



CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS

MAY 2011 ISSUE 11.129

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



MINISTRY TO THE CONFUSED - EMMAUS WALK

Vicar's ten - minute reflection

WALKING THE ROAD TO EMMAUS (Luke 24:13-35)



There is a beautiful legend about a king who decided to set aside a special day to honour his greatest subject. When the big day arrived, there was a large gathering in the palace courtyard. Four finalists were brought forward, and from these four, the king would select the winner. The first person presented was a wealthy philanthropist. The king was told that this man was highly deserving of the honour because of his humanitarian efforts. He had given much of his wealth to the poor. The second person was a celebrated physician. The king was told that this doctor was highly deserving of the honour because he had rendered faithful and dedicated service to the sick for many years. The third person was a distinguished judge. The king was told that the judge was worthy because he was noted for his wisdom, his fairness, and his brilliant decisions. The fourth person presented was an elderly woman. Everyone was quite surprised to see her there, because her manner was quite humble, as was her dress. She hardly looked the part of someone who would be honoured as the greatest subject in the kingdom. What chance could she possibly have, when compared to the other three, who had accomplished so much?

The king was intrigued, to say the least, and somewhat puzzled by her presence. He asked who she was. The answer came: "You see the philanthropist, the doctor, and the judge? Well, she was their teacher!" That woman had no wealth, no fortune, and no title, but she had unselfishly given her life to produce great people. There is nothing more powerful or more Christlike than sacrificial love. The king could not see the value in the humble lady. He missed the significance of the teacher.

Often we miss the value of those around us. I think it would surprise us to know how often we miss the presence of Christ just as Cleopas and his brother missed the significance of the stranger on the road to Emmaus.

Depressed

Their confused mind had given rise to a fuggy sight. Their sadness had left them disillusioned and they were moving away from where their colleagues were- away from Jerusalem. Have you ever noticed that some of the saddest words in our language begin with the letter D? For example: disappointment, doubt, disillusionment, defeat, discouragement, despondency, depression, despair and death.



All of these words sum up how Cleopas and his companion were feeling as they trudged up the road toward Emmaus in today's reading. They had left the downhearted and confused band of disciples who were afraid and bewildered over what had happened to Jesus on Good Friday. The two men, as they travelled along, were also sad and disillusioned.

The Master they had loved and followed had been horribly put to death - a cruel and degrading death on a cross. Only a week before, their hopes had risen to fever pitch when the excited crowds welcomed their Master waving palm branches and shouting 'hosanna'. But now Jesus lay dead in a sealed tomb. Their hopes were dashed; the dream was over! Even the report of the women that Christ's tomb was empty didn't raise their spirits; it only confused them even more. The two despondent disciples walking the road to Emmaus summed up the situation very neatly when they said, "We had hoped that he would be the one who was going to set Israel free!"

Hope

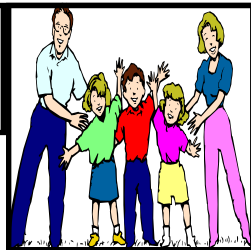
Human hope is a fragile thing, and when it withers, it's difficult to revive. We need to note the number of people who take their own life because despair and discouragement have sucked the last bit of hope out of their lives. When someone you love and care for is overtaken by a serious illness, which goes on, and on, despair sets in. "We had hoped ... ", said Cleopas and his friend. "We had high hopes for the future, but now those hopes are gone and all we have left is disappointment." Can you identify with the feelings of these two disciples in any way? For each of us the cause of feeling down might be different, but it would be a rare person indeed who can claim that they have never been affected by any of those D words - disappointment, doubt, disillusionment, defeat, discouragement, depression, despondency...

Jesus gets alongside them

As the two men walked along, a stranger joined them. They were heading off in the wrong direction away from Jerusalem (v.13). Jesus was prepared to walk at their speed so that he could talk with them (v.15). Grace means we slip alongside many not walking towards Jesus or even interested in Him. This was going to be the most significant walk in their whole lives. The stranger asked them what they were discussing. And so they poured out their story to someone who seemed willing to listen. They tell the stranger all about their hopes and their disappointments.

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QUESTIONS ON MARRIAGE (FROM BIBLE READERS)



Whether you're currently married, or thinking about getting married, the Bible reveals the secrets to a happy, successful marriage. With so many men and women "falling out of love" with each other in marriage, it's crucial you know what God says about marriage and how highly He values it.

How does God define my role as a wife?

