



CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX

CROSSLINKS

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



DECEMBER 2006 ISSUE 7.80

Vicar's three minute reflection

LET THE SON COME IN



Fred Buechner writes, "We are, God knows, a people who walk in darkness . . . If darkness is meant to convey a sense of uncertainty, of being lost, of being afraid . . . If darkness suggests conflict between races, nations or individuals . . . If darkness depicts a world where we can't see very well (because of sin), then we know enough about the darkness."

However, God in Christ does not run away from the darkness. God sets up residence right smack in the middle of the darkness. If you have light, then you are not scared or worried about the darkness. In the naked vulnerability of the baby Jesus, God entered the world in the flesh. God came to be with us. For centuries God had tried different ways to reach humanity and build a lasting covenant of love. God had tried the Law, various prophets, priests, and kings. Nothing worked to God's satisfaction. People continued to wander aimlessly, living lives filled with activity but little purpose.

When Jesus was about to be born, the innkeeper claimed that he had no room. Isn't the crowded inn a rather appropriate symbol of our lives? So cluttered (not with important things but with things that don't amount to a hill of beans) that there is just no time, no energy, no money, no room left over. There is just no room in our lives for the Messiah. Luke seems to carry this refrain throughout the ministry of Jesus Christ.

There was no room for Jesus in the economic world: When Jesus commanded the demons to come out of a man in Gadara and into a nearby herd of swine. The pigs immediately stampeded and ran off a cliff and were killed. The man was healed. But what was the response of the community? Did they sing 'praise God from whom all blessings flow?' What they did was to send a committee to Jesus and kindly ask him to get out of town. What really got to them was the fact that Jesus destroyed a herd of swine to heal an outcast in their society. It was quite clear to them that if Jesus lingered a little longer the local economy would be disrupted.



What they wanted was business as usual and not some itinerant miracle worker to disrupt the status quo.

In economic, legal, religious, and political realms—wherever Jesus turned, there was no room for him.

What began first in Bethlehem when the innkeeper turned him away was to become a recurrent theme. Let's look at ourselves. Do we have room for Christ in our lives? When the innkeeper was presented with this unexpected situation that night, he faced what I call our universal dilemma. At that point he became every man. Every man is asked: Do you have room for the Messiah?

So the advent message to us is to watch and wait. Keep our minds and our hearts open for his coming. For the hour approaches when Messiah will come to you and to me. And like the Bethlehem innkeeper we will be forced to make a decision. Will our lives be so cluttered with incidentals that there will be no room for God? Or will we open the door and gladly welcome him in? To the innkeeper, the knock that came that night was just another of a long series of bothersome interruptions. That is how some respond to God in their life. "Yes. Take the stable! Do anything; just leave me alone." God knocks at the door of every heart. The question is—will there be room enough in your life to let him in?

God made Christmas for us. But there is a sense in which all of us have to make our Christmas. All the salvation of God is finished and complete, but it is not mine until I claim it. "No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him still the dear Christ enters in. You are forgiven. You are loved. Peace on earth and goodwill to everyone. Merry Christmas!

Dele Agbelusi

Memory Verse

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6



LAUGHTER TAKES THE EDGE OFF



Once we asked the kids to compile a list of the things we most often say to them. This is what they wrote:

- ◆ I'm not talking just to hear my jaws flap.
- ◆ You just ate.
- ◆ It'll be good for you.
- ◆ Sit back and buckle up.
- ◆ Not another word.
- ◆ I had to walk five miles to school and five miles home and it was uphill both ways!
- ◆ Don't touch each other.
- ◆ There are starving people in Africa.
- ◆ Were you born in a barn?
- ◆ Don't you look at me like that.
- ◆ I'll give you something to cry about.
- ◆ Ask your mother.
- ◆ Ask your father.
- ◆ That drives me nuts.
- ◆ Do you want to live to see your next birthday?
- ◆ If you pick at it--it won't heal.

Humour is the spoonful of sugar that makes the medicine of all our serious parenting efforts more palatable to children.

Then there are the mixed messages like:

- ◆ Shut your mouth and eat.
- ◆ Hurry up and don't run.
- ◆ Don't be smart.
- ◆ Keep quiet and answer me.
- ◆ Tell whoever calls that I am not in.

