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Royal Wedding Liturgy Retains Much Christian Truth

Despite the regrettable cohabitation that preceded the marriage of William and Kate, the service at Westminster Abbey on 29th April was most dignified. Thankfully there was a noticeable absence of modern innovations. The inclusion of large potted trees in the building was presumably a 'green' measure instead of perishable flowers. While it will presumably be copied by others it was not objectionable as far as we can see. The clergy vestments on the other hand were typically lavish and unreformed as expected.

are true but one wonders if there was a reason for not using the more well known version. Maybe there was no reason but unnecessary change always has the undesirable effect of causing doubt.

Similar very light editing of the 1662 Prayer Book characterised the otherwise excellent service in general. Blushes were spared by modifying slightly the reasons for marriage to omit the word procreation as well as references to sin, especially the need to "avoid fornication", something that was, in this instance as in so many

were omitted. Given the attendance by many Jews and Muslims who also claim Abraham as their Father, this was most surprising. It may well reflect the general ignorance of the Bible today but more probably just that the 1928 version was assumed to be the "traditional" service and that the 1662 was not considered.

It was a marvel to see atheist Nick Clegg as well as Elton John and his friend sing the hymns which included "Love Divine" by Charles Wesley but one cannot but wonder how fervent atheists and liberals can sing the

be utterly unable to carry out the tasks ahead of them in their own strength. That they had written their own prayer was encouraging. It might have been too much to have expected them to repent publically of their cohabitation but we may hope that in the future they will trust the Lord and will come to a better understanding of right and wrong and truly know what it is to be saved by grace through faith. That is a vital need if William is ever to become King.

It was good to hear a prayer similar to the 1662 version asking God to bless the marriage with children. In these days of contraception and fertility treatments it is often forgotten that children are a gift and blessing from God.

The final omission from the liturgy was the reference to "Adam and Eve", to man being created in the image of God and woman being taken out of man. This was probably again a 1928 change and not intentionally done. Nevertheless, while such foundational doctrines are unacceptable to modern man, this is nothing new. The Genesis creation account was always unpalatable to Satan from the beginning. It is not necessary to omit parts of a service that may challenge the status quo and leave people with questions in their minds. The modern church is happy to find the ordinance of marriage given in Genesis so it should not reject the other vital doctrines that stem from the account of creation and the rebellious fall of man. These fundamental doctrines serve to demonstrate that we are accountable to God and that we need to be saved.

While there was so much about the service that was highly commendable, it was nevertheless regrettable that the 1662 liturgy was not retained in full, blushes and all. After all, if we will not blush, how are we going to feel the need for repentance and cry out to be saved?

Following the modern style funeral of Princess Diana it is encouraging that this marriage service has demonstrated something of a return to traditional liturgy. Our prayer must be that there will be a further turning not merely to tradition but to the Reformed Protestant faith, both among the clergy and the Royal Family. While we can be sure that when the sad day comes, the burial of our Queen will be a most dignified ceremony, there is much concern that there is pressure for there to be a serious downgrade from godliness when it comes to the coronation of our next king.

Royal Succession Reform

by Protestant Truth Society

Prime Minister, David Cameron, and Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, are reported to be speaking to both Buckingham Palace and Commonwealth leaders about possible changes to the laws governing who can or cannot ascend to the British throne. In particular, it is being reported that they would like both to overturn the preferment of male heirs and to scrap the ban on a Roman Catholic becoming the British monarch.

To link these two possible changes, suggesting that both are simply about equality, seems at best somewhat disingenuous. Some of our most highly respected monarchs have been women - such as Queen Victoria and our current Queen Elizabeth II - so few would argue strongly for retaining the preferment of male heirs. However, it is quite wrong to suggest that the requirement for the British monarch to be a Protestant member of the Church of England singles out Roman Catholics for discrimination.

The current law is not so much anti-Catholic as pro-Protestant. Contrary to popular opinion, it does not require the monarch to be anyone but a Roman Catholic. Rather, it requires them to be a Protestant Anglican. Therefore, whilst excluding Roman Catholics, it also excludes Nonconformist Protestants, Muslims, Atheists and all those who are not Protestant members of the Church of England.

Far from encouraging discrimination, our Protestant British monarchy has allowed people of all faiths and none to live in peace and thrive in society over the last five centuries. We only have to look at countries dominated by either the Roman Catholic Church or other world religions such as Islam to conclude that we have an enviable record of religious freedom in this country. Also, many countries that once had a Roman Catholic monarchy are now secular republics.

Instead of encouraging equality and tolerance, the abandonment of an expressly Protestant Anglican monarchy in Britain is likely to lead to the disestablishment of the Church of England, could threaten the very existence of the British monarchy, and would almost inevitably lead to increased religious intolerance and a less harmonious society.

www.protestant-truth.org



However, other than a prayer for the wedding ring and a single 'crossing' of the body during the benediction, the service was conducted in a reverent manner.

The BBC commentary was reasonably unobtrusive except when mistakenly saying that the place where Edward the Confessor was buried was a 'most holy' part of the Abbey.

The wording of the marriage service was very similar to the 1662 service of the Book of Common Prayer. The exact wording was not modern but appeared to have been from the 1928 "Series 1" service which is offered as an alternative to the modern version in the Church of England liturgy "Common Worship". It is probably not realised by couples that the 1928 service is not as good as the 1662 service and that they may request to use the 1662 service, either in the Church of England or in any other church.

The opening hymn, "Guide me O thou great redeemer" surprised us as the name Jehovah needn't have been changed to the title redeemer. Both

marriages today, not so much being avoided as finished.

There was also no promise by the bride "to obey and to serve", this being a popular alternative permitted in the 1928 service and reflecting a great misunderstanding about the nature of marriage. Thankfully the fact that marriage is a pattern of the relationship between Christ and the Church was clearly stated, however this should work both ways. While Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, so the church obeys and serves Christ. Why men and women are so unwilling to express this full ordered union in marriage makes one wonder if they really want Christ at all. There is a cost in following Christ and there is a cost in marriage yet, as the 1662 Prayer Book so aptly puts it, "His service is perfect freedom". The benefits far outweigh the cost of obedience but the benefits are not assured without obedience.

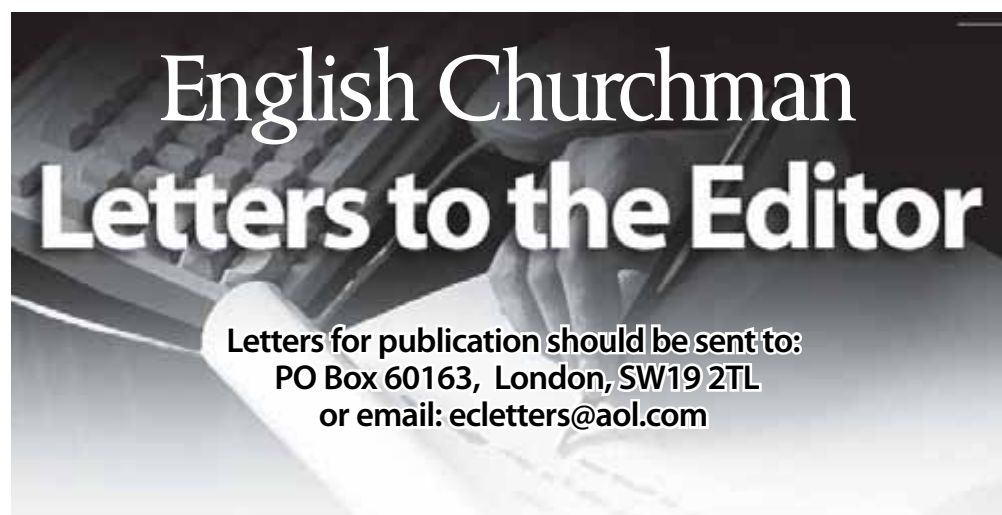
While the prayers very closely followed the 1662 wording all references to "Isaac and Rebecca" and later to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Sarah

words of plainly evangelical hymns. The words of congregational singing are not always very clear and perhaps it was again to spare blushes and obvious hypocrisy that the BBC did not add subtitles to the service. Such a help would also have greatly enabled those watching on TV to more fully join in with the service.

Though not from the Authorised Version, the appropriate reading from Romans 12 was very well read, nice and slowly and clearly.

In his brief sermon the Bishop of London declared marriage to be between a man and a woman. That was very clear. We were not expecting to ever come and see two men marry each other here and we should not expect it anywhere else. Why cannot the church at large be so clear?

While further helpful reformed theology was generally absent from the sermon, we must nevertheless be thankful that this was a service that was unambiguously carried out in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and no one else. Hopefully William and Kate will realise that like all people they will



Marriage Service Fees

Dear Sir,
A young niece of mine is shortly to be married in her local Parish Church. I was appalled when I heard of the amount she is being charged for a church wedding service. A simple service, with no peal of bells, and a friend acting as organist, is still costing her hundreds of pounds.
Are not the Church of England hypocritical when they lament the breakdown in family life and children being born out of wedlock, and yet make it almost impossible for young people to afford a church wedding?
A local Charismatic pastor is so concerned about young people living together, until they can afford a wedding, that he has volunteered his services free of charge, and has offered to marry any who want to put their relationship right before God.

Should not the Church of England follow his example instead of "cashing in" on an event which is always an expensive time in one's life?
Sincerely,
JANET P NORTH (MRS)

Ed: A Funeral Director told us that the Humanists charge the highest fees for taking funeral services, about £150 compared to £110 by the Church of England. Is it the same for weddings?

Anti Roman Catholic bigotry

Dear Editor,
I was recently sent a copy of your publication, dated 11th & 18th March. I have previously read a number of editions and find your anti Roman Catholic bigotry utterly appalling. The headline 'Murdered Pakistan Minister was Roman Catholic' and the following story, was, even by your standards, absolutely disgraceful. This was a man, a Christian, murdered for following the Lord Jesus. And how DARE you state that he will not be saved. Do you know your Bible? Jesus came to save all men, to teach us to LOVE one another. You preach hatred and should be ashamed of yourself for constantly printing such an evil message.

What is it about the Roman Catholic Faith that you cannot tolerate? Your comment in your editorial likening Roman Catholicism to an 'incubus upon true Christianity' is gross and utterly sickening.

You need to remember that it was Roman Catholicism that kept Christianity flourishing and alive through the centuries after Christ's Crucifixion. Christ designated St Peter as the Rock on which HIS church was to be founded and St Peter took Christ's message to Rome and was murdered there. St Peter is acknowledged as the FIRST POPE.

Throughout the early centuries after Christ's sacrificial death for ALL MEN many Christians were martyred for their faith in following our Lord - and they were ROMAN CATHOLICS - not Protestants. Are you arrogantly dismissing all the Saints - many of whom were Martyrs for their faith? The list is enormous and includes St Andrew, St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, St John, St Paul, St Stephen, St Augustine, St Patrick, St Francis, St Teresa and a latter-day Saint, Mother Teresa, whose dedication to the poor and outcast peoples of India was Christianity

at its most Christ-like. Have YOU ever sacrificed yourself as Mother Teresa did?

There are many groups with ALL denominations working together in the Name of Our Lord, and I have been blessed by the love and care of so many within these groups - including wonderful Roman Catholic believers.

By the way, Martin Luther, who began the Protestant movement, was anti-Semitic. The Protestant Church in England sprang up because an adulterous king wanted to dump his WIFE and marry another woman.

I am a member of the Church of England and I find your self-satisfied attitude repugnant. If you are a Christian your task is to save souls - NOT judge them. Your vilification of millions of believers in Jesus Christ is harmful, hurtful and repulsive. Jesus said 'I am the Way the Truth & the Life'. And that those who believe in Him will be saved. Are you daring to deny that?

May the Lord change your heart to become more Christ-like and loving.

In His Precious Name,
SUE PHEASANT

Ed: We dare to publish this thoroughly erroneous letter to illustrate to our discerning readers the level of deception by which the Roman Catholic Church has managed to wreck the Church of England. This is why so many people move between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church but few have the sense to join the more biblical and reformed episcopal church, the Church of England (Continuing). For any readers not familiar with all the simple answers to the above errors we would commend the website of our friend Richard Bennett www.bereanbeacon.org. Mr Bennett used to be an RC priest and, like ourselves, loves Roman Catholic people and desires their salvation.

