



CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX

CROSSLINKS

COME O HOLY SPIRIT COME

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



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Vicar's three minute reflection "WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT I AM A MESS"



A ship strayed off course near San Diego some years back. It became stuck in a reef at low tide. Twelve tugboats were unsuccessful in their attempts to dislodge it. Finally, the captain instructed the tugs to go back home. He sighed, "I'll just be patient and wait." He waited until high tide. All of a sudden the ocean began to rise. What human power could not do, the rising tide of the Pacific Ocean did. It lifted that ship and put it back into the channel.

Something like that happened to the early church on the Day of Pentecost. They were all together in one place, confused, unmotivated and fearful when suddenly the tide of God rolled in. There was such turmoil that some

"without the Holy Spirit, I'm a mess. With the Holy Spirit I'm a message!"

supposed that the disciples were drunk. It fell upon Simon Peter to explain to the crowd what was occurring. They were not drunk, he said. God was pouring out His Spirit on His people. And Peter began telling the good news of Jesus. When he had finished, about three thousand souls were added to the church. How I long to have such excitement in the church again! How I long for the mighty tide of God to roll in once more.

Just consider the changes that Pentecost brought about in the disciples. The fearful became fearless. Facing the very same Jewish Council which had condemned Jesus, Simon Peter indicted them all for executing Jesus. When the Council warned the disciples not to teach in Jesus' name, Simon Peter replied, "We must obey God rather than men." Those disciples stood like steers in a blizzard, refusing to be intimidated. When Simon Peter and John were beaten within an inch of their lives, they rejoiced over the privilege of suffering for Jesus. The amplified Bible says, They were dignified by the indignity. The wimps had become warriors! And as persecution forced them out of Jerusalem, they just told the story over a wider area. The great missionary to India, E. Stanley Jones, was fond of saying, "without the Holy Spirit, I'm a mess. With the Holy Spirit I'm a message!"



At Pentecost God entrusted the Gospel to a motley crew so obviously under-qualified that anybody with common sense would know that the power came from God.

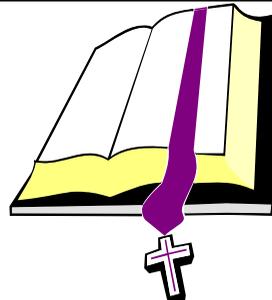
Remember, if you are not attempting something that you could not possibly achieve without God's help you are not likely to solicit help from the Holy Spirit. But God wants you to live over your head, borne on the wings of the Spirit. **There are miracles God wants you to witness. There are scars He wants to remove, ministries He wants you to discover, fractured relationships He wants to reconcile. The question is: Do you have enough faith to take on something that looks impossible?**

Finally, make it a habit to tell people that you're living on borrowed power and when they ask, tell them where the power comes from– the Spirit of Jesus. Notice in Acts 2 verse 11 what the disciples were telling people on the day of Pentecost: They weren't discussing their own credentials. They were proclaiming God's mighty acts. **Oftentimes, people say that the hope of the Church is the young adult. I would rather say, the hope of the Church is the Holy Spirit.** When He is at work in the Church, He sets the hearts of young and old on fire for the Lord. He unbolts the door behind which the church is taking refuge from the world and lets them out to challenge the world in His power. God and God alone can save a soul, transform a life, change a city, and renew a denomination. Let us return to the Lord and look up to Him to renew us, empower us, guide us and fill us daily with His Holy Spirit so that we will have the mind of Christ concerning His created world. Dele Agbelusi

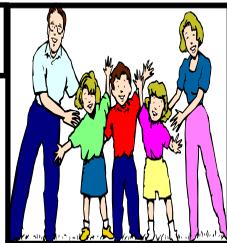
Memory Verse

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8



WHEN A MAN FAILS TO LEAD



It is the basic nature of a man to assume leadership—to be a *do-er*. Immediately, you may think of many men who are passive. For these men, according to some psychologists, passivity can be a means not of leading but of control or manipulation—what is known as *passive-aggressive* behaviour.

James Walker in his book, "When man fails to lead" says "There are two parts to handling the problem of a withdrawn man. The first is to commit yourself to the process of helping him emerge into his God-given role. And the second is to build for yourself a strong relationship with the Lord from which to draw strength while the emerging process is working".

How does a wife enter into the process of helping her "withdrawn man" come out of himself? The first part of her task is to build the skill of "active listening."

