



CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS

DO YOU HAVE ROOM FOR CHRIST?

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



DECEMBER 2007 ISSUE 8.91

Vicar's three minute reflection
DON'T KEEP CHRIST OUT OF CHRISTMAS



Christmas is a time of giving gifts, not just in the ordinary sense of packages under the tree and shopping lists but in the extraordinary sense that Christmas is the time that God gave. He gave us His very best. He took on our form and became man. He gave us Himself!

Jesus is not to us as Christmas is to the world, here today and gone tomorrow. He is God with us. To remain with us. To share our humanness and pain. And to lead us back to God through His ultimate sacrifice of himself.

Whether he was born in 4 B.C. or A.D. 6, in Bethlehem or Nazareth, whether there were multitudes of the heavenly host to sing glorious hymns to God or just Mary and her husband--when the child was born, the whole course of human history was changed. That is a truth as unassailable as any truth. It is impossible to conceive how differently things would have turned out if that birth had not happened whenever, wherever, however it did. And there is a truth beyond that: for millions of people who have believed since, the birth of Jesus made possible not just a new way of understanding life but a new way of living it. His birth drew a line in world history, just as it does in the history of many people who have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. They can say with confidence "before Jesus came into my life, I was this and that... but after He came in I became this and that." That is the testimony of many millions today who know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

**May the overcoats of
materialism,
tradition, and schedules not
smother the very reason for
the Christmas
season.**

All we could ever imagine, could ever hope for, He is. ... He is the Prince of Peace whose first coming has already transformed society but whose second coming will forever establish justice and righteousness. All this, and infinitely more, are alive in an impoverished baby in a barn. That is what Christmas means--to find in a place where you would least expect to find anything you want, everything you could ever want.



Let us not fall prey to the devices of Satan who would want the world to think of Christmas as a time of eating, drinking, spending, making money and ensuring that the name and person of Jesus is tucked far away where it would not come into contact with the “festivities”.

Luis Palau tells the story of a wealthy European family who decided to have their newborn baby baptized in their enormous mansion. Dozens of guests were invited to the event, and they all arrived in the latest of fashion.

After depositing their elegant coats on a bed in an upstairs room, the guests were entertained like royalty. Soon the time came for the main purpose of the evening, the infant's baptism. When they asked for the child, no one seemed to know of his whereabouts. Panic ensued as they desperately searched for the baby. In a few minutes the child was found--buried underneath all the coats, jackets, and furs. The very object of the day's celebration had been forgotten, neglected, and nearly smothered. May the overcoats of materialism, tradition, and schedules not smother the very reason for the Christmas season.

Dele Agbelusi

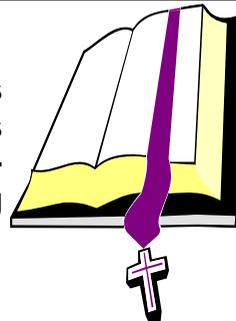
Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it reaches the heart of man.

Christmas is based on an exchange of gifts: the gift of God to man--His Son; and the gift of man to God in worship and obedience.

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





IF JESUS COMES TO YOUR HOUSE

If Jesus Christ came to your house
To spend a day or two,
If he came unexpectedly
I wonder what you'd do?

I know you'd give the nicest room
To such an honoured guest
And all the food you'd serve to him
would be the very best.

You'd keep on reassuring him
You were glad to have him there,
That serving him in your own home
Is joy beyond compare.

But when you saw him coming
Would your welcome be sincere,
Or deep down would you worry
That this man had come too near?

Or would you have a change of clothes
Before you let him in
Or hide some magazines
And put a bible where they'd been?

Would you turn off the video
And hope he had not seen
the picture that was showing
on your Nicam TV screen?

Would you hide your world of music,
Tuck your CDs out of sight?
Would you rush about and tidy
Other things that were not right?

I wonder if the Saviour
Spent a day or two with you
Would you choose to keep on doing
All those things you often do?

Would you choose to
keep on saying
All those things you often
say?

Would life for you continue
As it does from day to day?

