

SHARING CHRISTIAN NEWS ACROSS THE NATION

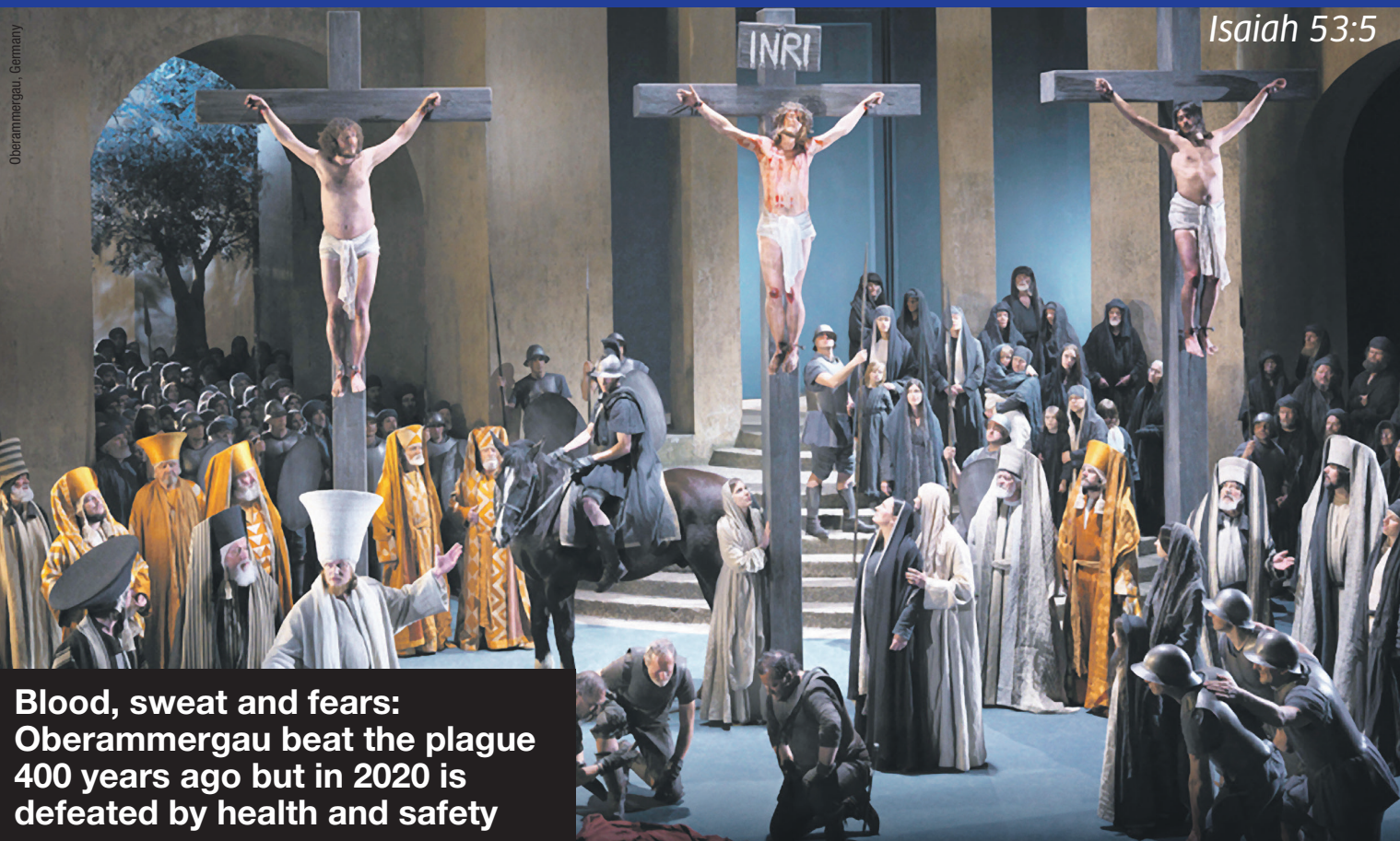


HEART

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BY HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED



Isaiah 53:5

Blood, sweat and fears:
Oberammergau beat the plague
400 years ago but in 2020 is
defeated by health and safety

THIS IS WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS TO HEAR RIGHT NOW

Huge opportunities for Christians to respond with faith to a fearful public

With life in lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak, Christians are facing restrictions that were not even applied in wartime.

Police will have the power to disperse gatherings of more than two people, unless they belong to the same household.

This is especially challenging for those who enjoy meeting together to sing praises to God and to pray or study the Bible in their homes.

Manned by churchgoers

It will also affect the many ways Christians serve their communities such as running Food Banks, homeless shelters and holiday clubs. The Evangelical Alliance (EA) had urged the government to consider the effects of closing drug recovery groups and homeless shelters.

The EA and other Christians were also very concerned both about the need for scrutiny of the government's hastily pro-

duced 329 page bill that introduced what one pastor called "a soft martial law", requiring citizens to stay at home.

Advised not to meet

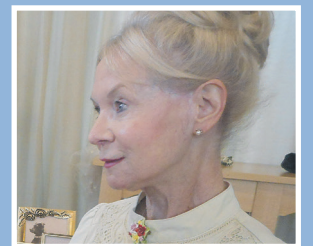
However, while the EA said it would "continue to hold the government to account", it had already advised churches to "take their responsibilities seriously" by not meeting. So before the new laws came out on 23 March, most UK churches

had already closed for services on 22 March. A few pastors in Britain and overseas have continued to keep their churches open, trusting God to protect his worshippers from infection.

Even the open air passion plays, such as Oberammergau in Bavaria, and the One Good Friday plays such as the annual performance in Trafalgar Square, were cancelled by authorities

Continued on page 2

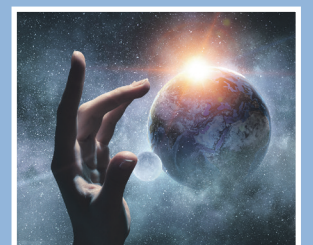
**FREE
INSIDE**
Gospel pullout
for your
neighbours!



**Actress healed
after ten years
in wheelchair**
See Gospel
pullout section



**David Pawson
at 90 p13**



**The finger of
God by
Clifford Hill**
p7

Continued from page 1

zealous to follow government guidelines, before the ruling limiting gatherings to two people at a distance of six feet was announced.

Protection from plague

Ironically, passion plays represent a source of hope and healing for communities. Oberammergau's passion play began in 1634 to ensure God's protection from plague.

While plague swept Germany in 1633, Oberammergau's elders did a deal with God. If the Lord would ensure that no villager died from the plague, they would mount a passion play every decade for perpetuity. Nobody died from the plague and the villagers have dedicated themselves to continuing the tradition, with roles passing down in families. At the time of writing, no villager had contracted Covid-19, but with 450,000 visitors usually hosted, the authority of Garmisch-Partenkirchen did a risk assessment and, without allowing for divine approval, concluded that infections might reappear during the play's long run from May to October.



Scenes from Horsham's One Good Friday passion play which was scheduled to be filmed and shown via the BBC

CHURCH – BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

ONLINE resources look certain to be a key driver in ongoing fellowship for churches as they were told to close their doors in the face of the coronavirus.

To fight back, churches of different denominations organised times of fasting and praying via email and social media. More than 2,300 people affiliated to the Baptist Union joined an online call for prayer on 17 March, followed by prayer events on 19 and 22 March.

Meanwhile church small groups and Sunday services have been set up via video web links and video conferencing.

Holy Trinity Brompton wrote on Facebook: "Shout out to all the amazing church teams who are working round the clock to make sure we can still meet online as a community and spend time together in prayer and worship as a church on Sunday."

Pastor Clive Urquhart, of Kingdom Faith Church, encouraged church members to devote Sunday morning to watching a message together online via

the church's website as none of their four West Sussex venues would be meeting. Church staff also posted online resources for young people.

The pastor of Gateway Church in Abergavenny, Wales, was excited at the prospect of digital divinity. Pastor Chris Vaz wrote to members: "Church will not close but church will continue to meet – 'differently' – in a new experience, with a new strategy and opportunities to reach out to the lost like never before. We are going digital for this season, family!"

Israel's Chief Rabbi called for a day of fasting on 25 March. Rabbi David Lau wrote, "At this time, we must engage in soul searching," he wrote. "As believing Jews, we know that the Hand of Providence is behind this and that it comes to tell us something."

Time to repent

Calls for repentance have come from around the world. President Trump followed advice from Christian ministers and called for a national prayer day on 16 March, quoting Psalm 91.

In other nations there was talk of holding several services a day and limiting the congregation to the advised limit of 50 people, in order to hold a "sacred assembly" before the Lord. One American prayer leader wrote: "II Chronicles 7:13-15 is still in effect today, as it was in the time of Solomon: whenever there is a real turning by his people to refocus on him, he hears from heaven, forgives our sins, and heals that congregation, that town, that city, that nation."

Meanwhile Andrea Williams, CEO of Christian Concern, has warned that the Church needs to repent of following culture's lead.

"We've barely murmured while society has made an idol of self, our physical bodies and sex. We've largely been silent while around 200,000 children are aborted each year in the UK. We hardly made a noise as

Clean family viewing

In response to millions of children around the world being confined to their homes after schools closed (from 23 March in the UK), VidAngel waived their \$9.99 monthly fee and offered families at home two weeks' free access to their 'clean' video library: vidangel.com

governments and judges tore apart God's design for family through permissive divorce, civil partnerships, same-sex adoption and 'marriages'."

She added, "We've failed to challenge politicians as they've passed laws to protect evil and punish righteousness."

There is far more to print than we have room for in this paper. Longer versions will be at www.heartpublications.co.uk, but if you're a subscriber, email subscribercommunity@heartpublications.co.uk for updates as the situation develops.

HEART'S VISION

To see local Christians unified and strengthened, sharing information and building trust across churches by providing a meeting place, a marketplace and forum for the local Christian community.

To inform and stimulate concern about local and national issues relevant to our society.



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ADVICE FROM THE CHRISTIAN MEDICAL FELLOWSHIP

CORONAVIRUS: responding like Jesus

Panic buying loo roll is not loving our neighbour, says Steve Fouch

Screaming headlines, broadcasters debating the effectiveness of the government's measures all bombard us daily.

Of course we ask, "Will I be OK? What about my children, my parents? Will I still be able to work or go on holiday? How will I look after the kids? Will I go out of business?"

Be practical

The most practical way to keep safe and protect others is to wash your hands, thoroughly (hot water, with soap, for at least 20 seconds) and at every opportunity. If you or anyone in your household has a persistent cough or fever, stay at home for at least 14 days. If you can, avoid using public transport and work from home. There are regular updates on what we need to do to keep the infection under control on the government website and NHS 111.

But how should we respond as Christians? Our focus should always be foremost on Christ's greatest commandments, to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbours as ourselves (Mark 12:29-30).

