



CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS

THIRSTY FOR THE WATER BROOKS

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



NOVEMBER 2007 ISSUE 8.90

Vicar's five-minutes reflection

As the deer pants after the water brooks... (Psalm 42:1)



The psalmist tells us about his own pathetic plight that is close to that of a hounded deer. He, too, is being pursued by bitter foes who have chased him into exile. Even now they are taunting him with the derisive question, "Where is your God?" (Psalm 42:3) And the bitterest heartache of it all is that he can give no answer to their question that is satisfying even to himself.

Once, he felt that he could have done so. But it is not so now. His realization of God is no longer vivid. And since sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier days, his soul is cast down within him. In his bitterness he tells us that his tears have been his food day and night. He feels that he must have help. He simply cannot get on without it.

**"Why pay your last penny
for what can never
satisfy?"**

But where does he turn in his hour of desperation? What fountain does he seek for the slaking of his thirst? He turns to the One that he believes can do for him what the water brook can do for the deer, and far more. And what space does God fill in the program of the psalmist? He leaves us in no doubt as to the answer to that question. He counts God as an absolute necessity. Therefore he cries after him as a hungry, frightened child might cry after his mother: "I thirst for you, the living God: when can I go and worship in your presence? (Psalm 42:2)

The thirst of this poet is not unique. It belongs to all mankind. If our bodies do not have physical bread and water, they will hunger and thirst and die. Just so, if our souls do not have Jesus, the Bread of Life and the Water of Life, they, too, will hunger and thirst and die. No man can be satisfied by a well of his own contriving. No water that this world has to offer can meet the needs of these transcendent spirit of ours. Every man, therefore, is either consciously or unconsciously thirsting after God. This is a characteristic of the human race.

One day when Jesus was resting upon an old well curb, he saw a woman coming to him through the noonday heat (John 4:6). She had made a ghastly wreck of her life, poor soul, and was now, nothing more than an utter moral and spiritual bankrupt. She is coming to the well at this sultry and unseemly hour, doubtless because she dreads the hot rays of the sun less than the hot words of her more decent



and respectable sisters. Of course she is hopeless. Everybody said as much. She is just a thing of shame in the eyes of those who know her best.

But Jesus sees with different eyes. He tells her frankly that she is not satisfied to what she is, but rather that she is not sure that she can ever be different. Yes, even in this woman, who was looked upon by the respectable Jew as lower than a street dog, there was a real hunger after God.

And Isaiah in his day saw the hot and restless crowds about him hurry from one booth to another and buy and buy, only to come away in the end the more restless and dissatisfied. At last, when he could endure the tragic sight no longer, he cried after them: "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. (Isa. 55: 1-2) "Why pay your last penny for what can never satisfy," he asks in bewilderment, "when he who meets your needs may be had for the taking?" Why?

This claim that God can satisfy every man's need becomes even more emphatic upon the pages of the New Testament. It reaches its climax in the magnificent and daring appeals of Jesus. "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37). If any one - there is no single exception. "I am the bread of life," (John 6:35) he declares again, "he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst. ... But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

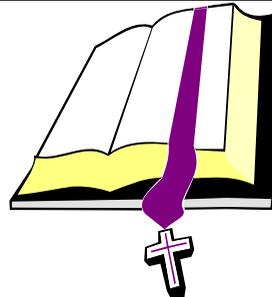
And those who have accepted this invitation have never been disappointed. Countless millions through the centuries have been able to sing out of their own experiences. You can be the next one.

Dele Agbelusi

Memory Verse

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

John 6:35



SURRENDER YOUR MARRIAGE



Maybe you're thinking to yourself that you already have a godly marriage and really don't need to change anything. Well, consider this question honestly and prayerfully: Have you surrendered your marriage to Christ? Are you doing some things in your marriage God's way and others, your own way?

When I asked myself that question, God clearly revealed to me that, I was sprinkling into the recipe of my marriage a little bit of God and a whopping serving of me.

