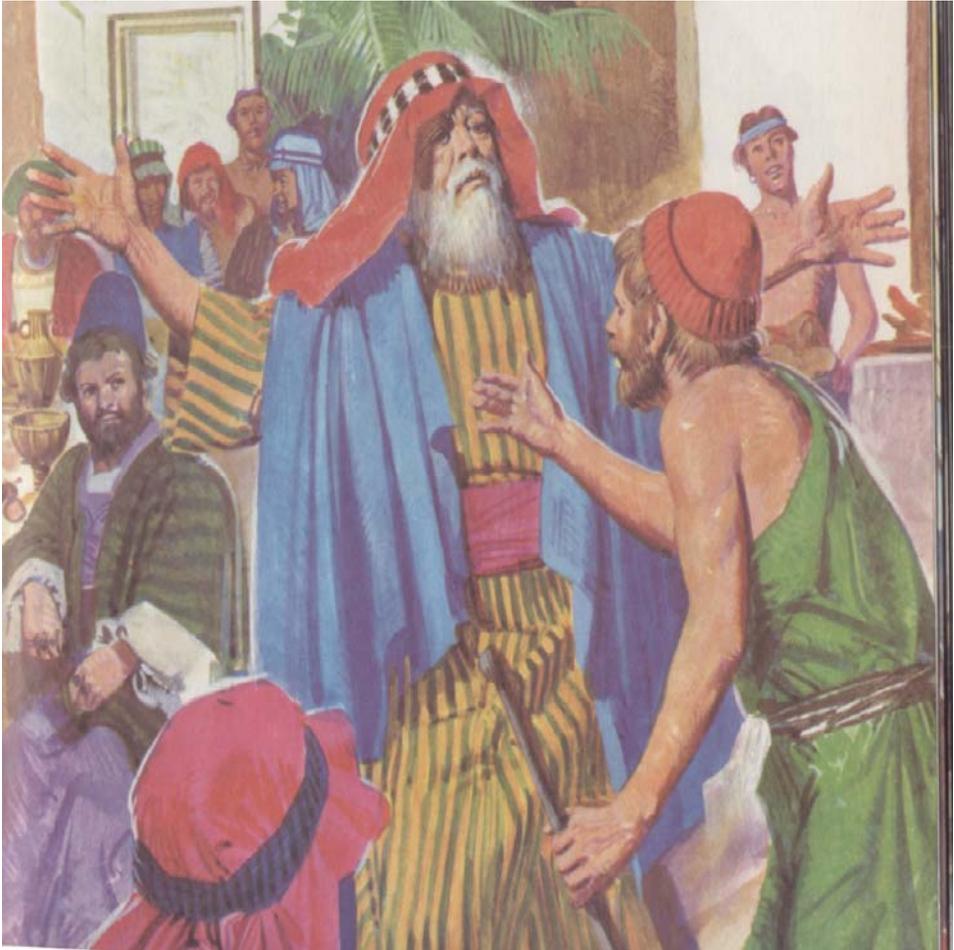




CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS
GOD ALLOWS U-TURNS

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



APRIL 2005 ISSUE 5.62

Vicar's three minute reflection
ANOTHER CHANCE FOR EVERYONE.



In the story of the prodigal son told by Jesus, it is often very difficult to see ourselves as that son who wasted his inheritance on a wild life, finally coming home to his father's warm embrace of unmerited love. We often excuse ourselves that our situation is not as bad. But is that really the case? Are we really qualified to sit as judge in condemnation of any one? We are more like the Pharisees though we love to bash them and condemn them in our religious speeches. Yes, we are like them in the way they brought a woman to Jesus and asked him what should be done to her because the woman was caught in adultery.

**Our God allows
U-turns if your change
of direction is towards
Him.**

Cheeky Pharisees. They caught the woman and there was no male accomplice? They wanted to stone the woman to death because she had "sinned" and they requested for the verdict of the Master. Jesus simply authorised the person who never broke any part of the law to throw the first stone. Any hands up? Jesus scored a good point there and also here now.

