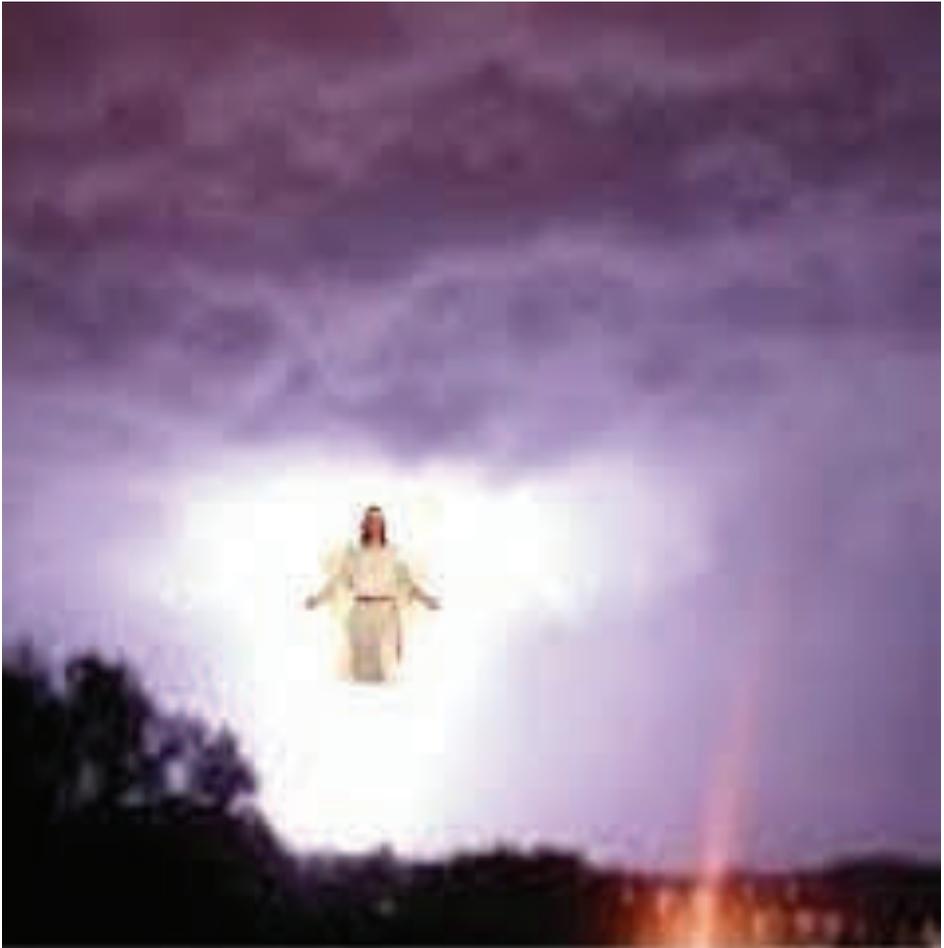




**CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS**

NOVEMBER 2011 ISSUE 12.134

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



BE PREPARED - JESUS IS COMING

Vicar's ten - minute reflection on Mark 13:24-37 **BE PREPARED - JESUS IS COMING**



The Saviour of the world came in the baby of Bethlehem some two thousand years ago, but still the world waits. That is the meaning of Advent. Advent is the

celebration of what has been and what is yet to come. The Saviour of all the world came to us in the baby of Bethlehem, but this was simply the beginning of God's redeeming work. A beachhead was established, but the war over evil and darkness still has not been won. That victory will only be complete when the Saviour returns and the kingdom of God is established in this world even as it is in heaven.

It is so easy with our comfortable lives to focus on the beauty and the joy of Christmas. It is much more difficult for us to focus on Advent, that season when the world groans with birth pangs as it awaits God's final victory over sin and suffering.

Mark 13: 24-37 is about the second coming of Christ. We always start off the season of Advent talking about Christ's Second Advent. We do so in order to remind ourselves that there is something we are waiting for beyond celebrating the Christ Child. We start off the Christian year reminding ourselves that soon, Christ will come again. The text in Mark tells us to be on our guard, be alert, watch, because you never know the day or the hour.

