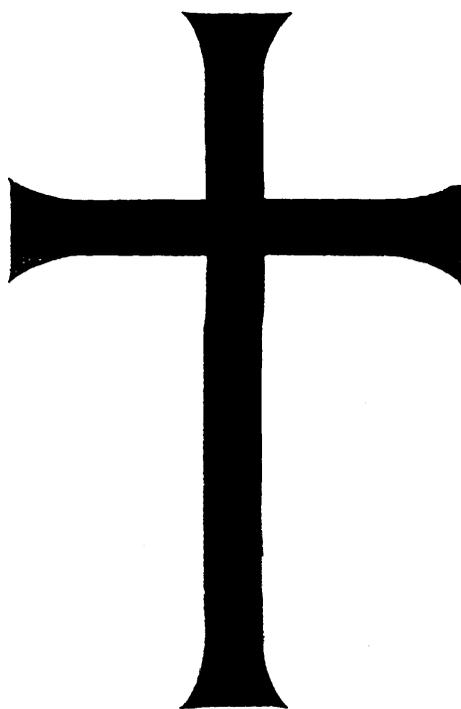


**CALDICOT, ROGIET,
LANGSTONE &
PENYCAEMAWR
METHODIST CHURCHES'**



SUMMER 2015
QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER

MEDITATION ALONG THE WAY

By Edward Norman

IT IS the time of year, sometimes the only time in the year, when people travel: it is the time for holidays.

Most of this travel, therefore, is undertaken for pleasure - in contrast to the journeys made by most of our predecessors. In truly nomadic societies of the ancient world, movement was linked to actual survival, and life itself became a literal progression through the world, an unending homelessness by those for whom the journey was all they experienced of social reality. Imagine, therefore the gratitude of the people of Israel when they found, and conquered, land for themselves - and for ever afterwards made their expression of gratitude, to God the basis of their religious understanding.

For many people in the past, the journey they entered upon was the pilgrimage: an odyssey of the soul to offer thanks in a different way - by prayer at a shrine. Modern writers, largely on the evidence of Chaucer's pilgrims, have tended to represent all pilgrimage as a disguised form of vacation, and have thus anachronistically adhered their own lack of serious spiritual purpose to the searing expectations of their medieval and earlier predecessors. In the Greek world, pilgrims journeyed in order to consult an oracle about choice of proposed action: both then and at most other times, people have travelled to healing sanctuaries, seeking relief from affliction through the mercy of the divine presence in a holy well or a school of sacred cultic observances.

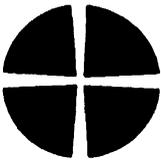
As we journey today, to Miami, let us say, or to Genoa, our intentions may be very different, but we, too, still experience something of the

detachment from familiar surroundings, and the hope of fresh insights, which those people of the past looked for in their wanderings. Even we, for all the materialism of our circumstances, and the removal of most (but not quite all) sense of personal hazard from the business of locomotion, can still sense that we are in transition in more than a merely bodily fashion.

The image of life as a journey has always been used in the religious life, and this continues to attract modern exponents of Christianity. Yet the sense in which individual lives are forever in transit has changed radically. Our predecessors used the idea to show how the soul, having been claimed by Christ through initiation into his faith, faces all kinds of dangers on its course through the world, how it is tested by each one, and is educated in spiritual formation as a consequence, arriving eventually at a triumphant entry into paradise.

Some modern users of the image — and it is becoming the conventional use among Christians today - conceive the journey of life to be itself a discovery of faith: that the experiences of the world, collectively, provide the content of spiritual understanding. This second usage reflects the modern disposition for people, regarding themselves as emancipated from religious authority, to construct a menu of religious ideas by eclectic association, and to consider the resulting and very personal mix to be "Christianity".

Many of the clergy today encourage them in such endeavours, seeing the procedure as evidence of mature understanding. But Jesus warned his followers that many would come in his name with false ideas. The authentic Christian journey is a pilgrimage through the world of the whole People of God together, confessing the same truths and enduring all things. And led by the great shepherd of their souls.



From the Green Room

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Dear Friends,

As I am writing this, Margaret and I still do not quite know for sure by what means of transport we shall get to Mother's 90th birthday in Denmark in August. But get there we will. In fact, we all shall, young and old, grandchildren and all, by hook or by crook. Some family members will fly, while others will journey by car, taking their time through the near-Continent and make convenient stops in Holland and Germany en route. Quite possibly Margaret and I will end up doing the same.

You see, in the "olden" days they had a great shipping line taking us from Harwich to Esbjerg, and with only an hour and a half to Mother's once we got to Denmark. But the crossing had to stop last year due to lack of travellers. Now, another shipping line is trying to re-activate the route, but it seems with very little instant success, as for starters they cannot seem to find a ship to buy! One moment their website says, 'we start at Easter', but Easter has been and gone, the next time you look, it's 'we start in the summer' – but Margaret and I have come to the point now when we begin to wonder, "the summer of what year are we talking about here?" There is not even a booking office yet.

Travelling places is not always easy, and this brings me to the point of this Letter (in case you wondered if there was going to be any point!) Two of our ministers are on the move very soon, our Superintendent Barry Smith, as he enters retirement, albeit in a very active kind of way I have no doubt – we never really stop as ministers – and Anne Ellis, who is heading for my old stomping

ground in the Amersham Circuit as their new Superintendent. As I hinted last month, this Letter is very much in appreciation of them both and their ministry and witness among us.

It remains one of the great joys of Methodist ministry that because of it being itinerant – with clergy always on the move – the gifts and talents of those who are called to serve God in this way are never limited to one place, one people, one time, but there for sharing with the whole Connexion as and when God – and Conference (and I trust in that order) - directs us. I have no doubt that God has a great deal waiting for Barry and Anne to embark on, and I am sure you join with me in wishing them and their families well as they take their next steps, in some ways into unchartered territories (just like "How do I get to Denmark this year!")

Margaret and I have jokingly suggested to each other that in the worst scenario we may just have to swim the North Sea, and thinking about sink or swim, I reckon Margaret would probably get across OK. She is a good swimmer, but she would then have to explain to Mother why I'm not there with her but sank like a stone in the port of Harwich! In the ministry, as people move from station to station, and although not everything may seem to go smoothly every time, there is always the assurance that God is directing us safely and accompanying us on the journey, as I know he will Barry and Anne.

I want to thank them both for being great colleagues and for everything they have both done for us as a Circuit. I want us also to begin even now to welcome in Roger

Continued over page

Gresswell and Ruth Lownsbrough as they come to take up their positions in Newport and Monmouth respectively. They too are facing changes with all the mixture of emotions this entails.

So, where is all this leading? To a happy conclusion, I can hear you pray hopefully. Yes, indeed with new beginnings for everybody involved, and a busy summer with ministers coming and going, travelling from the old to the new, in trust and confidence. Someone said once you always know when Methodist ministers are on the move just by looking at the miles and miles of removal vans bumper to bumper along our motorways, and so it is.

Let me finish with this. Many Christians have the sign of the fish on their car window or bumper. You can get them in so many different formats and with so many different wordings too. Mine is in Greek – ICHTOS – Greek for fish. These symbols are great conversation starters as people will often stop you and ask what this all stands for, but what I like best about them is that when you sell your car, the fish symbol will almost always go with it to the new owner, who may

or may not be a Christian, as they are virtually impossible to remove. And as far as I am concerned, just knowing that I have the fish on my rear window and by definition Jesus with me on the journey, every journey, is comfort and assurance indeed.

I pray that Barry and Pam and Anne and Owain will continue to travel safely with Jesus as they prepare to leave us, and that Gordon and Sue and Ruth and Richard will do the same as they prepare to join us. It is as simple as that in the rich tapestry of life, joining together in wishing each other travelling mercies in whatever situation we find ourselves.

Now, that trip to Denmark. We could of course walk it! We might just make it for Paula's birthday on August 17th if we set out now..... but then again....

Every blessing,

Preben

Church website
(for ALL four churches don't forget)
<http://www.caldicotmethodists.co.uk>

CURIOUS BIBLE STATISTICS

These facts were found in an old family Bible:

The Bible contains 3,586,489 letters; 773,692 words; 31,173 verses; 1,189 chapters; 66 books. The word 'and' occurs 46,277 times; the word 'Lord' occurs 1,855 times; the word 'Reverend' but once, 111th Psalm, 9th verse; the middle verse of the bible is the 8th verse, 118th Psalm.

