

Parish

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Magazine



February/March 2019

Chichester Road, Croydon

www.stmatthew.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1132508

Services at St Matthew's

Sunday Morning Services

1st 3rd 4th and 5th Sundays

8.30 am Eucharist (Said)

**10.00 am Parish Eucharist with Choir and Children's Groups
followed by tea and coffee in the foyer**

2nd Sunday

8.30 am Eucharist (Said)

11.00am Café Style All Age Service

Sunday Evening Service

1st Sunday 5.00pm Healing Service with Prayers

Morning Prayer

Monday to Thursday 9.00 am

Tuesday

2nd Tuesday 3.30pm



Wednesday

10.00 am Holy Communion (Said)

**Baptisms, Weddings and Banns of Marriage
By arrangement with the Vicar**

***St Matthew's Vision
'Celebrating God's love throughout the whole
community
By what we believe and do'.***

The Vicar writes...

Dear friend,

In these days of difficulty and uncertainty for our nation, now more than ever we need to hold fast to that which is certain and strong. Many people see faith as something vague - a leap into the unknown or a hope based on mere wishful thinking. Hebrews 11 verse 1 describes faith like this: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." You can't get much stronger than that! Christian faith is based not on a system of beliefs or precepts or a code of laws or conduct, or some nebulous idea of something out there above and beyond us. Our faith is based on a person - Jesus the Anointed One. The faith we believe and proclaim stands or falls on the most important event in the gospel story - that Jesus rose from the dead.

If this historical event was ever disproved, then we would be forced to admit that our faith was in vain. So far, those who have tried to disprove it have ended up becoming Christians themselves! Because Jesus lives, we can know that our lives are anchored in Him, and that whatever may happen in our lives as individuals or in the nation, we are held in His eternal care and love, and we can - and indeed should - experience peace even as the storms of life rage all around us.

Before the joy of the resurrection, of course, comes the agony of the cross, and during Lent we are called to prepare for the season of Easter by focussing on all the hardships Jesus endured, especially during the forty days he spent fasting in the wilderness. This experience was formative in Jesus' life and ministry, and it is highly significant that we read in Luke's gospel that Jesus returned from the desert in the power of the Spirit - the Holy Spirit who had driven Him there in the first place. Jesus' time in the desert was marked out by three things: being alone, being hungry and being tempted. Jesus entered the battle against all the evils in the world through prayer and through fasting. The wonderful thing is that He emerged victorious from those six weeks or so - a long time to be without human company, food and resisting every temptation common to the human race! Where every one of us, and every member of the human race from Adam to the present day, has failed to resist temptation, Jesus succeeded. And just as He represented everyone who has ever lived when he died on the cross, so His victory over temptation in the wilderness, is a victory we can share in.

So where we struggle in our lives and find ourselves failing, let us recall that Jesus overcame on our behalf and it is through our faith - that strong and

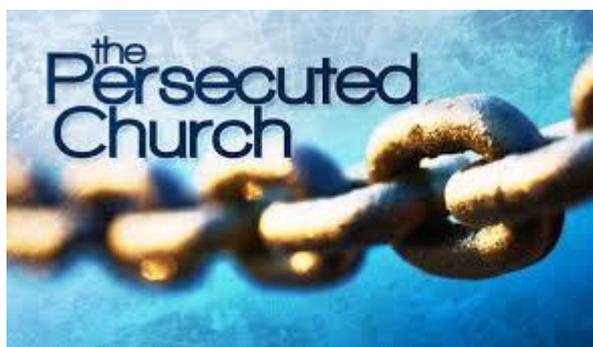


certain assurance - that we are able to access the help we need to overcome. Lent, then, can be seen in a very positive light - that the power to overcome the sin in our own lives is available to us through the person of Jesus. So however we choose to mark Lent - whether to give something up, or to give more time to prayer, or whatever it may be, let's remember Him who endured the struggle; let's hold fast to Him who knows what we are facing; let's gain from Him what we need to share in His victory and look forward to rejoicing in His resurrection.

May you have a victorious Lent!

With my love and prayers.

Simon



Persecuted Church Prayer Meeting

Our next Persecuted Church Prayer Meeting will be on Wednesday 20th February at 7.30pm at the Vicarage. This is a very informal gathering to bring the needs of many of our brothers and sisters around the world before the Lord in prayer. Do come if you can.

Mental Health Awareness Day

On Saturday 23rd February, at St Mildred's Church, Bingham Road, there is an event to promote the awareness of mental health issues. The day runs from 10.00am to 3.00pm. Further details from Simon.





Men's Breakfast

We are hoping to start a Men's Fellowship Group at St Matthew's; this is going to be launched at the George Pub on George Street with a Men's Breakfast on Saturday 2nd March at 9.30am. We hope that we can address the needs of men in the church as well as beyond the church, so please, if you are a man, come along and invite your male friends!

