



CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS
WHY ME LORD?

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



Acts 6:8–7:60 Stephen is stoned for his accusations against the Jewish leaders.

Joseph Miralles

JUNE 2007 ISSUE 7.86

Vicar's three minute reflection STEPHEN, A BLESSED MAN



Stephen was one of the "seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom," who was commissioned to oversee the daily ministry to the needy saints in the church at Jerusalem. Stephen, a remarkable man, was an evangelist, willing to share the good news of God's grace with those around him. He was also "full of grace and power, performing great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8). He was a fabulous choice!

Yet, by the end of the next chapter in Acts we find this godly man being stoned to death by a mob of angry Jews! What happened?! What went wrong? What brought about such a remarkable turn of events? Considering his wisdom, faith, grace, reputation, works of service, miraculous power, and devotion to the Lord, why would anyone want to viciously take the life of this man?

**"Stones are not
thrown except at the
fruit-laden tree."**

Why was Stephen stoned? Because he was a man of faith, intent upon sharing the good news of God's grace in Christ Jesus with others; because he stood his ground even though the message was not always popular; because he was bearing fruit for the Lord; because his opponents determined to silence this good man, and unable to do so in honest, open debate, resorted to lies, slander, and manipulation of public opinion. On the one hand, his death was a disgusting display of godlessness; on the other hand, it was an enduring testimony of the beauty of a disciple devoted to Truth regardless of personal cost. What an example of godly determination in the face of ungodly abuse!

"Don't give the opposition a second thought. Through thick and thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master. Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy. Keep a clear conscience before God so that when people throw mud at you, none of it will stick. They'll end up



realizing that *they're* the ones who need a bath" (1 Peter 3:14-16, The Message). Jesus says, "Count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit Me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens -- give a cheer, even! -- for though they don't like it, I do. And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble" (Matthew 5:11-12)

There is an ancient proverb which declares: "Stones are not thrown except at the fruit-laden tree." Stephen bore fruit for the Lord and it got him stoned!

How do you measure the quality of your faith? Nowadays, the sign of being blessed by many Christians is seen in how fat our bank accounts are or how many houses or cars we own or how expensive our clothes are. We would not confront falsehood neither would we stand to proclaim Jesus is Lord. We would privatize our faith for fear of being offensive to non Christians! Paul declares, "But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,..." (1 Corinthians 1:23)

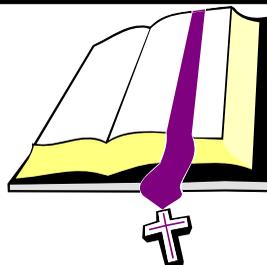
Do not be discouraged when you fall into diverse trials. Remember God is at work in you whatever your situation may be. He was at work when He allowed the beheading of John the Baptist . He was at work when he allowed Stephen to be stoned to death. He was also at work when Peter was miraculously released from prison. We may not understand everything God does, but faith will say, He does what is best in His sight and for me. Amen.

Dele Agbelusi

Memory Verse

**Hear my cry, O God: listen to my prayer.
From the ends of the earth I call to you, I
call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the
rock that is higher than I. For you have been
my refuge, a strong tower against the foe.**

Psalm 61:1-3



DO NOT GIVE UP



Bob attended a seminar on interpersonal relationships and became convinced that he needed to do a better job of showing appreciation to his wife. So on his way home from work he picked up a dozen long-stem roses and a box of chocolates. He was eager to see how excited his wife would be at this example of appreciation.

As Bob walked in the door with a big grin, he met his wife in the hallway — and she burst into tears. "What's wrong, honey?" Bob asked.

"It's been a terrible day," she exclaimed. "First, Tommy tried to flush a diaper down the toilet. Then the dishwasher quit working. Sally came home from school with her legs all scratched, and now you come home drunk!"

Bob had never shown this side of his affection to his wife. Such a gesture from him was unthinkable and his good intention was misunderstood. Have you ever been in this type of dilemma, when you want to turn a new leaf in your interpersonal relationships and you are misunderstood? People have gotten so used to your uncaring side that a show of love from you gives off the impression that you are drunk? This type of experience could occur in any interpersonal relationship and its not exclusive to marriage.

But you do not have to give up. Always think of your marriage as a covenant. If you work at it, you will be the better for it. If you neglect it to the point that weeds now grow on your lush garden, you will have to live with it.