Don't be anxious

Loving God means laying aside fear and anxiety – he is in control. Jesus warned us that things like this would happen and told us not to be anxious, but to recognise them as signs of Creation's groaning as it awaits his coming (Matthew 24:4-8; Romans 8:18-25).

Jesus warned us that things like this would happen

We love our neighbours by being more concerned about their welfare than our own. Panic buying loo roll and hand sanitiser is not loving God or our neighbour. It is giving in to fear. Checking on our elder-



Steve Fouch

ly neighbours, washing hands and self-isolating if we think we may be unwell, is loving by being responsible.

Pray, stay and care

We must also love God and our neighbour by praying for the vulnerable, for health workers on the frontline, for small businesses facing financial ruin and for those in authority making the hard decisions.

As plague swept the Roman Empire, Christians cared for the sick

In the third century AD, as plague swept the cities of the Roman Empire, it was the Christians who stayed and cared for the sick, including those who had been persecuting them, even at the cost of their own lives.

It changed the world because no-one had ever acted like this before. Are we prepared to be as Christlike in our own response today?

Steve Fouch is head of communications at Christian Medical Fellowship. He has worked in community nursing, HIV and AIDS and palliative care.

"Love your neighbour" in your street!

Don't miss... the chance to love your neighbour by giving them the free four-page pullout in the centre section of this paper! Just pop it through their letterbox!

ARTICLES IN THIS PAPER AND ON OUR WEBSITE ARE PRINTED FOR THEIR INTEREST AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OPINIONS OF THE PUBLISHER

Founding editor: Melanie Symonds

FRANKLIN GRAHAM IS STILL FIGHTING TO PREACH IN UK

The son of Billy Graham hasn't given up on Britain, despite broken contracts and coronavirus



Esteemed and welcomed: Franklin Graham's father, Billy Graham, with the Queen in 1989

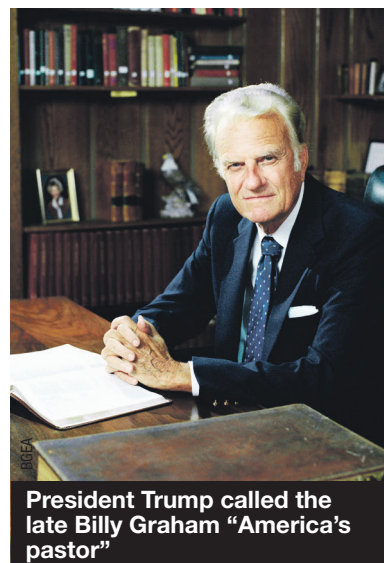
Fighting on: Franklin Graham wants to bring the good news

FRANKLIN Graham is continuing his quest to present the Gospel afresh in the UK after all eight secular venues cancelled outreach events citing so-called equality concerns.

The son of the late evangelist Billy Graham is pursuing legal options (at the time of writing) after commercial venues bowed to pressure from LGBTQ activists, who labelled him a hate preacher.

The tour was scheduled to start in Glasgow on 30 May and end in London on 3 October.

Despite the possibility of meetings being cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Graham team are seeking to resolve the disputes while "closely monitoring" the virus. At the time of writing, they had cancelled their regular training meetings for churches until mid-April.



President Trump called the late Billy Graham "America's pastor"

A spokesman for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) told HEART that legal action was currently being taken against the Glasgow (Scottish Event Campus) and Sheffield (FlyDSA Arena) venues: "During this time of uncer-

tainty, people need a message of hope, so BGEA is committed to pursuing a resolution with The SSE Hydro and the other venues that were scheduled to host the Graham tour. We hope the events will be held as planned, whether they are on the original dates or if needed, at a later time."

Mr Graham's support for traditional, biblical marriage saw cancellations by venues in London, Newcastle, Birmingham, Sheffield, Newport, Liverpool, Glasgow and Milton Keynes. In Germany, LGBTQ activists also militated against his event in Cologne, but German churches have supported Mr Graham. Heinrich Derksen, director of the Bible Seminary in Bonn (Bornheim), said Graham "would never call for human rights to be restricted for homosexuals".

Glasgow Sheriff Court has told Scottish Event Campus that a proper explanation must be given as to why the Glasgow event was cancelled. The BGEA had asked the court for an interim order so the event could be held at the venue. Scottish Event Campus did not respond to the court's request within its seven-day time frame, according to the BGEA spokesman.

Alleged lack of support

Meanwhile, Peter Lynas, director of Evangelical Alliance (EA) UK, has called Franklin Graham a "Marmite figure": "In the Evangelical Alliance we have members actively supporting the Graham tour and others who have concerns."

Danny Webster, EA advocacy and media manager, said the Alliance was "committed to promoting freedom of speech" and "supportive of all opportunities for people to hear the good news of Jesus". The EA was not involved in the Graham tour, Mr Webster pointed out, and neither were some local churches.

By Chris Eyte

Some 17 'evangelicals' have written to The Guardian opposing the Franklin Graham visit, saying it would "widen divides in churches and communities" and "people would be driven away from Jesus". They also wrote: "We find it hard to reconcile his public and partisan statements on such issues as immigration, poverty, gun control and Israel with our understanding of the teaching and values of Jesus Christ."

Gavin Calver, CEO of the EA, has since been 'no-platformed' himself, after Edinburgh City Council cancelled the booking for a conference at which he was due to speak. The annual Destiny Church conference this June would have seen Calver alongside American preacher Larry Stockstill. The council acted following complaints about Stockstill's alleged views on homosexuality.

Intolerant liberals

The shock at the cancellations even reached Parliament. Christian MP Fiona Bruce questioned whether the meeting cancellations conflicted with the government's pledge to defend the rights of UK Christians to practise their faith.

She asked: "Can we have a statement as to whether we can really call ourselves a tolerant, inclusive and diverse society which respects freedom of speech whatever one's religion or beliefs if we deny the Billy Graham [Evangelistic] Association a platform in this country?"

"Many people... are liberal only about what they like"

The Leader of the House, Jacob Rees-Mogg, responded by openly questioning the legality of the cancellations. He said: "Although venues are allowed to take their own decisions about whether or not to host Franklin Graham during his upcoming visit, they must, like all service providers, be careful not to discriminate unlawfully on grounds of religion and belief... It is a sad truth that many people who tout

HEART COMMENT

"The UK Church is facing an historic turning point"

This was what evangelist Franklin Graham sent worldwide this February, asking for prayer for the UK after eight venues bowed to pressure from LGBTQ activists.

He wrote that a "small but vocal minority is pressuring venues to back out of our contracts because I have said that God defines homosexuality as sin... I believe this is a defining moment for the Church in the UK, and Jesus Christ is the only hope for change."

What should concern British Christians was the silence from national British church leaders. While there were over 2,000 UK churches backing Mr Graham's tour, our nationally known church leaders did not wholeheartedly welcome a man bringing the uncompromised teaching of the Bible. And let's not forget that it was a mission paid for by his organisation, which had been prepared two years in advance.

Contrast this with the welcome extended to his late father, Billy Graham, a frequent guest of Her Majesty. "No one in Britain has been more cordial toward us than Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II," Billy Graham wrote in his autobiography, *Just As I Am*.

"Almost every occasion I have been with her has been in a warm, informal setting, such as a

luncheon or dinner, either alone or with a few family members or other close friends."

He added, "By welcoming us and having me preach on several occasions to the royal family at Windsor and Sandringham, she has gone out of her way to be quietly supportive of our mission."

While the Queen cannot openly endorse Franklin Graham, it would be good if she could be seen to approve of him.

Is it a coincidence that national church leaders who had failed to insist that doors remained open for the preaching of the Gospel (or offer a cathedral or two?) have now found themselves obliged to suspend their own services?

Moreover, it seems as if God has allowed all the pleasant but ultimately frivolous events that the nation would normally have enjoyed this spring to be cancelled or postponed. Stadiums and arenas which could have hosted a Gospel rally now lie empty and risk huge financial losses.

Spare a prayer for the millions cooped up indoors without even football or racing to watch on TV. Perhaps God has cleared the schedules for performances of passion plays and Hollywood 'religious' blockbusters?

Melanie Symonds



EA director Peter Lynas called Franklin Graham a "Marmite figure"

themselves as being liberal are liberal only about what they like and are very intolerant of the views with which they disagree."

"Real misunderstanding"

Graham has also written an open letter to the LGBTQ community in the UK, saying he was "not coming out of hate [but] coming out of love". He wrote: "It is said by some that I am coming to the UK to bring hateful speech to your community. This is just not true."

Graham said he was "coming out of love"

And speaking to Premier Christian Radio, he apologised

to those who felt offended by his views but reiterated his belief that marriage is only the union of one man and one woman.

"We're not here to preach against anyone"

He said: "I think there's a real misunderstanding. We're not here to preach against anyone. But we're here to tell everyone how they can have their sins forgiven, and how they can have a relationship with God through faith in his son Jesus Christ."

In addition to his evangelistic outreaches, Graham also leads Samaritan's Purse, which provides humanitarian and disaster relief around the globe.

PRAYER POINTS IN A TIME OF CRISIS

What the Church needs now are holiness and humility



Roy and Brenda Taylor are part of the 'Operation Breakthrough' group of prayer leaders

Before the coronavirus outbreak dominated the news, the Operation Breakthrough team met for three days in February to discern how God wanted us to pray. What followed was remarkably prescient

We were so grateful to God for the Brexit victory, but realised this is just the beginning. The seismic shift we are witnessing is not just political, but also spiritual – what happens next depends on how we use it.

This seismic shift is not just political, but spiritual

Get our hearts right

The enemy will seek to fill any spiritual 'void' with his ungodly agenda – but God miraculously led us out of the EU to bring us into our righteous inheritance. Remember that Israel's Exodus journey

was highly contested, even after they had departed. The problem wasn't just the enemy, but their own wrong heart attitudes, resulting in a 40-year delay in reaching their God-appointed destination.

We don't have 40 years to get this right

We don't have 40 years to get this right, so our heart condition is vitally important. The spiritual temperature of the Church must rise, and we must once more be a voice to our land, for it is righteousness that exalts a nation (Proverbs 14:34).

Return to holiness

However, in order for that voice to be effective, it must be born of love and carry the Lord's authority and character. This authority has been severely weakened due to compromise, and therefore we felt that the Lord was emphasising a return to holiness.

A relevant Church is a holy Church

The Word of God must be our plumb line, not the prevailing social climate. A relevant Church is a holy Church! We were never intended to blend

in with the world, or to be silent about the wilful dismissal of God's holy laws.

We urgently need to reclaim holiness in our personal lives and congregations. Jesus was passionate about his Father's house. On two separate occasions he entered the Temple, chasing the money changers out with a whip and overthrowing their tables (John 2:13-17).

Clean out the leaven

He did this at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a week when God instructed the Jews to put leaven (symbolic of sin) out of their houses and there were very serious consequences for disobedience (Exodus 12:13-20).