Would your family conversation lull
Or keep its usual pace
And would you find it hard each meal
To say a table grace?

Would you sing the songs you always
sing?

And read the books you always read
And let him know the things
On which your mind and spirit feed?

Would you take Jesus with you
Everywhere you plan to go
Or would you, maybe change your plans
For just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have him
Meet your very closest friends
Or would you hope they'd stay away
Until his visit ends?

Would you be glad to have him
Stay for ever, on and on
Or would you sigh with great relief
When he at last was gone?

It might be interesting to know
The things that you would do
If Jesus came in person
And spent some time with you.

Anon



A STRANGER AT THE DOOR

It was a snowy Christmas Eve. Inside the warm house, the Christmas tree was cheerfully ablaze with lights... The man's wife and children were dressed and ready to leave for church. "Come with us," they urged, for they loved him.

"Not me," he snapped. "I don't believe all that religion garbage." For many years the man's wife had been trying to tell him about Jesus Christ. How God's Son had become a human being in order to save us and show us the way God. "Nonsense," the man always said. The family left for church and the man was all alone in his cozy country home. He glanced out the window at the cold snowy scene outside. He turned to warm himself by the fire.

But as he turned, his eyes caught a movement in the snow outside. He looked. Cats! Three young cats walking slowly past his window. "The fools," he thought. "They'll freeze for sure!" The man put on his hat and coat and opened the door. "Come here, cats! Come inside where there's warmth and food. You'll die out there." But the cats ran away, frightened by the stranger at the door.

He walked outside. "Come back! Don't be afraid, I want to save you." But the cats were gone. It was too late. "Well, I did everything I could for them," the man muttered to himself. "What more could I do? I'd have to become a cat myself in order to reach them and save them. If I became a cat, I could tell them and show them. They would have to believe me then, unless they were fools."

Just as he reached the door, the church bells rang in the distance. The man paused for a second and listened. Then he went in by the fire, got down on his knees, and wept.

And that is what the Christmas story is all about. The Creator of the universe loved us so much that he came to earth to show us how to be saved. And if we listen to him and follow him, we will not perish, but instead will be given everlasting life. (John 3:16; Philippians 2:6-8).

From Youth Specialties

CHRISTMAS SONG

Let me tell you a beautiful old **CHRISTMAS** legend... the ancient legend tells of how God called the angels of heaven together one day for a special choir rehearsal. He told them that he had a special song that he wanted them to learn... a song that they would sing at a very significant occasion. The angels went to work on it. They rehearsed long and hard... with great focus and intensity. In fact, some of the angels grumbled a bit... but God insisted on a very high standard for his choir.

As time passed, the choir improved in tone, in rhythm, and in quality. Finally God announced that they were ready... but then, he shocked them a bit. He told them that they would sing the song only once... and only on one night. There would be just one performance of this great song they had worked on so diligently. Again, some of the angels grumbled. The song was so extraordinarily beautiful... surely, they could sing it many, many times.

**The earth must
do the singing of
His birth.**

Then one night, God called them together. He gathered them above a field just outside of Bethlehem. "It's time," God said to them... and the angels sang their song. O my, did they sing it! "Glory to God in the highest... and on earth peace and good will toward all..." **And as the angels sang, they knew there would never be another night like this one, and that there would never be another birth like this birth in Bethlehem.**

When the angels returned to heaven, God reminded them that they would not formally sing that song again as an angelic choir, but if they wanted to, they could hum the song occasionally as individuals. One angel was bold enough to step forward and ask God why. Why could they not sing that majestic anthem again? They did it so well. It felt so right. Why couldn't they sing that great song anymore? "Because," God explained, "my Son has been born... and now earth must do the singing!"



NOTICE BOARD

Christ Church Needs Your Help!!!

It has been over eight years since the internal decoration in the church has been IN NEED OF RESTORATION. These soft cries began with the flaking paints which were followed immediately by cracks in the plaster. We carried out some temporary works which revealed that a lot more work was required. Our wooden floor and public address system also require an upgrade, as well as the belfry which needs protection from the pigeons.