So, what can Bob do in his situation? He should listen to his wife in order to connect to her "world". He should explain to her that he is not drunk and the flowers are a token of his love for her, and that, he is trying to put into practice what he learnt from a seminar on interpersonal relationships. This is really the time for the couple to laugh at themselves. This is no time for Bob to get angry or demand an apology.

Do not give up (continued)

He should follow up his explanations with action of empathy with his wife and speak words of assurance to her. If they are Christians, this is a good time to commit the situation to the Lord

As I read Scripture, I hardly find teachings on happiness as a first principle in marriage. Joy, yes—the kind of joy that flows from obedience, from service and from glimpses of the Holy. God wants us to do that which glorifies Him—to be faithful and to seek first His kingdom. Sticking it out, not giving up, comes first in God's eyes—through the times when you are secretly thinking, "Is this life?" "Why am I married to this person anyway?" Sticking it out means being faithful, and out of faithfulness there is peace. Sticking it out means going the extra mile and as you do that in obedience and faithfulness to the Lord, there is joy.

Have you thought of your marriage relationship in that way? Don't ever give up on your marriage, no matter what comes your way. When friction festers into fights, new "oil" is needed to re-lubricate the relationship. When romance disappears into a dull fog of mundane sameness, work together at rekindling the glowing flames of love. When chronic financial distress threatens the emotional equilibrium of the home; or when in-law interference, tangled expectations, health crises or other predictable issues persist as huge problems that won't go away, biblical words of help and encouragement are needed to revive the marriage out of the emergency room and carry it gently into rehabilitative therapy. Whether it's the hot flare-ups of polarization or the long dry dredges of boredom and disillusionment, decide now that you will fight what infects the intimacy of your marriage relationship. Keep your vows. Never give up. God will reward your faithfulness.

Dele Agbelusi

WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?

Do you think you're unqualified to minister to other people?
Consider this:

Moses stuttered. David's armour didn't fit. John Mark was un-
dependable. Hosea married a prostitute. Jacob was a liar.
David had an affair. Solomon had too much money.
Abraham was too old. Timothy had ulcers.
Joseph was a nuisance.

Peter was a coward. Lazarus was dead. John was self-
righteous. Jesus was homeless. Naomi was a widow. Jonah
was disobedient. Miriam was a gossip.

Gideon and Thomas were doubters. Jeremiah was suicidal.
Elijah suffered from depression. Paul was a murderer.
So was Moses. Not to mention David.

John the Baptist dressed funny. Martha was a worrywart. Sam-
son needed a haircut. Noah had a drinking problem.
Zacchaeus was very short.

David was only a teenager. So was Mary, the mother of Jesus.
So was Daniel. So were many others who were used by God.

Fortunately, God doesn't require a job interview for his minis-
try. He doesn't do background checks or ask for references.
He doesn't care what your qualifications are.

The fact is, no one is qualified to serve God. If you think you're
qualified, you'll likely fail. God calls unqualified people because
the only way they can be successful in their ministry is to de-
pend completely on him. As God told Moses, "Now go; I will
help you speak and will teach you what to say" (Exodus 4:12).

NOTICE BOARD

CHRIST CHURCH SUMMER BARBEQUE

Sunday 15 July 2007

12 noon - 3.30pm

LOTS OF FUN!!!

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

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Outreach to Iberia House and Monroe House New Orleans Walk, Hornsey Lane

will commence on the 30th June 2007 and will continue for several weeks. We will need foot soldiers in the outreach programme and we request others to lift up holy hands on our behalf that the Lord grant us utterance.

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Confirmation Service

This year's Confirmation Service will hold on Sunday 25th November at 10.30am. Classes will begin in September. Intending candidates should contact the Vicar.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

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

Daniels Olufunmilayo; Davies Genevieve; Dolan Angela; Dunnage Barry; Evans Beverley; Evetts Richard; Farthing Jeannette; Faulkner Emma; Forsdike Jack; Freeburne Vera; Fujisaki Yumie; Furlong Rosalind; Gallagher Denise; Garness Teri; Goldson Barrington & Sharon; Green Peter; Greenaway Catherine.

WHO, ME?