Let's return to our earlier story. You and I are often like the prodigal son, turning away from home, from the one who loves us and yet, His thoughts never leave us. Whenever we return to our senses and plan to return home, we often plan what to say to our Father as words of repentance. "Father, I have sinned...", but the loving Father, does not even allow any time for that. He runs towards us, knowing our thoughts and intentions and embraces us in His hands of love. He gives us another chance.

The apostles of Jesus knew that "second chance" experience very well. After they have all proved to be "weather friends" of Jesus, deserting and denying Him when He needed them most, they must have been beside themselves with fear when the news of Christ's resurrection was broken to them. "How are we going to explain our failure?" For Peter, he could have reasoned that in spite of all the warnings, he still fell.

Come home, brother, you will not be the first to stray away from



“home” and return.. The loving Father is eagerly waiting to welcome you to himself and give you another chance.

And that was what Jesus did. When he met with the disciples, after his resurrection, Jesus did not give them room to say their own “We are sorry for what we did.....” and neither did he give them some tongue-lashing. He spoke first and what did He say? “Peace to you.” Then he showed them his hands and side. The disciples, seeing the Master with their own eyes, were exuberant. Jesus repeated his greeting: “Peace to you. Just as the Father sent me, I send you.” (The Message: John 20:19-21).

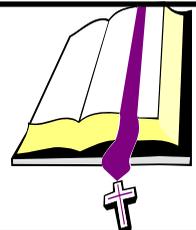
Jesus greeted and received them with His Peace thereby indicating that all is forgiven and forgotten. I am going to give you another chance. You don't have to remain behind locked rooms for fear of what the Authorities could do to you. I am alive and my Spirit will work in you to produce the kind of fruits expected of my friends. When Jesus talks about peace it is loaded with meaning. He had peace in spite of the fact that the men he spent three years with as his possible successors failed their tests on graduation! And his three-year ministry could not record the type of mammoth crowd of followers that that a contemporary successful minister is often associated with. But He was at peace because He had done what brought pleasure and satisfaction to the Father.

Are you reading this piece and you feel you have let God down terribly? The fact that you feel that way is an indication that you want to return home. He is waiting to receive you and reassure you of his love. And through the power of His Spirit, he will re-commission you. Our God allows U-turns if your change of direction is towards Him. I can see that you can't wait to make a dash for home. Peace be with you.

Dele Agbelusi

Memory Verse

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14: 27)



DO YOU QUALIFY?



Very often, some men boast about their real worth as “men” because they have given their wives expensive holidays or gifts even if the motive is not very honourable. They often say “I am a real man, men, because I satisfy my wife’s every craving.” But is that really the case? Does that make you a real man? How does your family rate you? Go through the lists below and discover for yourself as I have some of the things that will qualify you as being a real man. The list is not to discourage but to encourage you and equip you better so that in your role as a man, you will bring pleasure to God and glory to his name:

1. A real man includes his wife in envisioning the future.
2. A real man accepts spiritual responsibility for his family.
3. A real man is willing to say “I’m sorry and “Forgive me” to his family.
4. A real man discusses household responsibilities with his wife and makes sure they are distributed.
5. A real man seeks the consultation of his wife on all major financial decisions.
6. A real man follows through with commitments he has made to his wife.
7. A real man frequently tells his wife what he likes about her.
8. A real man provides financially for his family’s basic living expenses.
9. A real man deals with distractions so he can unite with his wife and family.
10. A real man prays with his wife on a regular basis.
11. A real man initiates meaningful family traditions.
12. A real man initiates family outings for the family on a regular basis.
13. A real man takes the time to give his children practical instructions about life, which in turn gives them confidence with their peers.
14. A real man manages the schedule of the home and anticipates pressure points.
15. A real man keeps his family financially sound and out of harmful debt.
16. A real man makes sure he and his wife have drawn up a will and arranged a well-conceived plan for their children in case of death.
17. A real man lets his wife and children into the interior of his life.
18. A real man honours his wife often in public.
19. A real man encourages his wife to grow as an individual.
20. A real man provides time for his wife to pursue her own personal interests.

