



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

NOVEMBER 2009    ISSUE 10.112

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

## Vicar's three-minute reflection

### LOVE YOUR ENEMY



Jesus begins the section in Matthew 5:38ff by citing the oldest law in the world – an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth...often referred to as *lex talionis* or the law of tit for tat. In the Old Testament, we find excerpts of this law laid down in Exodus 21: 23-25: 'But if there is serious injury, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye...;(see also Lev. 24:19-26 and Deut. 19:21). Many modern day readers of the Bible refer to these laws as savage, merciless and blood thirsty but this is not actually so. If anything at all, the law is in fact 'the beginning of mercy' (Barclay). Its aim is to limit vengeance by making it commensurate to the offence and also helps to check the vendetta and blood feud which were characteristic of tribal society. If you look at the law closely, it does not give the individual the right to exact vengeance but sets out a guideline for an arbiter or judge when assessing the level of penalty to be meted out to the offender.

It is true that the Old Testament taught "You shall love your neighbour." In fact, the Lord Jesus Himself taught that the second greatest commandment of all is to "love your neighbour as yourself." But the Pharisees had added four words—"and hate your enemy" (Matt. 5:43). Yet, that is not found anywhere in the Bible neither in the Old Testament nor the New. But the Lord Jesus literally butts in and says, "But I tell you, 'Love your enemies.'"

The word love in Greek has four noun derivatives: *storge* which describes the love of parent for a child and a child for a parent and characteristic of family love. *Eros* which describes the love between sexes and may involve some passion. *Philia* which describes real love, real affection and it is the word for warm, tender affection, the highest kind of love. *Agape* indicates unconquerable benevolence, invincible goodwill. If we regard people with *agape* it means that no



no matter what they do to us , no matter how they treat us, no matter how they insult us or injure us or grieve us, we will never allow any bitterness against them to invade our hearts, but will regard them with that unconquerable benevolence and goodwill which will seek nothing but their highest good.

**Jesus is not telling us to love our enemies the way we love our nearest and dearest as this kind of loving our enemies does not come naturally and instinctively. Rather we are being told to love with a determination of the mind those we have no natural tendency to love. Here Jesus is giving us the way to overcome our natural tendency towards hate, anger and bitterness.** Jesus sets this standard down as a basis for personal relationships and not as a basis for pacifism and this commandment is possible only for a Christian. It is only when Christ lives in our hearts that that bitterness will die and this kind of love can spring to life.

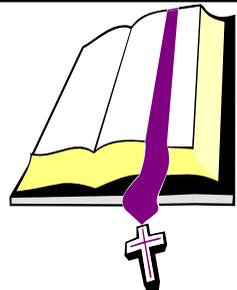
A slave in the West Indies, called Caesar by his master, had gained his freedom and also became a Christian. One day his master took him to the slave market in search for some new slaves. After securing all he wanted, the owner was surprised to hear Caesar beg for the purchase of yet one more, an old tired man. "Why, Caesar, should I buy him? Of what use can he possibly be?"

"Please sir," replied Caesar, "you must buy him for me." So the purchase was made and the old man returned to the plantation. Soon after, he took ill, very ill, and Caesar cared for him as though he were his father. (Continued on page 14)

### Memory Verse

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

**Matthew 5:43-44**



## PEAKS VALLEYS AND RAILS

(from October Issue of Crosslinks)



...I'm developing eyes to see both simultaneously. A peaceful coexistence. On our honeymoon, Susan and I chose the wrong day to spend at Busch Gardens in Tampa Bay, Florida.

Shortly after we paid our admission and entered the park, a tropical storm moved in and dumped more than four inches of rain on us.

Within minutes we were soaked. Normally, the idea of spending several hours in sopping wet pants, shirts plastered to our skin, and shoes squishing water with each step, is not my idea of a good time. It could have been a miserable day. But I was with the woman I loved, and she was with me! We took photos of each other splashing through puddles with our stringy hair arranged in crazy 'dos. That was the first time in our marriage that I realized joy and difficulty could coexist. But it wasn't the last.