Bring and Share Lunch

On another food-related matter, at 12.30pm on Sunday 3rd March, we are having a Bring and Share Lunch together with the Hispanic congregation who use our church building every Sunday afternoon for worship. They are very keen to get to know us a little better, so this is a great opportunity to meet with them, as well as trying some great Spanish cuisine!



On Ash Wednesday, 6th March, we will be having our usual Wednesday morning 10.00am service of Holy Communion as well as a service at 8.00pm in the evening. Both services will include receiving the sign of the cross in ash, for those who wish to.

Reflection “What is expected of us?” A challenge for 2019

(From “Turning Points” devotional- reprinted with permission)

Let’s talk about numbers for a moment. As someone has said, “if it can’t be quantified, it can’t be qualified.” That is, looking at numbers and facts often provides the backdrop we need for making quality decisions in our life. Just as we look at our budget or income to decide if we can buy a house or a car, we can look at some different numbers to decide how to live our life.

Here are the numbers: the average life expectancy in England is around 79 years for men and 83 for women. If you are younger than these years, then subtract your current age from your appropriate life expectancy number to estimate the years you have left. This is just an exercise and our times are in God’s hands. In Psalm 90:12 we read, “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” *Therefore we must be conscious of the time God has given us; we must use that time wisely.* We can think about our hours that we have each day and how we spend them. Think about the number of choices that we make in one day- dozens of them. Hours matter! If we take out eight hours per day for sleep, that leaves 16 hours of everyday life that we have to make choices about.- which equals 5,840 waking hours each year.

God expects

Let’s clarify something at the outset: God is God and we are not. God is the creator and we are His creatures. Therefore, it is entirely reasonable for God to have expectations. There is an unbiblical school of thought in some Christian quarters that God is delighted for us to live as we like. Wrong! God has expectations of us because He loves us. He knows better than we do what will fulfil us in our life.

Theologian N T Wright uses the term “covenant of vocation” to describe God’s expectations of mankind in Genesis 1: 26-28. God covenanted with man to carry out a vocation of bearing His image, filling the earth with humanity and exercising dominion over his creation. Mankind is like a full-length mirror slanted at a 45- degree angle; we reflect God’s glory from heaven *into* Creation and reflect the praises of Creation on earth back to Him. That glorious vocation was marred, and remains marred, by sin. But our vocation hasn’t changed. God expects us to represent Him on earth for His glory- and with that vocation come expectations. Therefore we are not free to live as we *want*. Rather we are obligated to live as we *ought*. Our time, our gifts and abilities, our money- time talent and treasure- all belong to Him. For all of our years, days and hours on earth they are to be used for His glory. If God is an expectant God, what does He expect of us specifically?

God's expectations of you

Let's start with 1 Corinthians 10:31. Paul was trying to settle an argument within the Corinthian church about food and eating. In summary he wrote, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." There's the guiding principle: God expects us to glorify Him in whatever we do. Think about the following three categories in terms of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. You are not your own- you belong to God.

Time

What does God expect of you when it comes to time? What does it mean that your time is not your own? How does a steward treat his owner's time? How can prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17) be a way to seek God's guidance about your use of time?

Talent

Your emotional and intellectual life – the sources of your gifts and abilities – belong to God. What does it mean to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? (Mark 12:30). How does God expect you to use your whole self to honour Him in 2019?

Treasure

This is perhaps where the pull from the world is strongest. If all our money belongs to God (1 Chronicles 29: 14-17), what does He expect us to do with it? How do we find the balance between investing in self, in God's Kingdom, and in others? (Matthew 25:14-30)

Your expectations of you

Time

How can you set a higher bar in 2019 for how you use and manage your time in ways that reflect the character of God? (Consider praying the prayer in Psalm 90:12)

Talent

If you challenged yourself in 2019 to better invest your heart, soul, mind and strength for God, what would that look like? How might your expectations differ from 2018?

Treasure

How would you like to change your patterns of working, saving, investing and giving in 2019? (Meditate on 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 for inspiration)

Praying for Croydon

School Pastors

Working with local churches, schools and police to help children get home safely.



Our team of eight School Pastors are all volunteers from local churches who are available at the end of the school day when pupils are heading home. Our role is to accompany them to the bus and tram stops and ensure they don't get into trouble or cause a nuisance to other members of the public. Sometimes young people want to chat about what's happening in their lives, and we're always available to listen, and to offer encouragement.

At present we work with St. Andrew's School on Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoons.

Please pray:

1. For safety for pupils making their way home.
2. For energy and encouragement for the team and sensitivity in their interaction with young people.
3. For continuing good relations with the school head teacher and staff.
4. For our School Pastors team to grow and expand, both at St Andrew's and into other schools in our borough.



Quotes

The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time.
(Abraham Lincoln)

It is better to get wisdom than gold. (Matthew Henry)

We should invest our time, finances and talents in the coming kingdom and focus on Christ as the centre, source and goal of our lives.