Has formulating this list caused us to stop saying these things? Of course not. But at least laughing together about them makes it slightly less nausea-provoking to the kids when they're repeated for the eight-zillionth time.

There's no place in parenting for "jokes" that ridicule or put down children. But all kinds of room exists for humour that replaces sarcasm, or diffuses genuine fury. Humour is the spoonful of sugar that makes the medicine of all our serious parenting efforts more palatable to children.

WILL YOU MISS CHRISTMAS?

There's a painting titled "The Census." by Brueghel . It portrays the census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke. The painting shows a huge crowd of people, with a long line waiting to be registered. As you look at the painting you can see busy shops and lots of active people shopping, talking, waiting and all those things people do in a crowd. Your first impression of the painting is that it's just a painting of a crowd-until you look in the lower right-hand corner. There you notice a man pulling a donkey which is carrying a very pregnant woman. It's obviously Joseph and Mary.

If you've ever seen the painting, you realize that it's very easy to miss Mary and Joseph. You have to look hard to find them, because their part seems so insignificant and unimportant in relation to what is going on all around them in the painting. They get lost in the shuffle of the crowd.

That's a very significant observation in the painting. You see, a lot of folks are going to miss Christmas this year. Oh, they'll celebrate Christmas. They'll have a tree, and "Santa" will come to visit. They'll get caught up in the frenzy of shopping, Christmas parties and buying. They will look for comfort and peace but all they'll get is a piece of paper telling them how much they owe MasterCard, Visa, and American Express. Oh, these folks will celebrate Christmas, but they'll miss the real point completely. And what's so sad is that they'll have been so close.

If for some reason you have always thought that the Church is where you come to find out or to be told how bad you are, then I think you're sadly mistaken. **The Church is where we come to find out how good we can be because God loves us.** Christ's coming wasn't a result of our virtue or because we've heaped up such a pile of good deeds. Christ came because we had sinned and drifted away from God, with no means of getting back. (continued on page14)

NOTICE BOARD

**YOU ARE VERY WELCOME TO OUR
CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR SERVICES**

**Sunday 10th December
5.00pm: Evening Worship**

**Sunday 17th December
10.30am: Parish Morning Prayer
3.30pm: Christmas Carols and Nine Lessons**

**Sunday 24th December
10.30am: Parish Morning Prayer
11.15pm: Carols/Midnight Holy Communion**

**Monday 25th December Christmas Day
10.30am: Parish Holy Communion**

**Sunday 31st December
10.30am: End of Year Morning Prayer
11.15pm : New Year's Eve Praise and Worship**

There are Holy Communion Services (BCP) every Sunday at 8.00 am

**God grant you the light in Christmas, which is faith; the
warmth of Christmas, which is love; the radiance of Christmas,
which is purity; the righteousness of Christmas, which is
justice; the belief in Christmas, which is truth;
the all of Christmas, which is Christ.**

Wilda English

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

This month we pray for members of our church family whose surnames begin with C, D, E, F.

Christian Ina; Clarke Joan; Coke Tania; Cole Christine; Collins Marion; Coxall Joan; Crawford Janet; Davies Genevieve; Evans Beverley; Farthing Jenny; Faulkner Emma; Forsdike Jack; Freeburne Vera; Furlong Rosalind.

THE REASON FOR THE SEASON



STORY OF THE MONTH

THE ART AUCTION

Years ago a wealthy man shared a passion for art collecting with his devoted young son. Together they travelled around the world, adding only the finest art treasures to their collection. The widowed elder man looked on with satisfaction as Mark, his only child, became an experienced art collector.

As winter approached, war engulfed their nation, and Mark left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram: his beloved son had died saving the life of a fellow soldier. Distraught and lonely, the old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness.

On Christmas morning a knock on the door awakened the old man. As he walked to the door, the masterpieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home. At the door was a soldier with a large package.

"I was a friend of Mark," the soldier said. "I was the one he rescued. If I may I come in for a few moments, I have something to show you." The two were soon deep in conversation. From the soldier the old man learned that Mark had rescued dozens of wounded soldiers before a bullet stilled his caring heart. The soldier then recounted how often Mark had spoken of his father's love of fine art. Placing the package on the old man's lap, the soldier told him, "I'm an artist. I want you to have this."

The old man unwrapped the package, pulling the paper away to reveal a portrait of his son. The canvas featured the young man's face in striking detail, though the world would never consider the painting the work of a genius. Overcome with emotion, the man thanked the soldier.