Most of us assume that communication involves talking, but it also requires listening and looking. Women are notoriously good listeners—at least during courtship. But many times, this crucial skill is lost and forgotten after marriage.

True listening involves far more than waiting to talk. It involves picking up clues in an attempt to understand the reasons *behind* what is said and what is left unsaid. Often, a wife is at loss for what to say to a husband who is silent. Many ask, in frustration, "How do you listen to a stone?" You don't. But neither do you try to forcefully penetrate a stone by talking at it.

A wife can, however, show her husband that she cares about what he's going through. And this can be done *non-verbally* in as many creative ways as you can imagine.

She can approach her silent husband, who has slouched in an easy chair, with a snack and the evening newspaper. She can stand quietly beside him, rub his neck and communicate without speaking "I love you. You've come to the right place after a tough day."

This can work in reverse, too. Instead of *telling* her stone-silent mate about all the pressures of her day—which will likely drive him deeper into detached silence and the wife deeper into frustration—she can try this: "Honey, I've had a rough day. Would you massage my shoulders and help me relax?" If you cannot get a listening ear, you can at least have the comfort of his warm, relaxing touch. In fact, he may be withdrawn because he has had his confidence shaken, has seen his dreams shattered, or has spent his day feeling defeated.

When a man fails to lead

As a result, he needs a safe place to go, and home should be that place.

When you listen, what do you listen for? What is he running from? The desire to escape pain is a tremendous motivator for many men. For a man, one of the greatest sources of inner pain is the lack of success or outright failure. Even men who have a strong belief in God are not immune from this male trait.

There can also be another side to the withdrawn man. When he isn't immersed in silence, he may be demanding and critical. Having lost the battle in his working world, he may turn his attention to the one place he still seeks to prove his dominance—his own home.

Another sign that a man feels his failure has thrown his life “out of control” is that he will take only “safe” tasks. Why should he attempt something that carries with it the uncertainty of risk?

The actions—and more importantly, the *reactions*—of a woman whose husband is undergoing a crisis are critical. It doesn't help to say, “My husband knows the Lord. Why doesn't he just pray?” The facts are that Christ has given each of us a ministry, and the wife may be the only expression of God's love that her husband can see during his most trying times!

Now, I'm not suggesting that a woman should overlook or ignore her own needs when trying to help her husband out of a time of emotional withdrawal. In fact, while she's learning to listen and to wisely communicate her love in practical ways, she must not neglect her own emotional and spiritual needs. If a wife is to have a major impact, she must ask God for the wisdom to help her to focus her husband on *hope*.

Many women wrongly assume that their withdrawn man is so confident in himself that he is withdrawn in silence because he doesn't need her at all. This is often a very wrong assumption. Having said all the above, a woman can be creative as she goes about this task:

Keep a prayer dairy and keep track of the ways God is answering prayer.

Find something he has done in the past which is paying off now. (I'm grateful you built that barbecue. We're getting so much good use out of it this summer).

Thank him for the smallest deed as soon as possible. This will help in no small way to build his confidence.

I hope we will have space sometime in the future to write about wives who won't follow.

D.A.

THE BOOK OF ACTS

ACROSS

- 3 He was chosen to replace Judas (1:23-26)
- 4 Sailed to Syria with Paul and her husband (18:2)
- 5 Seller of purple cloth (16:14-15)
- 7 Died because he kept money (5:1-5)
- 8 Tabitha is translated as ___ in Greek (6:36)
- 11 He brought Saul to the apostles (9:27)
- 13 Paul's ___ warned him of Jews' plot (23:16)
- 16 Paul raised him from the dead (20:9-12)
- 19 He had Peter put in prison (12:1-5)
- 21 Jesus told his disciples to wait for ___ (1:4-8)
- 22 Chief ruler of synagogue (18:8)
- 24 He baptised an Ethiopian eunuch (8:38)
- 26 Whom Paul stayed with in Corinth (18:1-3)
- 28 House where Peter gave gospel (10:24-48)