- *To be godly in attitude and actions. Proverbs 31:10-31*
- *To be wise, godly, and cheerful - no matter what. Eccl. 7:11-14*
- *To think of your husband before yourself. Colossians 3:15-19*

How can I prevent financial issues from becoming stumbling blocks in my marriage?

- *Grow a generous personality. Psalm 49:16-20*
- *Make giving to God your top priority. Malachi 3:8-12*
- *Treasure your spouse. Matthew 6:19-24*
- *Don't focus too much on finances. 1 Timothy 6:6-10*
- *Don't fall in love with money. Hebrews 13:5, 6*

I'm falling out of love with my spouse (and he with me), and I'm tempted to have an affair. What would be the harm?

- *Don't bow to temptation. Genesis 39*
- *Don't repay evil for evil. Hosea 2:2-8; 3:1-3*
- *Realize looking is as wrong as acting. Matthew 6:27, 28*
- *Use your body to honour God. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20*

What's essential for a healthy, rewarding sex life?

- *Recognize that sex is a gift from God. Genesis 1:27-31*
- *Use passionate words. Song of Solomon 5:10-16*
- *Keep practising. Keep talking. 1 Corinthians 7:1-5*

What does God think about divorce?

- *Divorce is cruel. Malachi 2:13-16*
- *God's original design is for marriage - for a lifetime. Matt. 19:1-9*
- *God wants you to be at peace with each other. 1 Corinth. 7:10-16*
- *God emphasizes unity. Ephesians 4:1-6*

Questions on Marriage (From Bible Readers)

How can I learn to forgive my spouse even when there's no apology?

- *Choose to forgive.* Jeremiah 33:1-9
- *Let Jesus help you tear down walls of discord.* Ephesians 2:14-18
- *Remember your feelings matter to God.* 1 Peter 3:8-15

My spouse is emotionally distant. How can I feel closer to him/her?

- *Resist closing yourself off.* Proverbs 3:27-35
- *Keep trusting God's power and goodness.* Zephaniah 3:16,17
- *Tell your spouse the truth with love.* Ephesians 4:14-16

THE BEREAN ANTIDOTE

Jesus Christ warned his disciples to: "Be on your guard against the yeast (Teachings) of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Matt. 16:6. This warning is even more important and urgent given the rate at which the Gospel is being secularized today. We must be on our guard against the teachings of denominations, movements, charismatic individuals, Tele-Evangelists, etc that do not square up with the true Gospel. John also warned us that it is not every: "Thus saith the Lord..." that is really from the Lord our God. "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Paul also added: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned" (Galatians 1:8).

The Word of God remains unchanged in our changing world. Do not allow yourself to be swept away into error by the current of popular opinion. The only antidote is the Berean prescription. **"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.** Acts 17:11. Please decide today to be more of a Berean than a Thessalonian in the handling of Scriptures.

Sunday Bwanhot

Walking the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

(continued from page 3)

The last thing they needed was a brisk "cheer up" talk, or being told to "snap out of it". He simply provides a listening ear. We know that the stranger was Jesus - but they didn't. It's a wonderful image - Jesus walking along the road with his despondent and confused disciples sharing their troubles? Suddenly this 2,000-year-old story is brought into the present. When disappointment, doubt, disillusionment, defeat, discouragement, despondency, depression, and despair fill our lives, Jesus is the unseen "stranger" walking alongside us, listening to us, and if we are willing to hear his voice, revealing himself to us.

He asks a question (24:17)

In spite of their ridiculous answers, he does not laugh at them but graciously asks another one. They had wrong and misplaced expectations of the Messiah (vv.19-21) and their confused mind was leading them to unbelief. (vv. 22-24) As Cleopas and his friend talked about the cross, their bewilderment and sorrow, Jesus reassured them and helped them. How did he do it? He pointed them to what God says in the Bible.

Luke tells us, "Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures, beginning with the books of Moses and the writings of all the prophets". Jesus must have given the Emmaus travelers the best ever lesson on the Old Testament, reminding them how sin came into the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, and how the prophets foreshadowed a saviour who would be obedient even to the point of death. He may have reminded them of Abraham - how he almost sacrificed his son - and how the heavenly Father did sacrifice his Son for the sin of all people. No doubt, he would have referred to Isaiah's description of the Suffering Servant of God who "was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53). It's not that these men hadn't read their Bibles, but that their understanding was clouded by the idea that the Messiah would come with glory and power and rain down fire on their enemies.

He challenges them

He speaks the truth about himself plainly (vv. 25-27) and He helps them understand the good news.