Once the soldier had departed, the old man set about hanging the portrait above the fireplace, pushing aside paintings by masters that had cost thousands of dollars. Then seating himself in his chair, he spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been given.

The art auction contd.

The soldier's gift soon became his most prized painting. He told his neighbours it was the greatest gift he had ever received.

The following spring, the old man became ill and passed away. The art world stirred in anticipation of the public auction of the old man's estate. He had stipulated that his collection be sold on Christmas Day—the day he had received his greatest gift. On the appointed day art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on the spectacular paintings.



The auction began with a painting not on any museum's must-have list—the soldier's painting of the old man's son. "May I have an opening bid," the auctioneer requested. The room was silent. "Who will open the bidding with \$100?" he prompted. Minutes passed and still no one spoke.

"Who cares about that painting?" shouted a bidder from the back of the room. "It's just a picture of his son," commented another. More voices echoed agreement. "Let's forget it and go on to the good stuff."

"No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?"

Finally, a friend of the old man spoke. "I'd like to have the painting. I knew the boy. Will you take ten dollars for it? That's all I have." "I have ten dollars," called the auctioneer. "Will anyone go higher?" More silence. "Going once." The auctioneer raised the gavel. "Going twice," he said looking around for any takers. "Gone," he said at last, letting the gavel fall.

Cheers filled the room. "Now we can get on with bidding on these treasures!" remarked the man from the back of the room.

(continued on page 12)

LAUGHTER LINES

SILENT NIGHT

A little boy and girl were singing their favourite Christmas carol, "Silent Night." The boy concluded the rendition with the words, "Sleep in heavenly beans." His sister quickly corrected him: "It's not beans, it's peas."



Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, Michael Green, ed., 1989,

DRIVING PERMIT

A young boy had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a minister, if they could discuss his use of the car. His father said to him, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study your bible a little, and get your hair cut, then we will talk about it."

A month later the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss his use of the car. His father said, "Son, I'm real proud of you. You have brought your grades up, and studied your bible diligently, but you didn't get your hair cut!"

The young man waited a moment and replied, "You know dad, I've been thinking about that. You know Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair."

His father replied, "Yes my son... and they **walked everywhere** they went!"

COME IN

An exasperated mother, whose son was always getting into mischief, finally asked him, "Tommy, how do you expect to get into heaven someday?" The boy thought it over and explained, "Well, I'll just run in and out and in and out and keep slamming the gate until St. Peter says, 'For heaven's sake, Tommy, come in or stay out.'"

LAUGHTER LINES

THEY THINK GOD IS MISSING!

Two little boys, ages 8 and 10, are excessively mischievous. They are always getting into trouble and if any mischief occurs in their neighbourhood, the two boys are probably involved. Following yet another incident, the boys' mother heard that the local vicar had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The vicar agreed, but he asked to see the boys individually. So the mother sent the 8 year old first, in the morning. The vicar, a huge man with a booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, "Do you know where God is, young man?" The boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response, sitting there wide-eyed with his mouth hanging open. So the vicar repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "Do you know where God is??" Again, the boy made no attempt to answer. The vicar got sterner: "Do you know where God is?" but the boy screamed and bolted from the room. He ran directly home and dived into the wardrobe, slamming the door behind him. When his older brother found him hiding in the wardrobe, he asked what had happened. The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied, **"We are in BIG trouble this time - they think God is missing, and that we did it."**

From: Dave_Hughes@birmingham.gov.uk

GLORIA PATRIA

While walking up the front lane to his house, Pastor Norris of First Church heard the intoning of a prayer that nearly wilted his collar. His five-year-old son and his playmates had found a dead bird and were giving it a Christian funeral. The burial spot was dug, and the minister's son was selected to say the appropriate prayer. So, with dignity he intoned his version of what he thought his father always said, "Glory be to the Faaaather, and to the Sonnnn... and into the hole you gooo."

© The Worlds greatest Collection of Church Jokes.