We love Roman Catholics as the two daughters of one of our congregation will testify! Their elderly mother is RC and they are impressed that we are so kind to her compared to their cruel RC priests. You should hear what they say about the Roman Church having suffered it all their lives. Indeed almost all the Roman Catholics we have ever met will say the same of us. Yes, some are furious to have their idolatry questioned but very many of them understand what we are saying and know full well that we love their souls and do not want to fleece them like their priests do.

Meanwhile it is supposedly acceptable to have masked IRA terrorists on Sky News declaring their threats to kill policemen. We saw this revolting scene screened every 15 minutes on Monday 25th April. Meanwhile our local library and a prison will not let their 'inmates' view the English Churchman because our views are supposed to be "too strong". No, our views are not too strong, the truth is just unpopular with a rather nasty bunch of bullies.

Wake up Scotland, before it's too late

Dear Sir,
Politicians are going to legislate on the basis of a person's sexual urges after the May 5th election. After the election on May the 5th, all mainstream political parties will set about in one accord to corrupt the natural order of marriage, by redefining it, this will be done in the name of 'fairness' but in reality, it is to

appease the powerful homosexual lobbyist. Decency, and normality, will be forced to give way to the abnormal.

Marriage is not something that was invented, neither did politicians create it by legislation. Marriage happened naturally, however, this natural order will soon be, if mainstream politicians get their way, sacrificed upon the altar of homosexuality in order to legitimise the homosexual life style.

If marriage is redefined, then it follows that our school children will be taught in the classroom that the homosexual life style is normal, because marriage is normal, it is hoped for by homosexual extremists that this will eventually lead to a brain washed generation who will be less antagonistic toward them in the future.

As a parent, and great grand parent I am stunned that the Scotland I once knew, has descended to this level of liberalism, where good, has become bad, and bad has become good. Homosexual orientated politicians are now telling us that traditional marriage is bad because it does not favour same sex participation, so they intend to change it to accommodate a life style, which is alien to the nature of marriage.

I don't need to defend marriage, it is its own defence. Marriage is the naturally occurring and historic expression of human covenantal relationship, and it serves as the only natural procreative outlet for the production of children, and it is a natural incubator for planting the necessary values for each successive generation. Benefits afforded children raised in a traditional family cannot be duplicated, even the Government's own consultation showed this to

be true. Homosexuality has been the exception to human relationships down through history; it does not fit into the general rule or pattern of human sexuality.

What we see today, are politicians, who are prepared to legislate on the grounds of a person's sexual urges, what next? Will paedophilia be next on the agenda for decriminalization? Will it be unfair not to accommodate their sick perverted sexual urges?

Law cannot change reality, and law cannot change true marriage, it can only confuse matters, by its unacceptable intrusion into the holy institution of marriage which has been with humanity since the beginning of time, one man, and one woman for the purpose of procreation, Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve. Is it right that politicians should legislate for minority groups simply on the basis of their sexual urges? If so, where will it all end?

In conclusion, I have to assume that the majority of the voting public have not read the manifestos of the main parties else we would have heard from them by now.

Wake up Scotland!
ALEX LENNOX
Renfreshire

Opinions expressed in the correspondence columns are not necessarily those of The English Churchman. We welcome letters of less than 400 words and reserve the right to abbreviate letters. Please state clearly whether letters addressed to the editor are for publication or not.

Alarm Bell For Another Mega-Pastor

The back page of the Jehovah Witness March 2011 "Awake!" magazine quoted an American girl who said that though she knew Christ as her Saviour, she feared hell ... until she read a JW book. But how could she fear hell if she was saved? Her saviour was obviously not our Saviour who is our Saviour because he has saved us from hell. Clearly she was not saved at all, either before or after joining the JWs.

We expect such confusion from the cults but not from evangelical churches. However some American pastors build mega-churches by playing on such ignorance. While most may formally adhere to

some orthodox confession of faith, for many the Gospel is effectively kept in a sealed box in the bottom of a cupboard while week by week they preach whatever social or moral message will make people feel good and empty their wallets.

One of the most successful mega-pastors in the USA today is Rob Bell, a 40 year old athletic looking fellow who pastors what is supposed to be the fastest growing church in the USA, Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Bell's 'cool' style has been popular for some time but he has now set alarm bells ringing as he is said to have denied the eternity of hell, effectively turning it into something more akin to the Papists' fiction of purgatory. We reported a Evangelical Alliance statement in EC 7816 but EA were more concerned not to fall out with Bell than to say outright that he is very wrong. Historically modern evangelicals' refusal to reject 'the great' John Stott after he denied hell has set a precedent for such confusion. If the Evangelical Alliance can ignore its own evangelical "Basis of Faith" what is the point of believing anything? Do we believe anything? This is where the trendy

church ironically becomes irrelevant while the foolish old 'traditionalists' like ourselves still plod on with the glorious Gospel of our gracious God.

So what does Bell look like? Bell used to be in pop bands and his funky pop style makes Billy Graham's evangelism look Victorian, makes



Bill Hybels' Seeker Friendly Church look like a children's toy, makes Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Church look like little more than a funfair ride and even makes sex obsessed Marc Driscoll look boring and 'doctrinal'. Bell is supercharged and supercool. His church would be very comfortable if Bell was 'gay' as that is not an issue in such a 'free' church but we believe Bell is happily married.

We have not read Bell's latest book but have seen enough from some of his 'Nooma' YouTube videos. The common thread is a smooth talking 'cool' young trendy man saying what

most people would like to hear in a way they'd like to hear it. In the background of the top quality production is groovy music and sharp editing with floaty hypnotic graphic design. In this idyllic world the preacher waxes eloquent like a Byronesque type poet about how God is so good while ruthlessly caricaturing traditional evangelicals as being like demon possessed hate filled Satanists. This is not fair, there is only one Fred Phelps (God hates fags) and one Terry Jones (Quran burner) and very few are anywhere near to their extremity.

Nevertheless Jesus was hated for saying that people's deeds were evil. The only ones Bell says are evil are the people of God. Sadly Bell's spell has lured many. EA still call Bell "evangelical" and "brother". We may be wrong but we fear he is a blind leader of the blind. All we see is hypnotic pop idiom and we see no Gospel there. Even if Bell wakes up and finds that his liberal view of hell was a dream, he still needs to get the Gospel out of his box in the bottom of the cupboard. And he will have to turn off the pop music and cut out the stage lights if we are to be able to concentrate on the preaching, if there is any left.

£250,000 Spent Studying Religious Youth Morality

The credit crunch crisis may have bitten hard but the publication of some recent research on youth morality reminds us that a couple of years ago there was plenty of funding around for just about anything!

A team of researchers led by the University of Nottingham, in collaboration with Nottingham Trent University, have carried out a detailed two year study around the issues of sexuality and religion and how they affect and influence the lives of British 18 to 25 year olds.

The study, which involved nearly 700 young people from six different religions; Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism as well as young adults of mixed-faith, highlights the challenges they face in reconciling their sexuality and their religion and the concerns they have about the stigmatisation of religion and the increasingly sexualised culture in British society today.



The project Religion, Youth and Sexuality: a Multi-faith Exploration received funding of nearly £250,000 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council.

Dr Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip and Dr Sarah-Jane Page, in the School of Sociology and Social Policy at The University of Nottingham and Dr Michael Keenan from Nottingham Trent University's School of Social Sciences asked all the participants to fill in online questionnaires. Some were also interviewed individually and recorded week-long video diaries.

As well as looking at their family background, social and cultural expectations and participation in religious communities the researchers also examined young people's experiences of living in British society and how they understood and managed their gender identity in relation to their religious faith.

Dr Yip said: "Despite their diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, many of today's 18 to 25 year olds are following their own paths, drawing from a variety of resources such as religious faith, youth culture, the media and friendship networks. They are creating sexual ethics that are informed by their religious faith. Similarly, their sexuality also informs the ways they understand their religious faith and belonging. However, a majority of young people believe religious leaders do not know enough about sexuality — particularly youth sexuality. Others consider institutional religion a social control mechanism that excessively regulates gender and sexual behaviour, without sufficient engagement with young people themselves."

The research shows that nearly a third of young people think celibacy is fulfilling while nearly two thirds are committed to treating heterosexuality and homosexuality on equal terms. Meanwhile lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered participants reveal that there are psychological and social costs to living their everyday lives, particularly within religious communities.

Well over half the participants (65.1 per cent)

were involved in a religious community and just over half (56.7 per cent) attended a public religious gathering at least once a week.

Most thought that the expression of one's sexuality was desirable but opinions varied: some believing that consenting adults should be able to express their sexualities however they wished, while others believed sexual expression should be limited to marriage or a committed relationship. Despite the diversity in opinion, most salient was the support expressed across the board for monogamous relationships by 83.2 per cent of the sample.

Their experiences in connecting their religious faith and sexuality were diverse. Some had experienced tension and conflict. Others were able to deal with any conflict by compartmentalising faith and sexuality. While there were also participants who had found a way of accommodating both.

Dr Keenan said: "The majority of the religious young adults felt their religion was a positive force in their lives, and many felt that their faith was the most important influence on their sexual values and practices. The study also shows that the negotiation of religion and sexuality can be difficult and that there is a real diversity of experience among young religious adults. We hope the research findings will lead to greater discussion of these important issues and stimulate dialogue between religions and between religious and secular organisations."

More information about this research and a copy of the research report can be found at: www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology/rys

Ed: While we have no idea if any of the respondents were evangelical Christians, apparently the survey had trouble getting questionnaires filled by those of non-Christian religions. Perhaps that is because they come from more polite quarters. One expects that the 'Christians' who answered such a survey were those of the more liberal persuasion rather than the evangelicals who would surely blush when such subjects were raised.

The study seems to follow a general premise which we believe to be false, that the world can be divided between the religious and the non-religious. The media love to lump all religions, true and false, all together. The fact is that, according to the Lord Jesus Christ the division is not so much between the religious and the non-religious but rather between Christians and non-Christians, ie sheep and goats. When this line is blurred then all manner of confusion and loss of truth will follow.

Psychiatrists' abortion draft report biased says leading pro-life group SPUC

London, 10 April 2011 - A draft report by the Royal College of Psychiatrists is biased in favour of abortion, says leading pro-life group the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC).

John Smeaton, SPUC's director, commented: "The college's draft report, issued last week, concludes that there is no causal link between abortion and mental health problems. This conclusion, however, flies in the face of well-established studies which do show such a causal link. There is an increasing number of women all over the world testifying to how abortion has damaged them psychologically. These women will be very upset at the disservice done to them by the college's false conclusion. It should also be noted that there are no studies which show that abortion has even one psychological or physical benefit."

NIGERIA - Violence erupts following election of Christian President

Deadly violence has erupted across northern Nigeria following the announcement that Goodluck Jonathan, leader of the ruling People's Democratic Party, has been re-elected as president.

Violence erupted, predominantly in the Muslim states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, Gombe, Yobe and Katsina, as rioters took to the streets in protest at the election results.

The violence is taking a heavy toll on churches, Christian homes and businesses. Over 60 churches have been torched, thousands of houses belonging to Christians have been destroyed, and several pastors and church workers have been killed. Christians in the villages have not been spared and many were seen fleeing from their homes for fear of attack.

In the Malumfashi area, Katsina state, all the houses in a mission compound were torched. Numerous churches have been destroyed and several pastors killed. In Kaduna state, a 24-hour curfew has been imposed on the city following the destruction of property in the villages. In Kano state, many churches have been pulled down. There have been reports of security agents exchanging fire with Muslim protesters, causing the deaths of many protesters. Similarly, in Yobe state, churches were pulled down and Christian offices and homes destroyed.

In the city of Jos, chaos ensued when security



agents overpowered and killed Muslim protesters, but according to an Open Doors co-worker, the city is now calm.

General Buhari, leader of the opposing Congress for Progressive Change party and runner up in the election, claimed that there had been widespread irregularities in the election and he would mount a legal challenge. However, International observers said polling was generally free and fair. The African Union observer team said it was Nigeria's best poll for decades but this did not stop riots breaking out in many northern cities, where Buhari is popular.

Latest reports from the Red Cross say that 48,000 people have now been displaced after fleeing the violence. Open Doors is monitoring the situation closely.

Source: Open Doors, BBC

Essex Children Memorising AV



On Saturday 16th April 2011 the annual Memory Verse rally organised by the Essex Protestant Council was held at "Rehoboth" Strict Baptist Chapel, Sible Hedingham, Essex. A good number of friends, both young and not-so-young, gathered to hear 19 children aged 2 years to 16 years of age recite a portion from the Authorised Version of Holy Scripture. The children came from Sunday Schools at Barrow, Chelmsford, Wattisham, and Walsham-le-Willows.