There was once a college student who was struggling in many areas of his life. He spent a great deal of his time feeling angry and frustrated. When he could stand it no longer, he went to the dim and seldom-used chapel on campus. He paced up and down the aisles, slapping the back of the empty pews. He yelled, he cried, and he raged at God.

“God you created the world...what could you possibly have been thinking? Look at the problems people face. Look at the pain, suffering, and hunger. Look at the neglect, the waste, the abuse. Everywhere I look, I see messed-up people, hurting people, lonely people!” The young man ranted and raved on and on.

Finally, exhausted, he sat in the front pew and looked hopelessly at the cross. Its tarnished surface reflected the dusty sunlight filtering in through the stained glass windows. “It’s all such a mess! This world you created is nothing but a terrible mess! Why even I could make a world better than this one!”

And then the young man heard a voice in the silence of that dusty chapel that made his eyes open wide and his jaw drop.

“And that is exactly what I want you to do.”

It’s easy to identify problems that exist all around us. And sometimes we wonder why God doesn’t solve them all for us. But that’s why God created the church. That’s why God put you here—at this particular time and place. He has gifted you and given you the power to make a difference in the world.

God has commissioned His disciples and His church to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a broken world. That’s why we are called “the body of Christ.” Will you do your part?

THE TRUTH WRAPPED IN LAUGHTER FOILS.

Our Church will be perfect when we hear ...

1. "Hey! It's my turn to sit in the front pew."
2. "I was so enthralled, I never noticed your sermon went twenty-five minutes overtime."
3. "Personally, I find witnessing much more enjoyable than golf."
4. "I dearly want to be a teacher in the junior high Sunday school class."
5. "Forget the denominational minimum salary; let's pay our pastor so he can live like we do."
6. "I love it when we sing hymns I've never heard before."
7. "Since we're all here, let's start the service early."
8. "Nothing inspires me and strengthens my commitments like our annual stewardship campaign."
9. "Pastor, we'd like to send you to this continuing education seminar in the Bahamas."
10. "I've decided to give our church the five hundred dollars a month I used to send to TV evangelists."

From "The World's Greatest Collection of Church Jokes"

Only Christ Himself, who slept in the boat in the storm and then spoke calm to the wind and waves, can stand beside us when we are in a panic and say to us "Peace". It will not be explainable. It transcends human understanding. And there is nothing else like it in the whole wide world.

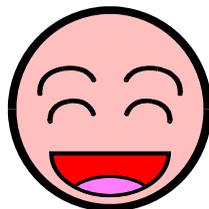
Elisabeth Elliot

LAUGHTER LINES

Out of the Mouths of Kids

After graphically telling the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was brutally beaten, robbed, and left for dead, Mrs Martin asked her Sunday school class, "If you saw a person lying beside the road all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?"

A thoughtful little Maggie broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."



From "World's greatest collection of church jokes"

Cheerful Giver

On Sunday morning a father gave his son a couple of quarters and a dollar. "Put the dollar in the offering," the father said, "then you can have the fifty cents for ice cream."

When the boy came home, he still had his dollar. "Why didn't you put the dollar in the offering?" his father asked.

"Well, it was like this," the boy explained. "the preacher said that God loves a cheerful giver. I could give the fifty cents a whole lot more cheerfully than I could the dollar."

From "World's greatest collection of church jokes"

How to Kill your Pastor

A minister was asked to inform a man with a heart condition that he had just inherited a million dollars. Everyone was afraid the shock would cause a heart attack and the man would die.

The minister went to the man's house and said, "Joe, what would you do if you inherited a million dollars?"

Joe responded, "Well, Pastor, I think I would give half of it to the church." And the minister fell over dead.

From "World's greatest collection of church jokes"

LAUGHTER LINES

Whistle While You Pray

During the minister's prayer one Sunday, there was a loud whistle from one of the back pews. Gary's mother was horrified. She pinched him into silence and after church asked, "Gary, whatever made you do such a thing?"

Gary answered soberly, "I asked God to teach me to whistle-and He just then did!"

From "World's greatest collection of church jokes"

When asked to contribute a franc to cover a stranger's burial expenses, famous writer Pierre Dumont asked who had died. Upon learning he was a tax collector, Dumont said, "Here's another franc, bury two of them."