DOWN

- 1 They wept when Peter left them (20:37)
- 2 Son of a believer and a Greek (16:1)
- 3 Paul was shipwrecked here (27:44-28:1)
- 6 Saul was converted on the way to _ (9:3)
- 9 Martyred by being stoned (7:57-60)
- 10 An apostle who was put in prison (4:3)
- 12 Where disciples were called Christians (11:26)
- 14 A Jew from Alexandra (18:24)
- 15 Where Paul taught Greeks gospel (17:19-31)
- 17 Disciple raised from dead (9:36-41)
- 18 Disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit (2:1-4)
- 20 Paul was born here (22:3)
- 23 Prayed and sang to prisoners (16:25)
- 25 He saw a vision while on roof (10:9-11)
- 27 ___ Jews plotted to kill Paul (23:12-13)

NOTICE BOARD

YOUTH WORKER

The church is looking for a Christian youth worker who loves the Lord passionately and is able to work with the church's team to develop our Youth and Community ministry. The applicant is expected to put in up to 17 hours a week, Sundays inclusive. Please contact the vicar for more information on 020 8340 1566.

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### CHRIST CHURCH SUMMER FETE AND BARBEQUE

Sunday 16 July 2006

12 noon - 3.30pm

LOTS OF FUN!!!

**MUSIC! FOOD! GAMES! DRAMA! QUIZ! BRIC-A-BRAC!**

#### TICKETS:

**Adults-£5; Family Pack-£10; Concession-£2.50**

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CONGRATULATIONS

Andrew Myers-Nobbs has been appointed District Commissioner Haringey Scouts Movement. He takes over from Bob Mole who resigned due to family reasons. We wish Andrew a successful tenure and Bob Mole God's abiding presence.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

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

Carr Sarah; Christian Ina; Clarke Joan; Coke Tania; Cole Christine; Collins Marion; Coxall Joan; Crawford Janet; Davies Genevieve; Edwards Andrea & Paul; Evans Beverley; Farthing Jeannette; Faulkner Emma; Forsdike Jack; Freeburne Vera; Furlong Rosalind; Gallagher Denise; Goldson Barrington & Sharon; Greaves Sonia; Green Peter; Green Jasmine; Green Rosanne; Greenaway Catherine; Gregory Teresa.

A BEAUTIFUL PRAYER

I ask God to take away my habit.

God said, No.

It is not for me to take away, but for you to give it up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole.

God said, No.

His spirit is whole, his body is only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience.

God said, No.

Patience is a by-product of tribulations;

It isn't granted, it is learned.

I asked God to give me happiness.

God said, No.

I give blessings; Happiness is up to you.

I asked God to spare me pain.

God said, No.

Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares
and brings you closer to me.

I asked God to make my spirit grow.

God said, No.

You must grow on your own!

but I will prune you to make you fruitful.

I asked God for all things that I might enjoy life.

God said, No.

I will give you life, so that you may enjoy all things.

I asked God to help me love others, as much as He loves me.

God said ... Ahhhh, finally you have the idea.

Author unknown

Submitted by Richard Mercer

OF SATANIC VERSES AND DA VINCI CODE

A few years ago Salman Rushdie published a book titled *Satanic Verses*. Among other things, the book was a critique of modern religious figures such as the Ayatollah Khomeini; and the author dared to question the authority of the very root of Islam: the inspired nature of the Qur'an and the authority of



the Prophet Muhammad. Many of his Muslims critics have argued that the *Satanic Verses* besides being offensive is bad fiction.

However, Dan Brown in his novel – *The Da Vinci Code* – has gone a step further. He claims on the title page that “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.” This assertion helps a reader draw the conclusion (pp.244-245) that the Last Supper presents Jesus and

Mary Magdalene as a pair, and that the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene is part of the historical record! Which record?

While Dan Brown is entitled to write whatever he wants to write in a free society, I agree with Richard Abanes who says “... what is problematic however is the way that he, his publisher and the media have been presenting *The Da Vinci Code* as expose wherein the characters reveal truths long hidden from, or at the very least ignored by the general public”.

When does fiction become fact and a lie become truth? It is when people do nothing to seek out the facts for themselves and are not able to separate the facts from the fiction.

Let's look at some of the pointed attacks on the Scriptures and the Christian faith, and the holes in his acclaimed "truths".

Lie

"The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine". Says Dan Browns' "expert" (p.231).

Fact

The New Testament experienced an informal recognition long before Constantine while the formal collation of the New Testament occurred later at the Synod of Carthage (AD397), decades after Constantine.

When does fiction become fact and a lie become truth? It is when people do nothing to seek out the facts for themselves and are not able to separate the facts from the fiction.