Writer Anabel Gillham describes in her book, *The Confident Woman*: 'I had gone to bed. It had been a bad day. I don't remember why—I had a lot of bad days. I was sobbing, praying, "God, I don't understand what I long for it to be; my kids are not turning out the way I want them to. And I'm so tired. I've given, given, and given, and I don't think I can give anymore. I have made one grand mess of everything".' Then I said what I had never said in all my 40-some-odd years of life: "I give up. I have failed. I can't do it. If anything is going to come out of this life, You're going to have to do it, because I can't. ...I believe God spoke to me that night in the quiet of my bedroom. A thought came into my conscious awareness that was foreign to my way of thinking. It was a simple little phrase: "Thank you, Anabel, I will do it all for you."

Surrender is completely counter to our human nature, but this is right where God wants us to be. Sometimes I sense God is saying to me through the whisper of the Holy Spirit on my heart or a verse that leaps from the pages of Scripture, I am God and you are not. I am really good at being God. You are not. When you get out of the way, I can work.

How do we surrender our marriages to God? What exactly do we surrender? First, we surrender our right to have the marriage work the way we think it should. We give up feeling entitled to what we deserve in marriage. Anabel, in her writing, came in to marriage thinking she deserved many things. She thought she deserved to be a stay-at-home mother while her husband provided for their family. She thought she deserved a certain level of comfort with a nice house and beautiful furnishings. When She did not get what she thought she deserved, she was unhappy and moody and made her husband feel as if he were a failure.

Surrender your marriage

Writing on surrender, Anabel says: “ we must surrender our expectations of our husbands. The main expectation I had of Scott was that he would make me happy. I expected him to know my needs and cater to them. When Scott and I first married, I was insecure about his love for me, so I made him prove his love all the time. I wanted him to prove his love by being home with me, by choosing me over other activities or people, by telling me he loved and appreciated me...These needs were not inherently bad, but I was draining Scott, my husband, by expecting him to do what no human being could do in my life. Of course, the only One who can meet our deepest needs is God. He’s the one we go to with all of our needs... As I turned to God with a sincere heart, I knew that I had to confess to God all of the sins I had committed against Scott and consequently against God. I prayed that God would reveal the sins to me so I could confess them to Him and then be free of them. Surrendering our marriages to God and repenting of our sins is an ongoing process. God wants us to be in constant fellowship with Him, seeking Him with our whole hearts through prayer, listening, reading His Word, and obeying Him.

As I began to be honest with God about my marriage, I started to realize that for a long time I had questioned God’s unconditional love for me. I had always felt that I didn’t quite measure up. I was good, but not good enough; pretty, but not pretty enough; smart, but not smart enough; a good mother, but not good enough. You fill in the blank—I was just not worthy of God’s unconditional love. I knew God loved me, but I thought I could help Him love me even more if I did something to deserve His love. I finally sensed God saying, Stop striving. Just receive the gift of My love for you. You’re My child. I created you so I could love you and you could love Me. God’s unconditional love, so different from human love, isn’t dependent on anything about us. It’s a free gift in Christ Jesus.”

Once we believe in God’s unconditional and personal love, we can trust Him and surrender everything in our lives to Him, including our marriages. God’s love will transform us, and we’ll love our husbands out of the well-spring of love God has put in us by His Spirit.

Adapted from the book, *The Confident woman* by Anabel Gillham

GOD CAN USE YOU TOO.

Imagine you're on your church's search committee, investigating applicants desiring to pastor your congregation. Among the letters from candidates is the following, handwritten letter:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Understanding that your pulpit is vacant, I'd like to be considered for the job. You see, I love to preach, even though my preaching tends to stir up quite a bit of controversy. In fact, one of my sermons caused a riot. Actually, I've never been able to stay in one place more than three years. My health isn't too good (I have what I call a "thorn in the flesh"), and to be perfectly honest, I'm not much to look at. I can assure you, however, that this doesn't interfere with my ministry. I'm a bachelor by choice—never been married and never had any kids—but I'm surprisingly good at conducting family life seminars.

If you do a background check on me—and I'm sure you will—you'll probably discover that I changed my name a while back, and I have been arrested a few times. But even in jail I was able to have a successful ministry. I hope you aren't looking for an administrator. I'm not too good at keeping records. And my memory's not too good. Sometimes I forget who I've baptized, for instance. But I'm a hard worker, ...and I've found that everything works out fine in the end for those who love God and are called according to his purpose. Praise be to God.

