



**CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS**

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A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



*The light shines in the darkness,
but the darkness has not understood it.
John Ch 1 vs 5*

ANY ROOM FOR JESUS?

Vicar's five -minute reflection

ANY ROOM FOR JESUS?



Fred Buechner writes, "We are, God knows, a people who walk in darkness . . . If darkness is meant to convey a sense of uncertainty, of being lost, of being afraid . . . If darkness suggests conflict between races, nations or individuals . . . If darkness depicts a world where we can't see very well (because of sin), then we know enough about the darkness."

However, God in Christ does not run away from the darkness. God sets up residence right smack in the middle of the darkness. If you have light, then you are not scared or worried about the darkness. In the naked vulnerability of the baby Jesus, God entered the world in the flesh. God came to be with us. For centuries God had tried different ways to reach humanity and build a lasting covenant of love. God had tried the Law, various prophets, priests, and kings. Nothing worked to God's satisfaction. People continued to wander aimlessly, living lives filled with activities but little purpose.

When Jesus was about to be born, the innkeeper claimed that he had no room. Isn't the crowded inn a rather appropriate symbol of our lives? So cluttered (not with important things but with things that amount to nothing) that there is just no time, no energy, no money, no room left over. There is just no room in our lives for the Messiah. Luke seems to carry this refrain throughout the ministry of Jesus Christ.

There was no room for Jesus in the economic world: When Jesus commanded the demons to come out of a man in Gadara and into a nearby herd of swine, the pigs immediately stampeded and ran off a cliff and were killed. The man was healed.

But what was the response of the community? Did they sing 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow?' No. What they did was to send a committee to Jesus and kindly ask him to get out of town.



What really got to them was the fact that Jesus destroyed a herd of swine to heal an outcast in their society. It was quite clear to them that if Jesus lingered a little longer the local economy would be disrupted. What they wanted was business as usual and not some itinerant miracle worker to disrupt the status quo. In economic, legal, religious, and political realms—wherever Jesus turned, there was no room for him. What began first in Bethlehem when the innkeeper turned him away was to become a recurrent theme. Let's look at ourselves. Do we have room for Christ in our lives? When the innkeeper was presented with this unexpected situation that night, he faced what I call our universal dilemma. At that point he became every man. Every man is asked: Do you have room for the Messiah?

So the advent message to us is to watch and wait. Keep our minds and our hearts open for his coming. For the hour approaches when Messiah will come to you and to me. And like the Bethlehem innkeeper we will be forced to make a decision. Will our lives be so cluttered with incidentals that there will be no room for God? Or will we open the door and gladly welcome him in? To the innkeeper, the knock that came that night was just another of a long series of bothersome interruptions. That is how some respond to God in their life. "Yes. Take the stable! Do anything; just leave me alone." God knocks at the door of every heart. The question is—will there be room enough in your life to let him in?

God made Christmas for us. But there is a sense in which all of us have to make our Christmas. All the salvation of God is finished and complete, but it is not mine until I claim it. "No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him still the dear Christ enters in." You are forgiven. You are loved. Peace on earth and goodwill to everyone who will welcome Jesus into their life.

On behalf of the editorial Board of Crosslinks and the entire Christ Church family, I wish you the peace of Christmas which comes from knowing Jesus Christ who is the reason for the Christmas season.

Dele Agbelusi

QUESTIONS FROM BIBLE READERS: PARENTING AND FAMILY



Everyone longs for a place to belong, and that's why God created the family—as a safe haven of comfort and growth. But let's face it, today's families are far from perfect. From raising a rebellious teen to assisting aging parents, you can use these questions as a roadmap to help you as you walk through your parenting role.

I long to have children. Will God ever fulfil this dream?

- Remember everything is in God's hands—and he can do the impossible. Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7
- Be aware that God's timing is not your timing. Genesis 25:20-26
- Don't let jealousy overtake your relationships. Genesis 30:1-8
- Know that God will answer your prayers. It just may not be in a way that you expect. 1 Samuel 1:1-20

Sometimes I get upset and angry with my kids. How can I maintain a loving attitude when I'm about to explode?

- Realize anger only breeds more conflict. Proverbs 15:1-4, 18
- Set aside distractions. Matthew 11:25-29
- Remember how much God's love and patience means to you. Titus 3:3-8

How can I nurture my child's self worth?

- Invite questions. 1 Samuel 17:24-54
- Create a sense of God-worth. Psalm 139
- Show your children unconditional love. Luke 15:11-32
- Set an example of healthy self-worth. Ephesians 1:3-14
- Give your child age-appropriate work to do. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

How can I effectively balance my roles as parent and wife?