Lie

Jesus' establishment as the 'Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by Council of Nicaea" And "until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet ... a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal." (p.233)

Fact

Many centuries before Constantine, Old Testament prophets anticipated a coming Messiah. Isaiah has this to say about Him. "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 COUNSELOR, MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE. [9.6].

And in chapter 7:14 it says “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a Son, and will call him Immanuel” meaning “God with us” (Matthew 1: 23).

It is instructive to refer at this stage to the confessions of Thomas the disciple after his personal encounter with the resurrected Jesus. Then Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands ... Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20: 27-28). Thomas called Jesus “God”, many centuries before Constantine, and this view of Jesus as God in the flesh was later taught by the apostles who were eye witnesses to all that Jesus said and did.

Paul after his conversion ascribed to Jesus the essential attributes of God and full deity in human form (Philippians 2: 5-11; Colossians 2:9).

Lie

“Constantine was a life long pagan who was baptised at his deathbed. ... Rome’s official religion was sun-worship and Constantine was its head priest” (p.232)

Fact

The record of history describes Emperor Constantine as one who confessed to a life-changing experience of Christ and His cross that caused him to reverse a long standing persecution policy against Christians. It’s true that as a Roman Emperor, he was regarded as both a political and religious head of state. “Constantine’s baptism just prior to his death may reflect a misguided belief in his day that water baptism washes away sin. There is reason to believe that he delayed his baptism until the last moment to try to assure that all the sins of his life would be cleansed.”

Lie

Jesus not only took Mary Magdalene as His wife but planned to make her the founder of His church (p.254).

Fact

Mary Magdalene was delivered of seven demons (Mark 16:9). She was grateful for being set free, and became a follower of Jesus along with many others. (Luke 8: 1-3).

She witnessed the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Christ (Matthew 27: 55-56, Mark 15: 40).

She was the first to see Jesus after His resurrection (John 20: 11-18).

“Although the New Testament never explicitly says that Jesus remained single, it gives indirect evidence that He did not get married like His apostles and brothers. The Apostle Paul later wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians, “Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?” (1 Corinthians 9:5). If Jesus had married, Paul would have included Him in the list and that would have strengthened his argument immensely.

- Mary Magdalene is never tied to any male when she was named (Matthew 27: 55-56; Mark 15: 40-+41; Luke 8:2; John 19:25).
- Jesus showed no special concern for Mary Magdalene at the Cross (John 19: 25-27). If indeed Mary was his wife, it would have been callous and inconsiderate of Jesus to have ignored her person when he instructed John to take care of Mary, his mother.

Lie

We should not trust the biblical accounts of Jesus and Mary. “Almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false” (p.235).

Fact

In the Ancient Greek world, Aristotle argued that in order to recognise a document as trustworthy we must establish whether

- (1) the person writing was an eyewitness;
- (2) how close to the event the record is and how many copies of the record are available;
- (3) the existence of other sources outside the document that collaborate the documents' claims.

Historians today still follow these guidelines, and they help us to see some of the many reasons that the credibility of the New Testament has stood the test of time.

- The Nag Hammadi documents (containing the Gnostic gospels) on which Dan Brown and his team of experts based their argument to refute the authenticity of the Scriptures) were written about 100 – 200 years after the life of Jesus. “Being later in time and lacking connection to those who knew Christ, they reflect Gnostic doctrines of the second and third centuries rather than a first-century record of witnesses” on which the New Testament was premised.

Some Bible scholars are of the opinion that Gnosticism has its roots in pre-Christian religions, instead of being merely an offshoot of Christianity.

Some of our readers may be unfamiliar with the term “gnostic” which derives from “gnosis” which means “knowledge” in Greek. The Gnostics believed that they were privy to a secret knowledge about the divine, hence the name. Some Bible scholars are of the opinion that Gnosticism has its roots in pre-Christian religions, instead of being merely an offshoot of Christianity.