HEALING AND FORGIVENESS

One of the ways by which we experience divine love is through forgiveness. True and lasting peace of mind and well-being are maintained when we have the attitude of forgiving others who offend or hurt us. The blessing of forgiveness heals any sense of separation between us and others. In becoming willing to forgive, we free ourselves from the bondage of an unforgiving attitude and allow God's love to flow through us unhindered. Energy that was once used to maintain an unmoving stance is transformed into productive, constructive, loving energy, which is made manifest as health on every level, and wisdom in all our relationships.

Unforgiveness blocks the healing love of the Lord from entering. It is not that people do not pray the right prayer, nor that they do not have faith, but because they do not understand the necessity of forgiveness. When we forgive, we do ourselves a big favour. We heal ourselves of the pain and hurt of bad memories. We discover humility and rid ourselves of the sins of pride - the biggest obstacle to healing. When forgiveness is communicated, it heals others, and teaches others to do the same. Everyone benefits. It becomes contagious and more people discover the ability to love unconditionally and experience the true meaning of joy in Christ Jesus.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, go back into my memory. Every hurt that has ever been done to me - heal that hurt. Every hurt that I have ever caused to another person - heal that hurt. All the relationships that have been damaged in my whole life that I am not aware of - heal those relationships.

But Lord, if there is anything that I need to do - if I need to go to a person because he is still suffering from my hand, bring to my awareness that person. I choose to forgive, and I ask to be forgiven. Remove whatever bitterness may be in my heart, Lord, and fill the empty spaces with your love. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

D.A.

THE STORY OF LING

Once there was an emperor in the Far East who was growing old and knew time was coming to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or one of his own children, he decided to do something different.

He called all the young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, "It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you." The kids were shocked! But the emperor continued. "I am going to give each one of you a seed today. One seed. It is a very special seed. I want you to go home, plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring to me, and the one I choose will be the next emperor of the kingdom!"



There was one boy named Ling who was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. She helped him get a pot and some planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks, some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow.

Ling kept going home and checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by. Still nothing. By now all the others were talking about their plants but Ling didn't have a plant, and he felt like a failure. Six months went by—still nothing in Ling's pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Ling didn't say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow.

A year finally went by and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot.

(continue on page 14)

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 20 hours a week - two week-days and Sundays. Please contact the vicar for more information.

CHRIST CHURCH AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the parish church will take place on Sunday 24th April after a brief time of worship from 10.30am. We would review the past year's activities and elect church council members and church wardens. Please be sure to be there. God is counting on you.

SALLY ROBERTS 1922 – 2005

During the week preceding Passion week, I had spoken with Sally Roberts our beloved friend and avid reader of our Crosslinks. I had requested for her permission to use her poems in this and subsequent editions of Crosslinks. She graciously acceded to my request and promised to make copies of some of her poetry available to me. Upon my return from holiday, I learnt that she died peacefully in her chair on Wednesday Easter week. Iyabo and I were privileged to be at her funeral on 8th April. Just like Sally she packaged the poems and enveloped it as though they were her last testament to us. We will publish her poems in our future issues. We will miss her dearly. She was a jolly good fellow and a beloved sister in the Lord. Sally was a member of All Saints, Edmonton, London, N9.

Dele

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER REQUESTS

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

Abdulai Janet; Adeneye Lolade; Agbelusi Tolu, Bolurin, Sope and Iyabo; Aiyegbusi Funke; Alvis Daisy; Anand Luke and Renu; Angus George; Banfield Fiona; Banfield-Nwachi Joy; Becessar Devin; Beckford Glen; Bentham Mervin and Anita; Billot Natasha; Botterill Allan and Patricia ; Burrell Cecil; Byron Barbara .