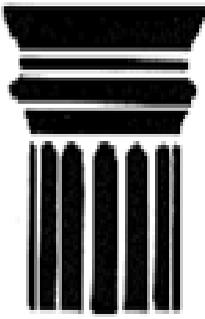
The 21st verse of the 7th chapter of Ezra contains all the letters of the alphabet with the exception of the letter 'J'. The finest chapter for serious readers is the 26th of the Acts of the Apostles. The 19th of the 2nd Book of Kings and the 37th chapter of Isaiah are alike.

The 9th verse of the 8th chapter of Esther is the longest. The 35th verse of the 11th chapter of St. John is the shortest. The 25th verse of the 1st chapter of the Book of Chronicles is the shortest in the Old Testament.

The 8th, 15th, 21st and 31st verses of the 107th Psalm are alike. All verses of the 136th Psalm end alike. The 117th Psalm is the middle and least chapter of the Bible.

The word 'God' does not occur once in the book of Esther.

***Gordon Hill (15.9.1991)
(Thank you to Julie Hooper
for making this available to us)***



John Mills Column

Dear Friends,

Tempus fugit

Many people at this time of the year or in the middle of summer holidays say, "Oh it's not long now 'til Christmas !" – these people seem not to value time. Time goes by so quickly it is sometimes frightening. A friend of mine spoke to me last week talking about how long he had been married – 20 years!! I was amazed how the years have sped away.

We all live by the clock at work and leisure, Edinburgh had its "One o'clock Gun" on the BBC, Big Ben was forever "booming" us the hour, Even the monks and nuns have routine prayer times, Matins – Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline, and some of us at some time has experienced the Moslem ritual "call to prayer" at all hours especially at the feast of Ramadan.

So it is that our lives are governed by clocks, bells, guns and muezzin calling us to work, play and prayer.

It is so sad that time , such a precious thing is frittered away, and yet when we are asked by someone if we can do a favour or listen to his/her problems we moan – "I would but I haven't time!" I wonder if God has time? Imagine his workload ! Yet we bombard Him with requests and off load our problems onto His broad shoulders and it does appear that He has time for us all. Although sometimes it isn't apparent that He has heard us, unexpectedly our prayers will be answered or a problem resolved..

Perhaps we should bestow the gift of our time more prudently – help God with His workload by listening to people, whether young or old, and trying to help them in their sorrow or confusion and rejoice with them in their happiness. Not only will we be helping them but we will be enriching our own lives by sharing in their joys and sorrows.

Read Ecclesiastes – Chapter 3 seems to sum up the use of Time for me.

Many people require our time – let's not waste it, let's share it with others.

Having said all that (Why not consider being a PASTORAL VISITOR!!)

Happy summer holiday.

JSM

Customs & Cooking

St Margaret. no longer appears in the Church calendar, though during the Middle Ages. she was remembered on 20th July. St Margaret's Fair is held in her honour each year in Tenby. According to legend, Margaret was a Christian shepherdess who was thrown to a dragon, which swallowed her whole. But the cross she wore grew until it choked the dragon and St Margaret emerged unharmed. Across the border in Gloucestershire she used to be remembered with the baking of Heg Peg Dump (Peg's

Hedgerow Dumpling) with suet and wild fruit.

More suited to our modern taste is the light summer pudding dedicated to her.



SISTERHOOD



I start my 'Newsletter' report with a special memory of Sisterhood Maundy Thursday Service. Rev Preben attended and shared a Holy Communion with us. It was lovely to see a good number of our ladies, only 3 (through sickness) were missing. The service was followed by tea and hot cross buns, enjoyed by all.

9th April no sisterhood (Easter holiday)

16th April Mrs Joan Thomas led us in a Celebration of Praise for our Easter donations of £133 for HHI.

23rd April Speaker Mrs Mary Rooney

30th April Members afternoon

7th May Speaker Mrs Hazel Barnett
14th May Our Anniversary Service. Speaker Mrs Margaret Anderson. Once again we celebrate with our Sisters from all the local area churches.

21st May Speaker Mrs Mary Laird.

28th May Members afternoon.

4th June – 16th July TBA except for 18th June Speaker Mr Laurie Tarr.

23rd July Members afternoon, last Sisterhood before Summer holiday.

On July 30th Glyn's daughter Becca will be marrying Paul at church 1pm. We at sisterhood, wish them a long and happy life together.

3rd Sept 2015 restart Sisterhood.

To all Newsletter readers, we wish you all a Blessed and Peaceful summer, returning from our summer break, refreshed, rested, and ready to face whatever is in store for us. May God surround you each day as we trust in him and walk in his way.

Yours in his service

Joyce Tanner

THIS IS THE DAY

(Acts 2:1-21)

This is the day,
This is the time
To call upon the name of the Lord.

Spirit breath,
And fire,
And words,
And power
Pouring from the Father and the Son.

Promises honoured,
Prophecies fulfilled,
A new spirit-fuelled sending

And revelation
Of God's reality.

This is the day,
This is the time
To call upon the name of the Lord.

Receive his Spirit
And go into all the world,
In his power,
Magnets
For Jesus.

By Daphne Kitching

ROGIET METHODIST CHURCH NEWS

What a delight to see all the Spring Flowers blooming. "Spring again is with us". As the month moves on summer will again bring forth the "Blooming Summer flowers".

As we see the lovely colours in our gardens does it not remind us of who gave the beauty of the earth. Thanking God for all little things in life and beautiful colours that God has clothed spring and summer in. Also saying when the clouds complain "There is even a rainbow in the rain".

Moving On

Our luncheon club in April was a great success thanks once again to the ladies of Magor Baptist Church who gave of their time and cooking skills to give us a lovely meal. Our next meal; is in July watch this space.

Our Easter services were well attended and our church looked lovely with daffodils and the cross bedecked with flowers, at the end of the Easter Day service. An Easter Bacon breakfast brunch was available to those who wished to stay, followed by an Easter Egg for

everyone. What a lovely fellowship morning this was.

Knit & Natter Club is still thriving where anyone is welcome to join us on the 3rd Thursday in the month at 2pm.

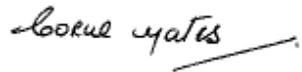
Bereavement

All Christian blessings to Beryl & Keith, on the loss of his sister. Our sympathy and love to you both at this sad time.

And Finally

"Jesus is the head of every household, the unseen guest at every meal".

Enjoy your summer breaks and Christian blessings to you all.



Coral Yates

SPIRIT OF LIFE

(Jn20:21,22; Ez37:4-6)

Breathe on us, Lord Jesus.
Fill us with your Spirit.

Send us out,
as the Father sent you.
Send us out into the world
to live, to work,
to make decisions,
to change and influence and transform;
that as your people
we might truly make a difference
in our generation.

Send us out Lord.
Breathe on us,
and into us, your kiss of life,
resuscitating these dry bones
to go, with your power and wisdom,
to build for your Kingdom today.

Breathe on us Lord Jesus
fill us with your Spirit,
for the work you have given us to do.

By Daphne Kitching

Before Pentecost the disciples found it hard to do easy things;
after Pentecost, they found it easy to do hard things. - **AJ Gordon**

WHY PENTECOST MAKES CHRIST ACCESSIBLE

Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house. (Acts 2:2)

Christianity is more than a fading memory scrapbook. The day of Pentecost came, to make our Lord accessible, even to the newest follower!

Imagine the late Nelson Mandela arriving at Heathrow Airport. On stepping onto the tarmac a group of admirers and friends wave to him excitedly from the airport roof. But instead of lingering with them, he only waves briefly, and is immediately whisked away. Yet any disappointment among his friends is tempered later, when they see Mandela in a major TV programme addressing himself not only to them but to an entire nation. His removal from them had been essential if he was to have been made available to many millions more.

During Jesus' earthly ministry, no more than a limited number of people could be near enough to hear him, let alone speak to him or touch him. His Ascension – followed by Pentecost - was to change everything to a global dimension. Earlier he had reassured his disciples, "I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you....It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you...(John 14:18; 16:7). To have the Holy Spirit is to have the very presence of Jesus in your life.



**All of them were
filled with
the Holy Spirit!
Acts 2.4**

The mystery of Pentecost. The coming of Christ's Spirit – 'the Counsellor' - reminded people of a wind (unseen, yet powerful in its effects) - and of prophecies such as Ezekiel 37:9. Christians have always loved these vivid descriptions of the Holy Spirit - wind, fire, oil, water, a dove.

The sovereignty of Pentecost. 'The wind blows where it wills' said Jesus to Nicodemus (John 3:8). So was the Spirit's working in Acts 2 - suddenly there were new believers swept into the Church of Jesus Christ - from lands all around the Mediterranean basin. Don't say the Gospel can't work in certain places and people. It has! It does.