Jesus clearly took this feast very seriously and we believe he is asking us to deal with leaven (sin) with the same strength of purpose (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). To do this means examining ourselves earnestly before the Lord (as we should before taking communion), then responding to any sense of conviction with true repentance (1 Corinthians 11:25-32). This must become a lifestyle, not just a prayer strategy.

Prepare the Bride of Christ

This 'spiritual clear out' is part of the preparation of the Church, the Bride of Christ, before Jesus' return. It would result in the Church gaining a greater authority to speak to the nation, with "signs (confirmation and miracles) following", as happened in the book of Acts.

We can begin to make declarations in prayer, which will be heard in the spiritual realm; we can bless our nation's people, government, land, waters, livestock and much more. We can pray that our nation returns to God's path for her.

Roy and Brenda Taylor, David Tidy, Kath Charles, Philip Quenby and Dennis Greenidge

Phone Brenda on 07946 456710 for further information and prayer declarations to use alone or with a group. A free set of three CDs on the relevance of the feasts of the Lord is available on request.

Protection from plague

Just as God's people, the Hebrews, were protected by God from the plagues that struck Egypt (Exodus 9-12), so true believers in Jesus can know that they are protected, too.

The area the Hebrews lived in, Goshen, was not touched when the Lord passed over the Egyptians, because they had marked their doorposts with the blood of a lamb. So as believers in Jesus, the Lamb of God, we are not part of the herd but part of the Good Shepherd's flock, under the Lord's hand and in his pasture.

Daily, thank the Lord for his shed blood and, as many have suggested, read Psalm 91 aloud, believing it for yourself, your loved ones and the nation.

PRAYER BRIEFING

Coronavirus hostility

Behind the coronavirus pandemic lurks an ongoing hostility between China and the US, made worse because of the crisis.

The Gatestone Institute reported in March that Beijing had nationalised an American factory creating much-needed face masks, while a ship transporting gloves, masks and related protective equipment to the USA was ordered to return to China.

Pray for all necessary supplies to be made available through honest trading.

"Highly infectious" mystery virus was suppressed

Meanwhile, The Sunday Times reported that Chinese laboratories had "identified a mystery virus as a highly infectious new pathogen" in late December 2019 – but they were ordered to stop tests, destroy samples and suppress the news, according to a respected independent Chinese publication. China did not acknowledge that there was human-to-human transmission until over three weeks later, when it was too late to control the outbreak. Censors deleted the report from the Chinese internet.

Pray that patients receive the correct treatment and are not vaccinated unnecessarily.

The Chinese and their Italian jobs

Italy's death toll from Covid-19 had overtaken that of China at the time of writing, when over 4,800 people had died.

Reasons given for the severity of the disease included the ageing Italian population, its low birth rate and the country's failing health system. Furthermore, Italy has a large Chinese community (of over 300,000), many of whom work in the textile and leather sector and originate from Wuhan and Wenzhou.

According to the Gatestone Institute, some may have brought the virus back after spending Chinese New Year on 25 January in those cities, before Italy suspended flights from China. Bergamo, one of the capitals of the Italian textile industry, was one of the first cities affected.

Pray for the Italian health system and for many to seek God in the crisis.

Iran's leaders have succumbed

Iran is one of the four countries most affected by coronavirus so far, due to its extensive trade and diplomatic links with China. The initial outbreaks were in the capital Tehran and the holy city of Qom, so a disproportionate number of senior figures in the Iranian regime have fallen ill. Iran's response to the virus has

been ineffectual and hampered by secrecy about the true extent of the outbreak.

The regime has many Christian pastors and 'hostage' women prisoners such as Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Kylie Moore-Gilbert (a British-Australian academic sentenced to ten years for alleged spying) and Fariba Adelkhah, a French-Iranian researcher.

Pray that the crisis will cause the Iranian regime to come clean and that the temporary release of political prisoners due to coronavirus will become permanent.

Coronavirus prayers

- The Church: that believers across the nation would be salt and light, bringing hope and peace where it is needed most
- Your household: for God's love to overtake the spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7)
- Political and civic leaders: for wisdom, discernment and protection for them and their families
- The NHS and the health care sector: for strength, compassion and wisdom
- Businesses and those in the workplace: for wisdom as they make critical decisions about the short-term future of their organisations and deal with staff and customers.

Relationships and Sex Education lessons

These lessons will be compulsory for children as young as four from September 2020. Already loopholes have been exploited by minority groups such as Mermaid and Stonewall, who openly encourage exploration of sexuality and gender identity.

Pray that schools will fulfil their duty to consult properly with parents over the material despite schools being closed.

Children outside church

It is estimated that 95 per cent of young people do not attend church.

Pray for Scripture Union, which gives children sports sessions and Gospel literature and for United Beach Missions to be able to share God's love with scores of children this summer.



Vinesong, the international ministry group, has seen increasing numbers of young people wanting to become Christians. After Vinesong led worship at this church, young people came forward to commit their lives to Christ

Revival prayer in London

Dear Christian friends

If you have a burden as to 'praying for revival' then do contact us so that we may meet, share and pray together in the London area.

It would be good to have an initial one hour meeting during a mid-week lunch-time to discuss and pray for revival.

Ezekiel 36:22-23 Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I AM the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I AM hallowed in you before their eyes."

We look forward to meeting and praying with you, as the Holy Spirit leads.

Many blessings

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NATIONAL NEWS by Andrew Halloway

EX-TRANS TAKES NHS TO COURT OVER SEX CHANGE



Transgender regret: Keira Bell

A woman who, as a child, falsely believed she was a man is taking legal action against an NHS gender clinic for making her transition too easy.

In February, the High Court said Keira Bell's case against the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust's Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) should go ahead.

Transition left her suicidal

The former transsexual now regrets her decision, which left her suicidal. She argues that she was too young for such a life-altering transition, as children cannot give

informed consent for puberty-blocking drugs and sex change hormones. She claims that the NHS allowed her to "run with this idea that I had, almost like a fantasy".

Bell told the BBC that, at 14, she was prescribed puberty blockers after just three hour-long appointments. She then took hormones for four and a half years, and had her breasts removed. In America it is reported that a drug used to halt puberty may cause health problems like brittle bones and faulty joints.

Her landmark case could change the way childhood gender dysphoria is treated in the UK.

Meanwhile, the government has announced that in England and Wales there will be no new legislation to make it easier for people to change gender. It is expected that the government will report on its public consultation about the Gender Recognition Act by the summer. Scotland, however, is still considering making it easier to change sex on birth certificates.

Drag queen school visit praised by politician

After an X-rated drag queen was invited to read to children at a Scottish school, a politician praised the event and called objecting parents "homophobic".

SNP MP Mhairi Black also mocked those who objected as the same "people who run out to buy their kids the latest Grand Theft Auto". Children as young as four attended the event at Glencoates Primary School in Paisley which featured 'Flowjob' – an 'adult' entertainer who publishes sexually explicit posts on social media.

The local council apologised when made aware of Flowjob's social media pages, but the school's headteacher defended the drag queen's February visit. According to local media, parents were not informed in advance of the event.

A spokesperson for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) told LifeSite-News that this is a "chilling example of the perverse indoctrination agenda being foisted upon innocent young children" which, they claim, is "nothing more than state sponsored child abuse".

Christian politician admits she's hated



Uncompromising: Kate Forbes MSP

A Christian MSP has opened up about the abuse she has experienced for her faith-inspired views.

Kate Forbes, the Scottish Finance Secretary, says God is her "anchor" amid the hatred directed against her by transgenderism campaigners.

The vitriol against the SNP politician began after she suggested that the Scottish government should not rush through changes to the Gender Recognition Act.

According to the Christian Institute, the MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch said: "Being involved in politics was the first time that I knew what it felt like to be hated... in politics people don't see the person, they see the label."

"I know the boss of all bosses"

But she explained that she has found much comfort in the Bible, and will not be changing her opinions to stop the attacks. "When making decisions, I recognise that I know the boss of all bosses, and he sees everything I do."

Forbes added that politics is an increasingly toxic environment: "There used to be a day when I would respect you as a human being... Now it's, 'If I don't like your views, I hate you and I will let you know that I hate you.' That's undermined the quality of our debate."

CHRISTIANS HELP NEIGHBOURS IN CRISIS



Supermarket shelves have been emptying as shoppers panic

As panic buying makes it difficult for some people to get what they need, churches are offering help to the vulnerable during the coronavirus pandemic.

Premier reports that C3 Church in Cambridge was one of the first to offer their neighbours help with shopping, collecting prescriptions and making phone calls. The church printed 3,000 'Love Your Neighbour' fliers for its congregation to put through neighbours' doors, as those in self-isolation risk being forgotten. The church is also changing its sermons to focus on faith instead of fear.

Meanwhile, church food banks

report that they are running low on stocks due to the panic buying at retailers, and some plan to deliver food to those in isolation.

A Norfolk church had its toilet rolls stolen

A Norfolk church has even had its toilet rolls stolen. Rev Canon Simon Stokes of St Mary and St Margaret's Church in Sprowston said: "It does seem that people are very fearful and frightened and that seems to be catching."

The church plans to keep its toilets open to the public.

"Love your neighbour," says Archbishop

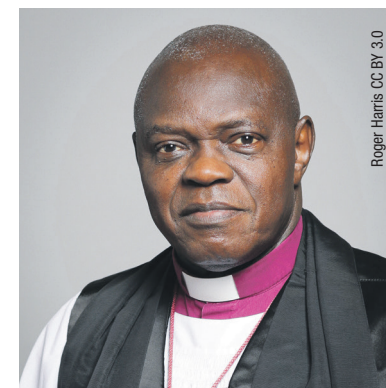
RETIREMENT may be looming for the Archbishop of York (officially on 7 June), but he remains focused on Gospel mission.

The Most Rev Dr John Sentamu was due to be a speaker at Spring Harvest 2020. Organisers have now cancelled the event because of the coronavirus outbreak.

Even so, Dr Sentamu is unafraid of the virus and wants Christians to take advantage of the crisis for evangelism. Recently the Diocese of York held a 'Come and See' mission week, with 30 bishops and helpers from the northern part of the country coming together for evangelistic activity.

Dr Sentamu has said publicly that fear can result from events like the coronavirus outbreak. He cited 1 John 4:18: "perfect love drives out fear," and encouraged people to "love your neighbour" and help them understand God's love.

In a joint statement with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, Dr Sentamu said: "The answer to conquering this fear is love that we receive. The tears of the child awakened by a bad dream are stilled by the embrace of someone who loves them. The uncertainty of someone of great



Roger Harris CC BY 3.0

"Perfect love casts out fear" says Archbishop Sentamu

age is often quietened with a familiar voice. The words of a friend can enable us to challenge the fears of illness to reduce our sense of threat."

Dr Sentamu and his wife Margaret (whom he ordained last year) was born in Kampala, Uganda. He was the sixth of 13 children and educated by English missionaries. The Sentamus fled to Britain in 1974 after John endured a brief spell in prison for opposing the dictator, Idi Amin.