(Charles Swindoll)

A sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue. (Thomas Brooks)

Holiness is not freedom from temptation but power to overcome temptation.
(G. Campbell Morgan)

You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.

(C S Lewis)

Life is wasted if we do not grasp the glory of the cross, cherish it for the treasure that it is, and cleave to it as the highest price of every pleasure and the deepest comfort in every pain. What was once foolishness to us—a crucified God—must become our wisdom and our power and our only boast in this world. (John Piper)

God loves each of us as if there were only one of us. (St. Augustine)

You are the only Bible some unbelievers will ever read. (John MacArthur)

God does not give us everything we want, but He does fulfill His promises, leading us along the best and straightest paths to Himself.

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Bible themed verses – Love

“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul....” (Deuteronomy 10: 13)

“Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. “This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” (Matthew 22: 37-39)

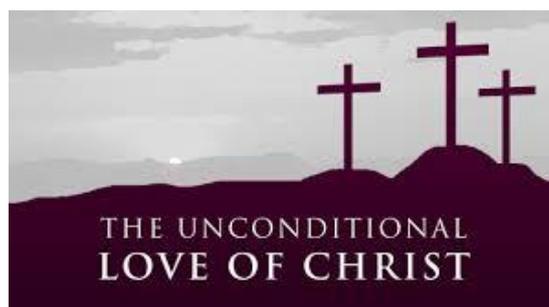
“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13: 34-35)

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another in brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another.” (Romans 12: 9-10)

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7)

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4: 7)



Remembering the Persecuted Church- for our prayers

Two items from the current Barnabas Fund diary



Winter relief for Christians in war-torn Syria

For Christian families in Syria, whose lives and livelihoods have been wrecked by civil war, Christmas amid the winter snow is cold and unforgiving. BF is providing heaters and blankets to Syrian Christians plus parcels of essentials such as rice, flour, cooking oil, tuna, canned meat and tea. They have also sent funds so Christian children in Damascus, Homs, Hama and Tartous can receive a special Christmas present pack with a winter blanket, scarf, hat and gloves. Each child will also get a matching school bag and pencil case, with exercise and drawing books, pens, colouring pencils, a ruler and a geometry set. The children's gifts are not just to bring a smile to chilled cheeks but help heal the trauma caused by conflict. BF's partner explains, "The psychological toll of living through eight years wondering if today will be their last is enormous."

(£32k for winter relief for Syrian Christians)

Earthquake relief and rebuilding for Indonesian Christians

The 7.4 magnitude earthquake and tsunami which struck the Indonesian island of Sulawesi on 28th September 2018 killed more than 2,000 people and laid waste towns and villages. Focusing on isolated areas, BF swiftly provided emergency aid packages and set up soup kitchens supplying cooked meals. The aid packages contained items such as toiletries, towels, blankets, vitamins and food. After meeting immediate needs, BF is helping to restore Christians' devastated homes and rebuild places of worship-at least 84 churches were damaged or destroyed. They are providing material for simple multi- purpose halls (which can be used as churches or schools) and for semi-permanent homes. Christians desperately need a proper shelter before the rains arrive in February. Christians comprise around 17% of Central Sulawesi's population and face discrimination from the Muslim majority; aid workers saw one hospital in the regional capital Palu which only offered treatment to Muslims.

(£62k for emergency relief and rebuilding in Sulawesi)

Scientists with a strong Christian faith - Alister McGrath



In previous issues I've included articles about scientists from previous centuries with a Christian faith, but in this new series I'm featuring living scientists who are making a significant impression in their particular discipline. Twelve years ago I read "The God Delusion" by Professor Richard Dawkins. The following year, a friend recommended "The Dawkins Delusion" by Professor Alister McGrath (whose name then was unfamiliar to me) refuting many of Dawkins's claims. Intrigued to learn more, I watched several YouTube clips of these two intellectual heavyweights debating many aspects of the Christian faith.

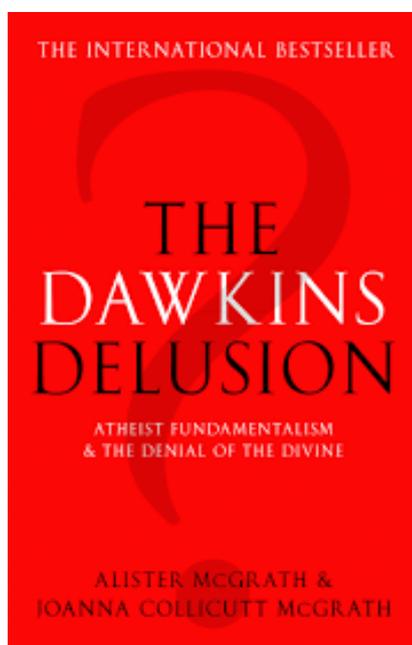
Alister Edgar McGrath FRSA (born 23 January 1953) is a Northern Irish theologian, priest, intellectual historian, scientist, Christian apologist and public intellectual. He currently holds the Andreas Idreos Professorship in Science and Religion in the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford, and is Professor of Divinity at Gresham College. He was previously Professor of Theology, Ministry, and Education at King's College London and Head of the Centre for Theology, Religion and Culture, Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Oxford, and was principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, until 2005. He is an Anglican priest.