In a world that is fraught with uncertainties, deprivation, poverty, pain, e.t.c., there is a great anticipation of the triumph of God over all. There is a great longing for the righteous intervention of God in a world where God's people suffer indignity and injustice. Advent gives us a good opportunity to talk about the continuing secularization of our culture. The fact that the old "Christmas" holiday for school children is now called a winter break, and the people of commerce are doing their best to keep Christ out of Christmas, are testimonies to this development. We need to be aware that we are in a post-Christian culture. Some argue that it is an "anti-Christian" culture. The name of Christ does seem to garner more hostility than that of Mohammed or Buddha or other historical religious figures. One of my parishioners put it this way: "It's kind of interesting. At work it is okay to mention God but it is not okay to mention Jesus." The main thing here is that our listeners have the opportunity to examine our texts with a view to examining the particularities of our faith. Advent is a great time to do that. (continued next page)



The key issue is that no matter what things may appear to be, the fact is God will act decisively in history.

The text from Mark does take us to the final or eschatological sayings of Christ, while liturgically we are at the beginning of the church year – nevertheless the issue of God's decisive action in history is very much a part of the Advent and Christmas season. The incarnation was God's decisive intervention in history and carries with it the promise of completion or – consummation.

The concluding words of the text, "Therefore keep awake!" are excellent counsel for the season.

I avoided Apocalyptic literature for a long time, but finally decided that I needed to study it for myself and my post-graduate studies at Spurgeon's college did me a lot of good as I pored over Revelation, Daniel, Ezekiel and especially Mark 13. Through that long study, I came to satisfy my own mind about the meaning of many of the mysteries of apocalyptic literature. If we were to discuss our interpretations of many of the details, we might disagree about some or all of them. But I believe among all the

details and differences, we would agree on the basic facts portrayed in apocalyptic literature. There are really only two things that matter, and they are both found in our text for today. We don't have to be bothered by all the details of the end times. All we have to know are these two basic facts: (1) Jesus is coming again. (2) You had better be ready.

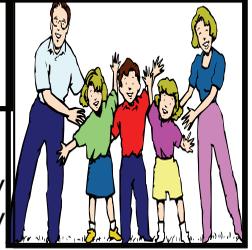
All we have to know are these two basic facts: (1) Jesus is coming again. (2) You had better be ready.

That is the essential message of all apocalyptic literature for us.

The Bible makes clear that Jesus will one day return and wrap up human history. One day God will intervene in this world and right the scales of justice. In this world, Satan reigns in many people's hearts now, probably more than God does. Bad things happen to good people. But apocalyptic literature tells us not to worry, God's going to straighten everything out in the end. Life's not fair; God will fix that. The unjust prosper; that'll change. The innocent suffer; they will be rewarded in the end. Believers sometimes die for their faith; God will not forget their sacrifice. So much of life cries out for a final reckoning, and the Bible assures us that God will one day right the wrongs, reward the faithful, and punish the evil.

(concluded on page 6)

WHAT CAN I DO OR WHAT CAN I USE TO MAKE GOD REAL TO MY CHILDREN?



A parent asks:

We have two little girls—Pamela turned six yesterday and Patty was four last October. Every evening my husband and I try to have a quiet time with the kids. We read from the Bible storybook; then we share what we did throughout the day. And we also pray. We're trying to teach the kids that the Lord is always with them, every moment of the day. He is not somebody who has to be "officially" approached—"Oh-my-let's go-before-God!" But I'm still looking for more ways to make God real for my kids.

Well, I think you're already doing a great job by reading to the girls from Christian books and praying with them. Little sentence prayers about simple things the children think about are best. As for other things you can do, you might occasionally read a story to your girls and then act out the story to apply the message to their lives. And if you read a story about being kind just before going to bed, try to do something nice for someone the very next morning as you remind them, 'Remember our story last night before bed? Let's be kind to Mrs. Jones next door today, shall we?'

Also, one of the best tools you can invest in is a little tape recorder children can have right by their beds so they can play Scripture tapes and Bible stories. And, oh, yes, if you have a DVD player, don't forget the wonderful videos that are available now. Some have biblical settings and others are contemporary stories in which the main characters depend on God to get them out of all kinds of difficulties.

Should quiet time with the children emphasize entertainment? We should certainly make it fun for them, but our primary goal shouldn't be entertainment. Kids are constantly entertained anyway, so what we need are tools and techniques to have them settle down and have some quiet moments with God.

A tape recorder is a great tool for quieting them down because it has a calming effect. And sometimes, if the child is acting up, you can use it as a means of Reality Discipline - just remove the tape recorder for a night or two to let the child know that misbehaviour results in losing something he or she really enjoys.

Author: *Parent Talk* by Dr. Kevin Leman and Randy Carlson of Family Life Communications

REALITY DISCIPLINE

Means...