POETRY FROM SALLY

WISDOM OF CHOICE

If you could be anything other than you—I wonder just what
would you do?
Would you be a clown who brings delight to a party of children
on panto night?
Maybe you would dance or play a tune on a tinkling piano.
Perhaps you'd croon.
Would you be a star—who shines so bright and winks at the
moon on a lovely night, or would you on a sweltering
day be a shower of cool refreshing rain?
Would you be, with each new dawn, a dewdrop to glisten on
earth each morn, or snowflakes pure that softly fall to
transform a hedge or garden wall?
Would you be a flower with your own perfume
to brighten a garden—or sweeten a room?
Would you be a bird who can fly so high and see from above
all the world go by?
Perhaps you would be A BEAUTIFUL TREE or—a river
that drifts along "PEACEFULLY"
So many things we all might have been, but I wonder—if we
could, would we exchange the things that life has
brought, for many lessons have been taught
thro' all the ups and downs of life, the laughter, tears
and times of strife.
I think, when all is said and done, when we reflect the race
we've run, perhaps
We'll linger in our thoughts to count the blessings— not the
noughts.
As for me, I can only say I had a choice—I chose this way!
As I walk with the LORD, and HE with me
this is the way I 'm content to be!

Sally Roberts (1922-2005)

QUOTES

An optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity, a pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity.

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

Happiness is not the absence of problems, but the ability to deal with them.

To believe is to be strong. Doubt cramps energy.
Belief is power.

Love and kindness is something you cannot buy.. You give it—and in time you receive it all back again.

From the collections of Adrian Ogilvie-Arendse

Prayer is the plumb line that finds its rest in the place where our hearts beat in rhythm with the heart of God. Scripture is the weight that propels the plumb line's fall. Wendy M. Wright in Weavings (July/Aug. 1996). Christianity Today, Vol. 40, no. 12.

Kartoon Knuggets

By Troy Knechtel

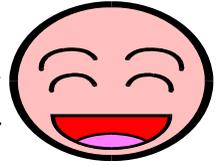


Well Pastor, I was all ready with my tithe cheque this morning, but you kept talking about my first fruits so I went home and got them (bag of onions).

Honour the Lord from your wealth, and from the first of all your produce. Proverbs 3:9