In fact, it was such moments of conjoined blessing and adversity that prepared us for more challenging times. When we gave birth to our daughter, Mandy, who was severely and profoundly retarded, whose condition made her unable to sit up, hold her head erect, or use her hands to grasp, we were again put to the test to see if joy could coexist with adversity.

One night I sat in a hospital emergency room, where we'd been forced to take Mandy after an extended seizure. I couldn't make sense of the extent of Mandy's suffering. I thought, I never realized someone could suffer so much.

When she died within two weeks of her second birthday, I didn't think I'd ever be totally happy again. The depth of grief was indelible. I would never forget her difficult and way-too-brief life with us. But as Susan and I experienced the help and kindness of Christian friends, we learned that joy was still there. We knew moments of joy even in the midst of the pain. We were deeply grateful, for instance, for Sarah, a respite worker the state provided to help care for Mandy.

## Peaks Valleys and Rails

She became a dear friend, and we stayed in close contact even after Mandy's death. Now, years later, Sarah is helping plan the wedding of our oldest daughter. It's not a carefree mountaintop experience, because we recognize the grief from which it came, but it is most definitely joy.

As Rick Warren said: "No matter how bad things are in your life, there is always something good you can thank God for. The goal is to grow in character, in Christ-likeness.

"You can focus on your purposes, or you can focus on your problems. If you focus on your problems, you're going into self-centredness, which is 'my problem, my issues, my pain.' But one of the easiest ways to get rid of pain is to get your focus off yourself and onto God and others."

I'm glad that life isn't just mountaintops and valleys, but that both joy and adversity are with us always.

Marshall Shelley, executive editor of MP and editor of Leadership, is co-author of Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham (Zondervan). He and Susan have been married 23 years.

Copyright © 2007 by the author or Christianity Today International/  
Marriage Partnership magazine.

### **God is speaking to you.**

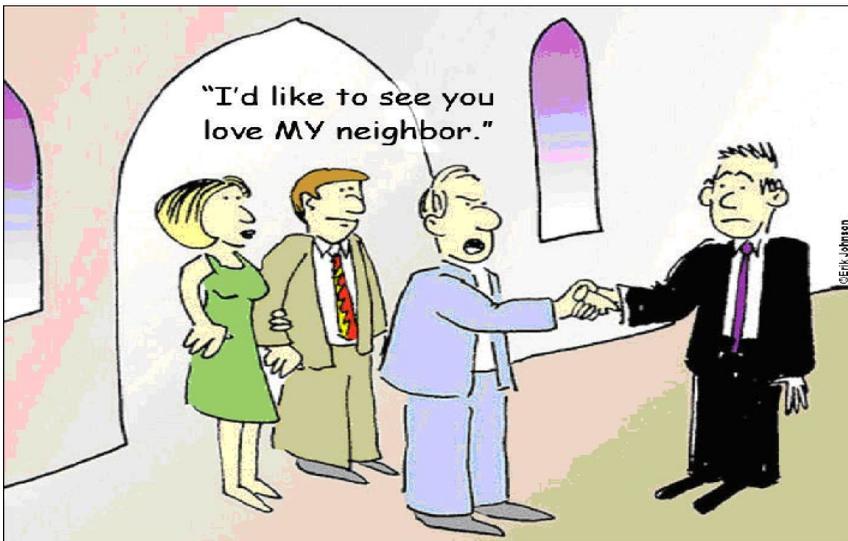
Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

**The ladies Fellowship meets on the first Sunday  
of every month, after the 10.30 service.**

**All ladies are welcome.**

## SOMETIMES A MARRIAGE NEEDS MATTHEW 5:44

A man came to his pastor for help because he was considering a divorce. The pastor counseled him to stay in the marriage and began to show the man scriptures which spoke to the issue of marital commitment. He first used Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands love your wives." The man responded by saying, "I don't love her." The pastor then turned to John 13:35, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." The minister noted that they were both Christians and should be able to at least love each other as fellow believers. The husband replied, "We fight all the time. The longer I stay with her the less I like her." The determined man of God then scrambled to Matthew 22:39, "Love your neighbour as yourself." Pleadingly he asked, "Will you at least try loving her as your next door neighbour?" In response the man said, "Pastor, you just don't understand. We're not even friends anymore." The pastor's face lighted up with relief. "Well, then, I've got just the verse you need." Triumphant he read Matthew 5:44, "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." Sometimes a marriage needs Matthew 5:44.