1) Being in healthy authority over your children. 2) Holding your children accountable for their actions. 3) Combining love and limits on a consistent basis. 4) Dealing with every child as the unique individual he or she is. 5) Being tough but always fair. 6) Using action instead of words. 7) Sticking to your guns and following through with enforcing consequences.

Following the biblical instruction not to exasperate your children and make them angry and resentful, but to bring them up with loving discipline and godly advice (see Eph. 6:4, The Living Bible).

KEVIN : We never tell parents to punish. We tell them to discipline, train, and teach their kids, but that doesn't mean that there might not be some kind of "pain" or consequence involved. That's how the kids learn what the real world is like and how it works. Reality Discipline gives the child a chance to make his own decisions and then live with the result of his mistakes and his failures or his good choices and his successes.

RANDY [Randy Carlson]: You know, Kevin, when we tell people they can give children choices, some moms and dads might think that sounds permissive...

KEVIN: The last thing you can call Reality Discipline would be "permissive." But the best thing about it is that it is not authoritarian. Reality Discipline helps parents avoid making some big mistakes. Authoritarian parents often tend to think that they own their children but we always say that the parents are in healthy authority over their kids. In other words, I never let my kids use me or manipulate me, but at the same time I don't come down on them with "It's my way or the highway!" That can work with some kids for a while—maybe while they grow up, but later in life it can come back to haunt everybody.

RANDY: Okay, at "Parent Talk" we're not permissive, nor are we authoritarian. We hit a happy medium—maybe the best way to describe it is authoritative. A child doesn't care what you know about parenting; what he really wants to know is, "Do you care about me?" That's really the essence of Reality Discipline. By holding kids accountable, parents use a combination of love and limits, which helps children feel safe and secure as they grow and develop during their maturing years. (concluded on page 8)

Vicar's ten - minute reflection on Mark 13: 24-37

Be prepared - Jesus is coming

(continued from page 3)

The second essential message is that we need to be ready. Note the emphasis in this passage on "keeping awake." Jesus often uses the phrase "watch and pray." And we need to remember to do both.

Until that time when Jesus returns, we wait patiently. But there are different types of waiting. There is passive waiting and there is active waiting. It is the difference between waiting for Christmas and waiting for Christ. We know Christmas will come, obviously, in some weeks time, we will celebrate and we know what that day will look like. We passively wait for the time to come and we find joy in the traditions that happen between now and then. Yet, waiting for Christ is different. We are told to be alert and to be on our guard. We don't know the day or hour, so we actively wait for his return, ready at every moment. But we don't know when he will come.

The real gifts of this season are not the gifts you find in the stores and place under the tree. The real joy of the season is not the "holiday spirit" found in all the parties and gatherings. The real fulfilment of the season is not when we open even the most special gift with our hands. The real gift of this season is when we open our hearts and wait for the coming of the Lord in our spirits.

Jesus' words in Mark serve as a strong caution to Christian people as we enter what can be the most hectic season of the year. The outward "mad dash" of the world around us can distract us from the real thing. We are vulnerable to spiritual lethargy precisely because the outward, secular Christmas can lull us into a false-sense that we are celebrating the incarnation when in fact, we are celebrating the culture.

To all of these, Jesus' words serve as a warning that in the rush of this season, we might miss his coming. "Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come... or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

Dele Agbelusi

LORD, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY...? THOUGHTS ON MATTHEW 25: 31-46

As the worshippers at the Lutheran Church in White Lake North Dakota arrived on a late November morning they were met by a rather disturbing sight. An apparently homeless beggar sat on the front steps of the church, wearing tattered clothing, a wool cap pulled down over his eyes, and clutching a bottle in fingerless gloves.

Most worshipers simply walked around the man, or stepped over him, as he sat there. Some muttered words of disapproval, and others suggested that the man move to another doorway before the Sunday school children arrived. One member told the man, in no uncertain terms, that the Salvation Army on the next street was a more appropriate place to sleep it off. At one point, a kind woman brought the man a Styrofoam cup of hot coffee, but not one person asked the man to come in out of the cold, and certainly nobody invited him in to join them in worship.

Imagine, then, the people's surprise during the entrance hymn, when their homeless friend made his way into the pulpit took off his cap, and the people recognized that it was their pastor! The pastor began his remarks that morning in this way: "I didn't do this to embarrass you. I did it to remind us that this is a person that Jesus loves, and he has called us to love him, too."