We must rise up now to restore the worship area to its former glory, that expresses our love for God. The estimated cost of the works is £65,000, and we intend to commence works in February/March 2008.

We will appreciate your donation towards this project. "You are so rich in all you have: in faith, speech, and knowledge, in your eagerness to help and in your love for us. And we want you to be generous also in this service of love" (2 Corinthians 8:7).

Please send your cheque/s to Christ Church PCC (decoration).
C/o The Vicarage, 32 Crescent Road, London, N8 8AX.

Thank you and God bless you.

Rev Canon Dele Agbelusi
Vicar



THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

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

Daniels Olufunmilayo; Davies Genevieve; Dolan Angela;
Dunnage Barry; Evans Beverley; Evetts Richard, Farthing Jenny;
Faulkner Emma; Forsdike Jack; Freeburne Vera; Fujisaki Yumie;
Furlong Rosalind.

EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT

Messianic Prophecy

No ambassador from one nation to another would simply show up in its capital city without some advance introduction. Just so, we may expect that if God planned to enter the human race, He would earlier describe the credentials that we could look for. Thus, flowing out of these same prophetic writings have been the prophecies of a coming Messiah. Jesus said that the Hebrew Scriptures spoke of him (John 5:39); and sixty-one to seventy-one of the Messianic prophecies, depending on the methods of counting, were fulfilled in the birth, life, and death of Jesus. The odds that one person could fortuitously fulfil even half of these by sheer chance are so remote as to be unthinkable. Yet, when we eliminate all prophecies that he conceivably could have fulfilled by manipulating circumstances, we still could account for more than half. It is not easy to arrange for one's birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Luke 2: 4-7) or to belong to the lineage of the House of David (Jeremiah. 23:5; Luke 2:23, 31). Thus the prophecies that could not be engineered increase, and taken together, offer our time-locked minds further evidence of a dimension beyond the natural.

DO YOU KNOW THIS JESUS?

He wrote on Bethlehem the story of His birth, on Nazareth the story of His manhood, on the mountain side the story of His prayers, on Capernaum the story of His mighty works, on Olivet the story of His tears, on Gethsemane the story of a broken heart, on Calvary the story of a finished work, on the throne of God the story of the world's redemption, and He writes on human hearts the story of divine love and peace.

WISE SAYINGS FOR TROUBLED TIMES

Christmas Sayings From Robert C. Shannon

In the Indian Ocean there is a Christmas Island; an almost lost, isolated speck of land. There is another Christmas Island, an equally isolated speck of land almost lost in the Pacific Ocean. Christmas is always an island; an island of hope in a world of despair, an island of love in a world of indifference, an island of giving in a self-centered world. Come to Christmas Island!

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The Muslim calendar is dated from the Hegira, when Mohammed fled to Medina to escape persecution. Our calendar is also dated from a journey, but it was not a journey to flee persecution. Christ willingly made the journey from Heaven to earth, and when his time had come, willingly went to the cross to die at the hands of his enemies.



### CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE VICAR AND EDITORIAL TEAM OF CROSSLINKS

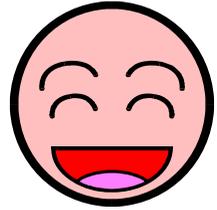
May God grant you the light in Christmas, which is faith; the warmth of Christmas, which is love; the radiance of Christmas, which is purity; the righteousness of Christmas, which is justice; the belief in Christmas, which is truth; the all of Christmas, which is Christ.



# LAUGHTER LINES

## OLD AGE AS I UNDERSTAND IT

A little girl was sitting on her grandfather's lap as he read her a bedtime story. From time to time, she would take her eyes off the book and reach up to touch his wrinkled cheek. She was alternately stroking her own cheek, then his again. Finally she spoke up, "Grandpa, did God make you?"



"Yes, sweetheart," he answered, "God made me a long time ago." "Oh," she paused, "grandpa, did God make me too?"

"Yes, indeed, honey," he said, "God made you just a little while ago."