Well, let me know if you are interested. I can start next week. By the way, I wrote this with my own hand. Grace to you all,

Paul

With the above credentials, would you call the Apostle Paul to pastor a church? God did. If God could use Paul, chances are he can use you. Remarkable talent and physical perfection are not prerequisites to being used by God. Most of the heroes of the Bible, in fact, were imperfect, inexperienced, unqualified—certainly not the kind of people we would have chosen to do the job. Their inadequacy, however, motivated them to depend upon God and to follow him in obedience. When you think you "have it all together," you tend to do things your way instead of God's way. God isn't waiting for you to get good enough to serve him. He's waiting instead for you to say yes.

Adapted from Youth specialties

NOTICE BOARD

Why not join us as we thank God for His special Gift to us? You never know, this could be your best Christmas ever!

CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL, LONDON N8

Sunday 16th December

10.30am: Christingle and Family Carol Service
5.00pm: Evening Worship

Sunday 23rd December

10.30am: Christmas Carols and Nine Lessons
5.00pm: Evening Worship

Monday 24th December Christmas Eve

11.15pm: Carols/Midnight Holy Communion

Tuesday 25th December Christmas Day

10.30am: Parish Holy Communion

Sunday 30th December

10.30am: Morning Prayer
5.00pm: Evening Worship

Monday 31st December

11.15pm : New Year's Eve Praise and Worship

8.00 am all Sundays: Holy Communion Service (B.C.P.)

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

This month we pray for members of our church family whose surnames begin with A, B, C.

Abdulai Janet; Adebona Ade; Agbelusi Dele, Iyabo, Bolu, Tolu and Sope; Alvis Daisy; Anand Luke and Renu; Bala Hassan; Benjamin Janet; Becessar Devin; Bentham Mervin and Anita; Brewer Steve, Burrell Cecil; Carter Carlene; Carter Jean; Christian Ina; Clarke Joan; Cole Christine; Comer Jason & Emma, Coxall Joan, Crawford Janet.

WHAT THE GREAT INTERCESSORS IN THE BIBLE PRAYED FOR.

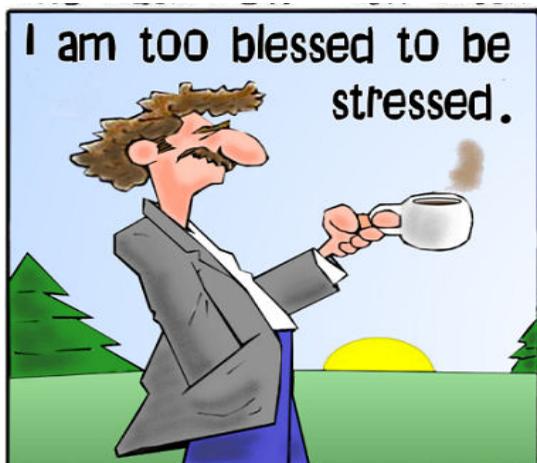
PAUL

Paul's real prayer life began during the 3 days he remained blind in Damascus. The Lord told Ananias to go to Saul (Paul) for he is praying. Acts. 9:11. Nothing is told us of what Paul prayed for. Paul rose to become the most powerful prayer warrior in the Bible only next to His Master, Jesus Christ. Paul & his companion, Silas, locked up in a prison in Philippi prayed and sang in the middle of the night and an earthquake occurred only in the prison freeing all the prisoners. The outcome of that was the salvation of the jailer and his family.

Here are a few samples of Paul's prayers: "I keep asking that .. God .. may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you ..." And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ... And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God." Eph. 1:17-23, 3:16-19, Phi. 1:9-11. Go through all of Paul's epistles and you will be amazed at what he prayed for or what he asked believers to pray for on his behalf. Nothing personal! Every prayer and prayer need was about God - His praises; His Kingdom - it's expansion and His people - their spiritual growth.

Compare with all the health, wealth, promotion, 'Divine Favour', financial breakthroughs etc. we focus on today. May God change our perspective and make us focus on eternal things. Amen.