On the Day of judgement the King would say: "When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink..." And the people on the right were surprised and asked: "Lord, When did we feed you, or give you drink..." " And Jesus said "Whenever you did it to one of the weak ones, you did it for me."

Memory Verse

"Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

(Mark 13:35-37)



NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER SERVICES AT A GLANCE

<u>Date</u>	<u>10:30AM</u>	<u>5:00PM</u>
20th Nov.	(MP) The great Separation Matt. 25:1-13	Living God's way (Jude 17-25)
27th Nov	(HC) You better watch out 1 Cor. 1:3-9 Mark 13: 24-37	There will be light (Isaiah 2:1-5)
4th Dec	(MP) Comfort my people Isaiah 40:1-11	There will be peace (Isaiah 11:1-10)
11th Dec	(FS) CHRISTINGLE John 1:6-8, 19-28	God will be with us (Isaiah 7:10-16)
18th Dec	CAROL SERVICE Followed by Parish Christmas lunch	No Evening Service
24th Dec.	No Morning Service	(HC) 11:00PM Hebrews 2:10-18; Luke 2:1-4 The Incarnation: What and Why?
25th Dec	(HC) No room for Jesus Isaiah 7:10-16; Luke 2:1-14	No Evening Service
31st Dec	No Morning Service	11:00PM God of new beginnings

**Note: (HC) - denotes Holy Communion (Common Worship);
(MP) - Morning Prayer; (FS) - Family Service;**

**There is Holy Communion Service every Sunday at 8AM using
the Book of Common Prayer, except on 25th December when
there shall be a combined Parish Communion at 10:30AM**

Reality Discipline(continued from page 5)

KEVIN: We always like to say, "Love and discipline go hand in hand." Pulling the rug out means the parent goes into action and just doesn't do a lot of talking. Kids can smell it in a minute if you just talk and don't really mean it. And after you pull the rug, you stick to your guns and hold your children accountable for their actions. That's how they learn from any experience.

NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

PLEASE PRAY FOR NIGERIA

Over 136 people were reported dead in Yobe as a result of the attacks from Muslim fundamentalists called 'Boko Haram'.

The report we received on November 6, actually stated that all the thirty Churches within the 'Jerusalem' district in Yobe, were burnt, while the Anglican Bishop of Damaturu spent the night in the bush without any shelter. He was later rescued by security agents. The gunmen also blew up a branch of First Bank of Nigeria Plc and attacked at least three police stations. Sources with the National Emergency Management Agency, who visited the state hospital in Damaturu, confirmed that of the 136 who died, 135 were male and one was female. In addition, 17 people were injured, comprising 13 male and four female. The wave of bomb attacks in Yobe and Borno States prompted President Goodluck Jonathan to cancel his scheduled trip to Bayelsa State to attend the wedding of his brother, in order to focus on the security situation in north-east Nigeria.

CHRISTIAN YOUTH KILLED FOR WEARING A CROSS

In October of this year, Egyptian news media published stories of an altercation between Muslim and Christian students over a classroom seat at a school in Malawi, Minya province, which left one student dead. It was being reported as a non-sectarian, that is, non-religiously motivated, incident. However, Copts Without Borders, a Coptic Christian news website, denied the claim, saying, in fact, that the student was killed because he was wearing a crucifix.

CHRISTMAS TREE

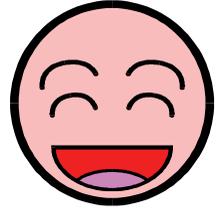
Two weeks ahead of Thanksgiving in the United States, the Christmas wars for 2011 are already in full swing after Wisconsin Governor restores name of State's 'Christmas' Tree after 25 Years as 'holiday' Tree. "You can read the Constitution from the beginning to the end and you will find nothing in there that prohibits a governor from calling a Christmas tree a Christmas tree."

-

LAUGHTER LINES

NO CASH - USE CREDIT

While putting my 4-year-old daughter to bed one evening, I read her the story of the Prodigal Son. We discussed how the young son had taken his inheritance and left home, living it up until he had nothing left. Finally, when he couldn't even eat as well as pigs, he went home to his father, who welcomed him. When we finished the story, I asked my daughter what she had learned. After thinking a moment, she quipped, "Never leave home without your credit card!"



—Jolene Horn, Atascadero, CA. "Heart to Heart," *Today's Christian Woman*

STORMY PRAYER

I have never liked thunderstorms. A few weeks ago, as I sat at my kitchen table during a particularly noisy storm, I started to pray in an effort to comfort myself. As lightning and thunder split the night sky on all sides, my prayer unwittingly began, "Dear LOUD Jesus ..."