Aside from being a faculty member at Oxford McGrath has also taught at Cambridge University and is a Teaching Fellow at Regent College. McGrath holds three doctorates from the University of Oxford: a DPhil in Molecular Biophysics, a Doctor of Divinity in Theology and a Doctor of Letters in Intellectual History. McGrath is noted for his work in historical theology, systematic theology, and the relationship between science and religion, as well as his writings on apologetics. He is also known for his opposition to New Atheism and antireligionism and his advocacy of theological critical realism. Among his best-known books are *The Twilight of Atheism*, *The Dawkins Delusion*, *Dawkins' God: Genes, Memes, and the Meaning of Life*, and *A Scientific Theology*. He is also the author of a number of popular textbooks on theology.

McGrath was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and grew up in Downpatrick, County Down, where he attended Down High School. In September 1966 he became a pupil at the Methodist College Belfast, where his studies

focused on mathematics, physics and chemistry. He went up to Wadham College, Oxford, in 1971 and gained first class honours in chemistry in 1975. He began research in molecular biophysics in the Oxford University Department of Biochemistry under the supervision of Professor George Radda and was elected to an E.P.A. Cephalosporin Research Studentship at Linacre College, Oxford, for the academic year 1975-6, and to a Domus Senior Scholarship at Merton College, Oxford, for the period 1976-8. During these three years, he carried out scientific research while studying for the Oxford University Final Honour School of Theology. He was awarded an Oxford DPhil for his research in molecular biophysics (December 1977), and gained first class honours in Theology in June 1978.

McGrath then left Oxford to work at the University of Cambridge, where he also studied for ordination in the Church of England. In September 1980, he was ordained deacon and began ministry as a curate at St Leonard's Parish Church, Wollaton, Nottingham, in the English East Midlands. He was ordained priest at Southwell Minster in September 1981. In 1983, he was appointed lecturer in Christian doctrine and ethics at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and a member of the Oxford University Faculty of Theology. He was awarded a BD by Oxford in 1983, for research in historical theology. He spent the fall semester of 1990 as the Ezra Squire Tipple Visiting Professor of Historical Theology at the Divinity School of Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. A former atheist McGrath accepts



evolution. In 2004 McGrath suggested in *The Twilight of Atheism* that atheism was in decline. He has been highly critical of Richard Dawkins, calling him "embarrassingly ignorant of Christian theology". His book: *The Dawkins Delusion*— a response to Dawkins's *The God Delusion* – was published by SPCK in February 2007, and the two had public debate on the topic, "Does religious belief damage the health of a society, or is it necessary to provide the moral and ethical foundations of a healthy society?"

□

The Great Designer

“The heavens are telling the glory of God; they are a marvellous display of His craftsmanship.” (Psalm 19:1)

Whether you look at the universe through a microscope or a telescope, you discover that God is the great designer. Here are six things He designed:

1. Temperature. The sun’s surface is 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit and we’re 93 million miles away from it—just the right distance. If the earth’s temperature was 50 degrees hotter or colder all life would cease. Think about it: why wasn’t the earth placed twice as far away, or twice as close?

2. Rotation. We rotate 365 times a year as we pass around the sun. Suppose we rotated only 36 times? Our days would be ten times as long. We’d be terrible hot on one side, unbearably cold on the other and life as we know it would cease.

3. Air. Oxygen constitutes 21% of our atmosphere; the precise balance of air we need to breathe. Why not 50%? Because the first time somebody lit a match we’d all be toast. And if there’s a design then it follows that there must be a designer; God. At creation He revealed His great power, but at the cross He revealed His great love (John 3: 16). Through Jesus His son you can know the great designer personally and receive the gift of eternal life. If you don’t, you’ll enter a lost eternity. The people in heaven will be those who got there by choice, not chance.

4. The Deep Blue Sea: About 70% of our world is covered by oceans. The significance can’t be overstated. Abundant liquid water is the most important distinguishing factor on this planet that supports life.

5. Constant Gravity: Nobody expects gravity to go anywhere, anytime soon, but it’s interesting to note that scientists don’t really understand how gravity works. We take it for granted, but gravity helps make us who we are.

It defines our strength, contributes to the shape and form of every living thing. An average male human transported to Mars could dunk on a 26 foot-tall basketball hoop (due to the reduced gravity). A 200- pound man trying to stand on Jupiter would weigh 480 pounds and would have to get a lot stronger just to jump more than a few inches.