The Word, Doug Jackson, April 18, 1990, p. 4

Poli-tricks: Oldest Profession

In a prestigious argument, a surgeon, an architect, and a politician debated over whose profession was the oldest. The surgeon boasted, "Eve was made from Adam's rib. That was surgery!" "Maybe so," said the architect, "but before that, order was created from chaos, and that was the work of an architect." The politician quickly saw his cue and said, "But who do you think created the chaos?"

Stories for Preachers

Story of the month

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

Centuries ago in China a certain teacher would call one of his students to the front of the room, hold out both hands and explain to the student that one hand held a valuable gold coin and the other was empty. He would invite the chosen student to choose one hand or the other. If the student chose the coin, he would be allowed to keep it. But if he chose the empty hand, the teacher would strike the boy with his clenched fist. If the student decided not to choose at all, he could return to his seat.



This ritual was practiced each day in the teacher's classroom. Because the students knew of the teacher's strength and skill as a fighter, they were afraid to make a choice. They knew that to be hit by him might result in serious injury.

On the rare occasion that a student would choose a hand, the teacher would ask, "Are you sure?" As the student looked more closely at the teacher's hard fist and even harder scowl, he would invariably change his mind and hurry back to his seat. Finally, Chin was called to the front of the room. Chin's father had died in the war five years before and his family was having trouble getting by. Chin needed the gold coin. The instructor held out his fists. Chin studied both hands for a long time. His classmates stared at him, expecting him to simply return to his seat as each of them had done. Finally Chin pointed to the teacher's left fist.

"Are you sure?" the instructor asked. Chin nodded. "Would you like to forget about your choice and return to your seat?"

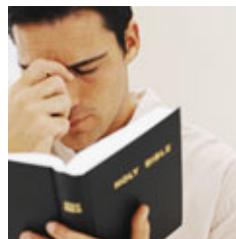
Chin shook his head "no". The instructor's fist shot out and struck Chin squarely in the face, knocking him to the floor.

Chin lay on the floor looking up at his teacher in a daze. Then the instructor turned both fists over and revealed that each of them held a gold coin. "You can not expect anything for free," the teacher told his class.

(continued on page 15)

HAVE A PRAYER LIST

It is true that the Holy Spirit is the One that helps us in our praying as "We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us.." Rom. 8:26. Certainly the Holy Spirit brings urgent and instant issues to our minds and burdens us to lift them up in prayer. On the other hand are the already established prayer needs that God Himself has commanded us to pray about - praying for our nations, political and spiritual leaders, saints, sinners, protection from temptation, etc. Our leaders in our churches or fellowship groups also charge us from time to time to pray on some particular issues. We sometimes make promises to pray for people who share their needs with us. If you do not organize your prayer life, the Holy Spirit will not do it for you. You will most likely fail to pray for the things God and others have asked you to pray about.



Here is what you can do: Prepare a weekly and monthly prayer list. Example:

Mondays: Missionaries - list several names of missionaries you will be praying for.

Tuesdays: Tasks - your job(s), school, witnessing, Bible Study, and other assignments.

Wednesdays: Workers - List Christian workers, colleagues at your place of work, etc