—Heidi Mittiga, Rochester, N.Y. "Heart to Heart," *Today's Christian Woman*.

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD

Dear God,

I bet it is very hard for you to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I can never do it.

Nan

Dear God,

I don't ever feel alone since I found out about you.

Nora

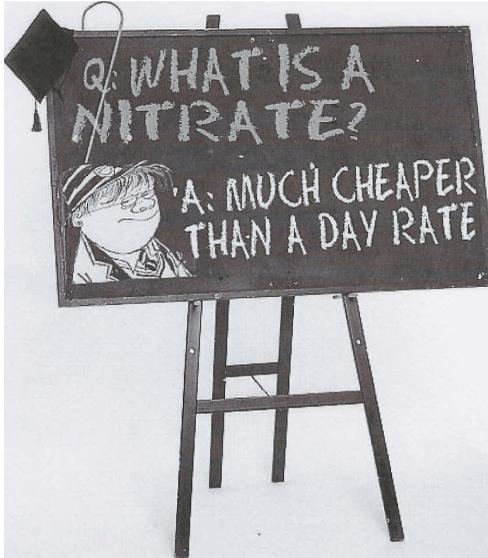
Dear God,

If you give me a genie lamp like Aladdin I will give you anything you want except my money or my chess set.

Raphael

LAUGHTER LINES

SCIENCE WHIZ KID!!!



CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD

Dear God,

Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each so much if they had their own rooms. It works with my brother.

Larry

Dear God,

I think about you sometimes even when I'm not praying.

Elliott

Dear God,

If we come back as something - please - don't let - me -be Jennifer - Horton because - I hate her

Denise

GETTING ANGRY AT GOD

After a painful year of facing rejection in relationships, of suffering disappointments in her career, and of facing disillusionment with Christians and the church, Susan Isaacs began to wonder about God and their relationship. She was angry—and was tempted to walk out on him. But instead Isaacs—an actress who has appeared in many movies, plays, and TV shows such as *Parks and Recreation* and *My Name Is Earl*—decided to work on her relationship with God. So she took God to marriage counselling.



Out of this came the hilarious one-woman act, which led to a hilarious book: *Angry Conversations with God: A Snarky but Authentic Spiritual Memoir* (FaithWords). Kyria.com talked with Isaacs recently about her book, her anger, and her relationship with God.

With a title like *Angry Conversations With God*, what feedback have you gotten from people? I got one several months ago from someone who lived in the buckle of the Bible Belt, and she felt alone and frustrated—like she was the only one who looked at stuff that happened in the church and felt disturbed by it. She felt as though she wasn't allowed to be angry—especially not at God.

How did you respond? When someone says, “I feel like I'm not allowed to get angry at God,” my first reaction is, “Go read Jeremiah.”

Why do people think we shouldn't get angry with God? A lot of times the church has watered down the earthy, honest, and vulnerable side of our faith. They have watered down the graphic, violent, frustrating conflict that's in the Bible. So much so that we think we're living the biblical Christianity by not ever questioning God or not ever getting upset. Obviously anger can be a destructive emotion, and it can lead us away from God. But there's a difference between getting angry at God behind his back and getting angry at God to his face. **But then we have to be willing to sit and listen to what God has to say in response. Because that's fair. If you're going to get angry at God, you really need to sit and think about how he reacts to that? He might say, “Yeah, I don't like what you're saying. You know what? That's lame.” We have to allow God to get angry back.**

One of my favourite things about your book is how you acknowledge that the reasons you were angry with God came out of “middle class, white girl” problems. As opposed to, say, global poverty kind of problems.

Getting angry at God

Yes, that's true. But you know what? Pain is pain. We need to recognize that. And it's only in the process of dealing with it can you then turn around and help someone else. If you don't, you shut down. You stop an important, healthy spiritual process by not dealing with it. One of the most important things for me was to really experience and take an inventory of my losses and to be honest about them. God says humble yourself and he will lift you up.

What do you think God was trying to teach you in all this? That it's important for us to be called to account and to really feel our losses. God doesn't say, "It's okay. It's all going to be okay" like my therapist does. It's more like, "No, actually, you really experienced a loss there. You messed up, and it cost you." It was important for me to experience the weight and the effects of my own actions as well as to experience the effect of the actions of others and to feel the weight of that. And it was really only then that I could make peace, forgive, heal, move on, and then turn around and say there are still some good things in all of that pain.