Walking the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

The two-hour walk to Emmaus must have seemed like five minutes. The two disciples could feel the despondency and sorrow they felt in their hearts change into understanding and hope as the "stranger" explained that Jesus' death was a part of God's great plan of salvation.

Our Journey

When disillusionment, depression and defeat dominate our lives, Jesus walks with us just as he walked with the two men on the road to Emmaus. He points us to God's Word of promise in the Bible that tells us again that we are God's dearly loved children and that he will stand by us through thick and thin. He turns our despair into hope.

He eats with them

The two disciples asked the "stranger" to stop with them for the night and at the evening meal he "took the bread, and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them". Suddenly it dawned on them who the stranger was. It was their Master raised from the dead. Jesus himself had ministered to them in their sadness. Now they knew why a change had come over them as they walked on the road. They now know why their despondent hearts had been changed to hearts filled with hope and renewed faith. Jesus had revealed himself to them in his Word and through the Sacrament.

I can imagine Cleopas and his friend standing in amazement; perhaps embracing each other in great joy, asking each other, "Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" Their world had come together. They had experienced something of the grace of God. Because of his love for his despondent disciples, graciously Jesus came and met them on the road to Emmaus. Graciously he cleared away the fog of confusion; he showed to them the heart of God and his plan of salvation, and finally he revealed himself to them - he was alive, risen from the dead. At the moment the "stranger" reveals who he was, he vanishes from their sight. But he has not gone; he is still visible to those who have the eyes of faith.

They are changed (v.33)

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem; their lives turned around. Their confusion was clarified and their fears were overcome.

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NOTICE BOARD

HEALING AND ANOINTING SERVICE

There is a fifth Sunday in May and as is our practice, there will be a healing and anointing Service on 29th May at the 10.30am worship time. The Theme is: "The Lord is with you". We are expecting a visiting preacher to speak on the subject. Invite your friends and come along to be a partaker of God's blessing on that day.

MORRISS HOUSE GARDEN PARTY

All Crosslinks readers are invited to this year's garden party on the 18th June, 2.30pm to 4.00pm. There will be strawberries and cream, a raffle with great prizes, home baking, book-stall, plants and sideshows - something for everyone, and all in the beautiful Morriss House garden. All proceeds go to brightening up the lives of the elderly residents of Morriss House, so do come and support this good cause. Morriss House is at 23 Coolhurst Road, Crouch End, London N8 8EP.

Sheila Wheeler

CHRIST CHURCH SUMMER BARBEQUE

Our summer barbeque this year will take place in the vicarage garden on Sunday 10th July 2011 at 12noon after morning worship. More details will be given in the June edition of Crosslinks.

Jim Jenks

COACH TRIP TO BRIGHTON

A day-coach trip is being organised to Brighton on Saturday 30th July 2011. The cost of transportation is £15.00 per person and it does not include the cost of meals or drinks. Please give your names to Iyabo Agbelusi or call 020 8340 1566 to register. The trip is open to all our friends and well-wishers.

Iyabo Agbelusi

TWELVE DIE AS EGYPTIAN CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS CLASH

By Marcus Jones – Premier News (May 9, 2011)

Twelve people have been killed in religious fighting in Egypt. One hundred and eighty people were wounded following attacks on two churches in Cairo over the weekend.

Officials say the violence started when around 500 conservative Islamists gathered at a Christian Church in the suburbs demanding to take custody of a woman they say had converted to Islam. A shouting match between the two religious groups turned into an exchange of gunfire, firebombs and stones.

Today Christians have been holding a prayer vigil for those affected in the violence. They're also urging the government to give them more protection from future attacks.

NIGERIAN CHRISTIANS MOURN

More than 500 people have been killed and thousands displaced in post-election violence which swept across northern Nigeria. At the same time 60 churches were burnt and thousands of Christian homes destroyed in protest at the electoral victory of southern Christian Goodluck Jonathan, reports religious rights charity Open Doors. Muslims were then 'targeted in revenge attacks', according to the BBC.

The Red Cross said that 16,000 people had been displaced across six states in the predominantly Muslim north of the country.

Opposition leader Muhammadu Buhari confirmed to the BBC that churches were being burnt – but denied that the violence was religiously motivated. Violence broke out on Monday, April 18, after the preliminary results of the presidential poll were announced. Supporters of opposition leader Buhari claimed the vote was rigged – though international monitors declared the poll to be free and fair.

Many in the north believed the next president should come from their region because the last Muslim president, Umaru Yar'Adua, died in 2010 before he had finished his term. President Jonathan won 57 per cent of the votes.