## DO NOT GET HOOKED

There is such a thing as “the deceitfulness of sin”, and it’s very powerful. You start by allowing yourself the apparent luxury of doing something small which you know you shouldn’t but which you think doesn’t matter. When it becomes a habit, you stop thinking it’s wrong at all. If the question is raised, you are ready with rationalizations: everyone does it, this is the way the world is now, you mustn’t be legalistic, no good being a killjoy. This creates a platform for the next move: here’s something else which a while ago you would have shunned as certainly wrong, but it’s quite like the thing you’ve got used to, so maybe... And before too long you’re rationalizing that as well. And once the mind has been deceived, the habit will continue unchecked.

### LAST WORDS OF FAMOUS CHRISTIANS

- You have been used to take notice of the saying of dying men-this is mine: that a life spent in the service of God and communion with Him, is the most pleasant life that anyone can live in this world.—Matthew Henry (1662-1714)
- This night shall close the door and put my anchor within the veil, and I shall go away in a sleep by five of the clock in the morning . Glory! Oh, for a well-tuned harp! Glory! Glory dwelleth in Immanuel’s land!  
Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661)
- Now , God be with you, my dear children. I have breakfasted with you and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ.-Robert Bruce, King of Scotland (1274-1329)
- This is life eternal, that they might know Thee! That is where I cast my first anchor! - John Knox (died in 1572)

# Recognise stroke F.A.S.T.

Only a hospital test can confirm a stroke for sure, but it is important to know the signs and the Face Arm Speech Time test (F.A.S.T.) can help you recognise them for stroke or TIA.

F.A.S.T. was developed by leading stroke physicians and is used by emergency services to help them detect the signs.

## Face

Has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?

## Arms

Can they raise both arms and keep them there?

## Speech

Is their speech slurred?

## Time

Time to call **999**

if you see any single one of these signs. If the person has failed any of these tests, dial 999 for an ambulance immediately so they can be taken to hospital for urgent treatment. Paramedics and ambulance staff are trained to assess patients with suspected stroke and get them to hospital quickly.

## Why rapid diagnosis is vital

Quick diagnosis of stroke is important to understanding the cause, the damage done and what immediate medical treatment is needed. People with a suspected stroke should have a brain scan as soon as possible to determine:

- If the stroke was caused by a blocked artery or a burst blood vessel.
- Which part of the brain has been affected.
- How severe the stroke is.

The sooner the person is diagnosed, the sooner they can be treated and the greater their chances of survival and recovery. Rapid diagnosis of TIA allows steps to be taken to reduce the risk of a second and potentially major stroke.

Courtesy NHS, Department of Health.

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

<b>Christingle Service (13th Dec.) -</b>	<b>10.30am</b>
<b>Carols and nine lessons (20th December) followed by Christmas lunch</b>	<b>10.30am</b>
<b>Christmas Eve Holy Communion -</b>	<b>11.00pm</b>
<b>Christmas Day Holy Communion -</b>	<b>10.30am</b>
<b>Morning Prayer on First Sunday after Christmas -</b>	<b>10.30am</b>
<b>New Year's Eve Praise and Prayers-</b>	<b>11.00pm</b>

**There's Holy Communion on every Sunday at 8am  
(Book of Common Prayer).**

**You are invited to join us as we celebrate the birth of  
the risen Christ and call to mind his second coming.**

#### **Prayer Lines**

- Let us uphold Rev. A.C. Markby in our prayers that the Lord may renew his strength. He has been very poorly recently. He was the vicar of Christ Church from 1953-1964.
- Pray that the Lord will send to us a Christian worker who would be willing to help with youth work either as a part time worker or church volunteer.
- Pray that the coming Christmas services will bring about another harvest of souls in our Churches.

# LAUGHTER LINES

## Walking on Water



One day a Pastor and his assistant took a visitor fishing on a boat. As soon as they were in the middle of the lake, the Pastor said, "I seem to have forgotten my fishing pole, I'll be right back," and to the visitors amazement he stepped out of the boat and walked on top of the water towards the shore.