The energy of Pentecost. At the start of Acts 2, there were about 120 believers in the church. By the end of the day they had ballooned by over 2,000 percent. And today? Why, to take the statistics of Africa alone, for every little African baby being born today, there will be two Africans becoming followers of Jesus. Pentecost is a phenomenon worldwide!

Rev Richard Bewes

PRAYER AT PENTECOST

Dear Heavenly Father,
We all come from different places, a bit like that crowd on the first day of Pentecost. We are from different backgrounds, with different experiences that form us. I can't be just like somebody else and no one else can be just like me. Thank you for the gift of your Holy

Spirit to speak and reveal your will to us in a way that is personal and unique. Help us to be open to receive him every day. Please go on filling us with your Spirit Lord, that we might be effective witnesses to Jesus our Lord and Saviour. In his name, Amen.

A prayer by Daphne Kitching

HOW THE 'METHODIST PENTECOST' HELPED TRANSFORM BRITAIN

Early in 1760 there was remarkable move of the Spirit among the Methodist people in Otley in West Yorkshire. Although it began in a small way, it was a spark that caused a very large conflagration. The revival was so impressive that John Wesley took time to visit Otley and talk with those caught up in a very significant work of the Holy Spirit.

'In the beginning year 1760 there was a great revival of the work of God in Yorkshire. About thirty persons were met together in Otley in the evening in order to pray, sing hymns, and to provoke one another to love and good works...Thus they continued for the space of two hours, some praising and magnifying God, crying to Him for pardon or purity of heart. Before they parted, three believed God had fulfilled and cleansed them from all unrighteousness.'

John Wesley wrote of Otley that it was 'a glorious work of sanctification' and referred to it as the day of Pentecost. If John Wesley, always exact and definite in his use of words, likened the work at Otley to that which launched the Church in Jerusalem, then we can be sure it was a revival of great spiritual power. When the history of this Yorkshire move of the Spirit is carefully traced, the undeniable evidence is that whenever the spiritual flame spread, hundreds were converted.

John wrote of Bristol on 21st September, 1761. 'God was pleased to pour out His Spirit this year on every part of England.' 24th July, 1762. 'I rode to Dublin and found the flame was not only continuing but increasing.' A letter from Limerick in the west of Ireland confirmed that 'a glorious work' was going on there and 'the fire is now spreading on every side.'

Wesley returned to England to hear that the fires were burning in many places. From Cheshire came the news that 'there was an outpouring of the Spirit, nor is His hand yet stayed.' In Liverpool he found 'such a work of God as had never been known there before.'

18 years after the outbreak of the Methodist Pentecost, John Wesley's judgement on its spiritual impact had not changed. 'The glorious work of sanctification spread from 1760 ...and wherever the work of sanctification increased, the whole work of God increased in all its branches.' No wonder Charles Wesley taught the Methodist people to sing: *See how great a flame aspires, Kindled by a spark of grace; Jesu's love the nations fires, Sets the kingdoms on a blaze.*

***(The Revd Dr Herbert McGonigle,
is a retired Lecturer in Theology,
Church History and Wesley Studies at
Nazarene Theological College)***



TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE

This summer, spare a thought for the bees who visit your garden. What will they find there to eat? Albert Einstein once said that mankind cannot live without bees, such is their importance in the survival of the global ecosystem. For bees do far more than make honey – they pollinate more than 90 crops that we rely on for food, including apples, pears, blueberries, tomatoes and strawberries.

In recent years, the bee population has plummeted. Attacks by varroa mite, the overuse of pesticide and herbicides, combined with intensive farming, is thought to have killed millions.

What can we do to help, in even a small way? Plant some traditional cottage garden favourites such as rosemary, lavender, bluebells, foxglove, comfrey and viper's bugloss in your garden – all of which bees love. Bee welcoming in your garden!

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

'Dead Ringer' is the odd phrase we use when referring to someone who looks like somebody else. Sometimes, instead, we say 'spitting image' when we see a likeness or similarity between one person and another.

June includes Fathers' Day on the 21st June and is an occasion when dads are particularly remembered by their children. As far as the boys are concerned, how many have heard someone say 'Oh, you really look like your father'?

One day, Jesus was talking to His disciples and said "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9) What an amazing statement! Jesus was saying that he was the dead ringer or spitting image of God! At another time Jesus said "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." (Jn 14.10) These words must have shocked his hearers, for he was saying that he was equal with God. No one had said anything like this before, but certainly his miracles were proof that he was different. No-one else could do what he was doing. Some people wondered—could he really be who he said he was?

So Jesus attempted to make his position clear and said "If you knew me you would know the Father also." (Jn 8:19) The people were being urged to know Jesus more. They had to look, listen and believe. Were his deeds of God or not? They had to decide!

Today, we all stand in a similar position. Who is Jesus? Do we look at him and say 'Yes, this is God in the flesh' or 'No, he was just a good person — but also perhaps, deluded or crazy?'

Thomas, the disciple with the nickname 'doubter', exclaimed: "My Lord and *my God*" (Jn 20:28) Thomas was convinced that he was in the presence of God, in human form. And when the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Colossae he said clearly: 'It was by God's own decision that the Son has in himself the full nature of God' (*Colossians 1:19*). Like Father, like Son!



REMEMBERING ALBERT EINSTEIN – AND HIS FORMULA – 60 YEARS ON

The most influential physicist of the 20th century, Albert Einstein died 60 years ago, on 18th April 1955.

He was born in Ulm, Germany, in 1879, but took American citizenship in 1940. His 1905 theory of special relativity and his formula $E=mc^2$ radically changed scientists' views on space, time and matter.

He considered himself a "reluctant Zionist", and although he did support the state of Israel as a refuge for Jews, when the presidency was offered to him in 1952, he turned it down.

He did not believe in a personal God. He described himself as agnostic rather than

atheist and believed in an ordered reality, revealed in one of his most famous quotes, "God does not play dice with the universe." This was also displayed his unease with quantum physics and its random nature, believing that the ultimate "theory of everything" could not be attained by studying it.

He was instrumental in persuading Churchill to bring Jewish scientists out of Germany and into British universities in the mid-1930s. He was also a pacifist, and regretted his role in persuading America to build an atomic bomb. He felt that the most important question facing humanity was "Is the universe a friendly place?"

GOD'S PROVISION COMES FROM SURPRISING PLACES...

'Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the LORD came to [Elijah]: "Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have instructed a widow there to supply you with food..."' 1 Kings 17:7-10

God's provision for us can come in the most unlikely of places, and through the most unlikely of people. Having announced to Ahab that there will be a drought in the land, Elijah is led by God to a brook where ravens supply him with food. When the brook dries up, God displays his power to provide in a different way. Just as God 'directed' the ravens (17:4), so now he 'directs' a widow to feed Elijah.

Not the most obvious choice, perhaps. Apart from anything else, she lives in enemy territory. In addition, being a widow, the woman has already suffered loss; she is poor and in need, eking out an existence. When Elijah encounters her, she is preparing what will be a final meal for her and her son – a last supper.

So it is with remarkable faith that she responds to Elijah's promise that her meagre

resources – a jar of flour and a jug of oil – will not run out. Against all her instincts as a mother, she feeds Elijah first, and discovers that God is able to meet their needs. He continues to do so in the daily provision of flour and oil. And, like other widows in Scripture, she takes her place in the circle of those drawn into God's plan, such that Jesus himself refers to her in Luke 4:24-26, reminding us that grace extends to – and comes from – unexpected places.

We, too, may be the means by which God shares his abundance with neighbours, with colleagues, with strangers. And we minister grace and love to others not because we are special, but because we have been on the receiving end of it ourselves. God uses us to bless and benefit others, and may allow us to see him work through us in ways we could not even begin to imagine.

Yes, God's provision can come in the most unlikely of places and through the most unlikely of people, even through us.

Antony Billington

first appeared in LICC Word for the Week.*

*(*London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.)*

COME REIGN IN ME

Oh God, who made the world so fair,
And formed the earth, the sky, the sea;
Who gave us ears, and eyes, and minds,
To hear, to see, to know all love is thee.

Oh God, who in the Lord Jesus,
Gave us a light to light our way;
Let our life's lamp be lit by Him
Whose strength will see us safely through
each day.

Oh God, whose Spirit gave us birth,
And holds all life secure, e'en mine;
Take all I am, and all I have,
Bless and redeem them for they both are
Thine.

Oh God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, three in one;
Blessed be thy name, come reign in me,
And in me let thy will be done.

By Sam Doubtfire

WHY DOES GOD BOTHER WITH US?

We were standing on the edge of the Sahara Desert. It was night, and silence reigned. In a cloudless sky, a myriad of stars were shining. It was like standing inside a vast dome, with pinpricks of light everywhere from the highest point above, down to the horizon all around.