The art auction contd. (from page 9)

Over the microphone the auctioneer said. "Thank you for coming. The auction is now over." Stunned disbelief quieted the room. "What do you mean it's over?" growled an irate bidder. "We didn't come here for a picture of some old guy's son!" said another. "What about all of these other paintings?" shouted the irate bidder coming to his feet. "There are millions of dollars of art here! I demand that you explain what's going on!" "It's very simple," replied the auctioneer. **"According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son...gets it all."**

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And that is the will of the Father today. Whoever takes the Son...gets it all. When you take Christ as Saviour, you will have the riches of life to its fullest (John 10:10). Jesus is God's greatest treasure, his "pearl of great price" (Matthew 13:45-46). When Jesus comes into your life, you become a joint heir with Him, sharing in all that pertains to Him, including the Cross. Jesus is God's gift to you, will you say Yes to Him today?

Quotable Quotes

Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it reaches the heart of man.

Christmas is based on an exchange of gifts: the gift of God to man-His Son; and the gift of man to God-when we first give ourselves to God.

Vance Havner

Christmas is not a date. It is a state of mind.

Mary Ellen Chase (1887-1973)

KIDS ADVICE

- ◆ Never trust a dog to watch your food: Patrick (10)
- ◆ When your dad is mad and asks you, 'Do I look stupid?' don't answer him: Michael (12)
- ◆ Felt markers are not good to use as lipstick: Lauren (9)
- ◆ When you get a bad grade in school, show it to your mum when she's on the phone: Alyesha (13)
- ◆ Never tell your mum her diet is not working: Nathaniel (10)
- ◆ Don't pull dad's finger when he tells you to: Emily (10)
- ◆ When your mum is mad at your dad don't let her brush your hair: Kimberly (11)
- ◆ Never try to baptise a cat: Elaine (11)

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



As hard as it is to Christmas shop, you still give good presents. How much more will your Father in Heaven give good things to those who ask him.
Mt 7:11 (CIV) Christmas International Version

Will you miss Christmas? (from page 5)

The first Christmas was an event that people had been waiting for, for ages. It was an event that God had been preparing the world for, through Israel, for generations. And when it came in all of its glory, everybody missed it, except for a few lowly shepherds, a trio of foreign astrologers and an evil king who tried to end it all. It went almost as unnoticed as Joseph and Mary in the painting "The Census." Why? Because they were looking in all the wrong places.

Will you miss Christmas this year? Will you look in all the wrong places? Start your search in a stable. Don't look up, unless it's to follow a star to Bethlehem. Don't miss Christmas! Prepare yourself. As Matthew 24:44 says: "Be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." Open your heart, open your eyes. "Be ready." D.A.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS from

Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi and the Editorial Board of Crosslinks

**Every good and perfect gift is from
above, coming down from the Father
of the heavenly lights...**

James 1:17



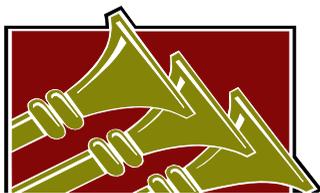
Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift in Christ Jesus!

THE GREATEST GIFT

There's a gift not wrapped beautifully
And placed beneath a tree,
Nor is this gift expensive;
It is priceless, yet it's free.
It's a gift that's far more precious
Than the purest chain of gold;
It's reserved not just for Christmas
And received by young and old.
It's a gift that never gets too old;
It's discovered fresh and new,
A gift that's not forgotten
After use a year or two.
A gift that never can be bought
By riches or great price,
A gift that's only paid for
By the precious blood of Christ.
And this gift that God has given
Is salvation full and free,
And when you have accepted it,
You'll be thankful when you see
That at this Christmas season,
With this thought your heart will lift,
For you'll know that you've been given
By far the Greatest Gift.

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

Cherilyn Costella



**Because Jesus lives, I can
face tomorrow.**

Motto /Text for the year
"I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES
ME STRENGTH" *PHIL. 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.

- **5.00pm.** Evening worship

ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

- Monday - Baby n' Toddler Group (**10.00 am to 12 noon**) -Term time only
- Brownies meeting in Church (**5.30 pm**)
- Next Prayer meetings 18th December, 15th & 29th January 07 (**8pm**)
- Wednesday - Bible Fellowship in the Hall (**7:30pm**)
- Friday - Home Group at Flat 10, 3 Waverley Road, N8 (**2.30 pm**)
- Scouts meeting in church and hall (**6.00 pm**)

Enquiry/Counselling - please phone 020 8340 1566

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Church Wardens: Peter Green, Charles Murphy

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YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

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