It is a religion that differentiates the evil god of this world (who is identified with the god of the Old Testament) from a higher more abstract God revealed by Jesus Christ. It sees the Old and New Testament of the Bible as revealing 2 different Gods! The early Church Fathers threw polemic at the Gnostics as we find recorded for example in 1 Timothy 1: 3,4; 1 Timothy 6:20; Titus, and almost all of Jude. Some of their writings include: The Gospel of Thomas, The Secret Book of James, Gospel of Mary, Marcion, Excerpts of Theodotus, etc. Every religion nowadays have something to say about Jesus, but if you are a little Christ [Christian] you will believe that

“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word ...” (Hebrews 1: 1-3)

- “The New Testament gives us eyewitness accounts, with more copies closer to the event than any other document from the first century.
- “No archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference” Nelson Glueck (www.evangelical-times.org/articles/dec03/dec03a05.htm)
- **Josephus**, a non Christian, and a reputable historian, published his lengthy history of the Jews. His report corroborates the record of actual events of the Christian gospels. Below is an account of the period in which the Jews of Judea were governed by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate:

“About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.”

Jewish Antiquities, 18.3.3

(Based on the translation of Louis H. Feldman, The Loeb Classical Library.)

Can you imagine a hypothetical situation: I publish a book of half truths, lies, and innuendos about the person of Christ today (year 2006) and 600 years later, the documents are discovered, hidden somewhere in the archives of Christ Church, Crouch End Hill, where I am currently the pastor. Come year 2606, another in the family of Dan Brown publishes my “informed writings” and says of them that they are superior to the Scripture which existed about 2000 years before my publications/document! If you can believe Dan Brown, then you can believe anything. You can believe that my father was King Henry V11!

Dele Agbelusi

If you can believe Dan Brown, then you can believe anything. You can believe that my father was King Henry V11!

Bibliography

“The DA VINCI CODE – Separating Fact from Fiction” © 2005 RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Adventuring Through the Bible, Ray C Steadman.

NOW IS THE TIME TO GUARD THE TRUTH

Paul’s letters to Timothy among other things centres on guarding the truth. Paul reminded Timothy that God has committed to him a deposit of truth, which is his responsibility to guard. “Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us”. (2 Timothy 1: 14). While the letter is addressed to a pastor, the challenge should be taken to heart by all Christians.

Secondly, Paul says that we should guard the truth by suffering patiently and never to be ashamed to testify about our Lord. “Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God” (2 Timothy 1:8).

Expect to see increasing hostility toward believers around the world – especially in the truth’s pertaining to the uniqueness of Christ. Charles Spurgeon was spot on when he said, “Truth is like a lion. Whoever heard of defending a lion? Turn it loose and it will defend itself.” That is what we need to do with this truth.

Thirdly, Paul admonished us as he speaks to Timothy, “What you heard from me keep as the pattern of sound teaching” (2 Timothy 1: 13). There are many today who are departing from the pattern of sound teaching. They believe that some secular writer, a Dan Brown, out of the blindness and darkness of his heart, has more insight into the Scripture and problems of life than everyone else before him.

Peter warns against false teachers in 2 Peter 2: 1-2. “There were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them ... many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.”

Today we see cults in which the leaders claim to be Jesus Christ – and in which members are sometimes destroyed through horrible mass suicides. We see the believers of Nostradamus and of late “NostraDanBrown” and Da Vinci Code. They are very subtle as they introduce destructive heresies and deny the sovereign Lord. As a result, says Peter, the truth of the gospel will be brought into disrepute. People will look down on those who believe the Bible; they will consider believers simple-minded, ignorant folk or worse, narrow minded bigots.

Conclusion

We have the facts we need for faith and for shielding ourselves from falsehood. We have the unchangeable truth of Jesus Christ. Let’s be on our guard so that we are not carried away or undermined by false teachers who want to steal our faith.

Dele Agbelusi

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

A very sick man visited his doctor in a small rural village. As he was lying, he suddenly blurted out: "Doctor, I am afraid to die. You go to church on Sundays. Tell me what lies on the other side."

Very quietly the doctor said, "I don't know."

"You don't know? You, a Christian man, do not know what is on the other side?"



The doctor was holding the handle of the door; on the other side of which came a sound of scratching and whining. He opened the door and the patient's spaniel sprang into the room and leaped on to him with an eager show of gladness.

Turning to the patient, the doctor said, "Did you notice your dog?" He's never been in this room before. He didn't know what was inside. He knew nothing except that his master was here, and when the door opened, he sprang in without fear.

"I know little of what is on the other side of death, but I do know one thing: I know my Master is there, and that is enough. And when the door opens, I shall pass through with no fear, but with gladness."