The new Archbishop of York will be the current Bishop of Chelmsford, the Rt Rev Stephen Cottrell.

PRAYER BRIEFING CONTINUED

Brexit and Europe

Europe is heading for the “mother of all credit crunches”, according to international property developer Ben Habib. Youth unemployment is also high: 6 per cent in France, 40 per cent in Greece. “If you want a recipe for war, have high youth unemployment,” he told a conference organised by the Bruges Group on 7 March.

Once Britain leaves, the EU will lose £18bn gross pa.

Pray for the churches in Europe to prosper and be a light within their nations.

There are five agreements that Boris Johnson should repudiate if Britain is to leave cleanly without long drawn-out complications, Mr Habib said.

1. The Northern Ireland protocol which leaves 1.8m British citizens in the EU.
2. The European Court of Justice; the current agreement still gives them influence over British affairs.
3. Our signing up for 500bn euros of liabilities to the European Central Bank.

4. Fisheries: paragraph 73 commits us to quotas into the long term. It's only 0.7 per cent of our GDP but of totemic importance.

5. Military ‘interoperability’ – Theresa May signed us up for a joint military endeavour in September 2017 in the Political Declaration – over a year after Britain voted to leave the EU. The EU has already committed to spending 21bn euros on a 10,000 strong EU force and 13bn euros on weapons development.

Pray for the Brexit negotiators' wisdom and persistence in the midst of the health crisis.

PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED

With the focus on our own nation and health, let's not forget persecuted Christians overseas.

Baroness Caroline Cox told HEART that she had witnessed the immediate aftermath of a massacre in the Christian village of Kolom on the Sudan-South Sudan border. She visited the survivors as founder and CEO of Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART): “We saw burnt bodies still in burning homes.”

Suspecting an imminent attack by nomadic Islamist Mis-



Massacre survivors who lost 22 homes, their local church and a clinic



Baroness Cox and the HART team arrived at the Christian village of Kolom just after the massacre by Islamist herders

seriya herders, the villagers had wanted to flee to the bush for safety, but were urged by the local UN peacekeepers to stay, who then left them to their fate. The Islamists killed 32 villagers and abducted 15 children on 22 January.

Many families have now fled to the town of Abyei, where they urgently need basic food supplies, shelter and health-care.

“Our ordeal showed us the Church isn't ready,” *Persecution Watch*, p15

PRAY FOR MISSIONS



George Verwer with host Rev Mark Weeden of Living Word Ministries, on 12 March

Missions and missionaries still need funding, more than ever as many anticipate the return of Jesus.



Mourning villagers covered the charred and mutilated bodies

George Verwer, who founded Operation Mobilisation, which has introduced thousands of young and old Christians to the excitement of short and long-term missionary work, told Christians at a meeting on 12 March, “Getting finance is the biggest challenge right now. There are 100,000 people across the world who want to be missionaries, but they're just told to get a job in the country they want to serve.”

Pray that believers don't forget the ‘Great Commission’ – to help others go out into all the world to preach the Good News – even if they can't go themselves, and continue to give, trusting God to supply all their needs.

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REV DR CLIFFORD HILL

Prophetic insight into today's world

A PLAGUE OF MOSQUITOES HIT THE EGYPTIANS MORE THAN 3,000 YEARS AGO.

It was one of a series of ten plagues that swept Egypt, eventually forcing Pharaoh to allow the people of Israel to leave the country. Time after time, Moses had returned to the king, asking him to allow the people to go out into the desert to worship the God of their ancestors. But Pharaoh was adamant: they could not leave; they were to remain in slavery.

The third plague occurred when Moses struck the ground with his staff and the dust turned into mosquitoes that swarmed across the land, troubling human beings and animals. Pharaoh's magicians tried to do something similar and found that none of their magic arts could create living creatures such as these.

The magicians then said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God!" (Exodus 8:19). They recognised that only God, the God of Creation, could have such power over the world of nature that he could turn dust into living creatures.

God of love

So, can we trace the hand of God in the coronavirus plague that is sweeping the world today? The answer is, yes, we can. But has God created the plague? The answer is an emphatic NO! The God revealed in the Bible is a God of love who is wholly good and does not create or willingly inflict evil upon his children. As John declares, "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16).

Yet God undoubtedly has allowed the coronavirus to sweep across the world. So, the question we should be asking is, why has God allowed this?

Anyone who has read the Bible and studied the ways of God can recognise the hand of God in these events. That is the easy part. The more difficult part is to discern the message he is conveying to those who are listening to him.

Shaking the earth

There are several places in the Bible where God says that he is going to shake everything. Isaiah says that a time will come when human beings are so proud and exalted in their knowledge and power that God will do something to shake the whole earth. God's message at that time was: "Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?" (Isaiah 2:22).

THE FINGER OF GOD

The coronavirus is a strong warning from God to the world. Will we take heed?

The same prophet foresees a time coming when the earth is so polluted by its people that "a curse consumes the earth" and many of its people are burnt up: a kind of global warming on a vast scale, something that makes the Australian wildfires look like a harmless bonfire (Isaiah 24:5-6).

God will do something to shake the whole earth

Another prophet who lived 200 years after Isaiah, Haggai, received a powerful warning that at some time in the future God would not only shake all the nations, but the whole of natural Creation. He said, "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations'" (Haggai 2:6-7). This prophecy was still in the future in New Testament times, where it is reaffirmed and interpreted in Hebrews 12:26.

As the coronavirus spreads around the world, it is coinciding with the greatest shaking of the natural environment in my lifetime, probably in the history of the world, where we are seeing earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, storms and floods, swarms of locusts invading East Africa, and many other natural disturbances.

Humanity's rebellion

So why is God allowing all this to happen in our lifetime? The simple answer is that human-

ity has reached a tipping point in rebellion against God. Many of us have seen measures put onto the statute book of the nation that are directly against the teaching of the Bible.

We have scorned the gift of life

We have scorned the gift of life by legalising abortion that has claimed the lives of more than 9 million children in Britain and countless millions across the world.

We care so little for the precious gift of life that only God can give, that the world allows a murderous dictator in Syria to slaughter millions of his subjects and cause millions more to leave their homes in search of safety. Terrorism and persecution of Christians across the world is greater today than it has ever been.

Of even greater significance, secular humanism is rampant in most nations, especially the West, home to the richest and most influential nations who seek to extend their power everywhere. This is deeply offensive to God.

Crossing a red line

For the past 50 years, the humanist campaigners have deliberately sought to undermine marriage and family. This has caused untold suffering, especially to children, which has resulted in vast numbers of young people having mental and emotional problems.

Vast numbers of young people have mental and emotional problems

Secular humanists have crossed a red line

Recently the secular humanists have crossed a red line in their campaign for gender equality; they have dared to challenge the God of Creation by saying that babies are not born with sexual distinctions, so that they can choose their gender when they are old enough.

This is intolerable to God who knows that the whole basis of our human relationships and the infrastructure of our civilisation will be destroyed if this carries on. The coronavirus plague is a strong warning from God to the world.

Repentance is the only answer before even worse things come upon us. But will the warnings be heeded by sinful humanity? Surely, the Bible-believing remnant should arise now and declare the word of the one true God, who so loved the world that he sent Jesus our Lord who alone can save rebellious human beings.

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well" (John 14:6-7).

STATE OF THE NATION

Rev Dr Clifford Hill



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GARDNER'S WORLD

Raised from the ashes

Football team tragedy is a parable for our times

by Charles Gardner

A colleague of mine was eager to get home from a conference I also attended because his home team (Derby County) were playing Manchester United in the FA Cup.¹

Now it may surprise you to learn that, in spite of spending much of my journalistic career as a sports editor, I am not a football fan.

But I tell the following story as a parable of our times, and of God's amazing story, especially as it relates to his chosen people – the Jews.

My colleague and I went our separate ways and I thought no more of his excitement until, shortly after arriving home, I joined my wife in front of the telly where she was absorbed in a movie – all about Manchester United!

The terrible tragedy put the future of the club in jeopardy

It was a harrowing, yet very moving, account of the disaster that virtually wiped out the 'Busby Babes'² as their plane crashed on take-off in heavy snow at Munich in 1958. Twenty-three people died, including the father of a very dear family friend of ours who was accompanying the team as a sports reporter for the

Manchester Guardian.

Of course, it was a terrible tragedy, and put the future of the club itself in jeopardy – footballers in those days may also have been famous, but they evidently did not live on fortunes.

Israel miraculously held off five invading armies

And yet, with only two of their original team in the squad – Bobby Charlton and goalkeeper Harry Gregg – they literally rose from the ashes of the plane crash to reach the final of the FA Cup just three months later, complete with the new club badge displaying a Phoenix! I remember playing on the South African farm of our family friend that year (I was just nine) being vaguely aware of something amiss.

Ten years earlier, in 1948, a much greater tragedy was turned into triumph of a sort when the state of Israel rose from the ashes of the Holocaust, which saw six



Six million Jewish people were rounded up and slaughtered by the Nazi regime

million Jews wiped out by the Nazis, and then miraculously (with a population of only 600,000) held off five invading armies determined to strangle the new nation at birth.



The state of Israel rose from the ashes of the Holocaust

The prophet Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones had been fulfilled, for the Sovereign Lord had promised: "I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life" (Ezekiel 37:5).

The ensuing years saw more prophecies fulfilled as God's people returned to their ancient land from every corner of the globe. Isaiah had prophesied: "He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of

Judah from the four quarters of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12).

In further encouraging them not to fear, the Lord of compassion had declared: "When you pass through the rivers, I will be with you... when you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze... since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you" (Isaiah 43:1-4).

Jesus will wipe away the tears of all who trust in him

Did the Lord have the Holocaust in mind when referring to the fire? Certainly, Christians around the world are right now walking through fire, just as Jews everywhere are continuing to experience, but Jesus assures us that he will wipe away the tears of all who trust in him and lead them to his everlasting kingdom of peace as he raises them up from the dust, clothed in their resurrection bodies. For all who trust in the blood of the Jewish Messiah, spilled for the sins of the world, will be raised to new life.

Death will have been swallowed up in victory. "Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

We have a solemn duty to preach the Gospel "to the Jew first" (Romans 1:16) – but not only in word. We need to express our love for them, identifying with our Lord's compassion for his ancient people, who have risen from the ashes to become "a banner to the nations" – a signpost of God's everlasting commitment to Israel, and to all who bless them (Jeremiah 31:3, Genesis 12:3).

Notes

¹ Sadly, Derby lost the fifth round 0-3.

² The nickname given to the all-conquering team led by the legendary Sir Matt Busby, who was injured in the crash.

Outrage over BBC report

Outrage followed a BBC report on the commemoration by presidents and princes of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz when veteran international correspondent Orla Guerin used the occasion to flag up her personal bias toward Israel.

Against the background of Yad Vashem, Jerusalem's Holocaust Memorial, she said: "The state of Israel is now a regional power. For decades it has occupied Palestinian territories. But some here will always see their nation through the prism of persecution and survival."