Grace and Sunday Bwanhot



In any circumstance I have learned the secret of being content whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. **Phil 4:12**

CONGRATULATIONS

On Your Confirmation

Mark Botterill, Evelyn Owusu and Yetunde Cobham were confirmed at a service of Holy Communion on 25th November 2007 by the Rt. Rev Peter Wheatley, Bishop of Edmonton Episcopal area in the Diocese of London.

Christening

We also welcome into Christ Church, Amy Haggerty and **James Bridge** who were baptised on 25th November 2007 by the Rt. Rev Peter Wheatley, Bishop of Edmonton Episcopal area in the Diocese of London.

Completion of Masters Programme

We rejoice with one of our editors, Grace Macauley who is also the church's honorary treasurer and administrator on the successful completion of a Master of Science degree in Globalisation and Development.

LAUGHTER LINES

Church Life Jokes

A kindergarten teacher gave her class a "show and tell" assignment. Each student was instructed to bring in an object to share with the class that represented their religion.



The first student got up in front of the class and said, "My name is Benjamin and I am Jewish and this is a Star of David."

The second student got up in front of the class and said, "My name is Mary. I'm a Catholic and this is a Rosary."

The third student got in up front of the class and said, "My name is Tommy. I am Methodist, and this is a casserole."

Make it simple

Jesus said, Whom do men say that I am? And his disciples answered and said, Some say you are John the Baptist returned from the dead; others say Elias, or other of the old prophets. Jesus asked: "But whom do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Logos, existing in the Father as His rationality and then, by an act of His will, being generated, in consideration of the various functions by which God is related to his creation, but only on the fact that Scripture speaks of a Father, and a Son, and a Holy Spirit, each member of the Trinity being coequal with every other member, and each acting inseparably with and interpenetrating every other member, with only an economic subordination within God, but causing no division which would make the substance no longer simple." And Jesus answering, said, "Huh?"

LAUGHTER LINES

From the mouth of babes

"A little boy went to church and was asked how we can get to heaven. The boy shocked everyone when he put his hands in his pocket, took out a toy gun and went: "Pao, Pao, Pao. You die!" .

De Pasto

True Story

My son was going through potty training on a day when I had several places to go. I attended a mothers' Bible study and then went to the grocery store. I was asking him quite frequently if he had to use the bathroom. At Kroger, I said to him, "Do you have to go potty?" He said, "No. I went at God's house."

When Children Pray

My daughter (now 19) was about 2 years old when we sat down at the dinner table to eat. When asked if she would like to say the blessing, she was excited to pray. With hands folded and heads bowed she began...God is great, God is good, let us thank Him for our food..... if he hollers, let him go...eeenie..... then she realized what she said and looked up at all of us who were laughing hysterically. It was so cute. Of course, we won't let her forget that. Mark

Our Lord's Prayer

We were teaching our 4 year old to say the Lord's prayer.

We would say a line and then prompt him to repeat it.

He did pretty well to keep up until we got to

"Lead us not into temptation."

We are not sure whether he had not fully mastered the language or whether he had not heard us properly but he responded:

"Lead us not into Playstation."

How true.

Pastor Mark Welke, Temora

BIBLE STUDY ON 2 CHRONICLES 7:14

This text of Scripture is such a striking passage of the Bible. It deserves our consideration for renewal needed in our day also. The background story involves the time of the dedication of Solomon's temple. Solomon had prayed all night to God in an act of personal dedication; and as the highest representative of the nation, his prayer was also an act of national dedication. God spoke these words to Solomon for His people.

If there is to be renewal in our time too, it will have to begin with God's people. Notice how the passage begins: If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and...

It is hard to do anything for people who think they are well, even if they are sick unto death. It is hard to speak to the proud who, because they may be riding high, think they do not need to fear God. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." There are many who do not reverence God; but if they did take time to think of the power and majesty, the tremendous greatness of an all-mighty, all-powerful, all-knowing God, they would realize how small they really are.

Our Lord set for us a good example when, on the night that He gave His disciples the last supper, He took a towel and went on his knees to wash their feet. He wanted them to learn a lesson, one which all Christians should remember: that to be the greatest among one's fellowmen, we must be the least. To be the minister, we must be the servant. Humility is what it takes. And humility entails acknowledging and confessing our sins to the Lord and at times to one another. We must confess our sins of omission, as more sins of omission plague the Christian than do sins we actually commit.