I found myself repeating these words from Psalm 8, written maybe 3,000 years ago:

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

The vastness of that night sky. And we, little dots of humanity. Why *does* God bother with us? That question and answer are reminders of the extraordinary contribution which Judaism has made to mankind's understanding of what the world is about.

There are two distinct assertions:

There is one God, who is the source of all things in heaven and on earth.

This God has a special interest in humans and given us a privileged position.

Nowadays, we Christians may take those two aspects of belief for granted, but that was not always the case. It is clear that in OT times people struggled to understand. One God or lots of gods? Did not every tribe, every community have its own god? And were not these gods irascible, needing to be pleased or placated? Monotheism, or belief in One God, was a gradual development from polytheism. Alongside grew the conviction that this one God had marked out humanity for his favour, with special attention given to

a downtrodden, nomadic collection of Hebrew tribes.

We know now that the Psalmist was mistaken to imagine that all he could see was the sum total of all that there is. Our planet, far from being pivotal, was like one of those specks of Sahara sand on which I was standing. And yet – such a Creator God knows and cares about each one of us.

With all this in mind, how then, does Jesus fit in the cosmos? What would the writer of the Psalm make of him? The Psalmist was already overawed at the majesty of the night sky, and bowled over to think that the same Creator had any regard for mankind, never mind a particular interest in the Hebrew people. How much more astonished would he have been to discover that the One God whom we believe to be the Source of everything, would at a given point in time and space, enter the womb of a teenage Hebrew girl: Mary, the Mother of Jesus?

Jesus is the 'Word', the idea which brought something out of nothing, and then lived alongside us. He taught us to address the Creator as Father. His and ours. He invited us to take his hand as our friend. The way is hazardous. We cannot go it alone. The One who calls us will help us to recognise all that is genuine and to spot where our true future lies. All this is the work of the Holy Spirit at work within us.

He has made us 'a little lower than the angels and crowned us with glory and honour.'

John Barton

HEAVEN

An exasperated mother, whose son was always getting into mischief, finally asked him, "How do you expect to get into Heaven?"

The boy thought it over and said, "Well, I'll just run in and out and in and out and keep slamming the door until St. Peter says 'For Heaven's sake, Dylan, come in or stay out!'"



HOW TO TRANSFORM THOSE HABITS IN YOUR LIFE

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:12-14

For much of our life we operate on automatic pilot with routines that require virtually no thought. We stand in the same place on the station platform each morning, or take the same route to work, and so on through the day with habitual patterns guiding our actions.

Our habits are like familiar, comfortable clothes. Many practical habits are helpful, but some habitual thought patterns and responses can reflect our workplace culture. Our everyday environments may have a level of noise and activity that can, all too easily, pull us in to a worry-filled life – where we feel distracted and fragmented, pulled in many directions.

Paul likens the Christian life to taking off an old set of clothes and putting on new

garments: 'you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self' (Colossians 3:9-10). Unless our beliefs transform our habits, our desire to become more like Christ will be frustrated. We know that we are called to be in the world (John 17:18), working, serving, building relationships and bearing fruit. Yet we are not of the world. We are people who are guided and directed by the Holy Spirit and who walk, as Henry David Thoreau put it, 'to the sound of a different drummer'. In order to hear that different beat we will need, regularly, to shut out the other noise.

Throughout the centuries, the Church has understood that it requires discipline, instruction and training to be a disciple. Spiritual disciplines or exercises are intentional practices that give space in our lives for the presence of Jesus to transform us. These exercises include solitude, silence, prayer, fasting, study, service, worship and celebration, and are designed to replace the habits of our former thinking and behaving with ones that fuel our desire to know and love God.

Bev Shepherd - PrayerWorks



**Samaritan's
Purse'**
INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

SAMARITAN'S PURSE BRINGS CLEAN WATER TO 50 COMMUNITIES IN KARAMOJA

The relief agency Samaritan's Purse is appealing for funds to help its project that provides fresh water to 20,000 people in Karamoja, a hot and dry region in northeast Uganda. The Karamojong people have suffered through decades of food shortages, lack of peace, and rampant alcoholism.

Karamoja's rainfall is erratic. As one relief worker explains: "It is a vicious cycle. The rain comes rarely and then in sudden deluges, doing little for the soil. When people run out of food, they eat the seeds they had planned to use the next year, leaving them with nothing to plant. Then they raid each other's villages to take livestock, often killing

innocent bystanders. Many drink to cope with their lives, because putting alcohol in their bellies is more comforting than having nothing at all. You find them dying of hunger, because all the muscles have been wasted off."

And so Samaritan's Purse is offering agricultural programmes to train the people how to make the most of their land, and food distribution to sustain them so they can continue working. People learn how to make items, such as liquid soap, that they can sell, and how to create savings groups. A ministry programme teaches life skills and biblical truths. More details at:

<http://www.samaritanspurse.org/article/helping-vulnerable-people-in-karamoja/>

“THANK-YOU” TO BARRY

At a Farewell Service on the 19th July we will have the sad task of saying goodbye to Rev. Barry Smith, who has been our Superintendent since the Newport and Lower Wye (NLW) Circuit was formed six years ago by the amalgamation of three smaller Circuits - the Chepstow and Caldicot, the Newport and the Monmouth, the latter of which Barry had been Superintendent for eleven years..

The restructuring of the Circuits in South-East Wales was primarily for the purpose of Mission. The idea of amalgamation was designed to achieve this and to create greater opportunities for collegueship amongst Circuit staff, giving the larger Circuits the opportunity of doing more things together. There was no doubt that the joining together of Circuits would not be without its challenges, particularly with a Circuit such as ours which is some 40 miles from end to end, from Broad Oak in Herefordshire to Cross Keys in the Ebbw valley.

Barry's administrative skills were well used from day one of the formation of the new Circuit - actually from some time beforehand as Barry worked with the two other former Supers - Rod Ingrouille and Richard Gillion and the then Circuit Stewards to bring the NLW Circuit into being.

Knitting three Circuits together, taking responsibility for a team of five or more ministers, and persuading people to give up

old practices and work together posed a challenging task, to which Barry brought his affability, good sense and wide knowledge and experience of how to get things done. Today, thanks to Barry's leadership, and his positive and faithful attitude to the wider Church community, the Circuit has settled down and is operating well and we must thank him for his considerable efforts and guidance in achieving that. We still have work to do on the Mission front but we have come to a point where we can see several green shoots of possibilities emerging which are exciting and it is now up to us to build on them and develop them in the future.

The folk in the Monmouth section have written their own piece in this publication which tells the story of Barry's ministry in Monmouth going back some 17 years - as Circuit Stewards we would like to sincerely thank him for his leadership as Superintendent of the Circuit these past six years and for his preaching which has been widely appreciated throughout the larger Circuit and to wish him, and Pam, a very long and happy retirement - if Ministers ever really do retire!. We understand Barry will be moving from Monmouth but, probably, still living within the Circuit boundaries, so it's not so much a 'goodbye', but more of an 'au revoir'.

With sincere best wishes,

The Circuit Stewards

THE ‘VIBRANT’ WORK CHAPLAINS DO

The second issue of the Methodist Church's new magazine, the connexion, focuses on the vibrant work of chaplains: lay and ordained, paid and volunteer.

Their wide range of work is testament to the

way that Methodism is continuing to live out John Wesley's belief that everything in life was the subject of his concern, and the whole of society was the field of his mission. The issue contains stories of chaplains from around the world, from Grenada to Ghana.

The ability to speak several languages is an asset,
but to be able to hold your tongue in one language is priceless.

HYMN TUNE - SWEET BEULAH LAND

Sometimes I feel that, like the Israelites, I'm wandering in the wilderness. Maybe everyone feels like that on occasion. And maybe, like the Israelites, the problem is that we have created our own desolation by turning away from God. When the Israelites turned back to the worship of God, they were rescued from their exile in Babylon and God promised "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah and thy land Beulah...." (Isaiah 62:4) The name "Hephzibah" means "God delights in her," and "Beulah" signifies that the land is dedicated to God as a married couple are dedicated to each other.

"Beulah Land" is often taken to represent Heaven, but that concept comes from John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress; the Bible doesn't suggest this interpretation. The gospel hymn "Beulah Land" seems to consider the land of Beulah to be on the border of Heaven, within sight and sound of Heaven's delights.