The passage selected for this year was Psalm 46:1-11, a portion that in these current times is very applicable and one that has been a source of comfort for God's people all down the years, but a Psalm that has promises yet to be fulfilled for God's ancient people, the Children of Jacob.

The nineteen children recited the whole passage of scripture and a number of these were word perfect in their recital, others did know the verses by heart but their nerves got the better of them and small mistakes crept in, and younger ones said a couple of verses.

Mr Michael Harley, the pastor of Friston Strict Baptist Church, then spoke to the children of the miracle of Christ that is given to us in Matthew 8:28-34. He spoke of the power of Christ that stilled the waves and storms on the Sea of Galilee, and then rebuked the demons, named Legion, and cast them out of the men into the swine that ran headlong over the cliff. Mr Harley emphasised that that same Jesus is the same today and still has the power to rebuke the devil and stop him in his tracks. He then went through the Psalm 46 and pointed out how poignant it was for this day when there are earthquakes and tumults around the world, but amidst all this "The Lord of Hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge."

So often the attack of the evil one puts pressure on churches to conform to modern methods and use modern versions of Scripture, under the pretext that it appeals to the young. Therefore it was precious to hear children of all ages, and from varying backgrounds, learning the fundamental truth as found in the Authorised Version of the Bible.

Cohabitation Trend Threatens Big Society Success

Provisional figures published on 30th March by the Office for National Statistics show the number of people who got married in England and Wales in 2009 was just 231,490, the lowest since 1895. (1)

This trend confirms research by the Jubilee Centre, a leading social reform charity, showing that other broader measures of marriage (such as the proportion of adults married and the proportion of children born to married parents) have dropped by more than 40 percent over the last 40 years. (2)

"Marriage is as important as the economy to the nation's overall health and the government's Big Society initiative," says Jubilee Centre Director Dr John Hayward, "because families lie at the heart of every local community."

Even more worryingly, the ONS figures show that, taking account of changes in the size of the unmarried adult population and the existing number of marriages, the general marriage rate has plummeted to its lowest since it was first calculated in 1862.

Just 21.3 men per 1,000 unmarried men aged 16 and over took the step of lifelong commitment in 2009, and 19.2 women per 1,000 unmarried women. This represents a significant deterioration in social cohesion of 25-30 percent over the ten years since 1999, when the rates stood at 30.1 for men and 25.8 for women.

"The government has stated that so-called 'bridging social capital' is crucial to the success of its Big Society ambitions," observes Dr Hayward. "However, such bridges can only be built on the strong foundations of the 'bonding social capital' that is best found in families headed by a married couple." (3)

The most comprehensive review of the impact of marriage to date, a study looking at 67,000 people over eight years, found that "the death rate for people who were unmarried was significantly higher than it was for those who were married and living with their spouses," and "Among the not married categories, having never been married was the strongest predictor of premature mortality." (4)

The latest studies, looking at the impact of nearly four decades of social change, also confirm that "married adults have made greater economic gains over the past four decades than unmarried adults." (5)

"Compared with marriage, other forms of relationships such as cohabitation are both unstable and short-term," (6) concludes Dr Hayward. "So, if the government's plans are to have any chance of success, they will need to recognise that married people earn more, have greater wealth, and enjoy better health and well-being – and they will need to deliver on their promises to make Britain 'the most family-friendly country in Europe.'"

1. *Marriages in England and Wales, 2009 (ONS, 30 March 2011) is available at*

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/mar0311.pdf>

2. *The UK Marriage Index for 2009 and 2010 can be downloaded from the Jubilee Centre website, <http://www.jubilee-centre.org>*

3. *See The Big Society in Context: A means to what end?, G Brandon (2011) Jubilee Centre, available at <http://www.jubilee-centre.org/resources/>*

4. *Marital status and longevity in the United States population, R M Kaplan and R G Kronick (2006) J Epidemiol Community Health 60(9): 760-765.*

5. *Women, Men and the New Economics of Marriage, R Fry and D Cohn (2010) Pew Research Center*

6. *Fewer than half of all cohabiting couples last two years together. Less than a quarter of first cohabitations last five years and just one in nineteen of all cohabiting couples (5.3 per cent) has been together for ten years or more. Just 7 per cent of cohabiting couples who have children stay together until the eldest child reaches 16, compared with 75 per cent of married couples who have children. See Cohabitation in the 21st Century (J Hayward & G Brandon, 2010) Jubilee Centre, available at http://www.jubilee-centre.org/resources/cohabitation_in_the_21st_century*

IRAQ

Open Doors launches new advocacy campaign as thousands of Christians flee Iraq

Tens of thousands of Christians are reported to have fled the country since last October's devastating bomb attack on a church in Baghdad, which left at least 58 people dead and over 60 injured.



"Many Iraqi Christians feel they have no future left in the country," says Bari, an Iraqi Christian in Baghdad. "Churches in Baghdad are reported to be almost empty, with senior Christian clergymen fearing that Iraq is on its way to losing its Christian minority. Baghdad was the last remaining city with a sizeable Christian community, but thousands are said to have fled the latest upsurge in anti-Christian violence."

"Mosul, the other city with a large Christian minority, is so violent that one of the city's

archbishops declared that it had become dangerous for Christians to stay," Bari continued. "Mosul was the city of churches, but many have been abandoned, turned into police stations or inhabited by squatters."

Many Christians have fled to Kurdistan, a semi-autonomous region in northern Iraq. But their meagre resources mean that it is not easy for them to make ends meet. "Rents are extremely high and commodity prices more expensive than in other parts of Iraq," explains Bari.

Open Doors is helping these displaced Christians to start a new life through income-generating loans to start small businesses or agricultural enterprises. Health clinics, medical

aid and housing projects are providing help to those most in need, while orphans are being looked after in children's homes, where they receive trauma counselling and discipleship training.

Some families are also fleeing to Syria, Jordan or Turkey. Open Doors worker Steve warned, "We have to stop this exodus, otherwise there will be no church or Christian activity in a few years time in Iraq, and that will be a disaster. Let us pray for the Christians in Iraq."

TAKE ACTION

Christians feel that the current Iraqi government has failed to ensure their security, and they need you to speak up on their behalf. Send an email to the Iraqi Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr Nouri al-Maliki, asking that he prioritises the immediate protection of Christians and helps guarantee their safety.

Source: Open Doors

Recreated 'Medieval' Organ to complement Medieval Church

A unique musical instrument is being unveiled at St Fagans National History Museum on 8-9 April. The highly decorated organ, which has quite a different sound to the modern church organ, recreates the now lost medieval organ. It will recreate the authentic sound medieval church music and complete the interior of the medieval St Teilo's Church at St Fagans.

The organ is based on a few surviving medieval organs parts and has been built using traditional materials and manufacturing techniques and using cutting edge research and 'creative archaeology' to recreate the lost sound of the medieval organ.

The organ was launched publicly with a workshop and presentations on 8-9 April at the reconstructed medieval church of St Teilo at St Fagans National History Museum, Cardiff.

This is one of the first major results of a research project: The Experience of Worship, funded by the Arts & Humanities and Economic & Social Research Councils, which operates in close collaboration with St Fagans Museum and Salisbury Cathedral.

Professor John Harper, who is leading the research at Bangor University's School of Music explains: "The aim is to explore what the experience of late medieval worship was like for those who participated in it, and how we can connect our present experience of surviving medieval cathedrals and churches with the texts, artefacts and music that were once used in them. That includes the late medieval organ, of which almost all trace has disappeared in Britain – even though documents and music testify to its wide use in church at that time."

Prof Harper explains further: "The organ is attempting to recreate the type of instrument known to have been used around 1520, the period that St Teilo's itself has been decorated and furnished to represent."

The organ has been designed and

constructed by the Worksop firm of Goetze and Gwynn, who have much experience of historic organs. Traditional materials and manufacturing techniques are used throughout. The oak case is a simplified form of the only surviving pre-Reformation organ case in the British Isles which still stands in the parish church of Old Radnor (Powys). The pipes are based in part on early West Country examples – chosen because of the medieval trade links with Wales across the Bristol Channel. The hand-operated bellows, which provide wind for the organ, are based on medieval illustrations.

The doors of the organ are magnificently decorated – painted with scenes from the Annunciation and Nativity, again using



St Teilo's Church

materials authentic to the early sixteenth century. The work has been undertaken by Fleur Kelly, an Italian-trained specialist in medieval and Renaissance painting techniques, whose work on the rood screen and panels will already be familiar to visitors to St Teilo's.

The organ will enable new research into the late medieval and early modern British repertoire for organ, and organ with voices. It has two chromatic keyboards with different ranges, the second designed to demonstrate changes in late Tudor performance practice. Though it is intended that St Teilo's will provide a permanent base for the organ, it has been designed to be moved so that it can be available elsewhere for specialist use, educational outreach, advanced teaching, and research. A residency is planned in Bangor Cathedral in early 2012.

Letters for Living

by Peter Murcott

R-Repentance

*'Repentance is to leave
The sins we loved before,
And show that we in earnest grieve
By doing so no more.'*

So wrote Ann and Jane Taylor in an old hymn. Repentance requires sorrow. Some say 'sorry' without meaning it. Some are sorry simply because they have been found out. Others find it expedient to apologise, so as to avoid some form of punishment. Such sorrow has as much value as counterfeit currency.

Thomas Watson, a seventeenth-century Puritan writer, said that, to be effective, repentance involves six elements: the

sight of sin, sorrow for sin, confession of sin, shame for sin, hatred for sin and, most significantly, a turning from sin.

Sin is like falling into a horrible pit. 1 You might repent of being there, but how do you escape? The tale is told of two men, floating helplessly towards the edge of the Niagara Falls. One saw a log, seized it, and was carried over the edge. The other spotted a rope, thrown by an onlooker on the bank. He grabbed hold of it, and was pulled to safety. So it is that only by turning to Christ in faith can we be saved. 2 And it starts with repentance.

Cause for thought



1: Psalm 40:1
2: Psalm 40:2 & 3

Canterbury Tales

Highlights and Lowlights from the Anglican Communion

Church Website Welcomes More Than Two Million Visitors Seeking Direction

More than two million people have turned to the web to find their local parish church in the last 12 months, according to figures released on 13th April.

The Church of England's www.achurchnearyou.com website welcomed 2,084,444 visitors in the 12 months up to April 2011, an increase of more than 28 per cent on the previous 12 months.

In January, the Church's location database was integrated within the new CoFE website at www.churchofengland.org leading to a steady increase in visitors. A link to the Crockford's clergy database ensures contact information for the vast majority of parishes.

Peter Crumpler, Director of Communications for the Archbishops' Council, said: "The increasing popularity of the site is one further indication of the trend for people to use the web when looking for a place for worship, to attend a wedding, funeral or baptism, or to seek a quiet place for prayer or reflection."

The www.achurchnearyou.com website is one example of the Church's engagement with web-based media. The Church of England's Twitter account (@c_of_e) currently has 8,200 followers; the YouTube channel boasts almost 60,000 views and 1,500 people viewed the latest video promoting church weddings in its first week.

More than 550 prayers have been posted on the Church's interactive prayer website for Lent, www.sayoneforme.org, which is also linked to Facebook (www.facebook.com/prayoneforme) where people are sharing their responses to prayer and encouraging each other.

The Church's podcasts are being recorded on a weekly basis with new and interesting people. The wedding website (www.yourchurchwedding.org), created to help people find out about getting married in church, is also proving popular. So far this year the site has had a monthly unique visitor average of around 50,000, compared to 33,000 visitors per month in 2010 - a 52 per cent year to year increase. New visitors have trebled since 2008.

Ed: To find strictly evangelical churches readers will find over 400,000 audio sermons at www.sermonaudio.com which includes much excellent preaching. Anglicans who reject the ecumenical liberal feminist approach of the Church of England can find the Church of England (Continuing) at www.cofec.org. To give a fuller list of biblical web sites would be exhaustive but if you know of good churches it does not take much effort to find their web sites and their links to other biblical ministries. Of course, except for the extremely isolated and housebound, this cyber-church life must never be used to replace public worship and the fellowship and discipline of church membership.