LAUGHTER LINES (from *Very. Dr. James A. Simpson*)

Marry a rich one

Michelle Guinness, the Jewish writer and broadcaster, tells how upset her Jewish mother was when she became a Christian, and later engaged to an Anglican Vicar.

Her father's complaint was different. 'If you were going to marry a Gentile, why did you not pick one of the rich members of the Guinness family?'

The Pet Monkey

Patrick Mahoney tells what he claims is a true story about a cardinal who was noted for his seriousness. When he lay dying, his relatives, seeing his helplessness, began sharing out his belongings. He lay there watching them, too weak to object. Then he noticed his pet monkey pick up his cardinal's hat, put it on his head, and admire himself in the mirror. At this the old man burst out laughing, and laughed himself back to health.

Archie

On one occasion a tabloid photographer was having difficulty photographing the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey. In desperation he finally shouted, 'Archie would you turn your head this way please?'

'My name, sir, is *not* Archie,' the Archbishop replied, smiling warmly, 'It's Mikel!'

The Chain Gang

The Bishop of Northampton was chairing a meeting at which there were seated at the front several mayors and others, all sporting their gleaming chains of office. The pomp of the meeting was reduced to hilarious uproar when the Bishop began, 'A warm welcome to all - including the chain gang in the front row'.

Who Am I? THE MUSING OF A MINISTER

Our public personas often overshadow our true identity

I often do not understand who I am or what I do. Calvin said that it is impossible to know myself without coming to know God—and impossible to know God without coming to know myself. Yet I find in some ways the older I grow, the more a mystery I am.

I talked with a man recently who has attended our church for a long time, someone I respect and admire. He said that sometimes he got the feeling that I cared more about trying to get people outside our church to start attending than I care about the people who are actually here. And I found this pricked something tender inside me in ways that other criticisms might not.

Am I a visionary, an innovator, a leader boldly calling people on an adventure of change and mission? Or am I selfishly ambitious? Do I want to be pastor of a large church so I can feel successful and significant? Or am I both? And if I am—what are the percentages? Paul said once, "I do not understand what I do." Many of Paul's teachings elude me, but not that one. I find myself a tale of three persons, kind of an anti-Trinity.

There's the public me. I prepare talks, and lead meetings, and say words that I want others to hear. This public me isn't deliberately false. But I am always aware, when I am in the presence of other people, of how they will hear what I say. This awareness is a kind of filter that I cannot put away. This public me will always be gauging other peoples' responses and adjusting accordingly. I often do not like this dynamic. But I cannot flip it off as if it were a switch. There is the private me. This is the me who watches and listens and feels. I sometimes avoid this me, especially in seasons of great busyness. When I slow down, and bring the private me before God, I often become aware of my inadequacies or sense of lack. I sometimes can slow down to a level of deep peace, or of awareness of my longing for God. This private me often seems surprisingly conflicted—moved some times by genuine desires to serve and grow, and other times by reflexive habits of greed or resentment. There is the real me, the true person who inhabits my life; the mixture of what is admirable and what is squalid and what is small. This me must exist, and must be fully known if justice is to prevail. But I do not know this real me. I often do not know what my real motives are.

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Who Am I? The musing of a minister

In some ways, the other people in my life see the real me better than I do. The formation of real souls is the one process going on in the universe that really matters. The sanctification of my own soul is the primary task with which I am charged by God. One of the ironies of church ministry is that it can cause me to neglect what matters most, in the name of doing what matters most.

I have just finished reading Eric Metaxas' biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer; one of the most challenging books I have read in a long time. I found myself asking myself questions repeatedly as I read it. Am I becoming someone like Bonhoeffer? Would I make the thousands of small and large choices he made that led to his martyrdom at Hitler's hands? Or would I be like the many pastors who could smoothly rationalize their collaboration with evil rather than risk failure, disgrace and death?

Is our church producing people like Bonhoeffer? Really? Or are we just aiming to have more and more people come to more and more events? Shortly before he was martyred, Bonhoeffer wrote a poem that has haunted people ever since. It gives voice to the struggle of a sensitive soul grappling with the tension between the public and the private and the real self. It is a gift to all of us who aspire to follow in the steps of the One who went before us.