6. The Moon: be thankful for our great big beautiful satellite. Without the moon, you might not be here; its gravitational tug creates tides.

From London gang violence to love

Some readers may recall that I included an article in the summer issue about London's knife crime epidemic, and how many churches are helping by reaching out to gang members. I recently read this inspiring story about a reformed gang member in the current prayer diary of "Speak Life Daily."

"When I was eight years old, the older boys in my area told me to deliver something to a man down the road," says Sephton Henry. "I didn't know that the package had drugs in it until I saw the man overdosing on the floor. I started to feel bad; that somehow it was my fault so I said to myself I would avoid going near the older boys. But I was a kid, and when you're a kid you only go as far as the shops and the park, and that's where they are, so I was bound to bump into them – and I did. I came from a broken home so the things I was looking for – affection, love and all the things a child hungers for - I ended up searching for on the streets."

I have seen some horrific things – people being stabbed with Sanurai swords, a woman being violently assaulted. Often people wonder why kids are out on the streets, but little do they know that it's sometimes more dangerous at home. I've been in prison seven times; the last time was for the London riots. At the time, I was dating a Christian lady ...she was the one who told me about Jesus. She started praying for me and when I went to the police station to hand myself in, they said they'd lost my papers- I was blown away. I knew it must be God. I looked up to the sky that day and prayed a prayer. I said I believe that you came to die for my sins and I need forgiveness for the things I have done. And I promise that.....I'll live my life for you." Boom- the Holy Spirit came and something happened. The next day I really knew that life had changed.

I was subsequently charged, tried and found guilty. I received a short prison sentence and there spent much time reading my Bible and changing my mind-set...I discovered that my behaviour started changing.....the fruit of the Spirit began to grow in my life and that changed my character, too." Sephton says of his new life back in the community, "when they notice that I've changed they're blown away and convinced that God is real." He now works with charity Gangsline which helps young people and community staff to tackle gang culture.

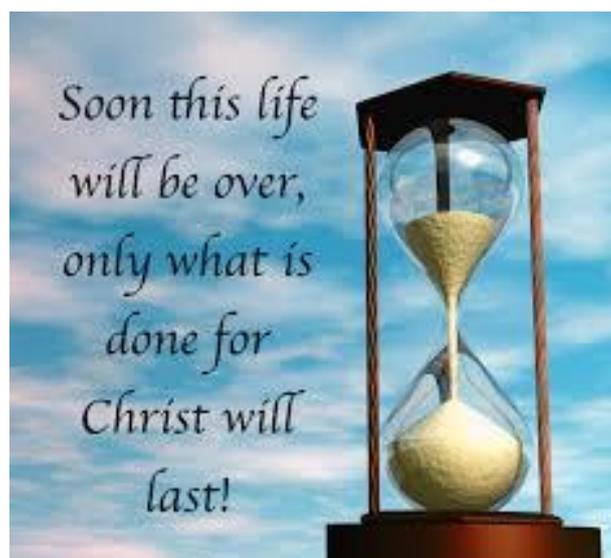
There were 130 knife -related murders in London in 2018; and seven last month in the Capital. However, what rarely make headlines is the work undertaken by churches, community leaders and reformed gangsters like Sephton telling people that there is a better way.

Another reflection “Every Moment, Every Day Time is short”

Two Washington DC residents quit their jobs to bicycle round the world. Jay Austin and Lauren Geoghegan described their adventures on their blog, “Simply Cycling,” explaining “Because life is short and the world is bigwe want to make the most out of our youth and good health before they are gone.” Tragically they were killed by ISIS terrorists while bicycling through Tajikstan; they were just 29.

We know time is short, but we don't know how short it is. The writer of Psalm 89:47 says, “Remember how short my time is” For those who know Jesus as Saviour, our lifespans are as long as eternity; Jesus has given us eternal life. But we have a brief allocation of time on earth, and we don't have a certain promise of even another day. “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.” (Proverbs 27:1)

Let's make the most of the moments God gives us. Don't fritter your time away with endless diversions and distractions. Live purposefully, making the most of the opportunities because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16). This is a New Year; let's take advantage of every moment and every day for Christ and His Kingdom.



God is at work in the Middle East

Millions of people in the M East are hungry for hope and change and are questioning traditional forms of authority. With all the cruelty and evil that ISIS has brought to the region, it is worth noting that many Muslims are now questioning their faith and, as a result, many are turning away from Islam and becoming either atheist or Christian. Moreover, because strict authoritarian regimes are limiting or forbidding young people to find the freedom they so crave, Islam's credibility is decreasing rapidly whilst creating a spiritually hungry generation. This has led to a historic and organic growth of Christianity and is evidenced by one of the fastest growing underground church movements in the world.