Church Commissioners' Results Confirm Long-term Growth

On 14th April the Church Commissioners announced a 15.2 per cent return on their investments during 2010. Their fund has now outperformed its comparator group over the past 10 and 15 years.

Despite challenging economic times for both the Church and wider society, the

Commissioners - who contributed more than £200 million in 2010 towards the cost of maintaining the mission of the Church of England - grew their fund to £5.3 billion (from £4.8 billion at December 31, 2009).

Although most of the costs of the Church's mission are met by the generous giving of today's parishioners, the Commissioners contribute around 17p in the pound towards the total. The Commissioners' contribution is biased towards supporting poorer dioceses. Today's results show that the Commissioners are able to distribute £26 million more each year to the Church than if their investments had performed only at the industry average over the last ten years, while pursuing their policy of maintaining the real value of the fund.

Andreas Whittam Smith, First Church Estates Commissioner, said: "These results are good news for the Church and its vital role in the life of the nation. Our mission is to support the Church's ministry, particularly in areas of need and opportunity - we meet that by ensuring our investments achieve sustainable long-term growth."

Returns from the fund, held in a broad range of assets, pay for: clergy pensions for service up to the end of 1997; supporting poorer dioceses with the costs of ministry; funding some mission activities; paying for bishops' ministries and some cathedral costs; and funding the legal framework for parish reorganisation. The Commissioners manage their investments within ethical guidelines, with advice from the Church of England's Ethical Investment Advisory Group. Andrew Brown, Secretary to the Church Commissioners, said: "Investment performance was strong across the board in 2010 underlying the importance of our diversified portfolio. We plan to continue to diversify the fund into other attractive and appropriate asset classes to reduce further the fund's overall volatility."

"In addition, our Assets Committee has adopted a deliberate policy of being more active in terms of the fund's overall asset allocation, adjusting the level of risk depending on the market opportunity."

The main factors behind the fund's strong performance in 2010 were:

- The Commissioners' higher weighting in shares, particularly those held in companies with overseas interests.
- The bias to higher performing smaller companies within UK shareholdings.
- The low weighting in UK government bonds, index-linked bonds and UK investment grade bonds and higher investment in property compared with the average pension fund.
- The Commissioners' property portfolio achieved a 15.4 per cent return, exceeding its comparator group, the Investment Property Databank.
- The contribution from the Commissioners' multi-asset fund managers.

The Commissioners' overall 15.2 per cent return was achieved against a comparator performance of 12.7 per cent for 2010. Over the past 10 years, total returns averaged 6.3 per cent per year, against the comparator group's 4.5 per cent. Over the past 15 years, the Commissioners outperformed the comparator group with an average annual return of 9.3 per cent against 7.0 per cent.

Investments

The key elements of the Church Commissioners' investment portfolio, as at December 31, 2010, are set out below. The levels at the end of December 2009 are in brackets.

Investments, including fixed interest, UK and overseas equities - £3,485.8 million (£3,167.4 million); Investment properties, including commercial, residential, rural, strategic land and global indirect property holdings - £1,492.9 million (£1,308.2 million); Other net assets and liabilities, including loans, short term deposits and cash - £340.8 million (£339.6 million).

Serving the Church

The Commissioners contribute to the ministry of each of the Church's 44 dioceses, in addition to their major role of funding all clergy pensions earned up to the end of 1997. This contribution includes supporting the ministry of bishops and cathedrals, as well as parish ministry particularly in poorer dioceses.

In 2010, the Church Commissioners continued to provide significant support to encourage the growth of the Church's existing ministries and new opportunities. Since it began in 2002, the mission development fund has given dioceses extra resources for parish ministry totalling £39.2 million, including £5.2 million in 2010. A further £5.4 million is to be distributed for this purpose in 2011. A fund of £7.25 million, earmarked for investment in areas of new housing and other developments in 2008-2010, has been allocated between 15 dioceses facing significant challenges and opportunities. Distribution of the grants began in 2009.

The Commissioners' total charitable expenditure in 2010 was £200.5 million (£190.8 million in 2009). Total non-pensions expenditure, including support for ministry

within dioceses and for the ministry of bishops and cathedrals, totalled £88.5 million in 2010, compared with £81.6 million in 2009. Included within this total, governance and other costs were £2.0 million in 2010 (2009: £1.8 million).

The main items of expenditure were (with 2009 figures in brackets):

- £114.0 million (£111.0 million) for clergy pensions based on service before 1998.
- £46.8 million (£42.0 million) for parish mission and ministry, primarily to less-resourced dioceses.
- £27.5 million (£26.6 million) for supporting bishops, including Archbishops, in their diocesan and national ministries, mainly for staff costs.
- £7.7 million (£7.4 million) for stipends of cathedral clergy and grants to cathedrals, mainly for staff salaries.
- £4.5 million (£3.8 million) for other charitable expenditure including support for other Church bodies, church buildings and support

To Quote

Christian wisdom and comment

Only those who have learned well to be earnestly dissatisfied with themselves, and to be confounded with shame at their wretchedness truly understand the Christian gospel.

John Calvin 1509-1564



Authorised Version

1611-2011 COMMEMORATIVE MEETINGS

The TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY will be holding the following meetings, God willing:

SATURDAY 21ST MAY AT 3.00 P.M.

Magdalen College, Oxford, OX1 4AU

THE AUTHORISED VERSION:
THE IMPACT OF TYNDALE'S TRANSLATION

Speaker: Dr. Jonathan Moore

SATURDAY 4TH JUNE AT 3.00 P.M.

New Life Bible Presbyterian Church,
West Kilburn, London, NW6 6NN

THE AUTHORISED VERSION: THE TREASURE
OF THE CHURCH & THE NATION

Speaker: Mr. Roland Burrows
(Member of the Society's
General Committee)

SATURDAY 18TH JUNE AT 3.00 P.M.

Emmanuel Church, Salisbury, SP2 7EE

THE AUTHORISED VERSION: THE PIETY
AND LEARNING OF THE TRANSLATORS

Speaker: Mr. Duncan Boyd

SATURDAY 2ND JULY AT 3.00 P.M.

Melbourne Hall, Leicester, LE2 1DB

THE AUTHORISED VERSION: ITS RELEVANCE
IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Speaker: Pastor Pooyan Mehrshahi

SATURDAY 30TH JULY AT 3.00 P.M.

St. Jude's Free Presbyterian Church
of Scotland, Glasgow, G3 6LE

THE AUTHORISED VERSION:
THE ENDURING LEGACY

Speaker: The Rev. Hugh Cartwright

FRIDAY 19TH AUGUST AT 7.30 P.M.

Stornoway, Isle of Lewis
(venue to be confirmed)

THE AUTHORISED VERSION:
THE CLIMAX OF
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

Speaker: The Rev. Malcolm Watts
(Chairman of the Society's
General Committee)

SATURDAY 20TH AUGUST AT 3.00 P.M.

The Thistle Hotel, Inverness, IV2 3TR

THE AUTHORISED VERSION:
THE CLIMAX OF
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

Speaker: The Rev. Malcolm Watts
(Chairman of the Society's
General Committee)

Other meetings will be held, God willing, throughout 2011 at Stornoway, Cradley Heath, Exeter, Cambridge, Walsham-le-Willows, and Cardiff. Details are available on the TBS website www.tbsbibles.org or by contacting the Society. Trinitarian Bible Society, Tyndale House, Dorset Road, London, SW19 3NN. Telephone: (020) 8543 7857. Registered Charity Number: 233082 (England) SC038379 (Scotland).

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"A grubby little law"!

"The price of liberty is vigilance." That is very true, especially where our spiritual liberties are concerned. Our enemy is always watching for weaknesses to exploit, and opportunities to promote his ends. We have, since the Protestant Reformation, enjoyed great liberty both spiritual and political in this country, but we can take nothing for granted, however secure it has been, and may still appear to be.

We were dismayed and horrified to hear a reporter on a BBC news programme recently describe the Act of Settlement, which secures the Protestant succession to the throne, as a "grubby little law". The offensive remark was uttered in the context of a discussion about the Royal Wedding, and the suggestion that the right of primogeniture should be waived, so as to admit a woman to succeed to the throne, if she is older than the male heir. The reporter clearly saw this as an opening to attack the Protestant Succession to the throne, which excludes forever a Roman Catholic. This law has given stability and peace to our nation for a very considerable time. It has set the tone and ethos of the country and informed our culture. It would be an unwise and precipitate step to take to alter this law, since it could lead to strife and conflict, and change the character of our country.

The Church of Rome and its adherents are ever vigilant and always seeking opportunities to advance its cause. It sees the occasion of a royal wedding as an opening to press for change – constitutional change – which would give it greater influence. It is not interested in the question of primogeniture, as such: it is merely a 'stalking horse' for promoting its own cause; for changing the law so that at some point in the future it will be possible for a Roman Catholic to succeed to the throne. If that ever came about it would change fundamentally and for ever the nature of the monarchy, and the moral and spiritual character of our country.

Some people might think that that would not matter. We are living, they would say, in a secular age anyway, in which religion has been driven to the margins of society. The question of faith is a personal matter for the individual, and one's personal predilection in this matter should not carry with it exclusion from public office. But such people have a rather innocent and simple view of the matter. They do not understand the nature of the Roman Catholic Church. They do not see that it exercises an extraordinary power over the individual conscience, which can be controlled and manipulated by the practice of auricular confession. It is through the confessional that the Church of Rome is able to control the lives of its people, and bind the conscience. A Roman Catholic monarch, like any other Roman Catholic, is not free. He must submit to the authority of the Pope and the Church. Such a situation is unthinkable and intolerable in a country such as ours, which has been the champion of freedom ever since the Protestant Reformation changed and fashioned the laws of this land.

We take strong exception to the description of this noble institution of the Protestant Succession to the throne as a "grubby little law". It is a good and honourable law which has protected the freedom and character of our nation. If there is anything that can be described as 'grubby' we must look elsewhere, indeed, to the Church of Rome itself. The term 'grubby' fittingly describes the succession of scandals which has swamped the Church of Rome in recent years, as the practice of paedophilia by its clergy has been exposed in many countries in the world. They have revealed the dark secrets and dreadful wickedness of a system that harbours such depravity, and sought to hide it from the world, until secrecy and dissembling were no longer possible. Is that the kind of institution that we want interfering in the affairs of this country? For we can be sure that if a future heir to the throne were a Roman Catholic he would be bound by the practice of the secrecy of the confessional.

We would do well to keep our distance from the Church of Rome in this and in every other respect. Let us be thankful we have the constitution we have, and the safeguards of the Act of Settlement and the Protestant Succession to the throne. Far from being a 'grubby little law', it stands for the liberty of the monarchy and the nation from the outside interference of the papacy and the Church of Rome, and is a fitting symbol of our freedom as a people; a freedom we have enjoyed ever since the Protestant Reformation.

NOTES

COMMENT

Thanks

The Editor and his wife would like to take the liberty to use some small part of this newspaper to give hearty thanks to Almighty God that it has pleased him to bestow upon us so many kindnesses in this last month.

Since the death of our beloved 3 year old daughter Hannah on 2nd April we have received untold kind help, letters, cards and other tokens of love from so many people. Above all we have been prayed for by so many people far above what we could have imagined.

There have been so many wonderful texts of Scripture brought to our attention that we have marvelled that there is so much help in the Bible.

May we offer some profitable thoughts as a fruit of all this? Firstly we must commend to you that you read the Bible. All that we need to know is found in Christ and all that we need to know of Christ is found in the Bible, so please read it diligently and prayerfully. Read it even when you are empty and don't think you can read.

Likewise be diligent in public worship. No church is perfect but it is more perfect if you are there. Pray for the ministry.

We pray that we may be more humbled like we should by such a severe providence so that we may glorify God far more fully. Bereavement can make the world seem cold and empty, it reminds us of our heavenly calling where all our spiritual blessings are to be found. Yet our land is even more desolate than our bereaved hearts. How much our neighbours, friends and some members of our family need to know the Saviour.

Your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:58

"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:56-58

The fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians concludes with a glorious hope based on a sure promise. This pointing to the future as a means of encouraging goodness in the present is common to the whole Bible.

Similarly the 5th commandment to honour our parents is pressed upon us by the incentive that we may live long. Writing to the Thessalonians, Paul explains details regarding the return of Christ so that they might no longer worry about those who have died.

So to the somewhat wayward church at Corinth, Paul urges them that, while they might suffer much as Christians, because of the promises of a coming general resurrection, they should not feel that all is chaos.