When he had returned, the assistant said, "I need to use the restroom, I'll be right back" Again the visitor watched in amazement. As soon as the assistant returned, not wanting to be out-done, the visitor said, " I need to use the restroom too"

Immediately he stepped out of the boat, he sank. The Pastor nudged his assistant and said, "We should have told him where the rocks were"

## Son wants to be a minister

After church on Sunday morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, "Mom, I've decided I'm going to be a minister when I grow up. "

"That's okay with us," the mother said, "but what made you decide to be a minister?"

"Well," the boy replied, "I'll have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell than to sit still and listen."

# LAUGHTER LINES

## **The Lord is My Shepherd**

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her 2 nd grade class memorize Psalm 23, one of the most quoted passages in the Bible. She gave the children a month to learn the chapter.

One little boy was excited about the task, but he just couldn't memorise the Psalm. Although he practised and practised, he could hardly get past the first line. The day came for the children to recite Psalm 23 before the congregation. The little boy was nervous. When his turn came, he stepped up to the microphone and proudly said, "The Lord is my Shepherd and that's all I need to know!"

## **Liquid, Fragile or Perishable?**

When a woman decided to send the old family Bible to her brother in another state, the postal worker asked her if there was anything breakable in the package. "Only the Ten Commandments," she replied.

## **The little boy's prayer**

There were these two boys who lived with their Grandma. They were about to go to bed but before they slept they prayed. The older son started to pray. He prayed about the day he had and about everything he had done. The younger son then started to pray, he prayed much louder than his elder brother, he prayed for bikes and toys. When he finished the older brother asked him, "Why are you praying so loud? God is not deaf!" and the younger son responded, " Yeah but Grandma is"

## REAL PEARLS FOR THE TAKING

The cheerful girl with bouncy curls was almost five. Waiting with her mother at the checkout stand, she saw a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box. "Oh please, Mommy. Can I have them? Please, Mommy, please?" Her mother checked the back of the little foil box and said, "Jenny, these pearls cost \$1.95. If you really want them, I'll think of some extra chores for you to do and raise your allowance. It won't take long for you to save enough money to buy them yourself."

Her mother was right. After only two weeks, Jenny had enough money saved for the pearls. Her mother took her back to the store, where Jenny proudly counted out her money to the cashier. Jenny loved her pearls. They made her feel pretty and grown up. She wore them everywhere—Sunday school, kindergarten, even to bed. The only time she took them off was when she went swimming or took a bubble bath. Her mother said that if they got wet, they might turn her neck green.

Jenny also had a very loving daddy. Every night when she was ready for bed, her daddy would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story. One night when he finished the story, he said to Jenny, "I love you, sweetheart. Do you love me?" "Oh yes, Daddy," Jenny replied. "You know that I love you."

"Then give me your pearls," her father said. Jenny was confused. "Oh, Daddy, not my pearls," she said. "But you can have Princess, the white horse from my collection. Remember, Daddy? The one you gave me last year? She's my favourite." "That's okay, Honey," Jenny's father said. "Daddy loves you. Good night." And he brushed her cheek with a kiss.

About a week later, after story time, Jenny's daddy said once again, "I sure do love you, sweetheart. Do you love me?" "Daddy, you know I love you." "Then give me your pearls."

## Real pearls for the taking

Jenny was confused again. "Oh Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have my baby doll. The brand new one I got for my birthday. She is so beautiful. You can have the yellow blanket that matches her sleeper, too." "That's okay," Jenny's father said. "Daddy loves you. Good night." And as always, he gave her a gentle kiss.

A few nights later when her daddy came in, Jenny was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed. As he came close, he noticed her chin was trembling and one silent tear rolled down her cheek. "What is it, Jenny? What's the matter?"

Jenny didn't say anything, but lifted her little hand up to her daddy. And when she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace. With a little quiver, she finally said, "Here, Daddy, it's for you."

With tears gathering in his own eyes, Jenny's daddy reached out with one hand to take the necklace. With the other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case and gave it to Jenny. When she opened it, she found a beautiful strand of real pearls.