Feeling their respective faces again, she observed, "God's getting better at it, isn't he?"

## MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

The young couple invited their elderly preacher for Sunday dinner. While they were in the kitchen preparing the meal, the minister asked their son what they were having. "Goat," the little boy replied.

"Goat?" replied the startled man of the cloth, "Are you sure about that?"

"Yep," said the youngster. "I heard Dad say to Mom, 'Today is just as good as any to have the old goat for dinner.'"

## PRAYERS TO GOD FROM THE YOUNG ONES

Dear God,

Thank you for the baby brother but what I asked for was a puppy. I never asked for anything before. You can look it up. Joyce

Dear God,

I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday night. That was really cool. Thomas

Dear God,

please put another holiday between October and Christmas. There is nothing good in there now. Amanda

## LAUGHTER LINES

### WHAT HAS CHRISTIANITY GOT TO DO WITH CHRISTMAS!!!

Christmas is celebrated the world over, but millions who celebrate the day are ignorant of its meaning.

A young woman went into a local bookshop and was looking through the Christmas cards. Suddenly she threw down the one she held in her hand and said to her friend as she stamped out of the shop, "Imagine bringing religion into Christmas!"

### DON'T SPOIL OUR FUN.

Two women were viewing the window of a departmental store in which there was a display of Christmas gifts and in the centre a painting of the 'young child', Jesus. One remarked to the other, "I suppose those religious fanatics are going to try to cram Christianity into Christmas and spoil our fun."

From the collections of A. Naismith

### GET THEE BEHIND ME SATAN

The young minister's wife had just returned from a visit to the sales with a smart two-piece outfit. Her husband remonstrated with her, saying that on his salary they could not afford it. She replied that she appreciated the fact, but the outfit had been a bargain and she had been tempted. "In that case," said her husband severely, "you should have said, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'"

"Oh, but I did," responded his wife, "and that was when Satan said, 'It's a perfect fit at the back, madam.'"



## STORY OF THE MONTH

### THE WORD BECAME FLESH

People came early one Christmas Eve for the 11 P.M. service at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City. Among them was a recovering alcoholic, six months sober, who slipped into the eleventh row. This was his first Christmas since having lost his family. A family of four sat down two rows in front of him. Seeing them together was crushing. He decided he couldn't handle it--he had to have a drink.



As he moved from the sanctuary to the nave, he ran into Pastor Thomas Tewell. "Jim, where are you going?" the pastor asked. "Oh, I'm just going out for a Scotch," Jim replied. "Jim, you can't do that," the pastor responded. He knew that Jim was a recovering alcoholic. "Is your sponsor available?" Jim replied, "It's Christmas Eve. My sponsor is in Minnesota. There's nobody who can help me. I just came tonight for a word of hope, and I ended up sitting behind this family. If I had my life together, I'd be here with my wife and Kids too."

Pastor Tewell took Jim into the vestry to talk with a couple of other pastors. Then he slipped into the auditorium, having no idea what to do. He whispered a prayer: "O God, could you give me a word of hope for Jim?" He welcomed everyone and told them about the church. Then he said, "I have one final announcement. If anyone here tonight is a friend of Bill Wilson--and if you are, you'll know it--could you step out for a moment and meet me in the vestry?" From all over the sanctuary, women, men, and college students arose and made their way out. "And there while I was preaching in the sanctuary about incarnation," said Pastor Tewell, "the Word was becoming flesh in the vestry. Someone was experiencing hope."

Bill Wilson, better known as Bill W., is a cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous.  
Adapted from Dr. Thomas Tewell, *The Communicator's Companion*

## ZECHARIAH AND ELIZABETH: LUKE 1: 5-25

This couple loved the Lord and loved each other and spent all their lives serving the Lord faithfully. When the blessing of the womb could no longer be taken for granted, this couple did the right thing - pray to God for a child. They had faith in God and that reflected in their commitment to each other. Zechariah could have married another woman, but he chose to leave the matter in the able hands of God. Now that they were old and beyond child bearing, God appears to inform Zechariah that **"your prayer has been heard"** (verses 13). This couple must have prayed for 30 years or more.