In brief we are not to be shaken but rather to keep on doing our best, and to this is added our concluding phrase of encouragement that our labour, provided it is in the Lord, is not in vain. While we have been heavily pruned by God's severe providence, we are assured that we will bring forth fruit in due course.

The word 'labour' in the Greek comes from 'cut' as reducing strength, ie toil. It is labour of a kind involving pains, trouble and weariness.

This is what the 'work of the Lord' is like. But it is 'of the Lord' and 'in the Lord'. Therefore it is not and cannot ever be in vain.

Such feelings are familiar to the preacher who reassures himself with the verse, 'my word shall not return unto me void'. We think our preaching falls on so many deaf ears as we cry out, 'he that hath ears to hear let him hear'. So we have 1. A sense of toil being hard, 2. A temptation to feel that this toil is not only wearying, but worse of all, in vain, yet we also have, 3. An assurance that our labour in the Lord is not in vain so therefore we should keep going.

'And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'

Galatians 6:9

The World, the Church and Older People

The World, the Church and Older People was a half day conference held at Heath Evangelical Church in February with just under 200 delegates. Organised jointly by the Pilgrims' Friend Society and the Evangelical Movement of Wales, it was the first of these conferences to be held in Wales. Geoff Thomas (Aberystwyth) spoke on the subject of spiritual issues for older people and their carers. He spoke movingly from his own experience; of the debt he owed to his parents for his upbringing, and as his mother grew older, of his ever increasing role

of caring for her needs. A choice of three seminars followed: Spiritual Support of Older People (Roger Hitchins, former Director of Age Concern); Insights into Dementia (Louise Morse and Janet Jacob from PFS); and Caring for Carers (Sheila Stephen). The whole event was very well received, and addressed an issue which is increasingly perceived as a need amongst churches. Some recordings from the day can be found on the PFS website. www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk



DON'T FAIL THE TEST!

"Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."

Mark 10:18

I wish it was Hannah speaking to you today. It can't be.

Jesus said unto him, why call thou me good? There is none good but God.

Now Hannah is the first 'good' I want to speak about. She isn't here. If she was here she would have treated everyone as equally important, she would have lit up the place, she would have gone to anybody who was sad and loved them. She hated seeing other people who are in difficulties. She would have recognised and trotted up to some people. She was a dear little girl and she was lovely and all of us think that together.

It therefore leaves us a problem. Why is it that each of you is without Hannah now? If God is good and Jesus is good and Hannah is good, what has happened that she is no longer here?

I just want to take you, for one moment, back to the scripture. There is a rich young ruler, well clad, vastly rich, he's a Jew, and running very very quickly. He came and kneeled down in front of Jesus and he said, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Now Jesus said, because he had called him 'good master,' why do you call me good? There is none good but God!

I want you to think what Jesus was saying to you as well as to him. He said to that young man, "Really, I'm going to test these tears and confessions and kneelings down and all the rest, I'm going to test you now", and he tested that young man. The young man said, "I have kept all the commandments." Jesus looking at him loved him. He said, "Yet one thing you lack, go, sell everything you have and come and follow me". The young man went away grieved because he had great possessions. That's written across England today, that very word. They left him because they had great possessions.

What does this say about that young man? He failed the test. What I am most anxious about is that neither Peter nor Sandra nor any of you fail the test today. Jesus is testing us and that test is worth more than all the exams this world ever had, all the interviews and all the job prospects. That test is the final test.

Now he's testing you through the dearest and sweetest little girl that has ever crossed your path. And she's here, she's not dead, she's alive but she's departed from you.

Now what I want to ask you first of all is this, can you genuinely say God has been good? Look, think, has God been good or are you bitter against Him?

Do you feel that he has done you wrong? Do you feel that he has hurt you in any way? He's done nothing of the sort. I'll tell you this, the Bible says no man layeth it to heart nor considereth that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. (Isaiah 57:1)

I once read something a certain Frenchman had written. He wrote a very pretty little piece and in it he said that no life has ever been less than perfect.

This little life has been perfect, perfect length, perfect throughout. When she saw a big house she'd say 'Grandad' and when she saw a certain make of car she'd say 'Grandma'.

And when she didn't have prayers taken at

breakfast, if ever it happened, she'd say, 'Pray, pray, Bible'. And at night she'd put her hands together and open her eyes and pray.

This little one, as far as she is able, as is written on the sheet, is "a burning and a shining light" (John 5:35), and you're going to miss her. You're going back, many of you, to an emptiness in your heart and an empty home but what I want to plead with you is this, don't fail the test.

Jesus said to that young man, it's alright to keep the commandments and all that but what I want from you is love. I want you to love me, to give up the things you've got, and follow me. Can you do that?

That's only the first thing. The next thing I want to just touch with you is this:

God is good. He is the only good in the universe. Our (human) race is in such a mess because they disbelieved that God was good just once and the devil got in and threw us down.

If you ever lose from your heart that God is utterly good you will fall. You will end up utterly lost.

How do we know that God is good? Just before the passage of Scripture we read just now Jesus was approached by a group of women with their little babies. I don't know if you've ever been to the Middle East, I have. They cut off a child's garments at buttock level because that avoids nappies and things. They are smelly and dirty and not very well washed. The whole thing is revolting. Then the disciples started chasing

them out, and Jesus was much displeased and he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven". Then he turned to his proud disciples and he said, "Except ye be converted and become like little children, not one of you will see the kingdom of God."

Change friends, change your thoughts about God. I could write your future if I knew what you were thinking about God at this moment. What you think about him is going to rule your life from now until eternity. That's the thing to think about. Is God good? There is none good but God.

What Jesus was saying was one more thing. He was saying to the rich young ruler, friend, do you recognise that what I am doing is because I have God's authority, because I am God? Now Jesus has the authority to raise the dead.

D.L. Moody was a remarkable man who used to speak to thousands. He said at a huge gathering just before he died, "very soon you will read in the newspaper that old Moody is dead. Don't believe a word of it." He said, "he's very much alive, more alive than he is this day."

Now God has prepared for little Hannah a place. Little children who love their redeemer are His jewels, precious jewels, his loved and his own, like the stars of the morning, his bright crown adorning. They shall shine in their beauty, bright

THE CALENDAR

May 15th to May 28th

PRAYER BOOK WORSHIP

15TH MAY

The Third Sunday after Easter

M. Numbers 22; John 4:31-54
E. Numbers 23 or Numbers 24; 1 Timothy 4

THE COLLECT

ALMIGHTY God, who shewest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness; Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's Religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Epistle. 1 St. Peter 2:11-17
The Gospel. St. John 16:16-22

22ND MAY

The Fourth Sunday after Easter

M. Deuteronomy 4:1-22; John 7:25-53
E. Deuteronomy 4:23-40 or Deuteronomy 5; Titus 1

THE COLLECT

O ALMIGHTY God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men; Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. James 1:17-21
The Gospel. John 16:5-15

gems for his crown.

This little one is in the presence of Jesus and she shines, not because she is good, there's none good but God, but because God has placed his goodness on her and lifted her up by the cross of the Lord Jesus. That is all I really want to get over to you.

Just think for a moment why it's worth leaving the things of this world. Jesus said, I go to prepare a place for you. Now that's a mansion.

You haven't got a mansion, well Jesus has said he will prepare one for you. You haven't got a house, well Jesus said he'll prepare one for you. He never lied yet, he was never wrong yet. Jesus never failed in anything he said about the future, about the past, about the present. He promised that he'd prepared a place.

And what sort of a place? Well, it's a place of eternal happiness, where God wipes away tears, where there's no more sorrow nor pain nor crying nor anything else that's of this world.

It's a place of perfect peace where God is the Sun and the Lord Jesus is the Light thereof, where they have no need of a place like this to worship God because the Lamb is in the midst of the throne. And if you walk with him, he has promised that everything you give up here he will give back one hundredfold above. Not only will he do that but he will give you himself as well, so you will share his throne. You will share his glory. You will share all that he has. He said he'll come and wait on you with his own hands, and he said he will join you in a feast above and there will be new wine and there will be rejoicing, unlimited rejoicing and I want everyone here to join Hannah.

Hannah is a lesson. Her little life isn't over now. She lives in your memories and in your hearts, and she lived in all our hearts too. But this I know, her greatest lesson to all our hearts today is that though she's dead yet she speaks. She speaks with great power. God help you and grant you to understand those words, and to turn from your ways and follow him.

God bless you.

Amen.

Sermon preached by Rt Rev Edward Malcolm on 14th April 2011 at the burial service of Hannah Joy Ratcliff, aged 3.

Viral Bible begins epic journey from Spring Harvest Festival in Skegness

Picture the scene: a group of 10 bikers seated on their saddles, holding up copies of the Viral Bible like an Olympic torch. At 9.30am on Thursday, 14 April, these men – members of the Christian Motorcycle Association – will start the epic journey of the first set of Viral Bibles, beginning at Spring Harvest Festival in Butlins, Skegness.

Over the next 12 months more than 200 Viral Bibles, published by Hodder, will be given away to random people at major Christian festivals and events. Each person receiving a Viral Bible will be asked to underline the verses that are most meaningful to them before passing the same copy on to another person who will then continue the process.

Each Viral Bible has a unique code printed on the cover, so that you can log onto www.viralbibleproject.com key in the number sequence and track its journey, as well as draw inspiration from other people's chosen verses. It is hoped that each copy of the Viral Bible will travel the length and breadth of Britain and beyond before returning to the London head office of the Evangelical Alliance in Easter 2012.

The Viral Bible Project is a year-long campaign aimed at illustrating how the Bible continues to influence, inspire and direct people's lives 400 years after King James published the authorised version. The Viral Bible Project is just one among scores of projects organised by Biblefresh.

Biblefresh was set up to encourage people to rediscover scripture in new and creative ways and is co-ordinated by the Alliance, with the involvement of more than 100 other agencies.

Dr Krish Kandiah, of Biblefresh, says: "Although I grew up in a Hindu family, I felt compelled to read the Bible for myself and when I did so, I was amazed to discover how scripture is able to inspire hope, promote justice and change lives. It is our prayer that as people up and down the country and abroad will read these Viral Bibles, they will share their experiences as well as inspire and encourage one another."

Ed: For many reasons we recommend the Trinitarian Bible Society. www.tbsbibles.org

English Churchman Book Review

Micah: an EP Study Commentary

Dale Ralph Davis

EP Books, Darlington, 2010, ISBN 0-85234-7170, Hardback, 191 pages, £12.99

This book is called a 'study-commentary', its name implying that it is meant to have special theological weight. It is not a densely-written or lengthy book, but has frequent references to the Hebrew of the text. It has a serious intention of dealing with the prophecy, of informing intelligent readers and preachers, of giving relevant topical applications, and adding illustrative anecdotes. The intention is good; and the book is not without usefulness.

The book reads like the product of the studies of a man who has preached through the book. Many good commentaries have been the fruit of ordinary pastoral preparation. The preacher's wish to impress the book's teaching on his hearers produces some helpful references to topical events and historical precedents. Mr Davis's explaining parts by homely analogies is simple and impressive at times.

There are, however, several defects which make it less worthy of recommendation. To hold his readers' (American) attention, the author uses grating vulgarisms: e.g. "these fellows knew how to play it rough". Journalistic quips are not necessary even to a popular book, and are not part of serious exposition: e.g. "Will the Church go belly up?". Furthermore, though well-meant, many of the illustrations have little relevance, and add nothing to the exposition in hand, but rather, distract from the point. There is much allusion to the original Hebrew: presumably an attempt to be scholarly, but without adding much of any depth. To substitute Yahweh always for the established idiomatic Lord only gives the impression of a superficial attempt at biblical accuracy. The book seems to fall between a proper full linguistic analysis and something for popular reading.

Rev John Harding

The Dairyman's Daughter and Other Annals of the Poor

Legh Richmond

Gospel Standard; ISBN: 978 1 897837 99 3; pbk; 164pp

Price: £6.50 Postage: £2.16 from www.gospelstandard.org.uk/

Accounts of some of the 'poor in this world, but rich in faith', first published over 200 years ago, whilst the author was a curate at Brading in the Isle of Wight.