However, with church growth comes persecution. While several governments in the Middle East recognise ethnic Christians as a religious minority, this does not usually apply to Muslims who have converted to Christianity. Muslim-Background-Believers (MBB) are considered apostates and face systematic

state persecution and discrimination. Extended detentions without formal charge, trial or sentencing are common.

The Middle East is not an easy place to reach through traditional missionary church models. In fact, formal church structures in most countries are not practical. However, the house church movement is experiencing strong growth. Social media and Christian satellite broadcasts into the Middle East have played a vital role in the success of the underground house church movement.

The Middle East church is growing fast and threatened from inside and out but that is how the church was during the early years of Christianity. Change and transition is not easy; it is necessary. Historically the church has seen its fastest growth during persecution. We are witnessing a historic trend in the region that is spreading to diaspora and surrounding countries. More and more people are responding to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many are coming to Christ through dreams and visions far before they are exposed to Christian media or missionaries. The news is good, inspiring and hopeful if we choose to view it through God's lenses.

(From a recent issue of Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

The final few letters of the alphabet)

Jesus Christ is a wonderful, glorious person. To look away from self and man to Christ, is to lay hold on everlasting life. If men would be safe, let them flee to Him. His names and titles are as important as they are significant. Every one of them is as an ointment poured forth.

P

He is the Peace, the prince, the priest, the prophet, the purified, the potentate, the propitiation, the physician, the plant of renown, the power of God, the passover of all saints. He is a polished shaft in the quiver of God.

R

He is the Rock, the refuge, the ruler, the ransom, the refiner, the redeemer, the righteousness and the resurrection of all humble souls. He is the rose of Sharon.

S

He is the Seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, the Son of God, the son of man, the strength, the shield, the surety, the shepherd, the Shiloh, the sacrifice, the sanctuary, the salvation, the sanctification, and the sun of righteousness of all believers.



T

He is that holy thing that was born of Mary. He is the Truth, the treasure, the teacher, the temple, the tree of life, the great testator of his church.

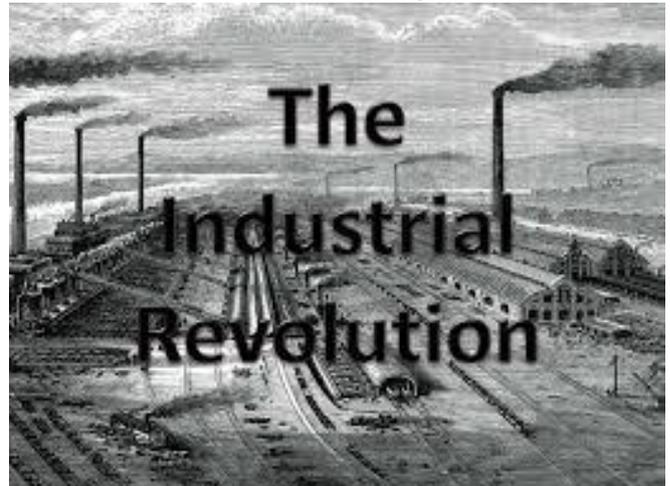
W

He is the Way, the well of salvation, the word of God, the wisdom of God, the faithful witness, the wonderful.”

“The Light of the World” by Holman Hunt

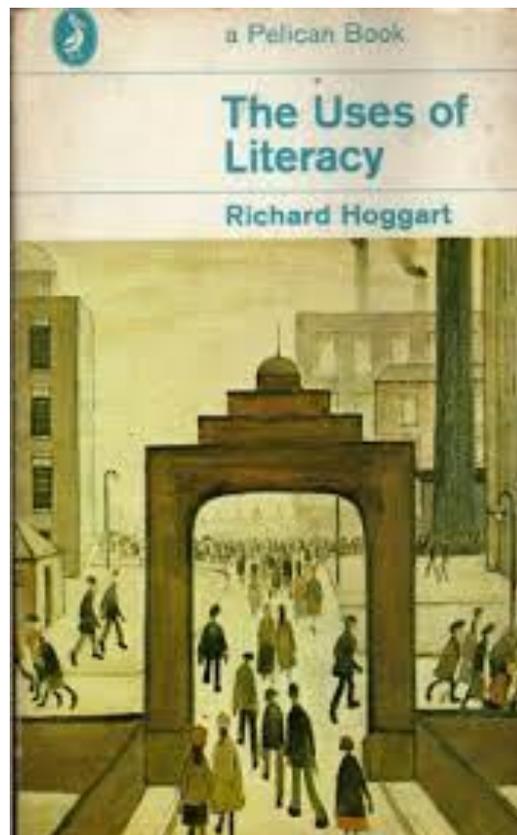
The Way We Live Now by Barney Powell

The following passage in a letter from a friend makes interesting reading: “We are making room to accommodate and adapt what were previously privileged notions of privileged classes to the enlarged base of a pyramidal working social class. Problems occur because of the sheer masses of people involved, the contraction and fusion of previously well-defined social orders and the inadequacy of dogmas in situations of relative social wealth. On the other end of the scale, the wealthy classes are effortlessly increasing their status but searching for a locomotive role to fit in which they haven’t quite yet found. After all, it does take considerable talent and imagination to become an accomplished dilettante..... So all appears to be a turmoil of wealth and how it is to be shared; of adaptation to the horrible truth that advanced technology is producing a transformation as profound as the Industrial Revolution and will render obsolete much of the existing fabric of our infrastructure. How to synthesize successfully with politicians at the controls who are not gifted with visions of the future?”