"Who am I? They often tell me I would step from my cell's confinement calmly, cheerfully, firmly, like a squire from his country-house. Who am I? They often tell me I would talk to my warden freely and friendly and clearly, as though it were mine to command. Who am I? They also tell me I would bear the days of misfortune equably, smilingly, proudly, like one accustomed to win. Am I then really all that which other men tell of, or am I only what I know of myself, restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage, struggling for breath, as though hands were compressing my throat, yearning for colours, for flowers, for the voices of birds, thirsting for words of kindness, for neighbourliness, trembling with anger at despotisms and petty humiliation, tossing in expectation of great events, powerlessly trembling for friends at an infinite distance, weary and empty at praying, at thinking, at making, faint and ready to say farewell to it all.

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Walking The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

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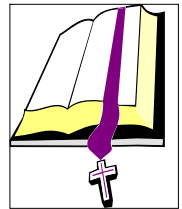
Their despair was dispersed and they proclaimed the truth about Jesus.

The road to Emmaus is a symbol of the Christian life. It enables us to see that the risen Lord gives hope and joy, when all we see is disappointment, discouragement and despair. It enables us to see the world, not as a place of death, decay, and defeat, but as a place waiting, groaning toward God's final victory. This story about the walk to Emmaus is a story for every day life now. If you are walking the Emmaus road right now or when you will walk it in the future with those sad Ds - disappointment, doubt etc, let us remember we are not walking alone. The unseen "stranger", the risen Jesus is walking with us. Christ is risen from the dead! Christ is the Saviour and hope of the world! When our Emmaus road is filled with discouragement and despair, let's walk it with Jesus. Walking with Jesus, our road will become a great highway of companionship, conversation, belief and hope. Amen.

Dele Agbelusi

Memory Verses

²⁵ He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)



Who am I? The musing of a minister

(concluded from page 13)

Who am I? This or the other? Am I one person today, and tomorrow another? Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others, and before myself a contemptibly woebegone weakling? Or is something within me still like a beaten army, fleeing in disorder from victory already achieved? Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine. Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am thine."

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HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE

E-MAIL FROM GOD (28)

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From: GOD, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER

To: You, My beloved child

For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground. (Isaiah 44:3)

Subject: A RIVER IN THE DESERT

My beloved child,

Do you ever feel 'dry' inside? Do you feel tired of life? Tired of work? School? Friends? Tired of your town? Sounds like you could use a little refreshment!

If I can make an oasis in the middle of a physical desert, then surely I can bring life into your world. The more you open your heart to Me, the more I can send the rain of My Spirit to refresh you.

Cry out to Me right now. Don't hold anything back. Share your needs with Me. Ask Me to refresh you. I want to rain My love down on you. I want to give you hope again. Let Me revive you.

Your Living Water,
God

MOTTO/TEXT FOR THE YEAR

“I WANT TO KNOW CHRIST AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION...” (Philip. 3:10)

FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who are resolved to live for God in a world that has largely chosen to ignore Him.

We believe that it is God's world and that He has given the answer to all human problems in Jesus Christ. As a body of believers, we offer to all who come, regular opportunities for worship and service that point the way to God as our strongest resources in all aspects of life.

We will be pleased to welcome you to any of our activities. You will find a warm welcome at Christ Church.

Times of worship and fellowship are shown below:

- Sunday**
- **8.00 am.** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
 - **10.30 am.** Main service with Crèche facilities
- There is family/parade service once every month - usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.
- **6.00 pm.** Evening worship

ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

- Sunday - Choir practice in church (**9.30 am**)
Monday - Baby n' Toddler Group (**9.30 am to 11.30 am**)
- Brownies meeting in church (**5.30 pm**)
- Prayer meetings in church - 16th May, 6th and 20th June (**8 pm**)
Wednesday - Bible Fellowship and Alpha in church - (**6.30 pm for 7.15pm start**)
Friday - Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (**2.00 pm**)
- Scouts meeting in church and hall (**6.30 pm**)
- Music Team practice in choir vestry (**6.00 pm**)

Enquiry/Counselling/Prayer Lifeline - please phone 020 8340 1566

- Saturday - Prayer Cell in church 7-8pm

Editorial Board: Sheila Wheeler, Iyabo Agbelusi, Dele Agbelusi

Voice Edition: Sheila Wheeler, Peter Green, Dele Agbelusi

Vicar: Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi

Church Wardens: Peter Green, Mervin Bentham, Charles Murphy

Lay Ministers: Richard Mercer, Iyabo Agbelusi

Organist: Pavla Bockova

YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

**PLEASE WRITE TO THE EDITOR, CROSSLINKS,
THE VICARAGE, 32 CRESCENT ROAD, LONDON, N8 8AX
E-MAIL: christchurchN8@aol.com; www.christchurchn8.org.uk**