Edgar Page Stites was born in New Jersey in 1836, a descendant of settlers who came over in the Mayflower. He was converted to Christ at the age of 19 during the great revival of Philadelphia, often called the Awakening. He served on the Union side

in the Civil War, and later became a riverboat pilot on the Delaware River. He belonged to the First Methodist Church in Cape May, New Jersey, for 60 years, where he was a lay preacher. He helped start new churches in New Jersey, and for a time was a home missionary in the Dakota Territory.

In 1869 a number of Methodist ministers and laymen, including Stites, founded a Methodist camp meeting near Ocean Grove, New Jersey. By 1875 the camp was quite active. Popular hymn writers of the day would visit each summer, and many beloved hymns came out of these camp meetings. One was Stites' own "Beulah Land" set to music composed by John Sweney, the camp song leader.

Stites reported that he was overcome with emotion as he wrote the verses of the hymn. The words speak of the hope for believers of one day living in a land "where mansions are prepared for me." This hymn is seldom sung today, and indeed has been dropped from many hymnals. But the words are still relevant for Christians who can overcome desolation and look forward to eternal life in "my Heaven, my home forever more!".

Susan Bemus 2013 Granby, Missouri

THE TRAVELLERS

They travelled together sad and forlorn
With all their dreams shattered and torn.
It started so well, their hopes were high
Never to guess that He would die.

The man joined the two as they walked along
He asked why their faces were sad and long
"Have you not heard" disbelieving they cried?
"How the One we followed was crucified?"

Opening the scriptures He began to unfold
How the Christ should suffer as written of old,
It was not a disaster, but all of God's plan
That one should come as Redeemer of man.

They listened enraptured as slowly they saw
The purpose of God revealed in the Law
The Prophets and Psalms, it's all about Him
The One who should come and rescue from sin

O that eyes should be opened and scripture
made plain
To see Christ in its pages again and again.
That just like the travellers I too should see
The Master, the Saviour dying for me.

By Megan Carter

A TOUCH ON JESUS



These are some thoughts on Luke chapter 8 and verse 40 onwards. It is the story of a woman who touched the garment of Jesus and found immediate healing. Can you imagine her, working her way towards him determinedly? The Bible tells us that she had spent her all on remedies that had failed. She bled bodily all the time whatever was done to her or for her.

However she had this feeling that Jesus was the answer – and praise his name, he is that to believers. She didn't want to draw attention to her state – and she might have been afraid to ask him hopefully and openly, but she felt sure that he had the power she needed.

Eventually, she drew near enough to touch his robe – and a miracle occurred. Her issue of blood ceased immediately. Now she was ready to creep away, hugging to herself the knowledge of her healing. But no one touches Jesus without his knowledge and no one touches Jesus without a result. If you can reach out to Jesus for any reason, he will answer your need.

Imagine her shock when Jesus said “Who touched me?” Peter was almost scornful – “Lord, with all these people pressing, touching, pushing, surrounding, can you ask who touched you?” But Jesus knew that it

wasn't just the press of the crowd. He had felt the need and met the need, but now he felt it needed acknowledgement – not for him, but for the woman's sake. He knew that she had drawn on his power and that faith and belief was involved.

In times past, Jesus had told healed people to tell no-one, and yet he wanted this woman to declare openly. I wonder why? There was a purpose, Jesus always has one. He wanted her to know that he knew her and that he honoured her faith. Well that faith had been fully honoured – but now the test was whether she would own up. She did indeed come forward, and see how gently Jesus dealt with her. He didn't embarrass her; he simply reminded her that suffering and sin were both dealt with – hallelujah.

Jesus was on his way to another sick person, when all this happened. Jairus had a young daughter who was very ill and he had begged Jesus to come and heal her. He must have been anxious and perhaps even impatient as Jesus stopped for this woman. The bible doesn't say how he felt, but he was very anxious – and while all this was happening, someone came from his home, saying, don't trouble Jesus any further, your daughter is dead. But Jesus heard that and assured Jairus and went on with him, saying that all would be well. When they arrived at the house, Jesus said to the people gathered, “She is not dead, but sleeping.” They treated him with absolute scorn. They knew dead when they saw it and dead she was to them – and for them there was nothing beyond death.



Did Jairus, at this stage wonder if it would have been different if they had come at once? A friend of mine always says that God's timing is perfect. Jesus knew that he had time for the woman and for the young girl. No matter where or when, Jesus is more than in charge of the situation.

And so, the little girl was raised to life, delighting Jairus and his wife and confounding the scoffing bystanders. But Jesus didn't want patting on the back- his wonderful compassion took over and he said, "feed her". She had been ill and weak and needed nourishment. Oh, the compassion of our precious Saviour! Perhaps sometimes we are meant to pose these questions. Why tell some to be silent and others to express their blessing? Sometimes I want to shout my blessings from the housetops – and sometimes I know it is just between me and God. I'm sure you have felt the same at various times.

What struck me about the woman, who touched the garment of Jesus, was that it was just a piece of fabric. She didn't touch his body and yet it worked. If we believe that God can do it – he does it, all he requires is faith. We can do it via the spirit – we don't need to touch his body. In verse 50 Jesus says to Jairus, "*Fear not; believe only, and she shall be made whole*". And Mark 9 tells us that Jesus said, "*If thou canst believe, all things are possible*".

There was involvement for the people following Jesus. First he opened their eyes to the faith of the woman. Then he astounded the friends of Jairus. He showed that the impossible was possible with him, and with the power of God working through him- and also showed that death need not be the end.

When we are healed in this mortal world, we are touched physically, by a nurse or a surgeon or even just by medication – but when we are healed by Jesus, we simply need faith and trust. No actual contact is needed; God's spirit and power can make it happen. What an amazing God we have!

God makes it so easy for us and yet we often have trouble in believing that he will do as we ask. We ask, but doubt is planted in us. The Bible says "Only believe". How hard is that? When we take our requests to the feet of Jesus, we should leave our doubts there too and count the answer as certain. Faith and

trust is the cornerstone of our acceptance of Jesus and his death – that gives us life. We have not seen Jesus, but we have been led by the spirit to accept him and that same spirit has given us an assurance of his being, his presence, his power. If we feel so certain of that, then we should be able to believe fully for answers to our prayers. Many of our prayers ask for healing and the stories we have just considered remind us that Jesus was **The Great Healer** – that Jesus is **The Great Healer**.

He was touched by infirmity- and not only that – but madness and death were also at his command. The Psalms tell us that

"His mercy endureth for ever".

Not just while he was on earth, not now and then, but forever.

"The same yesterday, today and forever".

Praise be to Almighty God for everlasting mercy. His hands are always ready to impart healing and life to all who believe.

So, in a few short verses, Luke gives us the account of a healing- and a resurrection and through them we see the compassion and the power of Jesus. Today, he is the same Jesus and we can tap into that source of compassion and power. The only proviso is that we should believe that what we ask will be done. These lovely Bible happenings help our belief. We have seen in our own lives people raised by prayer from all kinds of suffering, not just healing of ailments, but miraculous provision of money for dire causes, or safe-keeping in terrible danger – and much much more. Our Father is like any natural Father – but much better – he protects and cares for his children. God is not confined to any one kind of blessing, whatever your problem, God can deal with it.

Like the woman in the crowd, you need not tell anyone, you can just reach out to Jesus, touch him by the spirit and claim the answer to whatever is troubling you. Reach out and test him and prove him- he will not fail you, Hallelujah.

Amem

Calamus

PRAYER TO STAY CONNECTED

Heavenly Father,

Forgive us that we are all so busy. There are so many demands; so many expectations. Emails and Facebook demand instant replies and, if we're honest, they drain away our time as we try to keep in touch with everyone, whenever they contact us. We keep in touch with everyone who demands our attention, Lord, but often, in all the rush to communicate, we don't keep in touch with you, the greatest communicator of

*God's
Answers
Prayers*

all. You communicated all we need to know by sending Jesus. He is your love in person. He makes it possible for us to know you by trusting in him. Thank you for pressing the send button that gave Jesus to us. Thank you that you will never switch off or close down.

Help us to spend our precious time wisely and to stay connected to you.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

By Daphne Kitching



Contributions for the next magazine would be most welcome. Members and friends of Caldicot, Langstone, Rogiet, & Penyaemawr we would like to include an article of your choice. Please forward items to:-
Barbara or Roger Simms, 14 Rockfield Crescent, Undy,
Tel: (01633) 880304,
Email roger@barbaraandroger.co.uk
no later than midday :-

**FROM THE
EDITOR**

**Sunday
16th August**

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WILLIAM HARTLEY



William Hartley, the founder of Hartley's jam, was a prominent figure in the Primitive Methodist movement. In 1909, as a reward for his many acts of benevolence and for his tireless work in Methodism, he was appointed President of the Conference, only the

second layman in the denomination's history to hold the position.