- Look to the example of God, the heavenly Father. Deuteronomy 8:1-10
- Put everything in perspective. Job 38:1-40:5
- Love each other. 1 Peter 4:1-8

How can I raise a child to be kind and considerate of others?

- Remind your child that God cares about everyone. Jonah 1
- Pray for people you don't get along with. Matthew 5:43-48
- Help your child see others in a new way. Luke 10:25-37
- Be hospitable yourself. 3 John 4-11

(continued next page)

Questions from Bible readers: Parenting and family

How can I know what's best for my elderly parents?

- Show respect to your parents by living a godly life. Proverbs 23:22-25
- Respect their dreams. Joel 2:28-32
- Accept the aging process—even death. 1 Corinthians 15:35-58
- Take care of them. 1 Timothy 5:1-7
- Keep communication lines open. Psalm 25

How can I tell if I'm doing a good job as a mother?

- Teach your children who they really belong to. Ephesians 6:1-4
- Practise the art of discipline. Hebrews 12:5-13
- Remember God always knows what's best for your children. Luke 2:41-52

How can I encourage my child's faith to grow?

- Draw attention to the many ways God is working in your lives. Joshua 4
- Remember, kids need prayers, too. 1 Chronicles 22
- Find a place to worship with God's people. Ezra 3
- Be an example. Proverbs 2:1, 5
- Explain the simple message of God's love. John 3:16-21

How can I protect my kids from negative cultural influences?

- Ask God to guard them. Ezra 8:21-34
- Use proactive protection. Psalm 119:97-105
- Model godly living in a fallen world. Proverbs 4:10-27
- Protect, but don't smother. Song of Solomon 8:8, 9
- Be their shepherd. 1 Peter 5:2-11

I grieve over my child's rebellion. What should I tell him or her?

- Rebellion has its consequences. 2 Samuel 15; 18:9-17
- There is great joy in coming back to God. Psalm 32
- Accepting correction will bring life. Proverbs 10:17
- If you look for trouble, you'll find it. Proverbs 11:27-31

(continued on page 7)

THANK GOD FOR UNANSWERED PRAYER!

When Jimmy was a little boy, he wanted to be a cowboy. He spent countless hours in front of the television, watching reruns of "Gunsmoke" and "Bonanza." He just knew that someday he would live on a ranch, wear a big cowboy hat, and ride the range just like all his cowboy heroes.

When he was seven years old, Jimmy said, "Dad, I want to be a cowboy when I grow up. Will you help me be a cowboy?"

"Sure, son," said his dad, smiling down at his little cowpoke. As the years went by, Jimmy grew into a fine young man. As you might expect, he outgrew his childhood fantasy of becoming a cowboy, and turned instead to girls, sports, studying, and preparing himself for a career in the business world.

One day Jimmy went to his father again and said, "Dad, I want to go to college and get a good education. Will you help me?"

His dad said, "College? Son, you can't go to college. When you were seven, you said you wanted to be a cowboy. So I bought you a ranch in Texas with 50 heads of cattle! There's no money for you to go to college. Besides, you need to take care of that ranch. It's all yours."

"But Dad!" said Jimmy. "I was just a child when I said that! I didn't know then what I know now! I don't want a ranch! I want an education!"

Have you ever wondered why God doesn't answer your prayers exactly the way you want him to? Maybe it's because we're like Jimmy. As God's children, we don't always know what's best for us.

Instead of grumbling about "unanswered" prayers, we should be thankful God doesn't always answer our prayers the way we think he should. If he did, we might end up like Jimmy—with a ranch instead of an education. God knows exactly what you need, even when you don't. In fact, the Bible teaches that when you pray, the Holy Spirit actually prays for you, too. (Romans 8:26-28) Because of this, we can relax and know that whatever happens will be according to God's will.

Questions from Bible Readers (from page 5)

What advice, if any, should I give my twenty-something child?

- Enjoy youth; remember God. Ecclesiastes 11:1-12:1
- Remember you're individually accountable to God. Ezekiel 18:1-20
- Choose good instead of evil; see that justice is done. Amos 5:6-27
- Aim for independence. Matthew 14:24-33
- Keep the faith. 1 Timothy 4:5-16

How can I best relate to my adult child?

- Be a resource, not a controller. Genesis 13; 14
- Pass on your wisdom and experience, but let your child make final decisions. Ruth 3
- Pray your child will decide where he or she is heading—eternally. John 3:1-21

How can I deal with the challenges of being a single parent?