Prince Charles, on the other hand, who was among those who attended, was full of praise for the Jewish state, saying: "It's been fascinating to hear about so many of the co-operative ventures that are taking place between both our countries, and from what I gather it sounds as though Israeli geniuses are maintaining the entire structure of the NHS."

The heir to the throne further referred to "a great deal of other remarkable technological developments...and ingenious inventions." The Times of Israel, in which this report appeared, explained that much of the medicine used by the NHS stems from Israel.



Prince Charles speaking at the Holocaust memorial event



Manchester United's last match prior to the 1958 Munich air disaster in which many players lost their lives

Continued from page 8

ISRAEL: CORONAVIRUS NEWS

Israelis help Palestinians: Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) have set up a joint operations room to tackle the coronavirus. President Rivlin spoke on the phone to Palestinian President Abbas on 18 March, urging Israeli-Palestinian cooperation.

A PA official said, "Anyone who opposes cooperation with Israel in the medical field would be acting against the interests of our people."

Israel is supplying testing kits and protective equipment to the Palestinian Authority's health workers. On 19 March, there were 47 cases of coronavirus in the Palestinian Authority (PA) controlled areas of the West Bank.

First fatality is Holocaust survivor: Aryeh Even, 88, was buried on 21 March at a funeral restricted to 20 mourners. He had immigrated to Israel alone from Hungary in 1949.



French pastor Jean-Marc Thobois, a Hebrew specialist and tireless Bible teacher on Israel and prophecy, died from the coronavirus on the night of 13 March

TAINTED TEXTBOOKS

UK taxpayers are still paying the salaries of Palestinian teachers who use textbooks that incite hatred.

Students are encouraged to "sacrifice" for the liberation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and are invited to follow Dalal al-Mughrabi, who murdered 38 Israelis.

Peace initiatives and agreements such as Camp David have been removed, while statements such as "Jews are the enemies of Islam" have been inserted. These facts were reported at the annual lobby of Parliament organised by Christian Friends of Israel (CFI) and the Zionist Federation (ZF).

UK funding for Palestinian education has averaged £45 million a year. Robin Lane of CFI said, "We have a have a signed Memorandum of Understanding about the curriculum with which the PA should comply. However, there is much evidence that the PA does not comply with it, and the regular reviews promised by the UK government have not been published."

Meanwhile, the suggestion that Israel may have been linked to the 2001 attacks on New York's World Trade Centre was contained in a history textbook for UK Key Stage 3 pupils which has now been removed from sale. It also says that Al-Qaeda targeted the USA because "they believed it was leading a Christian-Jewish alliance to destroy Islam". The book, 'Understanding History: Britain in the Wider World' was published by Hodder Education Group.

Christians confess anti-Semitism

The people of High Wycombe have come together to apologise to the Jewish people for their expulsion from the town in 1234, in an extraordinary act of confession involving some 300 Christians from 50 different churches.

Read how a rabbi responded on the **HEART** website

\$50 billion aid rejected!

Commenting on President Trump's 'Deal of the Century' in a bid to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the United with Israel movement asked: "How did the Palestinian leadership respond to an offer of \$50 billion in aid, one million jobs, and an independent state of their own? Answer: with rockets and riots!"

Closer ties

As Arab neighbours in the Gulf forge increasingly closer ties with the Jewish state, the Bahraini Supreme Court sentenced a man to three years in prison for burning an Israeli flag at a pro-Palestinian rally.

Other recent articles by Charles Gardner can be found at www.heartpublications.co.uk and www.prophecytoday.uk. Charles is also a regular contributor to Israel Today at www.israeltoday.co.il.

His new book, 'King of the Jews', will soon be available from Christian Publications International. He is also author of 'A Nation Reborn' (Christian Publications International), 'Israel the Chosen' (Amazon) and 'Peace in Jerusalem' (olivepresspublisher.com) – all available from Amazon.

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CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY OF ISRAEL'S LEGAL FOUNDATION

Roy Thurley explains how the Jewish State's current territory became enshrined in international law – and why Israel has never illegally occupied Judea, Samaria or Gaza



British Prime Minister David Lloyd George (front left) at the San Remo conference with (left) the Japanese Ambassador to Italy (Mr Matsui), Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon, French diplomat Berthelot, French Prime Minister Millerand, Italian Foreign Minister Scialoja, Italian Prime Minister Nitti. The US Ambassador to Italy, Robert Johnson, had observer status

An event to mark the centenary of the San Remo Conference will be held in London in the autumn. Please go to WWW.LNF.ORG.UK/SANREMO for regular updates

In 1917 we celebrated the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. At San Remo in 1920 that Declaration became part of international law. A conference of the Principal Allied Powers was convened to decide the future of the Middle East following the Great War. A Mandate system was introduced, with one of the Principal Allied Powers being put in charge of administering each territory, with the aim of bringing about independence. Britain was awarded the Mandate for Palestine at San Remo on the basis of the Balfour Declaration.

The Mandate for Palestine recognised that there was to be a homeland for the Jewish people including the vast majority of them who were not yet living in the Land. It set out plans for re-settlement of the Jews in preparation for when they could form a viable national home there.

Jewish national home

Later, Britain decided that the area east of the Jordan would be an Arab area of the Mandate for Palestine (which later became today's Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan). The Jewish national home was then to be in the area west of the Jordan River.

In 1947 Britain decided to terminate her stewardship of the Mandate, and notified the United Nations accordingly. The UN proposed a Partition Plan for Palestine, recommending the setting up of another Arab state, a Jewish state and an international zone to include Jerusalem. This Resolution (181), which as a UN General Assembly Resolution was not legally binding, was accepted by the Jewish leadership but rejected by the Arabs.

Israel eventually re-established

When the State of Israel was declared in 1948, it became the fulfilment of the Mandate for Palestine, which referred to "the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country." Although the manner by which the fulfilment came about left much to be desired, the Jewish State of Israel was indeed eventually re-established, as the result of the San Remo Resolution nearly 30 years earlier.

Immediately after Israel's Declaration of Independence, five surrounding Arab nations invaded the new state. By the time that hostilities ceased, Israel had lost some of its territory to the attackers - the Golan Heights to Syria; Judea and

Samaria (including the eastern part of Jerusalem) to Trans-Jordan, and the Gaza Strip to Egypt. Gaining territory by attacking another country is illegal under international law.

Gaining territory by attacking another country is illegal under international law

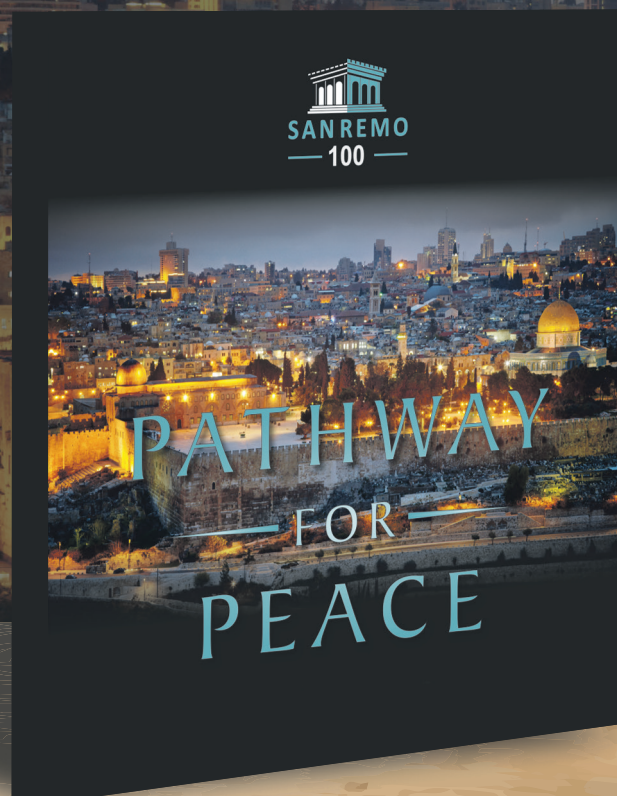
Recapturing lost territories

Israel's Six Day War of June 1967 resulted in the recapture of those territories it had lost in 1948. After returning the Sinai to Egypt in the 1979 peace agreement, the territory under Israeli control was almost identical to that originally intended.

It should be obvious from all this that the expression 'illegally occupied territory' is totally inapplicable to Israel's presence in, for example, Judea and Samaria (the 'West Bank'). A state cannot 'illegally occupy' a territory that belongs to it in the first place!

Roy Thurley is chairman of Love Never Fails, a coalition of Israel-supporting Christian ministries

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FINDING PEACE IN TROUBLED TIMES

YOU CAN WIN OVER WORRY

Worried about coronavirus?

Yes, there's an underlying issue that needs to be taken seriously, but the continual alarmist media hype makes it all too easy to over-react and be glued to the news.

Panic buying, for example, does not help, causing some to have stockpiles for long periods, while others struggle to find the most basic items.

Even without a global pandemic, circumstances in life can change suddenly, bringing uncertainty, worries, and fears for the future. Threats to health and financial worries can undermine life's normal securities. Such fears can even become debilitating, when our minds are continually bombarded with alarming thoughts of what could go wrong.

So where is the ray of hope?

Peace amid panic

The Bible says: "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (ie a disciplined mind, not a confused one! 2 Timothy 1:7).

In the midst of adversity and panic, we can have peace – real peace, with a presence of mind and a quiet confidence to face the future despite its uncertainties. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you," said the prophet Isaiah.

God is ultimately in control. Believers who actively put their trust in him will have peace in their hearts, because Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

How do I get this?

That's all very well for those who have faith, some might say, but how can others get this? By coming to Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that God so loved the world (that means you too!), that he gave his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Saviour.

Jesus died on a cross, taking the penalty for our sins upon himself, so that we might be forgiven and come into a

relationship with the living God.

One of the consequences of this is to receive a peace that the world does not know, a calm in the midst of the storms of life. This comforting truth is recorded in the words of a great hymn:

*When peace, like a river,
attendeth my way,*

*When sorrows like sea billows
roll;*

*Whatever my lot, thou hast
taught me to say,*

*"It is well, it is well with my
soul."*

That hymn was written by a man who had just lost his wife and children at sea...

Although God cannot be seen, the effects of his presence can be known – just as the wind is not seen, but its effects experienced as the leaves rustle in the trees, clouds scurry across the sky and a fresh breeze invigorates a sleepy soul. The wind of God's Spirit is able to blow into our souls, banishing fear, bringing hope and stirring faith, building conviction within our hearts of God's presence, working circumstances out for good.

Heroes in the Bible have seen this, such as the apostle Paul who faced many dangers – but God, he said, delivered him out of them all (2 Timothy 3:11). Likewise, Christians throughout Church history have known it too; the author John Bunyan, although imprisoned for his faith, came out of Bedford jail with his stirring book, 'Pilgrim's Progress,' inspiring countless Christians to a closer walk with Christ. In my own life, I too have seen God work in the midst of numerous difficulties, learning through it all that God is faithful, strengthening us believers to overcome the challenges we face.