What are you hanging on to? What kind of cheap, dime-store jewellery is preventing you from receiving the blessings that your heavenly Father wants to pour out on you?

Maybe it's your friends that are holding you back and keeping you from being the kind of person God wants you to be. Maybe you're holding onto the fake pearls of popularity or acceptance. You've been desperate to be liked and, until now, have been holding on to fake acceptance from your peers, rather than the unconditional love and unclouded acceptance that God gives.

What's your string of cheap pearls? What feels risky to let go of—even though you know it will be better to go for the perfect pearls?

## Love your enemies (from page 3)

He washed him, waited on him, nursed him in every spare moment he found. Of course the people all noticed this, and tried to guess why Caesar was so devoted to the old man. Finally his master asked, "What connection do you have with that old man? Is he perhaps your father?"

Caesar simply smiled and answered, "No, master, he is not my father." "Well, is he some old heathen friend or relative?" "No, master, he is no relative of mine." "He must be your friend then." "No, master, he is not my friend." "But who in the world is he?" asked the master impatiently.

Caesar's eyes moistened as he said, "He is my enemy. While yet a child, he tore me from my parents and sold me as a slave. But Jesus said I must love my enemy. So, master, I must love my enemy, I must love him. I must."

Paul, who had probably heard about the saying even though he wrote before the gospels were completed, puts an interesting twist on it. Quoting from the book of Proverbs, he says, "If your enemy is hungry feed him, if he is thirsty give him drink."

We can kick and squirm and reinterpret the Lord's words, but when all is said and done we must conclude that Jesus meant what he said. We are to love those who despise us and bless those who curse us. Indeed, it is at this point the Christian ethic is most vividly etched out in a brutal world filled with hate and bitterness; a world just like ours.

Is there someone in your life whom you regard as your enemy? Perhaps this reflection on the words of Jesus is meant for you. We do well to remember that the God who says "Love your enemies" is the same God who said "Let there be light" and there was light! This God brings about his holy and perfect will by calling into being that which did not previously exist: light in darkness, order out of chaos. He will supply the grace you need to carry out His wishes. God bless you.

Dele Agbelusi

# HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE

E-MAIL FROM GOD (9)

File Edit View Options Tools Help



Send



Contacts



Spell



Attach



Security



Save

From:

**GOD, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

To:

**YOU, MY BELOVED CHILD,**

**Jesus prayed, "Father forgive them; they don't know what they're doing."**

Subject:

**I'll help you forgive**

My beloved child,

Are you mad at someone you just don't want to forgive? You know you're right and they're wrong, so why should you let them off the hook?

Think about Jesus on the cross. A supposed friend sold Him out to the cops for money. A mob of religious phonies arrested Him. A small-time ruler pronounced Him guilty even though He was innocent. Cruel soldiers beat Him, spat in His face, and nailed Him to a cross. And the friends who should have stood by Him all ran away.

Yet from the cross, Jesus looked down at all the people who had hurt Him and said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." He wants you to forgive like that. Holding a grudge will only destroy you, not the one you're mad at. I'll help you to forgive.

The great Forgiver  
God.

## 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 trying 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**
- **8.00am.** Holy Communion ( Book of Common Prayer)
  - **10.30am.** Main service with Crèche facilities
- There is family/parade service once every month– usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.
- **6.00pm.** Evening worship (5pm from 25th October)

#### ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

- Sunday - Choir practice in church (**9.30 am**)
- Monday - Baby n' Toddler Group and Brownies - **meetings in church**
- Prayer meetings -2nd and 16thNovember; 7th December (**8 pm**)
- Wednesday - Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (**7:45 pm for 8.00pm start**)
- Friday - Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (**2.00 pm**)
- Scouts meeting in hall and church(**6.30 pm**) -
  - Music Team practice in choir vestry (**6.30 pm**)

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

**Editorial Board:** Iyabo Agbelusi, Sheila Wheeler, Dele Agbelusi

**Voice Edition:** Sheila Wheeler, Peter Green, Dele Agbelusi

**Vicar:** Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi

**Church Wardens:** Peter Green, Mervin Bentham, Charles Murphy

**Lay Preachers:** 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**