A lecture by JE North on the book:

LEGH RICHMOND AND THE ANNALS OF THE POOR

Brading is a village in the Southeastern corner

of the Isle of Wight a little below Brading Down. Just past the Bull Ring, up the hill and to the right, stands the parish church. Attached to the right-hand wall of the chancel (the south wall) is a brass plaque, which reads:

In memory of The Rev Legh Richmond MA of Trinity College, Cambridge, Rector of Turvey, Beds and chaplain to H R H the Duke of Kent. He began his ministry as curate in charge of Brading and Yaverland from 1797 to 1805. He has left the record of his faithful and loving care

for the people of Brading in the history of Jane, the Young Cottager. This story is one of a volume entitled *The Annals of the Poor* including *The Dairyman's Daughter* which was translated into many foreign languages besides having a wide circulation in England, Scotland and America. These short and simple *Annals of the Poor* are remarkable for the graceful descriptions of the beautiful scenery of the Isle of Wight and the vivid reality of the characters

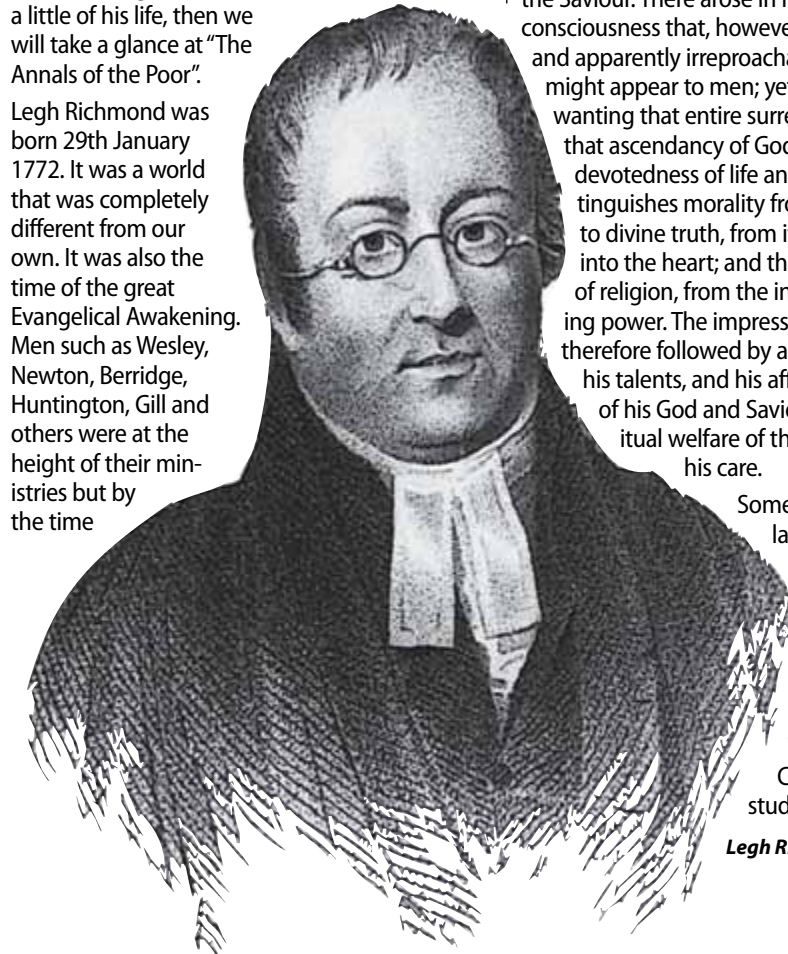
portrayed.

This monument was placed in Brading Church with the consent of the Rev'd E Summers BD Vicar & Rural Dean by Legh Richmond's descendants of the second & third generations, Easter, 1898.

It is this man, Legh Richmond and his ministry at Brading that we shall consider. The brass plaque just quoted sums up in a few words, but also in an unsatisfactory manner, his ministry on the Isle of Wight by saying that "These short and simple 'Annals of the Poor' are remarkable for the graceful descriptions of the beautiful scenery of the Isle of Wight and the vivid reality of the characters portrayed." His ministry at Brading was more than just describing the scenery and the characters. His was the work of an evangelist. The book "The Annals of the Poor" is a description of the work of God's grace in the hearts and lives of four families to whom he was an awakening ministry and to whom he was made a blessing.

However, before looking at Legh Richmond on the Isle of Wight, we must consider a little of his life, then we will take a glance at "The Annals of the Poor".

Legh Richmond was born 29th January 1772. It was a world that was completely different from our own. It was also the time of the great Evangelical Awakening. Men such as Wesley, Newton, Berridge, Huntington, Gill and others were at the height of their ministries but by the time



Legh Richmond

Richmond was to enter the ministry in 1797 most of these men had passed away.

He was born in Liverpool into a privileged family. His father was a doctor and his mother is recorded as being a pious woman. His was an ancient family from Ashton Keynes in Wiltshire who could trace their roots as far back as the Norman conquest.

He entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1789 when he was 17 years old. The intention of his father was that he should study for the Bar. His own mind, however, was drawn to the Christian ministry. His father eventually conceded in his wish and Legh was ordained deacon in June 1797, and priest in February 1798.

There is a letter extant in his biography which gives no indication of conversion, but merely a desire to be happy in his work and to be respectable. Another letter written by him in 1794 suggests there was little or no spiritual life as he began to undertake the Christian ministry.

"I have," he writes to his father, "built up a fabric of confidence in, and love for, that holy religion of which I am now a professor. To this I ultimately look as my future guide through life, and I hope it will enable me to bear with fortitude those evils which may be in store for me..." He is saying that his confidence is in what he has built up in his knowledge of Christianity. While he professes Christianity there is no profession of a personal knowledge of a Saviour.

He entered the ministry and undertook his duties at Brading and Yaverland in a conscientious manner but lacking that essential knowledge which is essential in any ministry, that of sins forgiven, of hell subdued and peace with heaven. His gospel, his ministry was deficient because he did not know the Saviour of sinners. "And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Without this knowledge there can be no Christian ministry, there can be no Christian life, there can be no Christian hope. All other religion is vain and empty.

But the ways of God are wonderful and beyond comprehension. There had been, in the same college, another young man in the same situation about to take holy orders within the Church of England who was a friend of Richmond's. Just before his being ordained a relative sent him a book, "A Practical View of Christianity" by William Wilberforce. This man appears to have been utterly careless. He sent the book to Richmond with the request that he read it, give his opinions so that he (the careless young man) could make suitable comments to the relative who had given him the book. In accordance with the request, he commenced reading it and its contents gripped him. His biographer says,

He received a powerful impulse, and was no longer able to rest under its former impressions. A change was effected in his views of divine truth, as decided as it was influential. He was no longer satisfied with the creed of the speculatist - he felt a certain conviction of his own state as a guilty and condemned sinner, and under that conviction, he sought mercy at the cross of the Saviour. There arose in his mind a solemn consciousness that, however outwardly moral and apparently irreproachable his conduct might appear to men; yet within, there was wanting that entire surrender of the heart, that ascendancy of God in the soul, and that devotedness of life and conduct, which distinguishes morality from holiness; an assent to divine truth, from its cordial reception into the heart; and the external profession of religion, from the inward and transforming power. The impressions awakened were therefore followed by a transfer of his time, his talents, and his affections, to the service of his God and Saviour, and to the spiritual welfare of the flock committed to his care.

Some twenty-five years later, in his journal on 12th September 1822, he says, "A day to be remembered. On this day twenty-five years since, I first read Mr Wilberforce's book on Christianity, in my little study in the vicarage-

house at Brading; and thence and then received my first serious, and I hope saving impressions.

"Impressions" the like of which all who would aspire to the Christian ministry and indeed all who would enter heaven must and shall receive by the effectual working of God's Holy Spirit applying the truth of the gospel to their hearts.

Legh Richmond was minister at Brading from 1797 until 1805, just eight short years, and yet it is for his ministry here on the Isle of Wight that he is chiefly remembered (if indeed he is remembered at all). For it was of the people here to whom he ministered that he wrote his articles which were first published in "The Christian Guardian" in 1809-11. The simple narratives were collected together and published anonymously in 1814 under the title "The Annals of the Poor". They have been almost continually in print since that time until early in the 20th century when they were allowed to go out of print. They were republished in 1970 and now have been reprinted in 2010.

He left Brading in 1805 spent a short time as chaplain to the Lock Hospital, London. He then moved to Turvey in Bedfordshire, also in 1805 where he spent the remainder of his ministerial career. His was an active life spent in the cause of his Master. He frequently toured the nation speaking on behalf of the British & Foreign Bible Society and other Mission boards. He died from lung disease in 1827 aged fifty-five years.

One of his sons, Henry, entered the Christian ministry. He did so with his father's "triple blessing". Legh Richmond wrote to him on 1st October 1826,

And now, take my blessing. You are three sons in one to me. Accept a triple blessing, and may the great Three in one confirm it. Your welfare lies close to my heart, - your prospects in the ministry, if your life be spared, affect me greatly. I would far sooner hear you preach a gospel sermon from your heart, and visit the bed-side of a sick parishioner, with the language of experimental consolation, than see you senior wrangler and medallist, with a cold heart and unconverted soul.

That blessing and that desire appears to have been fulfilled in Henry Richmond's life and ministry.

Legh Richmond died very quietly in the full assurance of faith. He died resting upon that covenant of God's eternal everlasting grace, resting only upon the merits of his dear Saviour.

To be continued, God willing.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE
English Churchman
IN YOUR WILL

Pray for Schools fortnight – every school a prayed for school!

There are 28,000 schools in the UK, and this May, Christians are being encouraged to make every one of them a prayed for school!

During Pray for Schools fortnight, which runs during 8-27 May 2011, there will be a host of events happening in churches, schools and homes, with focused prayer on the needs of one or more local schools.

The fortnight is the initiative of Pray for Schools, which in England, this is a partnership between CARE, YFC, SU, Association of Christian Teachers, New Generation and Churches Together England.

Celia Bowring, Prayer Coordinator for CARE is involved in the fortnight:

"Just imagine if every school in your locality was being prayed for! New prayer groups are springing up all over the UK and this is a brilliant opportunity for Christians in your area with a heart for young people to an evening to be inspired and challenged to pray for the schools in their neighbourhood. Head teachers, members of staff, youth workers, Governors, students and their parents – they can all be involved. Everything you need to organise a stimulating, fast-moving event is posted on the Pray for Schools website – so take a look yourself and maybe you will be the one who makes it happen!!"

The Pray for Schools website www.prayforschools.org has free resources and information.

Ed: Clearly both teachers and children are greatly in need of the Gospel. Our prayers are vital but we would be wary of forming prayer groups with those who might be ecumenical rather than saved.

CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

20 April 2011

NEW BISHOP OF LINCOLN

The Ven Christopher Lowson, Director, Ministry Division (Archbishops' Council); and Priest Vicar, Westminster Abbey: to be Bishop of Lincoln (Lincoln).

Revd John Aston, Priest-in-Charge, Felixstowe St Peter and St Paul (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): to be Vicar.

Revd Neil Bunker, Mental Health Liaison Priest, City of Westminster: to be also Priest-in-Charge, Crockenhill All Souls (Rochester)

Revd Michael Camp, Vicar, Bromley St Peter and St Paul; and Area Dean, Bromley Deanery (Rochester): to be also Hon Canon, Rochester Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Graham Cousins, Rector, Moreton (Chester): to be also Rural Dean, Wallasey Deanery (same diocese).

Revd Malcolm Cowan, Vicar, Witton (Chester): to be Rector, Christleton (same diocese).

Revd Nicholas Deane, Rector, Chadwell (Chelmsford): to be Assistant Curate (Associate Minister), Waverton with Aldford and Bruera (Chester).

Revd Christopher Dench, Bishop's Officer for Ministry and Training (Rochester): to be also Hon Canon, Rochester Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Simon Drew, Vicar, Marshfield with Cold Ashton and Tomarton with West Littleton (Bristol): to be Rector, Middlewich by Byley (Chester).

Revd Stephen Fielding, NSM (Assistant Curate), Welwyn (St Albans): to be Team Vicar, Albury, Braughing, Furneux Pelham, Little Hadham, Much Hadham and Stocking Pelham (same diocese).

Revd Canon Paul Francis, Vicar, Riverhead with Dunton Green; and Chaplain, Diocesan Association of Readers; and Rural Dean, Sevenoaks Deanery (Rochester): to be Rector, Beckenham St George (same diocese).

Revd Canon Michael Goater, Priest-in-Charge, Great Shelford; and Rural Dean, Granta Deanery (Ely): to be Master, St Nicholas Hospital Salisbury (Salisbury).