A prayer you can pray

If you have not yet known these blessings in your own life, there

is a way to experience them:

1. Come to Jesus Christ, who is the way to God.
2. Admit to God that you are a sinner who needs forgiveness (the Bible says we have all sinned – Romans 3:23).
3. Thank God that Jesus died on the cross for you.
4. Ask Jesus into your life to be your personal Lord (boss) and Saviour (rescuer from sin).

You can do this in a simple prayer, even where you are right now. Pray something like:

*"Almighty God, it is true that
I am a sinner,
and have broken your laws.
Please forgive me.
Thank you that Jesus died on
the cross for me.
I ask him into my life, to be
my Lord and Saviour.
Help me to live a life that
pleases you. Amen."*

If that is your sincere desire before God, he will accept you. To help you grow in your faith, spend some time talking to God (praying) each day; read the Bible, and find a church where the Bible is taught. You will begin to see God at work in your life, and experience his peace.

■ By Mark Weeden



Rev Mark Weeden pastors
King's Church in Arundel, West
Sussex



A PRAYER OF PROTECTION

Christians all over the world are using this psalm as a prayer of protection. You may like to read it aloud and make it personal for yourself and those you care about

*He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

*I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my
fortress;*

My God, in him I will trust."

*Surely he shall deliver you from the snare of the
fowler*

And from the perilous pestilence.

He shall cover you with his feathers,

And under his wings you shall take refuge;

His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,

Nor of the arrow that flies by day,

Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness,

Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side,

And ten thousand at your right hand;

But it shall not come near you.

Only with your eyes shall you look,

And see the reward of the wicked.

Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge,

Even the Most High, your dwelling place,

No evil shall befall you,

Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;

For he shall give his angels charge over you,

To keep you in all your ways.

In their hands they shall bear you up,

Lest you dash your foot against a stone.

You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,

*The young lion and the serpent you shall trample
underfoot.*

*"Because he has set his love upon me, therefore I will
deliver him;*

*I will set him on high, because he has known my
name.*

He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble;

I will deliver him and honour him.

With long life I will satisfy him,

And show him my salvation."

Psalm 91

PEOPLE & PLACES

NEW BOXING CHAMP FURY THANKS JESUS

TYSON Fury – the new WBC Heavyweight boxing champion – thanked God in front of a global audience after his brutal victory over previous title holder, Deontay Wilder.

The two boxing legends faced off at the MGM Grand Arena in Las Vegas on 22 February. It was the second fight between the duo after a draw in December 2018.

Fury, the only man in sports history to have held all the



Victorious Fury just before he publicly acknowledged his God

Heavyweight titles, is known for using colourful language, but he does have a faith in Christ.

He said: “First and foremost I want to say thank you to my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Those who bring evil against me will not prosper, those who stand in the dark can never come into the light. All praise be to the one and only true God, Jesus Christ.”

Photo source: YouTube

The ‘God pod’ is an emergency sleeping hut fitted with a bed, toilet, USB socket and a coded lock to protect the person inside.

Designer Stuart Johnson, 60, is keen for churches to donate a car parking space to help keep rough sleepers off the street: “[The pods] are not the final answer, but while someone is waiting for permanent accommodation, they know they are safe from bullying or injury or losing the few possessions they may have. They also give members of a church the opportunity to minister to them in a loving and caring manner.” The Amazing Grace Spaces project is based in Llanwnern, South Wales.



BABY’S BRAIN TUMOUR DISAPPEARS AFTER DAD PRAYS

AARON Ottley never thought his baby daughter would be healed of a life-changing condition, let alone that he’d be the one who triggered the miracle!

“I believed in God, but had no personal relationship with him. There was a hole in my life which had never been filled. This was made harder after a relationship breakup. I was in a bad place, with a gambling addiction and debts,” says Aaron, 23, who is a barber.

Aaron’s baby daughter, Maisie, had been born with a virus that left her with three brain tumours, two benign but one seriously malignant. “The virus could potentially have stopped normal development like sight, hearing, walking and talking.”

At Maisie’s six-month check-up, her hearing had been below average and nobody knew how Maisie would develop.

So Aaron had a lot on his mind late in 2019, when he stepped outside his Horsham shop for a breath of air. Little did he know that he’d bump into Tim, a Christian friend who was passing. In fact, Tim later admitted he’d felt ‘led’ to take a different route from normal.

As they chatted, Tim felt a nudge to ask Aaron “Do you believe?” and “Do you have a relationship with God?”

Aaron wasn’t really sure, so Tim offered to pray for him. Aaron noticed a difference at once. “I experienced God’s dramatic power, which gave me a real sense of peace – almost relief.”

Aaron started attending a local church, where he asked for prayer for Maisie. Then a miracle happened! At her 12-month check-up, Aaron and Maisie’s mother were staggered to learn that not only was Maisie’s hearing now average, but the

malignant tumour had disappeared! Aaron says, “The doctor agreed wholeheartedly that this was a medical miracle.”

Aaron, who also has a two-year-old son, is continuing to grow in his newfound faith: “I’m letting God take



all my worries. Regular worship and Bible reading have allowed Jesus to ‘invade’ my life.

“We all have to step out in faith and pray for people and believe it will happen like it did to me. God is waiting for us all to just turn to him.

“The only reason I know how to love my daughter is because of how God loves me.”

Aaron says Psalm 40:3 is particularly apt for him as Maisie grows up virus-free: “He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God”.

Promotion

THE PILGRIM’S PROGRESS

Director: Robert Fernandez

Stars: David Thorpe,
John Rhys-Davies, Kristyn Getty
DVD/Blu Ray – available now



Dragons, giants, dangerous swamps, dark foreboding castles, creepy characters and a deep threatening river of death! No, not elements of a new Harry Potter novel but features of a 17th century classic English novel – which has been brought to life in a new animated movie.

Published in 1678 and written while in prison for “illegal preaching,” John Bunyan’s classic is still regarded as one of the greatest works of English literature.

The story is simple. A man named Christian is living in the City of Destruction and realises that both he and his family need to get out before it’s too late. Meeting a character called Evangelist, he sets off on a path which will eventually lead him to the Celestial City.

The journey, however is more difficult than Christian can ever imagine. His route takes him, via the cross of Jesus through Vanity Fair, down into the valley of Death and eventually to that foreboding river of death.

This new film brings Bunyan’s story vividly to life with stunning animation that puts you right into the heart of the action. The film is a colourful, spectacular, wonderful retelling of the story with a terrific cast and a lovely music score by Kristyn Getty.

Thoroughly recommended for all ages.

■ By Andy Godfrey

‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’ has recently been released on DVD and Blu-Ray.

For a £2 discount, enter the code HEART at www.ao.vision/product/the-pilgrims-progress. This offer lasts until the end of May 2020.



PROPHECY *Today* UK

Bringing the unchanging word of God to a changing world

FACING THE FUTURE

Rev Dr Clifford Hill

The axe is at the root of the trees

Earlier this year I spent considerable time in pain from a tooth that I should have dealt with long ago. My dentist had been warning me that a large molar next to my wisdom tooth had a cavity underneath a filling, which was slowly turning into an abscess and dripping poison into my gums.

I stubbornly did not want to lose a tooth and insisted on a refilling, but the result was unbearable. I had to have an emergency extraction which led to ten further days of

pain. I learned a salutary lesson: if you allow poison to drip-feed into your body, the whole body suffers.

I believe this is a picture of the UK Church. The poison of false teaching and unbelief in theological colleges and universities has drip-fed into the spiritual arteries of virtually all the mainline denominations. Things have reached a critical point; we are now entering a period of separation: separating truth from deception.

We will see Bible-believing Christians expelled from ungodly institutions



WELCOME! OUR STORY

From 1985 to 2006, Prophecy Today was published in print and grew to become one of the most widely read Christian magazines in the UK. It was an iconic publication renowned for declaring the word of God for our times



Covers of the original Prophecy Today magazine, in print 1985-2006

In 2015, Prophecy Today was reborn online as Prophecy Today UK, taking a new format but keeping the same vision. Our small but dedicated team is led by Prophecy Today's original founder the Rev Dr Clifford Hill and operates under the umbrella of Issachar Ministries, publishing fresh editions each Friday. You can sign up on our website to receive these straight to your inbox, for free!

At Prophecy Today UK, we believe that God is as involved in the world today as he was in biblical times. We also believe that he longs to give Christians understanding about the world and how he is working out his purposes in it.

The next four pages contain excerpts from the contemporary ministry of Prophecy Today UK, which includes commentary on public affairs, teaching articles and book reviews.

Every one of our articles published since 2015 is available on our website – find us at www.prophecytoday.uk.

Prophecy Today's original logo



I believe we are now entering a period of separation: separating truth from deception

and others finding that they cannot remain in fellowship with those who are denying foundational gospel truths. As Jesus declared: "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots" (Matthew 15:13). Jesus' words echoed those of his cousin, John the Baptist: "The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 3:10).

To come back to my parable of the tooth, I had to recognise that merely refilling an old tooth would not deal

with the level of decay in the system. There had to be an extraction, right down to the roots. John the Baptist did not say that the axe was poised to cut off a few branches, or even fell the trunk of the tree. He said, "the axe is at the root of the trees" – meaning utter destruction. This indicates a level of judgment that goes beyond pruning, which is what I believe we will see in some of the institutional churches.

The Methodist Church is expected to accept same-sex marriage at its annual conference this summer. If that happens it will likely bring about calls for a separation of Bible-believing ministers, preachers and members, splitting that denomination.

A similar separation cannot long be delayed within the Anglican Church. Unity in the established Church has always been important. But if unity threatens the integrity of the gospel,

Continued over



FACING THE FUTURE

what should believers do? A time surely has to come when compromise can no longer be acceptable.

Maybe God intends to allow sections of the Church to die so that new life can thrive. Jesus called this separating the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25). This certainly does not mean that God has condemned the whole of his Church – it is unbelief that is coming under judgment!



I am not encouraging people to leave their churches: rather, to be prepared for the cost of witnessing within places that do not value truth. Believers should not sit suffering silently but seek the Lord's wisdom for how and when to be witnesses.

The conflict between truth and deception has intensified decisively at all levels of society. Every Bible-believing Christian has to make a personal decision as to where they stand in this battle. Of course, we need each other – the community of believers is of great importance today – but each of us must also decide individually where we stand, ensuring that we are right before the Lord.

■ **The Rev Dr Clifford Hill is Prophecy Today UK's Editor-in-Chief. Read his weekly editorials at www.prophecytoday.uk.**

THE BRIDE OF MESSIAH

God is preparing a people for himself

Something is happening amid the escalating tribulations of this fragile world, the immorality and selfishness of our culture, the persecution of believers, rising anti-Semitism and growing levels of deception and apostasy in the Church.

God is preparing a people for himself.