- Trust God to meet your needs. 1 Kings 17:8-16
- Rely on past records of God's work in your life. Psalm 71:1-6
- Ask God—and others—for help. Psalm 138
- Invite help from people around you, and give your help to them. Philippians 4:10-20

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Memory Verse

In the past God spoke to our ancestors 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 also 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. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Hebrews 1:1-3



NEWS AND EVENTS

Trial of Christian B&B owners has now begun. **Mon, 13 Dec 2010**

The trial of two Christian guesthouse owners being sued by a homosexual couple because of their policy of restricting double bed accommodation to married couples has begun.

Watch footage from this morning's witness

This morning as Peter and Hazelmory Bull approached Bristol County Court for the first day of their trial they were greeted by dozens of concerned friends and supporters. Around 30 people gathered in front of the court singing hymns and holding placards declaring 'It's their home', a stark reminder that the guesthouse is also the Bulls' home.

Marriage

Mr and Mrs Bull's double room policy has been in place since they opened the Chymorvah guesthouse in 1986 and the policy is applied consistently to all unmarried couples. But Martyn Hall and his civil partner Steven Preddy brought a claim of sexual orientation discrimination against the Bulls after they were denied double bed accommodation in September 2008.

They are bringing a claim under the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations, seeking up to £5,000 for damaging their feelings. The litigation is being financed by the Government-funded Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Contesting

Mr and Mrs Bull are contesting the claim, saying that their double bed policy applies to all unmarried couples regardless of sexual orientation. They say it is based on their beliefs about marriage, not hostility to any sexual orientation.

Their legal defence is being financed by The Christian Institute, a charity that protects the religious liberty of Christians.

The Institute's Mike Judge has said: "This Christian couple are being put on trial for their beliefs. Equality laws are being used as a sword rather than a shield."

Lobby

Just days before Mr Preddy and Mr Hall arrived at the guesthouse, a letter had been sent to the establishment from homosexual lobby group, Stonewall.

The letter claimed that Mr and Mrs Bull's double room policy was unlawful. Stonewall denies that the litigation is a 'set up'.

On Saturday a letter written by two Church of England bishops appeared in The Daily Telegraph in which the bishops expressed "great concern" over the case.

Liberty

The letter was signed by the Bishop of Winchester, Rt Revd Michael Scott-Joynt, and the former Bishop of Rochester, Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali.

They wrote: "Mr and Mrs Bull's understanding of marriage is the same as that of English law and the Christian Church. (Continued next page)

NEWS AND EVENTS

WORSHIP TIMES AND THEMES IN DECEMBER/ JANUARY

Date	10:30am	5:00pm
24th Dec.		Midnight Holy Communion (11pm) Col.1:11-20;Lk 23:33-43 No room for the King
25th Dec. (HC)	Heb. 1:1-4; Luke 2:1-20 (Keep Watch)	No evening service
26th Dec. (MP)	Heb.2:10-18, Lk.2:21-40 (My eyes have seen)	No evening service
31st Dec		Midnight Praise, Prayers and Worship (11pm) (Can these bones live?)
2nd Jan. (HC)	John 1: 1-18 (The Word became flesh)	No evening service
9th Jan. (MP)	12:1-5; Luke 2:41-52 (Don't you know?)	1Cor. ;1-17 (5pm) (The Corinthian church)
16th Jan. (FS)	Youth Sunday	No evening service Churches Together Joint Service at Middle Lane Methodist Church (5pm)

There is Holy Communion at 8am every Sunday using the Book of Common Prayer

Note: **HC** denotes Common Worship Holy Communion; **MP**— Morning Prayer; **FS**, Family Service

Youth Sunday on 16th January 2011

Our annual Youth Sunday will take place on 16th January 2011. Come and worship with us and listen to God's message through the lips of the young ones.

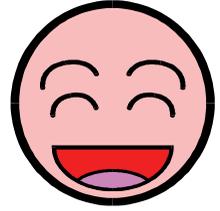
Their guesthouse is also their home. Their policy may seem traditional but, of itself, there is nothing wrong with that." They added: "Liberty of conscience must not be confined to the mind. It is meaningless unless it includes the freedom to stand by our principles publicly."

<http://www.christian.org.uk/news/>

LAUGHTER LINES

A Wedding Fire

At the beginning of my daughter's wedding ceremony, I was to light one of the candles. Not realizing the potential hazard, I got too close and set my acrylic nail on fire.



Trying not to ruin my daughter's big day, I calmly lit the candle from my flaming nail and then, like a gunslinger with his six-shooter, I blew it out. Needless to say, my blackened nail was the talk of the reception.