Hartley was born in the Lancashire mill town of Colne in 1846 and at the age of 16 was running his own business, selling groceries. In 1886 he built one of the largest preserves factories in the world at Aintree, a second factor) in Bermondsey followed.

On New Year's Day, 1887, he and his wife made a vow to give one-tenth of his income towards religious and charitable objects, a vow which he later described as "the greatest joy of my life". In the years that followed he would increase the amount he gave away to first a quarter and then a third of his income. Hartley wrote, "the fact is that unless men begin to give the Lord a share of what they get when they are comparatively young, the money becomes their master and they are no happier for it, but much more stingy and miserable."

After years of financial mismanagement the Primitive Methodist Missionary Society debts had risen to more than £5,000. Hartley offered £1,000 on condition that his fellow church members raise the balance - the first of his great challenge offers under which the stimulus of a large donation prompted others to financially support a cause. It was to prove a bold move and one which was deeply controversial. Primitive Methodism was a relatively poor denomination and its members were often keener to support local

causes rather than national and international needs. Hartley's idea nevertheless captured the imagination of the rank and file. Within a year he was able to announce that the debt had been repaid in full.

His success catapulted him to denominational fame and in 1890 he founded the Chapel Aid Association, which revolutionised the funding of the Primitive Methodist Church. In the mid 19th century the denomination had seen the construction of a vast number of churches, chapels and Sunday schools which resulted in the Church's debts spiralling. By 1890 they stood at more than £1 million. His success in eradicating the debts of the Missionary Society enabled him to promote his ideas more vigorously.

The Chapel Aid Association in essence was a savings bank, which paid interest on the funds that were deposited with it and lent those funds to the trustees of chapels, schools and other properties belonging to the denomination. It did not seek to make a profit, merely cover its running costs.

Hartley promoted the appointment of Arthur Peake, one of the foremost biblical scholars of his age, to head the denomination's theological college in Manchester and paying Peake's salary of £200 a year for five years, promoting the benefits of the college to the wider denomination.

In 1896 and 1906 he funded extensions to the college, making it one of the largest theological colleges in Britain, accommodating more than 100 students. On completion of its second extension it was renamed the Hartley Primitive Methodist College in his honour. Later he was responsible for the purchase of new denomination headquarters in, Holborn and the construction of a Connexional orphanage in Harrogate.



William Hartley

As the Primitive Methodists were not as prevalent in London as other parts of the country, he funded the work of three ministers in the capital and the training of the movement's first medical mission in Africa. In 1907 he was appointed treasurer of the movement's Centenary Fund, to which he contributed £15,000.

Hartley writes: "My own opinion is that we have listened to too many doctrinal and theological sermons, and too few as to the absolute importance of living Christ-like lives,

and unless we be actually miniature Christs day by day. breathing His spirit and living His life, it matters not what we believe, for our religion is a sham. Our actual creed is what we put into practice, and no more: and we want to be careful to see that our practice is equal to our creed."

Nicholas Hartley

(the great great-grandson of William Hartley),

extracts from articles in the 'Methodist Recorder' and 'Magnet'

THE VAGARIES OF A CLERGYMAN'S LIFE!

25 December 1866

"Married a young parishioner of the name of Mahershallalashbaz Tuck. He accounted for the possession of so extraordinary a name thus: his father wished to call him by the shortest name in the Bible, and for that purpose selected Uz. But the clergyman making some demur, the father said in pique. 'Well, if he cannot have the shortest he shall have the longest.'

(From the diary of the Rev. Benjamin Armstrong)

5 February 1790

"My poor cow rather better this morning, but not able to get up as yet. she having a disorder which I never heard of before or any of our Somerset friends. It is called Tail-shot, that is a separation of some of the Joints of the Tail about a foot from the tip of the Tail, or rather a slipping of one Joint from another. It also makes all her Teeth quite loose in her head. The Cure, is to open that part of the Tail so slipt lengthways and put in an Onion boiled and some salt and bind it up with some coarse Tape."

(From the diary of the Rev. James Woodforde)

Thursday. April Eve 1870

"In Hadley's shop I met Dewing who told me of a most extraordinary misfortune that befell

Pope the curate of Cusop yesterday at the Whitney Confirmation. He had one candidate Miss Stokes a farmer's daughter and they went together by train. Pope went in a cutaway coat very short, with his dog, and took no gown. The train was very late. He came very late into church and sat down on a bench with the girl cheek by jowl.

The Bishop of Hereford (Atlay) has a new fashion of confirming only two persons at a time, kneeling at the rails. The Bishop thought from Pope's youthful appearance and from his having no gown that he was a young farmer candidate and brother of the girl. He spoke to them severely and told them to come on and kneel down for they were extremely late. Pope tried to explain that he was a clergyman and that the girl was his candidate but the Bishop was overbearing and imperious and either did not hear or did not attend, seeming to think he was dealing with a refractory ill-conditioned youth, i know. I know." he said. "Come at once, kneel down, kneel down.' Poor Pope resisted a long time and had a long battle with the Bishop, but at last unhappily he was overborne in the struggle, lost his head, gave way, knelt down and was confirmed there and then.

From the diary of the Rev. Francis Kilvert)

Both articles taken from NEXUS (March 2005) at Ledbury Methodist Church

BOOK REVIEW



Reignite - seeing God rekindle life and purpose in your church

By Ian Parkinson, LionHudson, £12.99

Ian Parkinson shares his experience of partnering with God to transform two very different local churches. He weaves stories from his own congregations, and draws on his experience of ministering in an inherited traditional but declining church, revealing what he has done to turn them around.



The transformation of such churches is critical: there are relational links to build on within communities; there are resources in place; and most importantly, God desires to renew his people in their sense of identity, vision, calling and anointing, even when they lose their way.

In order for this to happen, there need to be leaders who are enthused and equipped to share in God's vision to be agents of change in the church for the sake of the world. This is transformational leadership. Such leadership comes about when we are gripped by a compelling vision of how God intends His Church to be, and a passion to see it move it forwards.

When Faith Gets Shaken

By Patrick Regan and Liza Hoeksma, Lion Hudson, £7.99

What do you do when life falls apart, and it feels as if God has left you? How do you keep going when your faith is rocked to the core? Sometimes things get so hard we're not sure where God is – or what he's up to. For Patrick there was pain, illness, and loss in his family and community.



Then a series of excruciating operations took him to the brink physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Writing during his journey of recovery, Patrick explores how we find God in times of suffering. He wrestles with how we can know God's peace when life is anything but peaceful, what the true nature of courage is, how we allow ourselves the grace to rest when we're running on empty, and how we can stay fully present in the moment – all so we can ultimately grasp the love of God at a deeper level.

The Pastor's Wife - Strengthened by Grace for a Life of Love

By Gloria Furman, Monarch, £7.99

But you're the pastor's wife!' Like most pastors' wives, Gloria Furman has found herself shouldering the burden of unrealistic expectations.

'Who am I? What am I? Am I supposed to be playing some sort of role? If so, where did I put that script?' she asks.

But, she argues, our identity as a woman, a wife or a pastor's wife must come second to our primary reference point: that of being found in Christ. With honesty and humour, and a truly fascinating window into the Middle East where she lives, Gloria helps us to love the Chief Shepherd and his under-shepherd, to love the church and look forward to the return of Christ.

Death by Civilisation - How to Accidentally Ruin a Perfectly Decent Society (and How it Might Still be Saved)

By James Cary, DLT, £8.99

The world is full of well-meaning people experiencing disappointment, discontentment and despair. We can put a man on the moon and grow an ear on the back of the mouse, but maybe it's time we thought about doing something useful.

Award-winning comedy writer James Cary has been thinking about this for some time and, after plenty of time on the internet and reading some magazines, he reckons he's found some answers. They lurk in five of the great institutions of society: The Government, The Media, The City, Academia and The Church. They all seek to make our lives better, but frequently end up being part of the problem. In his own, inimitable way James Cary stomps up to these gates of these great institutions, rings their doorbell and runs.



Prayer is often perceived as a difficult, “place-less” exercise in which we close our eyes and seek God beyond our everyday experience in an invisible realm. It does not have to be this way. Prayer can have its own sense of place in landscapes which we can inhabit and explore, and we can meet God as tangibly as we might meet a fellow traveller.

In this beautifully illustrated book, highly acclaimed author, Margaret Silf takes the reader through seven cityscapes, and shows how we can encounter the spiritual wherever we are – on a city street, on a train, in a library, in the workplace, in cafes, shops and parks. All are fruitful areas for self-discovery, inviting us to connect with the mystery of God in our lives. This inspirational volume will be returned to time and again as readers discover the divine in the bustle of the city streets.