Submitted by Richard Mercer

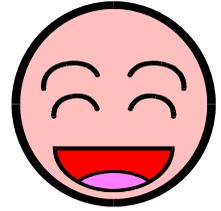
A Sunday School teacher asked the children in her class, "How many of you would like to go to Heaven?" All the children raised a hand except little Derrick. The teacher diplomatically inquired why he didn't want to go to Heaven. Derrick replied, "I'm sorry, Mrs. Spellman, but my mommy told me to come right home after Sunday School."

* Reminisce, May/June 1995, p. 61

LAUGHTER LINES

Don't go far!

The curate went to the bank and asked for a statement of his account, adding: "We want to know how far afield we can go for our holiday." Handing him his statement the cashier enquired very gently: "Have you got a field at the back of your garden, sir?"



When children write to their minister:

"Dear Vicar...

- I think a lot more people would come to your church if you moved it to Disneyland. Loreen. Age 9.
- Please pray for all the airline pilots on Sunday. I am flying to California on Monday. Laurie. Age 10.
- My father says I should learn the Ten Commandments. But I don't think I want to because we have enough rules already in my house. Joshua. Age 10.
- I liked your sermon on Sunday. Especially when it was finished. Ralph, Age 11
- How does God know the good people from the bad people? Do you tell him or does he read about it in the newspapers? Sincerely, Marie. Age 9.
- Who does God pray to? Is there a God for God? Sincerely, Christopher. Age 9.

Different Strokes

When Dr. James Weatherhead went to be measured for a new suit, the usual measurements were taken. He was told to stretch out his arm and then bend it. He was however slightly puzzled when at one stage the tailor asked him to raise his right foot. Never having been asked to do this before, he enquired why.

"Because," said the tailor, "you are standing on my tape"

The laugh shall be first- The very Revd Dr James A Simpson

Talking like a Radio

When a businessman told his friend he had not spoken to his wife for a whole week, the friend inquired if it had been a major row. "Oh nothing like that," said the man. " I just didn't like to interrupt".

The laugh shall be first- The very Revd Dr James A Simpson

LAUGHTER LINES

One Sunday, our minister spoke on faith. He told a story about a pastor who called his members to a prayer meeting to pray for rain, yet sent them home saying, "You came to pray for rain, but didn't bring umbrellas." Our minister's words on faith didn't go unheard. The following Wednesday evening, as he opened our Bible study with prayer, he heard a rustling sound. He looked up to see the smiling faces of our congregation--under open umbrellas.

-- Cheri Walters, Newhall, CA. "Heart to Heart," Today's Christian Woman.

Mature Business

Jack Gullede is the retired editor of *Mature Living*. One of his favourite jokes goes like this. A mischievous man walked up to an elderly woman and asked, "Lady, how old are you?" She indignantly replied, "Sir, my age is my business!" The man then countered, "Lady, it looks like you've been in business a long time."

Baptist Beacon, April 27, 1995, p. 5

Parking Spots

As an elderly woman prepared to park her large expensive car, a young college student cut her off and stole her parking spot. The young driver jumped from his car and sarcastically said, "Oh to be young and fast." But when the student returned to his car, he was appalled. The old woman was using her big car as a battering ram to demolish his little car. The lady powered down her window and smiled, "Oh to be old and rich."

* King's Treasury of Dynamic Humor, King Duncan, 1990, p. 28

Laziness

A little girl asked her relaxing brother an interesting question. She wondered, "When you just lie around doing nothing, how do you know when you're done?"

THE KIND OF FAITH THAT WILL GET YOU INTO HEAVEN

In order to clarify one issue, I would like to ask you, the reader, to answer a question. It is an important question. Indeed, it could be the most important question you will ever answer. This is it:

Suppose you were to die today and found yourself standing before God. He looked you in the eye and asked, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" What would you say?

What about pausing for a moment right now and asking yourself, "What would you say?"

This is a question I have asked hundreds of people over many years. There are a number of common responses. Some people reply honestly, "I don't know." Some people expect to get into heaven without having to answer such a question, as they believe everyone will go to heaven anyway. A more common response, however, goes something like this: "I have not been too bad a person. I know I am not perfect but I have done my best to lead a good life. I...I..." The focus of their response is on themselves, what they have done, or not done. In other words, they expect people (and themselves in particular) to get into heaven on the basis of their moral behaviour. (Or, in some instances, to fail to get in because of their lack of moral behaviour!)