This is not a recent letter but one written over thirty years ago! It still shivers with prescience and anxiety about the shape of things to come. The conditions he describes have simply intensified together with growing unease about the future. But let us first examine the whole notion of privilege. Adam Smith in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* beautifully explodes its vanity: “Our obsequiousness to our superiors more frequently arises from our admiration for the advantages of their situation, than from any private expectations of benefit from their goodwill.” The top 1% are now on the run from their conscience and the world’s hungry and illiterate. Increasingly they are finding that ‘locomotive social role’ through philanthropy and funding the dissemination of knowledge through the establishment of charities, schools and universities (with online educational programmes) and medical research centres. That ‘turmoil of wealth’ has become a turmoil of credit and debt, as people struggle to maintain a standard of living to which they feel entitled. The calm equilibrium of reasonable expectation has been shattered by the 2008 Financial Crisis

and the rift it caused can no longer be covered by the security blanket of final pensions. Shrinking means and paltry savings will not meet receding ends. The country is thrown back on its imagination and resourcefulness. There is, however, *pace* Mrs Thatcher, such a thing as society. Ever since the Industrial Revolution, people have entered that society in growing numbers. The most definitive and well-documented evidence of this is Richard Hoggart's wonderful, pivotal work, *The Uses of Literacy*, which shows how the working classes, yearning to breathe free of their drudgery, sought a fuller, richer life through learning, art, music, drama, literature and sport. It was the strength and support of their local communities which enabled them to achieve their ambitions. Today it is not only the fabric of our infrastructure which is being rendered obsolete by



advanced technology but also many traditional working occupations. We have to meet the most almighty challenge to adapt and succeed anew. The backwash of Empire, the colonial response to British impact, has brought about a sea-change in the population, growing to a massive swell in diversity



and debate. Into this moving scene have burst the counter-cultures of immigrants all seeking that fuller, richer life. The valiant struggles of the ethnic minorities represent a kind of rapturous insurgency providing greater impetus to the development of that microcosm of the future which this country has already become. London is the first, great world city – and the world will continue to beat a path to its door as ‘the cradle and lighthouse of liberty’. We will prevail, whatever reckless folly our politicians may lead us into. (Barney Powell)

I started writing a book review when I was distracted by rereading a superb comment from the current issue of “Every Day with Jesus” (written by Selwyn Hughes), read by several recipients of this magazine. It was one of those “of course” moments which, though I was fully aware of the meaning and significance, struck me afresh with such force and clarity that I wanted to share it with you.

How wonderful!

For reading and meditation- Ephesians 1:1-14

“To the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves.” (v6)

Just think of it: Had Martin Luther not rediscovered the truth of justification by faith and begun to preach that salvation is to be found in Christ – and in Christ alone- we might all still be struggling to find salvation through religious rituals and observances. Sadly though, this Philistine mentality continues to linger in some churches today. In order to resist and combat its lies, we must be clear as to what justification by faith is. Here is a simple definition: justification is a gift of God’s grace whereby, in legal terms, God acquits sinners and declares them to be righteous.

As soon as sinners turn from their sin and commit themselves in absolute trust to Jesus Christ, believing that He died for their sins on the cross, they are, as one translation of today’s text puts it, “accepted in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:6). We are acquitted of our sin and declared to be righteous. How wonderful, how so very wonderful.

This great truth is quite unique to Christianity. No other religious system proclaims forgiveness and offers a new life to those who do not deserve it. Every other religion teaches a form of self- salvation through good works or philanthropic pursuits. True salvation is by grace and through faith. God in Christ has borne the judgment for our sins on the cross: we cannot contribute anything. When God justifies sinners, He declares them to be righteous because Jesus has paid the penalty for our law-breaking and we receive the gift of His righteousness in exchange.

This truth wounds some people’s pride because they like to feel they can contribute to their salvation. They cannot, however. Everything flows out of God’s grace. Everything.

(My review of Lee Strobel’s, “The Case for Christ,” will be included in the April/ May issue.)

Clever observation or a general truth?