Postcards from the Middle East – how our family fell in love with the Arab world

By Chris Naylor, Lion, £8.99

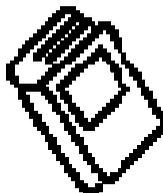
Newly married, Chris and Susanna Naylor set off for a new life in the Arab world – living first in Kuwait, then Jordan and finally Lebanon. Their story is a tale of love from one family's experiences: a story of work, schooling, friendships, worship and shared family life, lived out in precious communities against a back drop of world-changing events and spectacular scenery.

The Naylor's had never experienced such hospitality, danger, wildlife spectacles or snow before they moved to the Middle East. Their story provides a multi-coloured window on an extraordinary and rapidly changing Arab world.

Sacred in the City – seeing the spiritual in the everyday

By Margaret Silf, Lion, £9.99

Sacred in the City explores the spiritual in the urban, meeting people where they live, and helping them to discover God in the middle of the humdrum and every day.



Tiny Tots Prayers

By Lois Rock and Kay Widdowson, Lion Children, £5.99

A companion prayer book to the popular and cheerful Tiny Tots Bible, this volume contains sweet, simple, and sincere prayers, inspired by the promises of the Bible. Illustrated by Kay Widdowson with her trademark joyful characters and jam-packed with colours.

Simply Good News - Why the gospel is news and what makes it good

By Tom Wright, SPCK, £9.99

‘Gospel’ means good news, but why is it news? And what makes it good? Tom Wright believes that many, both within and without the Church, have lost sight of the true answers to those questions. In *Simply Good News*, he invites you to rediscover what the Christian gospel is all about: to explore the world-changing impact it had on its original audience, to understand how later generations have tamed and obscured it, and to find out why a message that was first proclaimed 2,000 years ago still has the power to transform your life, and the world around you, for the good.

ST JAMES-THE-LEAST OF ALL

Beware the church microphone

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Despite my assurances that it was unnecessary, it was kind of you to loan us your sound equipment, so we could experience the advantages of using radio microphones in church. Your assurance that everyone would then be able to hear with absolute clarity seemed to miss the point that everyone does *not* necessarily want to do so.

I have no doubt that members of your congregation hang on to your every word, eager to make sure you remain theologically sound, but for us, those who had blissfully slumbered throughout my sermons for the last 30 years found themselves unable to filter out a single syllable.

Colonel Wainwright decided to change the start of his Bible readings from the customary "Here beginneth.." to "Testing, Testing" before giving the microphone a good biff, which made the verger dash outside to check if yet another mediaeval gargoyle had fallen from the roof. Also, forgetting that microphones pick up asides just as effectively, his own comment to his wife in the front pew "I thought I read that rather well" did nothing for the pride he has always cherished for his humility.

I was also not convinced that the sixteenth century workmen who had devoted the greater part of their lives reverently carving the Lady Chapel altar had intended it to support an electronic console that would have looked more at home in an aeroplane cockpit.

However, the event which finally decided us against microphones came about an hour after the service. Several of the choir boys had crept back into the church and decided to improvise a rock concert with their guitars and the mikes turned up full blast. The

church exploded in a perfect cacophony of noise which panicked a horse and rider going by. The horse bolted down the road, which caused two cars to veer violently to avoid it. One car ended up in a pond, the other in a field, having ripped off a great deal of old fencing. Whoever fixed the fencing failed and later that night all 43 cows in the field escaped, and ended up in the Colonel's front flower-filled front garden, where they spent a comfortable night slicing his velvet turf with their sharp cleats, and chomping everything in sight.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

On why we don't bother to lock the church

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Since I happened to be in your area last week, I tried to call in at your church, and was sorry to find it was locked and bolted, with surveillance cameras watching me.

We tend to be a little more relaxed about matters of security. The key to the medieval lock was lost some time during Queen Victoria's reign and never replaced. How someone managed to misplace a foot long piece of cast iron, weighing about 10 pounds is a mystery. If it had fallen out of someone's pocket, it would certainly have broken their foot. Ever since, no one has bothered with locking the door – which makes me wish our burglars last year had thought of trying it, before wasting so much energy smashing a stained glass window when they visited in the early hours one morning. On the other hand, were the key still in use, I should probably be arrested these days for carrying an offensive weapon.

As with most rural churches, keys which open just about everything in the village are hidden in various parts of the church. The

by The Rev Dr Gary Bowness

vestry key is under my seat cushion, the organ key under a vase on the altar, the church hall key on top of the hymn book cupboard, and Miss Simpson's spare front door key inside the font. I have never been certain whether the latter is there for safety, or as a general invitation. I am sure someone could usefully produce a book suggesting the many places keys are likely to be found secreted in churches for the use of vergers, flower arrangers, cleaners – and thieves wanting to save themselves time and effort.

I suspect that the burdened look that many urban clergy wear is not because they are weighed down with parish troubles, but because they are obliged to carry with them a superfluity of keys needed to negotiate every door in church, hall, school and vicarage. And why is there always one for which no one has any idea what it opens?

The only occasion I have ever thought it would be useful to be able to lock a church is when you have a party of visitors inside. So often, on hearing the words "let us pray" or the start of an appeal for funds, they bolt for the door.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

On why it is so hard to read

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Your suggestion that every month at clergy meetings, someone should review a book of theology they have been reading, was bound to be greeted with uneasy resistance. It would mean that the majority would have to start *opening* books, rather than just occasionally dusting them. Possessing books does not necessarily imply that they are ever read.

Your high church colleagues will only read the Racing News, low church members the Railway Review, liberals the Knitting Weekly and those with tendencies towards non-conformism, the Vegetarian Times. Clerical studies may be lined with books, but they are largely for effect – and to hide damp patches on the wallpaper. Anything with hard covers will have been bought with the best of intentions - but somehow the vicarage lawn or the church hall drains will have taken precedence. And from what I know of your colleague at St. Crispin's, the only books he will buy will be to colour in.

I do try to keep up with my reading, but sleep mercifully intervenes after the first 10 minutes. On those days when I sit by my study window, so passers-by can see me deeply occupied in intellectual activity, it is most useful that my large tome on the letters of Eusebius can easily conceal an Agatha Christie inside it.

I confess that I was once gloriously put down when I tried to get one of our blue stockings interested in a new edition of a Dostoevsky novel. She replied: 'I have never read Dostoevsky in translation.' It only confirmed my suspicions that she had worked as a Russian spy in earlier years.

I was hugely impressed when during the bitter cold of last winter the Earl of Stowe, whose library would comfortably contain one of our cathedrals, told me he was slowly getting through its contents of tens of thousands of volumes. It was only some time later I discovered that he meant he threw the occasional one on the fire when he was running low on wood.

No, my dear Darren, the only literary activities that will spark interest will be crosswords for the majority, or diocesan reports for the truly dedicated – with weighty tomes being used as door stops.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

CROSSWORD

Across

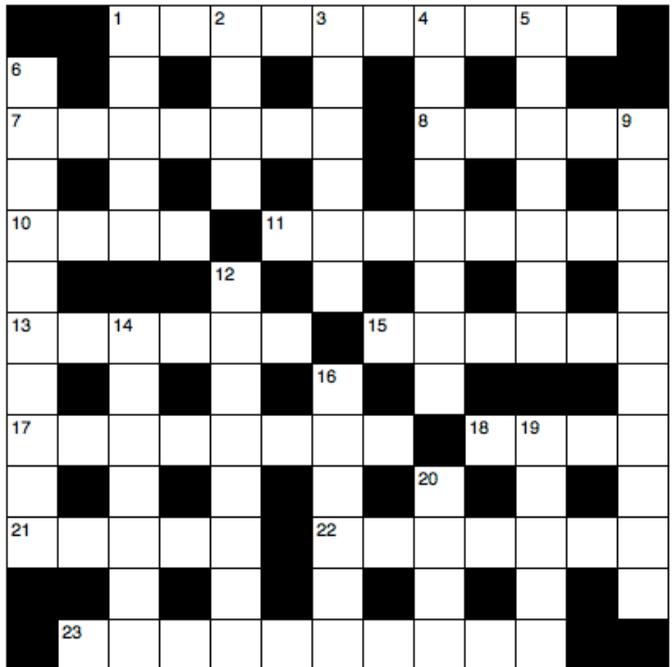
- 1 Evil (Genesis 6:5) (10)
- 7 Musician called for by Elisha when he met the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom (2 Kings 3:15) (7)
- 8 The request that led to the institution of the Lord's Prayer: 'Lord, — us to pray' (Luke 11:1) (5)
- 10 'We are hard pressed on every—' (2Corinthians4:8)(4)
- 11 Fraud (2Corinthians6:8)(3)
- 13 'His troops advance in force;they build a siege ramp against me and — around my tent' (Job 19:12) (6)
- 15 Where Rachel hid Laban's household gods when he searched his daughter's tent (Genesis 31:34) (6)
- 17 'Now about spiritual gifts,brothers,I do not want you to be—' (1 Corinthians 12:1) (8)
- 18 Nomadic dwelling(Genesis26:25)(4)
- 21 'As for man,his days are like—,he flourishes like a flower of the field' (Psalm 103:15) (5)
- 22 Or I live (anag.)(7)
- 23 Those guilty of 1 Across(Romans13:4)(10)