"If my people shall seek my face." God is willing to have us cooperate with Him. He wants us to seek Him. It is a known psychological fact that we become like the things we seek and with which we cooperate.

Bible Study on 2 Chronicles 7:14

We become like Christ If we seek His ways and His face. "If my people shall turn from their wicked ways." When we see the idolatry of the times in which Solomon lived (even Solomon slipped into idolatry for a time), when we read of the evil practices of that day, we can rightly understand why God wanted His people converted.

The word CONVERT means to change. It is a turning point away from the things of this world to the better things of life. There is too much religion that leaves out conversion. A patched-up life isn't much credit anyway. A genuine conversion makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus.

A common mistake is the notion that once we are converted we do not need to be renewed when we again, in our human way, sin against God. The church is full of backsliders who have forsaken God. Like Demas of old, they love the things of this world more than they love the Lord. We must continually take these steps for spiritual renewal personally, and the church must also be renewed if we are to have the right faith for these times.

Now notice the things God promised His people if they met His conditions: **He would hear them from Heaven. He would forgive their sin. He would heal their land.**

How blessed it is to know that our sins are forgiven! As for healing, how good it would be to have the wounds of past conflicts healed! Just as there comes a peaceful healing spirit after the cessation of war, so can come renewal to the church along with a gracious reviving of true faith in human hearts.

Our nation needs this formula. We need it in our churches and in our personal lives. God grant that it be so. D.A.

THE LITTLE RIVER- STORY OF THE MONTH

Once upon a time there was a little river that said, "I can become a big river." It worked hard to get big, but in the process, encountered a huge rock. "I won't let this rock stop me," the river said. And the little river pushed and pushed until it finally made its way around the rock. Next the river encountered a mountain. "I won't let this mountain stop me," the river said. And the little river pushed and pushed until it finally carved a canyon through the mountain.



Next the river came to an enormous forest. "I won't let all these trees stop me," the river said. And the river pushed and pushed until it finally made its way through the forest. The river, now large and powerful, finally arrived at the edge of a vast desert. "I won't let this desert stop me," the river said. But as the river pushed and pushed its way across the desert, the hot sand began soaking up its water until only a few puddles remained. The river was quiet.

Then the river heard a voice from above. "My child, stop pushing. It's time to surrender. Let me lift you up. Let me take over." The river said, "Here I am."

The sun then lifted the river up and turned it into a huge cloud. And the wind carried the river across the desert and let it rain down on the hills and valleys of the faraway fields, making them fruitful and rich.

Where to Take It from Here...

Ambition and determination are wonderful attributes, but, apart from God, they won't get you very far. When you're young, you tend to feel invincible. You think you can accomplish almost anything on your own. Who needs God?

(continued on page 15)

The little River

But what will you do when you get to the desert? There's one up ahead, you know. There will come a time when the heat will be intense, and you won't know what to do. You won't have the strength or the resources to make it through. Your desert may contain failure, rejection, disappointment, or loss. What will you do then?

When your desert comes, you may not have the opportunity to hear the voice of God saying, "It's time to surrender." But you can hear him now. He wants you to stop pushing and give your life to him today. He wants to lift you up and make you fruitful for him in ways you never imagined. Can you hear him?

This story is attributed to the late Henri Nouwen.

BUSY?

Jesus knew where he had come from, why he was here, and what he was supposed to accomplish? He came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of the Father. That determination controlled every decision he made.

As a result, he was not distracted with trivia. He was never in a hurry, for he knew his Father would not give a task without the time to do it. Christ was not driven by crises, feeling he must heal everyone in Israel. He could say, "It is finished," even when many people were still bound by demons and twisted by disease. What mattered ultimately was not the number of people healed or fed, but whether the Father's will was being done. His clearly defined goals simplified his decisions.

Erwin W. Lutzer (1941-)

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 3rd and 17th December (**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

Editorial Board: Iyabo Agbelusi, Grace Macauley, Dele Agbelusi

Voice Edition: Sheila Wheeler, Peter Green, Dele Agbelusi

Vicar: Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi

Church Wardens: Peter Green, Charles Murphy

Lay Preachers: Richard Mercer, Iyabo Agbelusi

Organist: Harold Randall

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**