LAUGHTER LINES

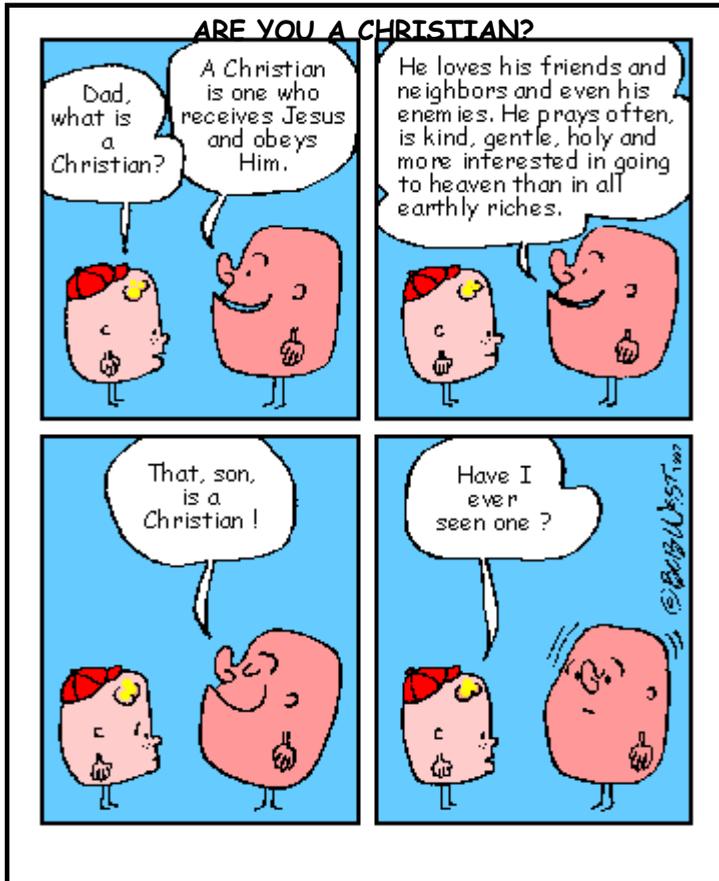
REVENGE



Many Christians are like the woman who had been bitten by a dog and was advised by her physician to write her last wishes, as she might succumb to hydrophobia. She spent so long with pencil and paper that the doctor finally remarked something about how long the will would be. "Will!" she snorted. "I'm writing a list of the people I'm going to bite!"

Stories for preachers

C L O S E S H A V E



"Mummy," asked a little girl, "do men ever go to heaven? "Why, yes, of course, my dear," answered her mother. "Why do you ask? "Because I've never seen angels with whiskers." "Well," replied the mother, "some men do go to heaven, but they only get there by a close shave!"

Anon

LAUGHTER LINES

During the Second World War, for basic training, the men were divided according to their religious denominations and expected to attend service at the Anglican, Roman Catholic or Jewish places of worship, as the case might be. One of the men in an attempt to evade attendance proclaimed himself an atheist.

"Don't you believe in God? Asked his officer. "No," said he

"Nor in keeping the Sabbath Day holy?"

"No, one day is as good as another to me."

"Then," said the officer, "you are just the man we have been looking for. You will stay behind and clean out the latrines!"

Anthony P. Castle

A very nervous airline passenger began pacing the terminal when the bad weather delayed his flight. During his walk, he ran across one of those life insurance machines. It offered \$100,000 in the event of an untimely death aboard his flight. The policy was just three dollars. He looked out the window at the threatening clouds and thought of his family at home. For that price it was foolish not to buy, so he took out the coverage. He then looked for a place to eat. Airports now carry a good variety of eateries so he settled on his favorite, Chinese. It was a relaxing meal until he opened his fortune cookie. It read: "Your recent investment will pay big dividends."

* Adapted from Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, Paul Tan, p. 440

While sitting in the club house, an old friend asked Dave why he no longer played golf with George. Dave said, "Would you play golf with a guy who's always improving his ball position, occasionally slips a tee under his ball in the fairway, and regularly lies about his score?" The answer from his old friend was obvious: "Certainly not!" Dave said, "Well, George won't play with a guy like that either."

* Rotarian, June 1993, p. 56

LOST IN WONDER, LOST FOR WORDS

What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object? Which came first, the chicken or the egg? How far is up? How many angels can dance on the head of a pin? Impossible questions. Questions that have no answers. Questions about which philosophers philosophize and theologians theologize and simple folk, LIKE ME wonder, all to no avail. Questions that boggle the mind and strain the brain and lead to endless argument. Useless questions - maybe.

But there they are: two seemingly unanswerable, impossible questions in St. Paul's Letter to the Romans: "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?" If these questions are impossible to answer, unworthy of our consideration, too hard and utterly meaningless, why did St. Paul, an eminently practical Christian, include them in his greatest epistle? Certainly not because he was afraid of hard questions. Paul surely was asked some tough questions, and surely he asked some of his own.

"What must I do to be saved?" cried the Philippian jailer out of the rubble of his ruined prison. Paul didn't even hesitate! "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:30-31). "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Hard questions, yes. Answerable? Listen to Paul's answer to himself: "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor ... things present, nor things to come ... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35, 38-39). "But some one will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' " Such questions would confound most of us Sunday-morning Christians and squelch almost any preacher; but Paul confidently replied: "For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable. and this mortal nature must put on immortality ... Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:35, 53, 57). No, Paul wasn't afraid of hard questions, (continued next page)

LOST IN WONDER (continued from page12)

and he was able to supply the answers of a Spirit-led faith-answers that lifted hearts and changed lives.