Down

- 1 'God so loved the — that he gave his one and only Son' (John 3:16) (5)
- 2 'Away in a manger, no — for a bed' (4)
- 3 Mob ten (anag.) (6)
- 4 'Each — group made its own gods in several towns where they settled' (2 Kings 17:29) (8)
- 5 Began (Luke 9:46) (7)
- 6 Speaking very softly (John 7:32) (10)
- 9 Workers Ruth joined when she arrived in Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi (Ruth 2:3) (10)
- 12 Put in jail(Acts22:19)(8)
- 14 Aceturn(anag.)(7)
- 16 Discharge(Acts21:3)(6)
- 19 'All these—come from inside and make a man "unclean"' (Mark 7:23) (5)
- 20 'Let us rejoice and be glad and — him glory!'(Revelation19:7)(4)

Answers over page

SCRIBBLE PAD



SUDUKU

EASY

	3					1		4
7		1	6	2				3
9	8			1		7		
	4	9			5		6	2
2	1		3			5	4	
		6		5			3	8
4				3	2	6		5
3		5					9	

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INTER-MEDIATE

		6	9					7
			8				2	5
		1		2		9		
								4
2			5		1			9
7								
		5		9		6		
8	3				5			
9					4	8		

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**Answers
over page**

CROSSWORD & SUDOKU ANSWERS

		W	I	C	K	E	D	N	E	S	S		
W		O		R		N		A		T			
H	A	R	P	I	S	T		T	E	A	C	H	
I		L		B		O		I		R		A	
S	I	D	E		I	M	P	O	S	T	E	R	
P				I		B		N		E		V	
E	N	C	A	M	P		S	A	D	D	L	E	
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I	G	N	O	R	A	N	T		T	E	N	T	
N		T		I		L		G		V		E	
G	R	A	S	S			O	L	I	V	I	E	R
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EASY

INTER-MEDIATE

6	3	2	7	9	8	1	5	4
7	5	1	6	2	4	9	8	3
9	8	4	5	1	3	7	2	6
8	4	9	1	7	5	3	6	2
5	6	3	2	4	9	8	7	1
2	1	7	3	8	6	5	4	9
1	9	6	4	5	7	2	3	8
4	7	8	9	3	2	6	1	5
3	2	5	8	6	1	4	9	7

4	2	6	9	5	3	1	8	7
3	9	7	8	1	6	4	2	5
5	8	1	4	2	7	9	3	6
6	1	9	3	8	2	5	7	4
2	4	8	5	7	1	3	6	9
7	5	3	6	4	9	2	1	8
1	7	5	2	9	8	6	4	3
8	3	4	1	6	5	7	9	2
9	6	2	7	3	4	8	5	1



We have this amazing crowd of people who have gone before us in Christian faith...

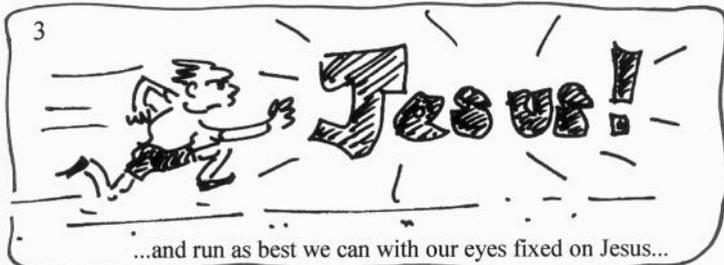
Just get rid of
all that
SIN!

Can I do this all by myself? Of course not! But Jesus can! So give it all to him and he will take it away! Then run with him!

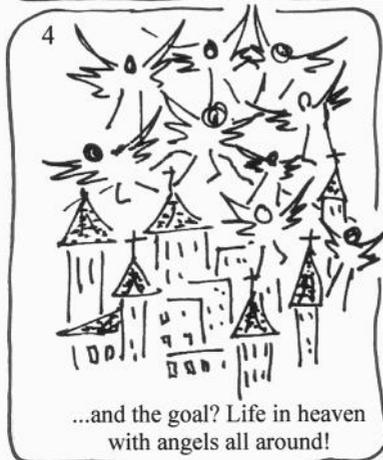
Bible Sketchbook



...so we need to get rid of all our sin!



...and run as best we can with our eyes fixed on Jesus...



...and the goal? Life in heaven with angels all around!

Be encouraged by all that Jesus did and the millions who have followed him since.

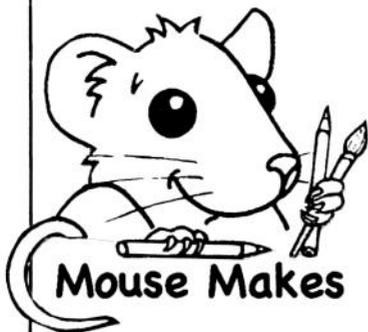
He didn't flinch from going the tough way - even death on the cross.

He has opened up the way for you and me to experience new life now and eternal life with all the angels in heaven!

Just trust in him, give all your rubbish to him and keep running with him. Do it today—you'll never regret it!

Read more in Hebrews 12

William Mather©



Mouse Makes

You may have read the bible story of Daniel in the lions den, but have you ever read the whole book of Daniel?

Take your time and read a little each day and find out about *the vegetables*, *the statue*, *the gold idol*, *the furnace*, *the tree*, *the writing on the wall*, *the lions*, *the four animals*, *the ram and the goat*, and the man.

Hidden in the lion's mouth are all these names and words, can you find them?

- DANIEL
- ASPENAZ
- HANANIAH
- MISHAEL
- AZARIAH
- DREAM
- STATUE
- IDOL
- FURNACE
- TREE
- WRITING
- WALL
- DARIUS
- LIONS
- PRAYER
- GOD
- NEBUCHADNEZZAR



W	D	A	N	I	E	L	V	N
A	S	H	P	E	N	A	Z	E
L	T	A	K	I	W	A	R	B
L	A	Z	J	D	R	U	H	U
E	T	A	D	O	I	D	A	C
M	U	R	R	L	T	F	N	H
I	E	I	E	D	I	U	A	A
S	T	A	A	A	N	R	N	D
H	R	H	M	R	G	N	I	N
A	E	U	G	I	G	A	A	E
E	E	F	O	U	P	C	H	Z
L	Q	V	D	S	W	E	E	Z
P	R	L	I	O	N	S	Q	E
U	X	P	R	A	Y	E	R	R



Ashpenaz changed the names of Daniel and his friends.

Look up *Daniel 1:7* to see what he changed them to.



JUSTICE

Every time there is a story about the law and justice in the newspapers or on television they always use the same symbol to show justice – a woman wearing a blindfold over her eyes, holding a set of scales in one hand and a sword in the other.



The blindfold is there to show that nothing affects the decision except the scales. The scales show that justice is only

right when both sides weigh the same and that all are equal before the law. The sword is there to show that the good are protected and the wicked punished.

All through Jesus' teaching is the idea of judgement – that we all shall stand before the throne of God and answer for what we have done. And when we do, the judge will be Jesus because he lived on earth as we do. St Matthew's Gospel, chapter 25, verses 31 to 46 tells us about this judgment.

Will you be a sheep or a goat?

SHEEP & GOATS

The answers to these are all animals in the Bible. Answers below.

1. 400 young men escaped on these (1 Samuel 30:17).
2. They eat under the table (Mark 7:28).
3. They live in the high mountains (Psalm 104:18).
4. One was lost and 99 were safe (Luke 15:6).
5. Benaiah killed this animal in a pit on a snowy day (1 Chronicles 11:22).
6. There were 4 of them, coloured white, red, black and pale green (Revelation 6:1-8).
7. Jesus rode this into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:21).
8. Their dung is used to bake bread (Ezekiel 4:15).



What did the cloned sheep say to the other sheep?

I am ewe.



What do you call a sheep with no head or legs?

A cloud.



Answers: 1.camels 2.dogs 3.goats
4.sheep 5.lion 6.horses 7.donkey 8.cow