When did God hear their prayer and why did He take so long to respond? Was God late? No! Right from the first time they united in prayer for a child, God heard them but He had a time table when the child will be born. Faith kept them on their knees all this while until God brought about the answer to their prayers. What have you been praying to God for that the answer has not been manifested? As long as that need is in line with His will, you need to hold on and also pray for patience for His timing. It takes great faith to keep on trusting the Lord when the answer is being delayed than when we get our answers instantaneously. God's timing always reveals our faith or the lack of it.

Sunday and Grace Bwanhot



## A TIMELY MESSAGE FROM GOD (Isaiah 11)

Christmas is the time of year for sending messages. Messages are important, and for many of us, Christmas is the only time in the year when we hear from old and distant friends. Christmas is a time when God sends a message to the world as well, and these words from Isaiah bring us a message from the Lord that we long to hear.

This ancient prophet was called upon to be God's message-bearer to a people who had lived in despair and misery as captives of the Babylonians. Isaiah was chosen of God to bring a message of good news, and the prophet's beautiful vision may well be the same kind of message God wishes to send to us in this Advent Season.

Isaiah's first words are words of hope in the midst of despairing times: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse ...." Now this hope is good news for the poor, the meek and the oppressed, and bad news for the unrighteous, the sinful and the oppressors. The hope that God promises in the midst of despair is a message that forces us to see our world for what it has become in its brokenness and sinfulness.

Let's not pretty up God's Christmas greeting so much that we miss the real reason why Christ came into our broken world. Christ came as the fulfilment of Isaiah's vision of a whole new order. Christ came to change both the hearts of humankind and the society in which we live. Christ came to call us to repentance and to turn us away from all the lesser gods who have usurped the place of the Living God on the throne of our hearts. That's the real hope that God has always offered to a world in the midst of despair. It's a hope that calls us in this Advent season to get ready for the King who is coming.

But like the Hebrews of old, we can dismiss this hope as something in the far distant future I wonder if it is not our human tendency to push hope into some far distant future that causes us to miss the fulfillment of so many of God's great promises to us. So often God's answers to our cries for help and deliverance come in a form we could never imagine. Isaiah's message from God not only brings the hope of a new order

(continued on page 15)

## A timely message from God (Isaiah 11)

but a description of a world where justice rules, and where the whole of creation lives in peace and harmony. Our difficulty in catching hold of Isaiah's vision of peace may rest in our misunderstanding of what the peace of God really is. The Bible's understanding of peace is not an absence of conflict, but a sustaining presence within our troubled lives that keeps us safe and secure in the midst of turbulence. God's Christmas message to you and to me is that we can know that peace through the presence of Jesus Christ in our daily lives. In Him our broken, troubled world catches a glimpse of a time to come when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.



A pastor whose story touched my life in a very significant way lost an eye during the Second World War. He ended up being taken prisoner on Christmas Eve by German forces. Taken to a field hospital, it seemed as if nothing could ease the terrible pain in his eye, nor the empty loneliness he felt in his heart. It was Christmas Eve, but there was no peace on earth. He lay in the midst of wounded, dying men wondering if he would ever see another Christmas Day.

And then a hand reached out from the cot next to his, and a wounded German soldier tried to say something to him. He could not understand the words, but suddenly he realized that the German was singing. In a voice filled with the anguish of his own pain, this German was singing the words, "Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright." Slowly those patients who could, began to sing as well, and before long the guards, the doctors and the nurses lifted up their voices in praise to the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace. It was one of those incredible moments when like Isaiah of old, we can glimpse a world where the power of God's love is greater than human hatred.

That message of hope and of peace is God's Christmas greeting to you and to me. It's a message of good news to a world often filled with bad news. More than that, it's a Christmas message that can change your life!

D.A.

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/6.00pm.** 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 7th & 21st January 2008 (**8pm**)  
Wednesday - Bible Fellowship in the Hall - To resume 9th January(**7:45pm**)  
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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**YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME**

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