It may surprise you that God's pass mark for getting into heaven is 100 per cent - perfection - that is, if you want to get in on your own merit. When speaking about God's moral laws, particularly his command to love others as much as we love ourselves, the New Testament declares, **"Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it"** (James 2:10).

(continued on page 21)

The kind of faith that will get you into heaven

The situation looks bleaker still when we take into account Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount that we break God's commands as much by our thinking as by our actions (Matthew 5:21, 22, 27, 28).

Obviously there must be some other way of getting into heaven than by trying to be good enough. Fortunately for us, there is another way. God himself has taken the initiative to reconcile us to himself. At the midpoint in human history, he came into our world in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus lived on earth as perfect man and gave us, in his own example, a picture of all we were meant to be. That by itself is no help. It only shows us up. However, he came for an even greater reason: to die for our sins and take upon himself the guilt of the human race. This is the central theme of the New Testament. **"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)**. Jesus not only died, he rose triumphant from the grave and now lives as Lord. The living Christ now offers to us the benefits of his death on our behalf - forgiveness, reconciliation, his transforming presence in our lives, and the assurance of a wonderful future in his eternal kingdom. We do not deserve these things. They are offered to us as free gifts of his love. **"The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"** (Romans 6:23). This being the case, we all have to face a decision. We can continue to attempt to make it on our own merit, or else we can humble ourselves, admit we are sinners, and gratefully accept what Jesus is offering us.

However, we do have to decide whether they are gifts that we want, and will accept. The means by which we receive them is faith. **"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast"** (Ephesians 2:8,9). **A choice to be made.**

(Continued on page 22)

The kind of faith that will get you into heaven

(from page 21)

The story is told of a man who dreamed that he built a ladder from earth to heaven, and when he did a good deed, up went his ladder a few feet. When he did a very good deed his ladder went higher, and when he gave away large sums of money to the poor, up it went further still. By and by it went out of sight, and as years rolled on, he thought it would go clear up into heaven. He expected to step off his ladder into heaven when he died. Suddenly, however, he heard a voice roll out from paradise. He heard words that had been spoken by Jesus himself when on earth. **"I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber"** (John 10:1). Down he came, ladder and all, and he awoke. He realised that if he wanted to receive salvation he must receive it in another way than by good deeds. He took the other way, which is by faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible is very clear that these two ways to heaven are mutually exclusive. We cannot have a bit of one and a bit of the other. **"We... have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified...for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"** (Galatians 2:16,21). **"If by grace [the undeserved goodness of God], then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace"** (Romans 11:6).

**NEXT HEALING AND ANOINTING SERVICE
9th JULY 2006 at 10.30AM**

**Those who see God's hand in everything
can leave everything in God's hands.**

NUGGETS FROM A PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE

- You were planned for God's pleasure. The moment you were born into the world, God was there as an unseen witness, smiling at your birth. He wanted you alive, and your arrival gave him great pleasure. God did not need to create you, but He chose to create you for his own enjoyment. You exist for his benefit, his glory, his purpose, and his delight. Bringing enjoyment to God, living for his pleasure, is the first purpose of your life. When you fully understand this truth, you will never again have a problem with feeling insignificant.
Rick Warren
- Since God intends to make you like Jesus, he will take you through the same experiences Jesus went through. That includes loneliness, temptation, stress, criticism, rejection, and many other problems...Problems don't automatically produce what God intends. Many people become bitter, rather than better, and never grow up. You have to respond the way Jesus would.

Rick Warren

Solution to Crossword on page 6

Across

3 - Matthias; 4 - Priscilla; 5 - Lydia; 7 - Ananias;
8 - Dorcas; 11 - Barnabas; 13 - nephew; 16 - Eutychus;
19 - Herod; 21 - Holy Spirit; 22 - Crispus; 24 - Philip
26 - Aquila; 28 - Cornelius

Down

1 - Ephesians; 2 - Timothy; 3 - Malta; 6 - Damascus;
9 - Stephen; 10 - John; 12 - Antioch; 14 - Apollos;
15 - Areopagus; 17 - Tabitha; 18 - Pentecost;
20 - Tarsus; 23 - Silas; 25 - Peter; 27 - Forty.

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**)
- Prayer meeting 19th June, 3rd & 17th July, 4th September (**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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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**