As believers we often interpret what God is doing in the world through the lens of our individual faith, or through the lens of our nation, or that of the British 'Church', or with particular (and necessary) regard for Israel. We are often less deliberate about viewing things through the lens of the global Body of Christ, also described in Scripture as Jesus' Bride.

Marriage was created by God as a glorious picture (in its ideal form) of his covenant relationship with his people: holy intimacy and oneness encircled by loving devotion, cherishing, service and faithful commitment.

God's offer of a relationship of spiritual marriage with his people has always extended to all who would enter into covenant with him by faith in the blood of Jesus, whatever their nationality or place in history.



Passages of Scripture so often reserved for weddings (eg Ephesians 5) are principally prophetic verses which speak of a much greater, more wondrous spiritual reality

Indeed, the passages of Scripture so often reserved for weddings (eg Ephesians 5) are principally *prophetic* verses which speak of a much greater, more wondrous spiritual reality, to be fulfilled when the Lord returns: the preparation of a Bride for the ultimate Bridegroom, Jesus the Messiah.

We are presently in this preparation period, somewhere between betrothal (marked by Jesus' first coming) and marriage (when he returns in glory, having prepared a place for us). This means a number of things:

1. The Bride is being prepared by the Lord, being arrayed spiritually in

3. The Bride is separating from her counterfeit, described in Scripture as an idolatrous harlot, embodying everything that has ever imitated true, biblical faith (eg false religions, apostasy in the Church) (see also Revelation 17-18)

4. The Bride is supposed to be one united, cohesive body (Ephesians 4:3-5), purified of both ungodly divisions and unholy mixture

5. The Bride is Jew and Gentile, together in Christ. Bible prophecy is not just about the Gentile 'Church' on the one hand and unbelieving Israel on the other, but the bringing of Jew and Gentile together as 'one new man'

Each of these aspects of the Bride of Messiah ought to shape the way that we see what is going on in the world today and God's purposes behind it. While the Bridegroom is busy preparing a place for us, let us also be busy preparing ourselves for his return, which may be sooner than we think.

Read the full version of this article at www.prophecytoday.uk. Search 'The Bride of Messiah'.

■ **Frances Rabbitts & Ben Robinson**

'If My People...'

A biblical understanding of repentance

One of the most 'thumbed' Bible verses of recent years is 2 Chronicles 7:14. In it, God affirms to King Solomon that if Israel turns from its wicked ways then the Almighty will "forgive their sin and heal their land".

This 'turning from wicked ways' is known as 'repentance'. Repentance has two components: conviction of sin and a turning back to righteousness. It is a spiritual conviction (from heaven), outworked in a tangible response (on earth).

Sadly, a whole industry has developed around calls for the Church to 'repent' for the wickedness in the nation, in the understanding that if this happens enough, God will turn around the UK's fortunes. However, this phenomenon, while well-meant, is mistaken.

Its fundamental error is the idea of 'vicarious repentance': that believers can repent for the actions of others.

If a third party sins, then one can express sorrow over their actions and call for repentance from them (Acts 2:38). However, in a New Covenant

context, the detached observer will not be held accountable for the other's misdeeds. Each of us will be held to account solely for our own individual behaviour (John 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

So, we as individuals cannot 'repent' on behalf of the nation, the Church, or those within. We can, and should, like Daniel (chapter 9), **confess** the sins of our nation as a whole and petition God for a Holy-Spirit-led turning back to his ways. But conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit; repentance is the individual's response.



Let us shrink from any notion that by assembling enough believers in one place, at one time, to pray in concert, we can somehow exert greater influence in the heavens to achieve our will. In a situation which begs judgment, we ask of the

Lord: "in wrath remember mercy" (Habakkuk 3:2). Ultimately, we need to pray not 'our' will, but "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven".

■ **Colin Wilson**



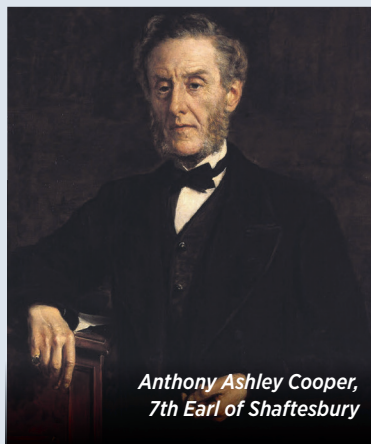
NANNY IMPACTS NATIONS

Gospel seeds faithfully sown produce miraculous harvest

Discovering how a 19th-Century hero of mine was converted to Christ is a welcome encouragement to my greatest heroine – my wife Linda! I'll explain why in due course.

Lord Shaftesbury's passion for Christ influenced an entire generation. Yet this might not have happened had it not been for an 'unsung saint' few people have heard of – one Maria Millis.

Maria was a devoted follower of Jesus who, as Shaftesbury's nanny, shared Bible stories and prayed with young Anthony Ashley Cooper (born 1801).



**Anthony Ashley Cooper,
7th Earl of Shaftesbury**

The son of an earl, the boy was otherwise neglected and bullied, both at home and at school. Sadly, Maria died when he was just ten, but Ashley described her throughout

his life as the best friend he ever had. And she would never know – in this life – the results of her faithful witness.

Shaftesbury devoted himself to helping the weak and powerless. As an MP and later a peer, he worked tirelessly towards improving the conditions of factory workers and the mentally ill while also helping to develop universal education.

He played a leading role in a number of Gospel programmes, including the Church's Ministry among Jewish people (CMJ). When he died in 1885, nearly 200 missions, schools, hospitals and charities – all of which had been his personal concern – sent representatives to a packed memorial service at Westminster Abbey. And thousands from the slums of London lined the streets as his hearse passed by.

The Bible says: "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6). So what's the link with my wife Linda?

Like Maria Millis, she feels called to share the Gospel with young people. Over the past 25-plus years she has had the immense privilege of sharing Bible stories with tens of thousands of primary school pupils. It sometimes seems a thankless task. But the seeds of Gospel truth have been sown liberally, waiting for

fertile ground in which to take root. There are rare moments of particularly encouraging feedback, such as the recent occasion when a young man at church told me that it was Linda's visit to his school many years ago that started him off on his Christian journey.



Linda Gardner, heading up Christian work in Doncaster's primary schools

Linda is always telling me not to put her on a pedestal. But my reason for sharing her story (and that of Maria Millis) is to encourage all those who are faithfully sowing Gospel seeds in their various endeavours, perhaps never knowing their full impact.

As Brian Maiden, author of the feature¹ that inspired this article, put it: "You don't have to do anything spectacular for Jesus. Just do what you can where you can. One day you may be surprised by the results."

¹**Maria Millis: the definition of an unsung saint**, *Evangelicals Now*, October 2019. I am indebted to Brian for a significant part of this article.

■ **Author: Charles Gardner**

GREEK VS. HEBRAIC THINKING

Two worldviews battle for the souls of mankind

When Abram left Ur of the Chaldees he became the first Hebrew. He responded to God's call to walk with him and learn to live by faith. The culture and way of thinking which developed from Abra(ha)m's walk, and those of his descendants, is what today we would call a 'Hebraic worldview' or a 'biblical worldview'.

Thousands of years later, when Plato taught his students in the field called the 'Academy', he taught a different

way of thinking based on a life lived independently of God. Ancient Greek thinking was carried through into the Roman Empire and from there into the culture and education systems of the entire Western world. It has endured through the centuries and remains the major rival of Hebraic thinking today.

The two worldviews, Hebrew and Greek, are in outright conflict for the souls of men and for the way

Continued over



'OUTSIDE IN' - SEEKING TO SERVE 'OUT OF CHURCH' BELIEVERS



In recent years, a growing number of faithful Christians in the UK have become disillusioned with current expressions of Sunday church available to them, or have left altogether.

They are not falling away from the faith, but rather acting in line with their consciences. Unable to find or attend a congregation that affirms the authority of the Bible, they are searching for fellowship in other ways, as they go through a 'wilderness' season with the Lord.

For Christians in this position, **Prophecy Today UK** is pleased to commend 'Outside In', a new area of ministry supporting and connecting believers who are on the 'outside' of current 'church' life but still very much 'in' the Body of Christ.

If you would like more information about this initiative, please e-mail outsidein@issacharministries.co.uk or write to 'Outside In' at Issachar Ministries, Office 5, Shannon Court, High Street, Sandy, BEDS, SG19 1AG.



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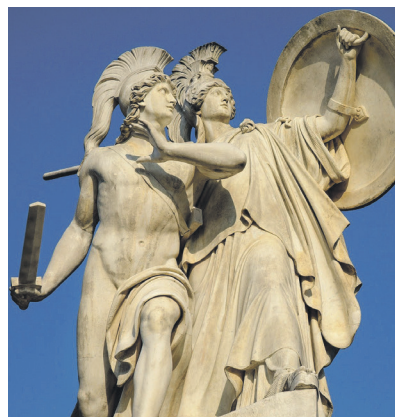


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GREEK VS. HEBRAIC THINKING



our society seeks to live – with or without God.

Today, much of our thought lives is influenced by Greek thinking, although most of us do not realise it. Its influence is subtler than we might think, especially if we have not recognised how it has shaped the culture of the world in which we have grown up.

The contrast between a Hebraic worldview (the life of faith in God) and a Greek worldview (a life based on human rationality, strength and achievement) is a battle for the mind between two different sorts

of wisdom: wisdom coming from a personal walk with God and wisdom coming from philosophies that are based on human logic alone. But the wisdom of this world will never reason out the way of salvation brought through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus the Messiah (1 Corinthians 1:18-25).

Today, the influence of Greco-Roman humanism is both strong and growing. It influences our education, our sciences, our politics and even our churches. It is deceiving millions into thinking that man is the measure of all things, that the universe evolved and that laws can be changed to govern the world in ways that are directly opposed to God.

The conflict between these two worldviews is central to the spiritual battle for the souls of men and women and will increase in intensity as we move closer to Jesus' return. The Hebraic walk of faith is still God's best.

Read Dr Clifford Denton's six-part study series, 'Comparing Greek and Hebraic Worldviews', at www.prophecytoday.uk.

ISSACHAR MINISTRIES UK

Prophecy Today UK is a project of Issachar Ministries. Its inclusion in Heart is still in its pilot stage and we need to be able to justify its production costs. We will be assessing its effectiveness after two further issues of Heart.

If you appreciate Prophecy Today UK's inclusion in Heart please let us know and encourage us to continue!

Telephone **01767 223 270** or fill out the following form and post it to
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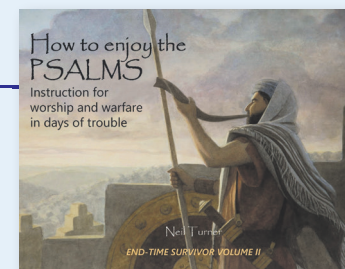
Prophecy Today UK reviews books, DVDs and other resources, both old and new, which we hope will bless your walk with God. Read the full reviews of the books below in the 'Resources' section on www.prophecytoday.uk

How to Enjoy the Psalms

Neil Turner

ProjectZone, 2019, 118pp

£24.95 (paperback). Purchase from Amazon. Find out more on the author's website, www.omegaprogramme.com



The Psalms are the literary centrepiece in our Bibles – as well as making up the longest of the Bible's books and the book most quoted by Jesus. Could this be so arranged by the Holy Spirit to show us that praise and worship should lie at the heart of our faith? Few believers would doubt it.