1. The nicest thing about the future is that it always starts tomorrow.
2. Money will buy a fine dog but only kindness will make him wag his tail.
3. If you don't have a sense of humour you probably don't have any sense at all.
4. Seat belts are not as confining as wheelchairs.
5. A good time to keep your mouth shut is when you're in deep water.
6. How come it takes so little time for a child who is afraid of the dark to become a teenager who wants to stay out all night?
7. Business conferences are important because they demonstrate how many people a company can operate without.
8. Why is it that at school reunions you feel younger than everyone else looks?
10. No one has more driving ambition than the teenage boy who wants to buy a car.
11. There are no new sins; the old ones just get more publicity.
12. There are worse things than getting a call from a wrong number at 4 am; for example, it could be the right number.
- 14 I've reached the age where 'happy hour' is a nap.
15. Be careful about reading the fine print, there's no way you're going to like it.
16. The trouble with bucket seats is that not everybody has the same size bucket.
18. Money can't buy happiness but somehow it's more comfortable to cry in a Jaguar than in a Ford.
19. After 60 if you don't wake up aching in every joint, you're probably dead.
20. Always be yourself because the people that matter don't mind and the ones that mind don't matter.

Spring Concerts

The Jubilate Choir

Saturday 30th March @ 7.30pm

St. Matthew's Church, Chichester Road, CR0 5NQ

Paul Carr: Stabat Mater & Ubi Caritas 

Conductor: Janet Haney

Tickets at the door Adults £12, Children (16 and under) £3

Croydon Philharmonic Choir

Saturday 30th March @ 7.30pm

St Mary Magdalen, Canning Road, Croydon CR0 6QD

Mozart – Coronation Mass & Haydn Te Deum plus

Mozart -Exsultate Jubilate & Vivaldi – Concerto for 2 trumpets

Croydon Bach Choir

Saturday 6th April @ 7.30pm

St. Matthew's Church, Chichester Road, Croydon, CR0 5NQ

Elgar: The Kingdom

Croydon Circle Dancing

2019

St Matthew's Church

Chichester Road, Croydon CR0 5NQ

1st Wednesdays 14.00 - 16.00

2nd January, 6th February, 6th March, 3rd

April, 1st May & 5th June

2nd & 4th Saturdays 10.30 - 12.30

January 12th & 26th

February 9th & 23rd

March 9th & 23rd

April 13th & 27th

May 11th & 25th

June 8th & 22nd

Contact Sally Ditzel -07568338204

sallyditzel1960@gmail.com

The Parish Church of St Matthew, Croydon
(A member of Churches Together in Addiscombe)

Church Address	Chichester Road Croydon CR0 5NQ	8681 3147
Parish Office Email Address	churchadmin@stmatthew.org.uk	
Website	www.stmatthew.org.uk	
Parish Administrator	Terry Mitchell	8681 3147
Hall Bookings	Contact Parish Administrator	
Vicar	Revd Simon Foster	8688 5055
	revsimon@stmatthew.org.uk	
Assistant Priest	Revd Darius Weithers	8686 1095
	d.o.weithers@gmail.com	
Reader	Paul Parmenter	
	Alison Radford	
Director of Music & Choir	Michael Strange	
Southwark Pastoral	Carolyn Tweed	
Auxiliaries	Sue Collins	
Churchwardens	Stephen Collingwood	8686 2815
	Rohini Abhayaratne	
PCC Secretary	David Williams	8768 3599
Treasurer & Gift Aid	Terry Mitchell	
Recorder		
Sacristan	Gillian Bridger	
Assistant Sacristan	Jerry Savage	
Electoral Roll Officer	David Williams	
Magazine Editor	Steve Tucker	8681 6872
	stephen.tucker123@btinternet.com	

Parish Committees and Organisations

Young Church (Sunday 10am)	Judith Spencer-Gregson	8688 6640
Fundraising Team	Jane Passfield	
Fellowship Team	Lucasta Grayson	
Communications Team	Alison Radford	
Fabric Team	Stephen Collingwood	
Finance Team	Richard Tweed	
Pastoral Team	Revd Simon Foster	
Circle Dance	Sally Ditzel	07568338204
	Sallyditzell1960@gmail.com	

Youth Groups and Clubs

Rainbow Guides (Wednesday 6.10-7.30)	Zoë Sheehan	07855 779458
Brownies (Wednesday 6.30-8.00pm)	Laura Easton	
Ten O'Clock Club (Tuesday 10-12noon)		
Cubs (Tuesday 7-8.30pm)	Simon Hamilton	07730586252
Scouts (Tuesday 7-9.00pm)	Michael Smaldon	07949586203
Guides (Wednesday 6.45-8.30pm)	Zoë Sheehan	07855779458
Beavers (Friday 6-7.15pm)	Tracey Hague	07528812877

For details of other activities taking place at church during the week that include Aerobics, Bach Choir, Philharmonic Choir, Children's Ballet, Children's Drama and U3A Groups. Please contact the organisers direct. Details from the Parish Office which is usually open Monday to Thursday 9.30am -12.30pm.