Revd Timothy Gomm, Assistant Curate (Associate Priest), Longfleet (Salisbury): to be Rector, Portland (same diocese).

Revd Christopher Michael Alan Hepper, Priest-in-Charge, Poitou-Charentes (France, Europe): to be Priest-in-Charge, Leyburn with Bellerby (Ripon and Leeds).

Revd Peter Hibbert, Priest-in-Charge, Micklehurst; and Priest-in-Charge, Hyde St Thomas (Chester): is now also Hon Canon, Chester Cathedral (same diocese).

The Ven George Howe, Hon Canon, Carlisle Cathedral; and Archdeacon of Westmorland and Furness; and Bishops' Adviser for Ecumenical Affairs (Carlisle): to be Bishop's Chaplain; Chief of Staff; and Diocesan Director of Ordinands (same diocese).

Revd Ian Hutchings, Vicar, Huntington; and Chaplain, Blue Coat Church of England High School Chester (Chester): to be also Programme Liaison Officer for the Committee of Ministry (same diocese).

Revd Canon Christopher Humphries, Residentiary Canon, Chester Cathedral (Chester): to be also Vice-Dean, Chester Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Joseph Kennedy, Principal, College of Resurrection Mirfield (Wakefield): is now Vicar, Oton (Chester).

Revd Paul Kerr, Vicar, Rochester St Justus; and Rural Dean, Rochester Deanery (Rochester): to be also Hon Canon, Rochester Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Michael Lee, NSM (Assistant Curate), Chickerell with Fleet (Salisbury): to be NSM (Associate Priest).

Revd Everton McLeod, Rector, Uphill (Bath and Wells): to be Vicar, Trentham; and Vicar, Hanford (Lichfield).

Revd Thomas Parker, Priest-in-Charge, Stalybridge Holy Trinity and Christ Church (Chester): to be Vicar.

Revd Edward Scrase-Field, Assistant Curate, Denton Holme (Carlisle): to be Assistant Curate

(Associate Minister), Cheadle (Chester).

Revd Canon Leslie Thomas (Retired): to be Canon Emeritus, Chester Cathedral (Chester).

Revd Canon Timothy Montgomery, Vicar, Kendal St Thomas (Carlisle): to be also Bishop's Adviser for Leadership and Strategy (same diocese).

Revd Leslie Rees, NSM (Resident Minister), Hanbury, Newborough, Rangemore and Tutbury (Lichfield): to be NSM (Associate Minister).

Revd Martin Robbins, Chaplain, Heathfield St Mary's School Ascot (Oxford): to be Assistant Chaplain, King's School Canterbury (Canterbury).

Revd Garry Thompson, Rector, Watershed (Lichfield): to be Rector, Clifton Campville with Edingale and Harlaston; and Priest-in-Charge, Elford; and Priest-in-Charge, Thorpe Constantine (same diocese).

Revd Peter Tompkins, Priest-in-Charge, The Laceby and Ravendale Group (Lincoln): to be Priest-in-Charge, Brough with Stainmore, Musgrave and Warcop; and Deanery Youth Network Church Minister, Appleby Deanery (Carlisle).

Revd Mark Turner, Retired (Lichfield): to be Secretary, Diocesan Board of Patronage (same diocese).

Revd Peter Walsh, Vicar, Chester St Oswald and St Thomas (Chester): to be Vicar, West Kirby St Andrew; and Ministerial Development Review Officer (same diocese).

Revd Andrew Wilkes, NSM (Assistant Curate, Whyke with Rumboldswyke and Portfield (Chichester): is now NSM (Assistant Curate), Chichester St Wilfred (same diocese).

Revd Canon Stephen Wilson (Retired): to be Canon Emeritus, Chester Cathedral (Chester).

Revd Andrew Wolton, Assistant Curate, Bures with Assington and Little Cornard (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): to be Rector, Saxmundham with Kelsale cum Carlton (same diocese).

RETIREMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Revd Jeremy Ames, Master, St Nicholas Hospital Salisbury (Salisbury): to retire with effect from 24 April 2011. Revd Canon Timothy Barlow, Vicar, Romiley (Chester): to resign with effect from 31 August 2011.

Revd Robert Bellamy, NSM (Associate Minister), Sharesill (Lichfield): to retire with effect with effect from 30 June 2011.

Revd Canon Howard Eales, Vicar, Cheadle Hulme All Saints (Chester): to resign with effect from 30 September 2011.

Revd John Harrington, Rector, Selsey; and Chaplain, RNLI (Chichester): to retire with effect from 30 April 2011.

Revd Malcolm Kelly, Chaplain, Bebington Hospital; and Rector, Grappenhall (Chester): to resign with effect from 31 August 2011.

Revd Ivor Morris, Vicar, Chelmsford Ascension (Chelmsford): to resign with effect from 24 April 2011.

Revd Richard Oakley, Vicar, Carlisle St Adrian and Christ Church (Carlisle): to retire with effect from 31 July 2011.

Revd Brian Perkes, Priest-in-Charge, Ashton Haye; and Priest-in-Charge, Delamere (Chester): to resign with effect from 31 August 2011.

Revd Richard Press, Rector, Chickerell with Fleet; and Priest-in-Charge, Abbotsbury, Portesham and Langton Herring (Salisbury): to retire with effect from 31 October 2011.

Revd Jonathan Ravensdale, Vocations Adviser, Richborough and Barking Areas; and Vicar, Walthamstow St Michael (Chelmsford): to resign with effect from 24 April 2011.

Revd (sic) Dr Diana Sanders, Priest-in-Charge, Farley Hill St John (St Albans): to retire with effect from 31 October 2011.

LAY AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS/ RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS

Captain Roy Hollands CA: is now Lay Worker, Whitstable (Canterbury).

Mrs Sue Jackson, PA to Director of Ordinands; and Administrative Secretary, Ministry Department (Lichfield): to retire with effect from 31 July 2011.

Elizabeth Robinson: to be Layworker, Maple;

and Leader, Bishop's Mission Order, Offerton (Chester).

Gareth Robinson: to be Layworker, Maple; and Leader, Bishop's Mission Order, Offerton (Chester).

Claire Tillotson, Music Therapist, Riverside School, St Paul, Cray, Bromley (Rochester): to be Hon Lay Canon, Rochester Cathedral (same diocese).

Miss Lucy Wilson: to be Personal Assistant to the Archdeacon of Salop (Lichfield).

Mr Peter Yates, Director of Social Responsibility (Leicester): to retire with effect from 21 April 2011.

28 April 2011

Revd Andrew Bishop, Vicar, Old Basing and Lychpit; and Area Dean, Basingstoke Deanery (Winchester): to be Residentiary Canon, Guildford Cathedral; and Chaplain, University of Surrey (Guildford).

Revd Matthew Boyes, Vicar, Turnham Green Christ Church (London): to be Chaplain, HM Young Offenders Institution Feltham (same diocese).

Revd Matthew Catterick, Rector, Wembley Park (London): to be Vicar, Pimlico St Saviour (same diocese).

Revd David Clune, Assistant Curate, Spalding (Lincoln): to be Team Vicar, Sutton, St James and Wawne (York).

Revd Trevor Critchlow, Team Vicar, Wembley Park (London): to be Rector, Stepney St. Dunstan and All Saints (same diocese).

Revd Dr Donald Paul Dalzell, Priest-in-Charge (Parish Priest), Alexandra (Province of Victoria, Anglican Church of Australia): to be Priest-in-Charge, Montreux with Anzere, Gstaad and Monthey (Switzerland, Europe).

Revd Barry Dominic Fenton, Chaplain, North Middlesex Hospital NHS Trust; and Priest Vicar, Westminster Abbey: to be also Priest-in-Charge, Grosvenor Chapel (London).

Revd Thomas Gillum, Warden, Community of St Jude Courtfield Gardens (London): to be Priest-in-Charge, Isleworth St John (same diocese).

Revd Graham Hunter (London): to be Vicar, Hoxton St John the Baptist the With Christ Church (same diocese).

Revd Martin Hussey, NSM (Assistant Curate), Thames Ditton (Guildford): to be NSM (Associate Minister), Oatlands (same diocese).

Revd Phillip Johnson, Assistant Curate, Cheam (Southwark): to be Vicar, Weston (Guildford).

Revd Dr Mark Powell, Vicar, Ealing St Peter Mount Park (London): to be Vicar, Melbourne, Ticknall, Smisby and Stanton (Derby).

RETIREMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Revd Robert Heyes, NSM (Assistant Curate), Shamley Green (Guildford): to retire with effect from 28 August 2011.

Revd (sic) Hazel O'Sullivan, Chaplain, Whiteley Village (Guildford): to retire with effect from 31 July 2011.

The Rt Revd Peter Vaughan, Hon Canon, Bristol Cathedral; and Hon Assistant Bishop (Bristol); and Hon Assistant Bishop (Gloucester): has resigned with effect from 31 March 2011.

CORRECTION

Maureen Anne Davis, Rector, Woodchurch (Chester): is now also Hon Canon, Chester Cathedral (same diocese).

APPOINTMENTS DUE TO THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

Elizabeth Blatchley, Assistant Curate, Telford Park (Southwark): to be Vicar, Homerton St Luke (London).

Susan Bond, Vicar, Ampleforth with Oswaldkirk, Gilling East and Stonegrave (York): to be also Adviser for IME 4-7, Cleveland Archdeaconry (York).

and Assistant Curate, Mackworth All Saints; and Assistant Curate, Mugginton and Kedleston (same diocese).



CHURCHES & MINISTRY

ABERDEEN. Free Church of Scotland [Continuing]. Pittodrie Community Centre, Golf Road. Sabbath 11.00am & 6.00pm. Prayer Meeting Wednesday 7.30pm. AV & Metrical Psalms. Rev T. McGlynn, tel no 01224 865714 Website:www.fccontinuing.org/aberdeen

BALLYMENA, NI. Covenant Protestant Reformed Church, new church building, Clarence Street. Sabbath:11am, 6pm. Expository preaching, Metrical Psalms, AV. Rev Angus Stewart: (028) 25891851 www.cprc.co.uk

BROADSTAIRS, Kent. Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Sabbath services: 11.00am and 6.00pm at Portland Centre, Hopeville Avenue, St Peter's. Tuesdays: 7.00pm, Quaker Meeting House, Fordoun Road. Rev. John MacLeod. Tel. 020 8309 1623. www.fpchurch.org.uk

CHELMSFORD. Presbyterian Church. Sunday: 11.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Worship services (A Sunday School is held for children during the Morning service and a creche provided during the evening service). Location: Hall Street Methodist Church, Hall Street, Chelmsford, CM2 0HG. Minister. Rev. Dr. John Scott. Telephone: 01245 399570.

DUBLIN. Arann Reformed Baptist Church 1 Quinn's Road, Shankill, County Dublin. Services: Lord's day: 11am and 7pm Wednesday Bible Study and prayer meeting: 8.30pm. contact Mark Fitzpatrick, (00353) 862667070 AV & Metrical Psalms, www.arann-reformed.org, Website: www.sermonaudio.com/arann

EDINBURGH. Free Church of Scotland [Continuing]. Services held at Cluny Centre, 1 Cluny Drive, Edinburgh, EH10 6DN. 11.00am and 6.30pm. Thursdays 7.30pm, venue as announced. AV and Metrical Psalms. Minister: Rev James Gracie. Tel: 0131 667 4730

FRINTON & TENDRING DISTRICT. Holy Trinity, C of E (Continuing) Lord's Day Morning Prayer 11am at Frinton Community Centre. 6pm Evening Prayer. BCP (1662) & AV. Mr Philip Lievesley 07972 159908.

GLASGOW. Knightswood Free Church Of Scotland (Continuing) 361 Fulton Street, G13 2SP 11am & 6.30pm Tuesdays 7.30pm, Rev William Macleod 0141 959 0292

LONDON N22. Pilgrim Tabernacle. Reformed Evangelical, Stirling Road, Wood Green, N22. Lords Day 10.00am and 6pm service and Tuesday 7.30pm Bible Study. Friday 7.30pm Prayer in members homes. Contact Pastor John Sherwood 0208 368 8080 www.pilgrimtabernacle.co.uk

LONDON E1. Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Varden Street, Whitechapel. Sabbath services 11.00am and 6.30pm. Wednesdays: 7.00pm. Rev. John MacLeod. Tel. 020 8309 1623. www.fpchurch.org.uk

LONDON. South Wimbledon, St Johns C of E [Continuing]. Sabbath Day Services 11am, 6.30pm. AV. Prayer Book (1662). Phone: Rev. Peter Ratcliff 0208 417 0875.