Linda Huckins,

Foible at a Baptism

As a young preacher, my small church had limited facilities, so we held baptisms in a creek. With alligators in the area, however, that was less than ideal.

Then a minister friend suggested I bring my next group of baptismal candidates to his church for a joint baptismal service. Naturally, I accepted.

The baptismal pool had a clear front so the congregation could see everything. When the baptisms were finished, curtains were drawn, and I was left alone in the pool for a moment. The building had no air conditioning, and it was quite hot. I thought how nice it would feel to take a little dip. I glided to one end, turned, and backstroked to the other end.

Hearing a riotous uproar in the church, I looked toward the congregation. The curtain was down only to the top of the glass! An astonished and amused congregation had been watching my every move.

Although it was probably the best laugh that church ever had, I never was invited back to repeat the performance.

Doug Woodall, "Lite Fare," Christian Reader

LAUGHTER LINES

She Learned Her Lesson

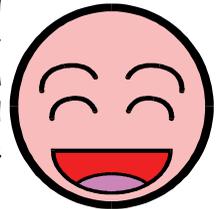
I was the new teacher for the toddler-age Sunday school class, which included my 14-month-old daughter. During a lesson on creation, I'd ask questions like, "Who made the trees?" or "Who made the sun?" and the children would respond, "God did." I was pleased the children learned quickly that God made everything.

Teaching lessons at home was more of a challenge. I had tried hard to teach my daughter to pick up her toys, and she wasn't learning very quickly. One day I walked into the living room to find toys scattered everywhere. In exasperation I asked, "Who made this mess?" My daughter looked at me with a proud smile and said, "God did!"

Carol J. Rivest, "Heart to Heart," Today's Christian Woman

Road Rage

Fighting rush-hour traffic from suburban Maryland to Washington D.C. can cause its share of near misses and irritating moments. One morning, a young lady darted her compact car from a side street into the stream of traffic immediately in front of a driver just a few car lengths ahead of me, forcing him to brake sharply. He avoided hitting her by inches and was obviously furious. Within seconds, traffic stopped at a red light, and I watched him pull up behind the offender, leap from his car, and stride angrily toward hers. Clearly, he intended to give her a royal bowling out.



Seeing him coming, the very attractive young lady jumped from her car and ran to meet him--a big smile on her face! Before he could say one word or know what was happening, she had thrown her arms around him, hugged him tightly, and planted a passionate kiss on his lips! Then she was back in her car and driving away, leaving her antagonist standing in the middle of the street still speechless and looking somewhat confused and embarrassed--but no longer angry!

HISTORY CORNER: WILLIAM CAREY

YOU CAN BE A ROPE—HOLDER

No one in the village of Paulersbury, England, expected William Carey to become a missionary, especially since Carey was a boisterous teenager. But on Feb. 10, 1779, he experienced a spiritual transformation. Only three years after his conversion, William Carey was speaking regularly at Earls Barton Church, a tiny Dissenter congregation that relied on visiting lay preachers. The apprentice shoemaker had studied the commentaries and books of his employer – and with the help of a friend even taught himself New Testament Greek.

Carey soon began to question the church's reluctance to take the gospel to foreign lands. He mentioned the subject at a meeting of ministers in 1786 but was reprimanded by the chairman, who said, "You are a miserable enthusiast for asking such a question. Certainly nothing can be done before another Pentecost."

Crushed, Carey remained silent for the rest of that meeting, but six years later he wrote a pamphlet, *An Enquiry into the Obligation of the Heathens*, which refuted the five major arguments against missionary work. Carey reminded the ministers: "It only requires that we should have as much love for the souls of our fellow - creatures ... as we have for the profits arising from a few otter-skins."

In spite of no promised financial support, William Carey announced his decision in 1793 to give his life to missionary work in India. He challenged the people of his small church, "**Yonder is a gold mine. I will descend and dig, but you must hold the ropes.**"

On June 13, 1793, William Carey and his large family went to India with John Thomas, a former naval surgeon who had been a ship's doctor for the East India Company. For seven years, they struggled to survive, learn the language, and communicate the faith to the people, **Carey's motto was, "Attempt great things for God, and expect great things from God."**

The first major breakthrough occurred in November 1800 when a young Bengali carpenter, Krishna Pal, dislocated his right shoulder. Thomas opened a clinic because the villagers had no doctors.

(Continued on page 14)

A STRANGER AT THE DOOR

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

"Not me," he snapped. "I don't believe all that religion garbage." For many years the man's wife had been trying to tell him about Jesus Christ and the salvation he offers. How God's Son had become a human being in order to show us the way to heaven.