Do you feel it's easier to *hear* God since your angry conversations? It's easier in one way in that I'm not in as much pain. But when you're that desperate and that much in pain you listen to God a lot more. It's true when things start going well it's easy to go, "Yeah, God, I can take it from here." In some ways I miss the hungry year, I miss the painful year, because I was so desperate to talk to God and to hear him because I was in such pain. I miss that. I think God wants to teach me a way we can still have that conversation without me having to be so desperate. Now I'm better at being calm in hearing God's word of encouragement to me.

What are your conversations with God like now? I don't blame God anymore. And I say that as someone who went through the pain and anger and was honest about it all. But now when tough stuff happens, my harshness is more likely directly toward myself, and God has to snap me out of that. My conversations are filled with a lot of gratitude and a lot of asking him, "Okay, what's happening now? What's the lesson that I need to learn?" Or, "Okay, you have allowed this conflict and pain into my life. Here's how I feel about it. I'm really frustrated. I really hurt. Show me what I need to change in myself. Show me how I need to be different." It's much more of a sense that I trust him; I really believe that he's on my side.

Caryn Rivadeneira

ARE YOU ONE OF THE PICCOLOS WHO WON'T PLAY?

Sir Michael Costa, the celebrated conductor of the 19th century, was holding a rehearsal. As the mighty chorus rang out, accompanied by scores of instruments, the piccolo player--a little pint-sized flute--thinking perhaps that his contribution would not be missed amid so much music, stopped playing. Suddenly, the great leader stopped and cried out, "Where is the piccolo?"



The sound of that one small instrument was necessary to the harmony, and the Master Conductor missed it when it dropped out. The point? To the Conductor there are no insignificant instruments in an orchestra. Sometimes the smallest and seemingly least important one can make the greatest contribution and even if it doesn't seem to make that big a difference to the audience at large, THE CONDUCTOR KNOWS IT right away!

In the Church the players and the instruments are diverse--different sizes, different shapes, different notes, different roles to play. But like the piccolo player in Sir Michael's orchestra, we often in our own sovereignty decide that our contribution is not significant. Our contribution couldn't possibly make a difference. And so we quit playing. Stop doing that which we've been given to do. We drop out. But the Conductor immediately notices. From our perspective, our contribution may be small, but from His, it is crucial.

I just have to believe I'm talking to some piccolo players today, who have dropped out of the orchestra, for whatever reasons: pain, exhaustion, insecurity, criticism, laziness, misbehaviour, fear. Convinced that your contribution doesn't count in the bigger scheme of things. We have buried our talent in the ground.

For all piccolos who won't play, or at least aren't playing, Jesus has something to say: 'use the gifts that God has given you!'

HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE

E-MAIL FROM GOD (32)

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From: **GOD, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

To: **You, My beloved child**

These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31)

Subject: **BEING A CHRISTIAN IS SIMPLE, NOT EASY**

My beloved child,

Becoming a Christian is not hard. In fact it is so simple any child can do it. If you believe that Jesus is My Son Who came to forgive people and you want to be forgiven, then you can be a Christian.

Although becoming a Christian is simple, living like one can be difficult at times. Standing up for what's right when everyone else is doing what's wrong is hard. Caring about people who don't treat you with any respect, is hard. Being My person in places where people don't believe in Me or honour My words is hard.

But the good news is that when you make the simple decision to follow my Son, I am there to help you through the hard times.

Your Redeemer,
God

Adapted from 'e-mail from God for Teens'-Clonigers

MOTTO/TEXT FOR THE YEAR

“I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH” *PHILIPPIANS 4:13*

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

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

- 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 - 21st Nov. 5th and 19th Dec. (8 pm)
- Wednesday** - Fellowship Meal in church (6:30pm) followed by,
Bible Fellowship (7.15pm)
- Thursday** - Homework Club (5pm-7pm)
- Friday** - Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (2.00 pm) - On recess
- Scouts meeting in church and hall (6.30 pm)
- Music Team practice in choir vestry (6.00 pm)
- Saturday** - Cell group prayer meeting in church. 7-8pm

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

Editorial Board: Sheila Wheeler, Iyabo Agbelusi, Dele Agbelusi

Vicar: Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi

Church Wardens: Peter Green, Mervin Bentham, Charles Murphy

Lay Ministers: Richard Mercer, Iyabo Agbelusi

Organist:

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**