READING. St. Mary's Chapel. Castle Street. Sundays: 11 am Morning Prayer (1st Sunday, Lord's Supper); 6.30 pm Evening Prayer (3rd Sunday, Lord's Supper). Prayer Book Services, A.V. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting Tuesdays 8pm (2nd Tuesday Missionary Prayer Meeting). Rev. E. J. Malcolm 0118 959 5131

SOUTH BUCKS. The Free Methodist Church, Penn (near High Wycombe). Traditional worship, expository preaching. Lord's Day 11.00am, 6.30pm. Rev. Peter Simpson Website: www.realchristianity.org. Telephone: 01494 816202.

WEST MIDLANDS. Tipton, St. Paul's, Owen Street. Sundays 10.30am; 6.00pm. Prayer Meeting, Bible Study, Wednesday 7.30pm; BCP services. Rev. John Dunn. 01215571902

WOLVERHAMPTON. St. Silas. C of E [Continuing], 49 Long Street, WV1 1HU. Morning Prayer 11am (HC 1st Sun) Evening Prayer 6pm (HC 3rd Sun) AV & BCP. Tel. 01547 528815.

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Voices from the Past



Lincolnshire worthies & their message for today

John Wesley 1703-1791 C of E Clergyman and Evangelist

By: Rt Revd Dr J Barry Shucksmith Royal Navy (Rtd)

John Wesley raised up, not by chance, but by Almighty God

G M Trevelyan wrote... "One of the greatest missionaries and the greatest religious organizers of all history, Wesley chanced to be contemporary with one of the greatest of popular orators, George Whitefield, who may be regarded either as his supporter or as his rival." Christians will widely endorse the view of this fine historian; they will be more sceptical about the use of the word "chance." God is absolute in his will. What He begins, He completes. He does nothing by chance, whether this relates to humanity, the church, salvation, or the raising up of men of God for gospel work.

Certainly, we can endorse the words of Trevelyan where he continues, "the zeal of these first 'methodists' was opposed in every respect to the characteristic faults and merits of the Eighteenth Century attitude of mind. For this reason their separation from the Established Church of the day was, perhaps, unavoidable, although Wesley to the last, regarded himself as her faithful son. But the cornerstone of religion as he preached it was neither 'reason' nor sacramentalism, but the doctrine he had borrowed from the Moravians that conversion comes as a sudden personal assurance of salvation, bringing new birth and dominion over sin. This revivalist doctrine, in the mouths of Wesley and Whitefield had enormous power' (p.519-520; chapter 1; Book 5; 1926; History of England).

So who was John Wesley? What was the character of the home into which he was born?

A firmly disciplined and highly motivated childhood

John Wesley was born June 17th 1703, at Epworth Rectory. His father was Rector of the parish church. John was five years older than his brother, the famous hymnologist, although there would be nineteen children in all. Those that grew up, whether sons or daughters, were all gifted and accomplished. His mother Susannah was a remarkable woman and a model mother. 'Brave, bright spirits and high principles were the growth of that remote Lincolnshire parsonage. It was the home of strict and earnest religion, of much learning, of true high breeding, and of pinching and sometimes bitter poverty. Both the rector and his wife came of a line of Puritan ancestors, who had endured persecution for their faith, but who were once gentlemen, scholars, and divines; and the training in the parsonage was not unworthy of such a twofold ancestry.'

Susannah, a praying, loving, zealous, conscientious, and godly mother

From the purest of motives, and with

true zeal for the gospel, Mrs Wesley would sometimes act unwisely and in conflict with the Pauline passages on male headship. This may have been due to her husband's absence for several months at a time, at the Convocation in London, and, sadly, for a brief while in Lincoln prison, due to financial problems. On one occasion, she felt it her duty to supplement the ineffective activity of her husband's curate, who was struggling to look after two parish churches at the same time. Susannah held after-meetings for her family, and for the neighbouring parishioners, in the kitchen of her parsonage. She used to read a sermon or some good book, and to conduct a service of Scripture reading and prayer with the gathered company. These services were popular, and the large farm-rectory kitchen was crowded. This looked too much like "a nonconformist conventicle" for some. No doubt, remembering the nonconformist background of the rector and his wife, the curate complained in a letter to Samuel Wesley. Samuel urgently wrote to his wife. The reply of Susannah hardly edifies us on feminine obedience to the Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:33-35, or 1 Timothy 2:11-15) but it furnishes us with a true image of the persistent piety of a very great Christian lady. The letter ends: "If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you desire me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience; but send me your positive command, in such full and express terms, as may absolve me from all guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ." Obviously, John Wesley's mother was destined to be one of the most important guides & counsellors of his life. He never forgot her, or his fine upbringing, and the effective schooling in the Word of God. In old age, he personally cared and provided for his dear mother, in his London home.

Plucked like a brand from the burning!

A second and equally-important impression which never left him, was the fire in the old Epworth Rectory. He was only six years old at the time. Epworth was a remote rural area and some of the locals could be malicious, even violent. John Wesley's father did not have the easiest parish in Lincolnshire by a long shot. Troublemakers, agitated by the religious and political views of Samuel Wesley, set fire to the Rectory. It seemed as if all the family had escaped. Then, it was realised, "young Jacky" (John) was still missing. Suddenly, he appeared at a window of the large house. Two brave parishioners risked their own lives. They reached up and brought him to safety.

All eight children present knelt in prayer with their parents, and with the nearby parishioners returned thanks to Almighty God. John Wesley often referred to this in the words of Zechariah 3:2... 'is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' He knew that the Lord had spared him for some great work but, like Joseph of old, the plan had not yet unfolded. Strangely, John does not appear to have quoted the whole verse of the minor prophet. Perhaps, because of his later hesitancy about Calvinistic doctrines, he preferred half a verse to the full text? 'The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' But John never forgot the experience. It became a driving force in his search for the truth - a remarkable incident revealing the biblical knowledge of a mere six years' old! John Wesley commemorated this escape in later life by a portrait, a house in flames, and underneath the inscribed extract from Zechariah 3:2.

The further education and developing character of John Wesley

Before he was eleven, John was sent to Charter House School. Initially, he found this difficult. This was not unusual for students at public schools. He was hardly a pampered boy and had been brought up by his parents to exercise self-discipline over his emotions and feelings. 'He was a diligent and successful scholar, and a patient and forgiving boy' even though he was picked on, had his food stolen, and may have been physically abused. But it cannot have been too painful an experience because, after leaving, 'he made an annual visit to the establishment and walked around the Charter House gardens, "chewing the cud" of early memories, to him more sweet than bitter.'

From Charter House, Wesley went to Christchurch, Oxford in 1720. He was seventeen at the time. He was to remain there for the next fifteen years of his life. He has been described as clever, sprightly, and a virtuous youth. He was full of wit and pleasantry, doing extremely well with his studies, and he was regular in attendance at the Services of the Church. It is also noted, he was well-read in the Scriptures and other religious books, particularly commentaries. But he appeared to be without any true apprehension of spiritual religion. His biographers describe him as a devout, half-worldly young Pharisee, not unlike the ruler in the Gospels. He took his degree and graduated. By now, he had a high reputation as a scholar, gentleman, and good companion. He appeared, as we are told by one contemporary, as "the very sensible and acute collegian,

a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments." However, in evangelical terms, he would not be described as of serious and earnest opinions.

Christianity without Christian assurance

In 1725 he received deacon's orders in the Church of England. During this year he read, to great personal benefit, Jeremy Taylor's HOLY LIVING AND DYING and another book, THE CHRISTIAN PATTERN. His conscience was awakened by these but he rejected Taylor's view on personal Christian assurance as unnecessary. He wrote to his mother, "If we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, certainly we must be sensible of it." Although God's Spirit was at work, another thirteen years were to pass before he learned the primary doctrine of the Roman Epistle - justification by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Between 1725-1729, a more pronounced legalism begins to show. "I preached much, but saw no fruit of my labour," he records. With maturity, he was able to analyse these years, "I neither laid the foundation of repentance nor of preaching the Gospel taking it for granted that all to whom I preached were believers, and that many of them needed no repentance. From the year 1729 - 1734, laying a deeper foundation of repentance, I saw a little fruit; but it was only a little, and no wonder, for I did not preach faith in the blood of the covenant."

This period also sees the rise of the Oxford Club - the Methodist Society - which was founded by his brother Charles. The Society held weekly communions, studied the New Testament, fasted, kept regular hours of devotion, visited the sick and poor, instructed children, and even cared for prisoners. Because method, or discipline, was a characteristic of the Wesleys, and their Oxford friends, they were nicknamed "Methodists."

Law, Laud, and the Latitude of Tradition and Mysticism

Both John and Charles were now powerfully influenced by the writings of William Law. His SERIOUS CALL and CHRISTIAN PERFECTION were published about this period. John Wesley actually visited Law to obtain a clearer understanding of his teachings, in 1732. But Law was far from being an Evangelical Christian. He was a Jacobite, a nonjuror, and an extreme Laudian High Churchman. Within a short while William Law fell into the theosophical views of Jacob Behmen - a form of experiential mysticism - and John Wesley, for a while, moved into a more mystical phase. Wesley confessed this for himself, "I bent the bow too far, by making antiquity, a coordinate, rather than a subordinate, rule with Scripture, by admitting several doubtful writings, by extending antiquity too far, by believing more practices to have been universal in the Ancient Church than ever were so..."

Georgia, death of Wesley's father, Moravianism, and Aldersgate street.

How and when did the change come for John Wesley that turned the upright legalistic churchman into a New Testament Christian, one who was burning with love for Jesus Christ, and the lost souls of mankind? We can trace at least four steps.

First, there was the death of his father Samuel, 25th April, 1735. John had heard his father's own testimony before he died. 'The inward witness, son, the inward witness. That is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity!' It left an indelible impression on John. And Charles recounted how his father had said to him, just before he died, 'the

Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not.'

Second, there was the experience in Georgia. He left England in 1735 to work for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. It was a disaster. He took high church practices and teachings with him. He refused the Lord's Supper to all who had not been baptised by an episcopally-ordained clergyman. He refused to admit John Martin Boeltzius, a most godly Moravian, from Holy Communion. He insisted on rebaptism of dissenters and he clashed with leading officials of the new Colony. His words on returning from Georgia, as a disillusioned Clergyman, are well-known, 'One thing have I learnt in the end of the earth, that I who went to America to convert the Indians, was never converted myself.'

Third, on returning to England after the unfortunate Georgian episode, John Wesley met with Peter Bohler, a Moravian teacher. He was on his way to the new Colony which John had just returned from. Peter Bohler proved out of scripture that faith was the means of leading us to Christ's salvation. At last Wesley was convinced and wrote in his journal, 'Peter Bohler... by whom, I was clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved.'

The fourth and final step, a private meeting of a religious society in Aldersgate Street occurred on Wednesday 24th May, 1738. A man was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, about the sinner's salvation, and the personal relationship of the Saviour to the sinner. Wesley records, 'I felt my heart strangely warmed; I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given to me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.'

An unfinished story, which can only be completed by ourselves!

I have purposely left out the story of the development of Methodism, Wesley's eventual ordination of men for the work, the founding of the Methodist Conference, the incredible accounts of mass evangelism, revival, and thousands brought to faith in Jesus Christ. I have said little about his Arminian theology, his unbiblical doctrine of holiness, his controversies with Anglican Calvinist George Whitefield, or his remarkable organizing skills. But he was, without question, a chosen vessel, "a brand plucked from the burning," by a Great and Glorious Redeemer God. Along with others, he reached the masses for Jesus Christ. He proved to himself and thousands of others, "the saving power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, through grace alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone." Have we?

Final words are invariably truly revealing words

Almost his last words were, "The best of all is God is with us." The last hymn he sung was, "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath, and when my voice is lost in death, Praise shall employ my nobler powers." His final word, on 2nd March 1791, to an old companion, Joseph Bradford, was simply "Farewell." He was 87 years old when he died with such assurance and peace - a trophy of grace, and an outstanding man of God. To try and imperfectly draw lessons from his life would be pointless. The words of Revelation 2:4-7 seem aptly pertinent. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works... He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."