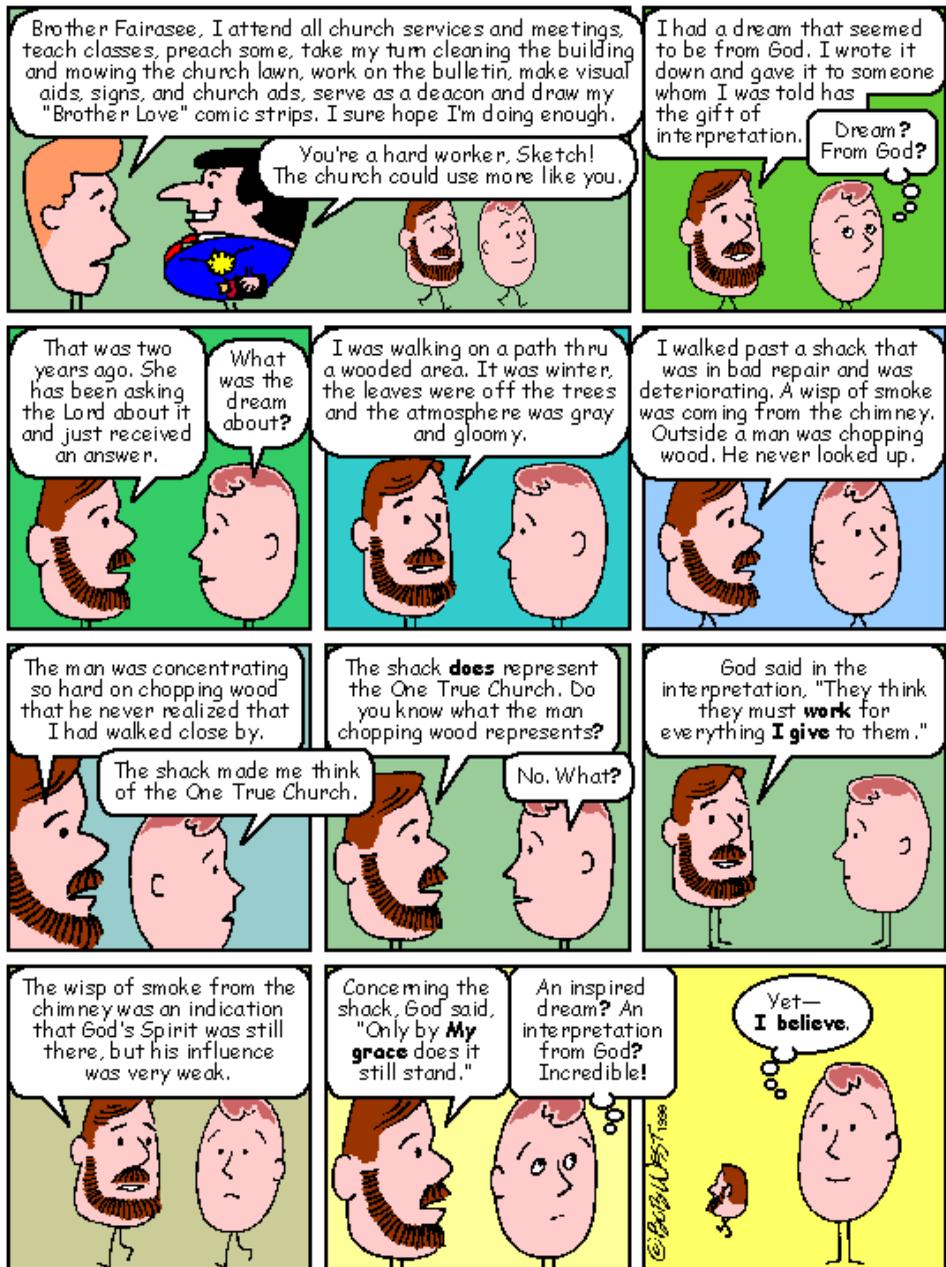
Thursdays: Thanksgiving: Thank God for who He is, what He has done and what He will do.

Fridays: List your immediate and extended family, other families and friends

Saturdays: Sinners: List unsaved people you know and pray for their salvation.

Sundays: Saints - List believers to pray for, include ministers, opportunities to share the Gospel, and openness of hearts to God.

"ONLY BY MY GRACE..."



Making the right choice (contd. from page 12)

“Every good thing costs something.”

The teacher helped Chin to his feet, smiled, and placed both gold coins into his hand. He never repeated the exercise again.

People today are afraid to make choices. Like the students in the classroom, they are afraid of failure. They are afraid of pain. They are afraid of commitment. They are afraid that it might cost them something. Take marriage, for example. Many young people today choose not to marry because they know that commitment to one person will require a good deal of effort and self-denial. They would rather live their lives selfishly, not having to sacrifice to meet the needs of another person.

Life is full of choices and contrary to popular belief, the best things in life are not free. They are always costly—but worth it. The Bible sets before us some very clear choices: “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve” (Joshua 24:15). Do you have the courage to step out from the crowd and choose the way that offers the greatest reward? The grace of God bestowed freely on you cost God His Son. Jesus said, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). Jesus is the gate to that narrow road. You can decide to walk in Him and with Him today. I pray for you that God in Christ Jesus may open the eyes of your heart, so that you may see what you are missing by not belonging to Jesus Christ. salvation is free for you because Jesus paid the cost.

Pain can either make us better or bitter.

Tim Hansel

Pain is inevitable for all of us, but misery is optional.

Barbara Johnson

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.

- **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 18th June, 2nd & 16th July (**8pm**)
- Wednesday - Bible Fellowship in the Hall (**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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