"Nonsense," the man always said. The family left for church and the man was all alone in his cosy country home. He glanced out the window at the cold snowy scene outside. He turned to warm himself by the fire. But as he turned, his eyes caught a movement in the snow outside. He looked. Cats! Three young cats walking slowly past his window. "The fools," he thought. "They'll freeze for sure!" The man put on his hat and coat and opened the door. A blast of wintry air sent a shiver through his body.

**that is what
the Christ-
mas story is
all about.**

"Come here, cats! Come inside where there's warmth and food. You'll die out there." But the cats ran away, frightened by the stranger at the door. He walked outside. "Come back! Don't be afraid, I want to save you." But the cats were gone. It was too late.

"Well, I did everything I could for them," the man muttered to himself. "What more could I do? I'd have to become a cat myself in order to reach them and save them. If I became a cat, I could tell them and show them. They would have to believe me then, unless they were fools."

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

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

William Carey: You can be a rope holder

(continued from page 12)

He quickly set the bones and then told the Bengali Carpenter how Jesus could heal a man's soul as well as his shoulder.

After that Krishna and friend, Gokul, visited the mission regularly and embraced the faith.

Carey's faith grew even though he did not see the fruit of his labour for almost 20 years. He did not experience significant success until after he completed revising the second Bengali version of the Bible and establishing a publishing company and free mission schools for low-caste and orphaned children in Mudnabatti, Serampore, Calcutta, and Cutwa.

Then on March 11, 1812, a fire destroyed the mission, Carey's manuscripts, and all the Bible versions in the publishing company's warehouse. "In one short evening," Carey observed as he surveyed the smoking desolation the next day, "the labours of years are consumed. How unsearchable are the ways of God! I had lately brought some things to the utmost perfection of which they seemed capable, and contemplated the missionary establishment with perhaps too much self-congratulation. The Lord has laid me low, that I may look more simply to Him."

The Lord has laid me low, that I may look more simply to Him."

William Carey told his nephew: "If after my removal anyone should think it worth his while to write my life, I will give you a criterion by which you may judge of its correctness. If he give me credit for being a plodder, he will describe me justly. I can plod. I can preserve in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything."

As William Carey was supported in ministry, he in turn was a rope-holder for the people of India. All of us are rope-holders for someone. And we must be faithful – as Jesus is faithful to us. God doesn't give us a bigger task than we can handle. But He expects us to do the job assigned to us.

Are we doing our job? Are we holding the ropes for the people God had given us? Will we hang on until their baskets safely touch ground? God has called us to be rope-holders in our world. May we follow Him.

George Sweeting

HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE

E-MAIL FROM GOD (23)

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From: **GOD, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

To: **YOU, MY BELOVED CHILD,**

He used his servant body to carry our sins to the Cross so we could be rid of sin 1 Peter 2:24 (The Message)

Subject: **Receive the gift of the Cross**

My beloved child,

Even the most perfect person has done something that deserves a death sentence. There are times when you've been cruel, or greedy, or conceited, or jealous. Just as one drop of poison pollutes a glass of water, one small lie pollutes your life and separates you from Me. Even the smallest, white lie earns the death penalty.

But I loved you so much that I gave all the bad stuff you've done, big and little, to Jesus on the cross. He held it there for you because I asked Him to do it. The power of your wrongdoing died when He was crucified. So when you believe in Jesus, all that bad stuff you've done is forgiven and washed away. It's My gift to you for the cost of My Son's life. Your debt is cancelled forever. Will you receive my Gift—My Son—as your Lord and Saviour?

God.

Adapted from 'e-mail from God for Teens'-Clonigers

MOTTO/TEXT FOR THE YEAR

“I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH” *PHILIPPIANS 4:13*

FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who strive 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 resource 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

- Sunday - Choir practice in church (**9.30 am**) - on recess
- Monday - Baby n' Toddler Group (**9.30 am –11.30am**) - on recess
- Brownies meeting in church (**5.30pm**) - on recess
 - Prayer meetings –17th January. in church(**8 pm**)
- Wednesday - Bible Fellowship in church - (**6.30 pm for 7.15pm start**) -on recess
- Friday - Bible Fellowship in church - West Chapel (**2.00 pm**) -on recess
- Scouts meeting in hall and church(**6.30 pm**) - on recess
 - Music Team practice in choir vestry (**6.00 pm**) - on recess

Enquiry/Counselling/Prayer Lifeline - please phone 020 8340 1566

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YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

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