But two questions confounded Paul: "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?" At the very heart of all Christian worship, there is a deep sense of wonder at the goodness and greatness of God. Sooner or later, all Christians reach a point when they are overcome with awe and amazement. We run out of words and all we can do is to stand with the adoring host of Charles Wesley's old hymn, and "cast our crowns before Him, lost in wonder, love and praise."

That's what Paul did. Confronted by an impossible question, a question which had no answer, a question which disclosed the sovereignty and majesty of God, all Paul could do was to sing a hymn of praise: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable are his ways!" Suddenly! Suddenly! SUDDENLY! Paul was aware that he was a man before his Maker, the creation before his Creator, an earthen vessel before the Master Potter, the known before the Unknowable. All Paul could do at that moment was to shout in adoration; and that is exactly what he did.

One of the great tragedies of our time is that many Christians have lost their sense of wonder and awe. We are a scientifically minded generation, technologically oriented people who consider all of living as a logical thing to be explained and analyzed and defined. We look at the church as just another human organisation, characterized by boring rituals and endless committee meetings in which we participate out of a sense of duty. We have put so much emphasis upon the immanence of God that we have lost all sense of his transcendence. We have talked so much about the humanity of God that we have forgotten his Divinity. We need to hear again the testimony of biblical characters when they experienced the majesty and greatness of God. (to be concluded in May Issue)

THE STORY OF LING (from page 6)

But she encouraged him to go, and to take his pot, and to be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace.

When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by all the other youths. They were beautiful—in all shapes and sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor and many of the other kids laughed at him. A few felt sorry for him and just said, “Hey, nice try.”

When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. “My, what great plants, trees, and flowers you have grown,” said the emperor. “Today, one of you will be appointed the next emperor!”

All of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified. “The emperor knows I’m a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!”

When Ling got to the front, the Emperor asked his name. “My name is Ling,” he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling, and then announced to the crowd, “Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!”

Ling couldn’t believe it. Ling couldn’t even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor?

Then the emperor said, “One year ago today, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!”

CAESAR ! CAESAR! SPEAK UP.

A slave in the West Indies, called Caesar by his master, had gained his freedom and also became a Christian. One day his lord took him to the slave market in search for some new slaves. After securing all he wanted the owner was surprised to hear Caesar beg for the purchase of yet one more, an old tired Negro. "Why, Caesar, should I buy him? Of what use can he possibly be?"

"Please, sir," replied Caesar, "you must buy him for me." So the purchase was made and the old man returned to the plantation. Soon after he took sick, very sick, and Caesar cared for him as though he were his father. He washed him, waited on him, nursed him in every spare moment he found. Of course the people all noticed this, and tried to guess why Caesar was so devoted to the old man. Finally his master asked, "What connection do you have with that old man? Is he perhaps your father?"

Caesar simply smiled and answered, "No, master, he is not my father."

"Well, is he some old heathen friend or relative?"

"No, master, he is no relative of mine."

"He must be your friend then."

"No, master, he is not my friend."

"But who in the world is he?" asked the master impatiently.

Caesar's eyes moistened as he said, "He is my enemy. While yet a child he tore me from my parents and sold me as a slave. But I must love my enemy, master, I must!" That is what Jesus said I must do!

Forgiveness was painful and costly to Caesar but he was glad he did what would bring pleasure to God's heart. And that is real worship. Can you take a cue from Caesar and do likewise? God is waiting for you and you will be glad you did.

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**)
- Prayer meeting : April 25 and May 9 (**8pm**)

Wednesday - Alpha Programme/ Bible Fellowship in the Hall (**7:30pm**) from May 18

Wednesday - Home Group 17 Coleridge Road N8 8EH (**10:00 am**)

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

Vicar: Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi

Church Warden: Peter Green

Reader: Richard Mercer

Organist: Harold Randall

YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

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