Bible teacher Neil Turner, author of 'End-Time Survivor', believes that the Psalms have a particular role to play in preparing us for the turbulent times preceding the return of our Lord Jesus. Written by men who overcame great odds and tremendous pressure, the Psalms are uniquely placed to help us in these increasingly difficult days.

Arranged in five volumes and spanning several hundred years from Moses' time (around 1450 BC) to the post-exilic period (5th-4th Century BC), the Psalms are a treasure trove of extraordinary breadth and depth. Turner meticulously analyses all 150 in turn, considering their technical elements and structure, their prophetic application and how they can best be enjoyed by modern readers.

He shows their astonishing richness and relevance to every area of Christian experience and provides us with the tools to embed their treasure into our lives. There are vital gems for every individual believer, gems for intercessors, training gems for pastors and preachers and powerful gems for corporate worship.

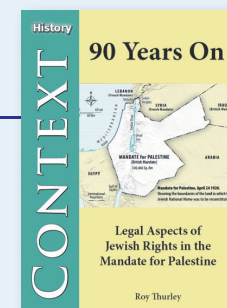
The book is beautifully presented, with contextual illustrations and comprehensive footnotes. This is an inspired and inspirational book that deserves our close attention. ■

90 Years On: Legal Aspects of Jewish Rights in the Mandate for Palestine

Author: Roy Thurley

Publishing info: Christians for Israel (CFI), 2010, 10pp

Purchasing info: £2.50 (paperback). Purchase from CFI



This is a short but well-produced booklet with colour maps, produced from conference material commemorating the 90th anniversary of the San Remo Agreement. It is still just as relevant ten years on, as we celebrate the Agreement's centenary this month. It makes a worthwhile contribution towards a better understanding of the aftermath of the Balfour Declaration and the subsequent British Mandate.

For anyone who has not studied the legal aspects of the British Mandate for Palestine before, the points made in this booklet will be revelatory.

Its conclusion is that the Jewish State draws its legality from the San Remo Agreement of 1920, a fact that counters much of the misinformation spread in recent times about the perceived illegality of Israel, especially that which uses the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947 (Resolution 181) as its basis.

The only modification to the Mandate for Palestine was the creation of the Emirate of Trans-Jordan in 1946 (now Jordan). Thus the provisions of the Mandate to the land west of the Jordan remain applicable to this day. It soon becomes clear that the expression 'illegally occupied territory' is totally inapplicable to Israel's presence in what has become known as the West Bank, as well as other areas that were assigned to Israel under the 1920 San Remo Agreement.

The booklet argues that those who would deny Israel's right to the territories it recaptured in 1967 should be challenged, using the legal case set out in its pages. ■



Marianne Gaston today

ACTRESS HEALED AFTER TEN YEARS IN WHEELCHAIR

When Lyme disease left actress Marianne Gaston housebound, she thought her career was over. But prayer from an unexpected visitor saw her instantly healed

were faithfully praying for her. "Communion was brought to me occasionally, so I never felt God had forsaken me."

But the isolation was taking its toll, causing Marianne to question God: "The months and years seemed to run into each other. One day, when feeling particularly low, I asked God about my purpose in life. I felt he answered, 'Become a prayer warrior'."

"Despite having been a Christian since Easter 1979 and getting baptised in 1982, I had neglected spending time with God due to working full time and leading a busy social life. So my settee became my prayer place."

Visited by an angel

One morning, she received a surprising supernatural visitation. "I woke up feeling a real sense of despair, with no hope for the future," Marianne recalls. "It was 2.55am on our bedside clock and Leslie was fast asleep. I sensed a 'presence' in the room and saw a huge shadow in the corner, with warmth emanating from it."

"I'm your guardian angel"

She whispered, "Who are you?"

A soft voice replied, "I'm Meshuel, your guardian angel. Don't be afraid. I've been sent to comfort you." The shape



Marianne as 'Kate', the wife of Charles Dickens

Marianne Gaston has always been at home onstage.

Having trained in dance and drama, she forged a successful career as an actress, performing in secular and Christian theatre in the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

But 23 years ago, the onset of a mystery illness forced her to exchange the stage for her sofa. She spent the next ten years virtually housebound.

Today, Marianne, 60, credits God for the miracle which has enabled her to return to work.

Back in 1997, she had been feeling unwell for several months when she woke up one morning unable to get out of bed. After many inconclusive tests, doctors finally labelled her condition as ME (chronic fatigue syndrome). It took two years before Marianne was finally able to struggle to the sofa.

She never left their house except for visits to hospital or the occasional outing using a wheelchair

Her devoted husband, Leslie, gave up his job as an aircraft engineer to become her full-time carer. "Friends stopped calling due to my sheer exhaustion after talking for just ten minutes," she remembers. "Next to Leslie, my constant companion was our lovely cat, Smudge, who would sit on the arm of the settee all day next to me."

Unable to eat properly, she existed on health drinks, her weight slowly dropping to just six stone. The illness also caused her hair to fall out. She never left their house except for visits to hospital or the occasional outing using a wheelchair.

Although she couldn't attend services at their local church, Tewkesbury Abbey in Gloucestershire, she was encouraged to know that fellow Christians



Marianne Gaston playing Catherine Dickens (with David Lloyd as Charles Dickens) in a dramatisation of the Dickens' marriage

then dissolved.

"I was left with an immense feeling of peace and God's love," she says. "The clock said 3am, so I knew I hadn't dreamt it."

But despite this heavenly encouragement, she saw no improvement in her condition. As the years passed, the same verse kept reappearing during her Bible studies: "I will restore to you the years that the... locust has eaten."

However, she was not prepared for the dramatic transformation that was to take place.

Husband invited special guest

Meanwhile, Leslie, who has an online teaching ministry, had made contact with a Pakistani bishop, Yousaf Nadeem. When Bishop Yousaf came to fulfil speaking engagements in the UK in August 2007, Leslie gave him a tour of the Cotswolds and also asked him to visit Marianne.

"As I was so unwell, the idea of meeting a stranger was quite out of the question; I was adamant that I did not want to see him," she remembers. After the bishop assured them that he would not to stay too long, she reluctantly agreed.

"A lightning bolt went through my body"

As Yousaf entered their sitting room, Marianne felt as if "God's light" was shining from him. "After asking my permission, he



Healing power: Bishop Yousaf Nadeem, who prayed for Marianne

laid his hands on my head and prayed, first in Urdu and then in 'tongues', as spoken of in the book of Acts.

"What I can only describe as a lightning bolt went through my body. I knew immediately that something had happened."

"I couldn't stop laughing"

"After Bishop Yousaf and Leslie left, I felt full of the joy of the Lord and couldn't stop laughing. Ten years after my illness began, I was instantly healed!"

Two days later, Marianne asked Leslie to take her for a ride on the local Toddington steam railway. "I hadn't done that since

the onset of my illness. He was bewildered when I told him I didn't need the wheelchair." After their train ride and a visit to Cheltenham for some 'retail therapy', she finally plucked up the courage to tell Leslie about the miracle.

Back to the theatre

Marianne took things steadily, but eventually resumed acting in 2011, while Leslie started a new job as head of wheelchair technology at a further education facility for disabled young people. A medical survey later revealed that Marianne had been suffering from Lyme disease, having been bitten by a tick in Scotland many years before.

Later, Leslie and Marianne were able to help Bishop Yousaf and his family after they received death threats from the Taliban. Leslie was instrumental in liaising with the Home Office when they applied for asylum in the UK.

Today, Marianne is fully involved in acting and directing, playing various lead roles, including a film for the BBC in 2018. For the past three years, she has toured with 'My Dearest Kate', a dramatisation of the little-known story behind the marriage of novelist Charles Dickens and his wife Catherine.

But she will never forget that her career today is all down to divine intervention: "God kept his promise to restore the years I had lost."

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07956 789 112
Sundays 10.30am
10 Tarrant Street BN18 9DG

BATTLE

- **Battle Baptist Church**
01424 774825
Mount Street, Battle, East Sussex TN33 0EG
office@battlebaptistchurch.org.uk
www.battlebaptistchurch.org.uk

BOGNOR REGIS

- **The King's Gate Church**
07594 780515
- **Our Lady of Sorrows Church**
01243 823619

BRIGHTON

- **Brighton Elim Church**
07523 849646
The Fountain Centre, Braybon Ave, Patcham, East Sussex, BN1 8HG
christy@brightonelim.org.uk
www.brightonelim.org.uk

HAYWARDS HEATH

- **Lindfield Evangelical Free Church**
01444 483576
- **Ruwach Christian Church**
- **The Joy of All Souls**
0800 093 8766
Redwood Activity Centre, Perry Mount Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 3DN
info@thejoyofallsouls.org
www.thejoyofallsouls.org

HORSHAM

- **RCCG Living Faith Assembly**
07878 108989
Holbrook Community Centre, Holbrook, RH12 5PP
www.rccglfa.org.uk
info@rccglfa.org.uk

PEVENSEY

- **Ellel Ministries**
01323 440440

SOUTHWICK

- **Christian Community Church**
01273 870103
Sundays 10.30am
1-5 Roman Crescent, Southwick BN42 4TY
info@southwickchurch.org.uk
www.southwickchurch.org.uk

WALBERTON

- **Walberton Baptist Church**
01243 584435
Sundays 10.30am and 6.30 pm
The Street, Walberton BN18 0PH

- **St Mary's Church**

WESTERGATE

- **Westergate Christian Fellowship**
01243 263821
Sundays 10.30am at Eastergate Village Hall
davegwenlan@tiscali.co.uk
www.westergatefellowship.co.uk

WORTHING

- **Coastlands Church**
01903 600584
Sundays 10.30am, 6.30pm
Sidney Walter Centre, Worthing, BN11 1DS
office@coastlands.church
www.coastlands.church
- **Highdown Church, Durrington**
Contact: 07871 195572
www.highdownchurch.org.uk

BRISTOL

HARTCLIFFE

- **River of Life**
www.riverlife.co.uk

CORNWALL

PENRYN

- **Stirring of the Water Ministries**
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enquiries@stirringofthewater.org.uk

DORSET

BOURNEMOUTH

- **Discover Church**

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FAIRFORD

- **Fairford Christian Fellowship**
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HAMPSHIRE

FAREHAM

- **Living Word Church**
Henry Cort Community College, Hillson Drive, Fareham, PO15 6PH
Sundays 10.30am. 01329 841619
www.livingwordchurchnetwork.uk

SOUTHBOURNE

- **Southbourne Free Church**

KENT

FOLKESTONE

- **Cheriton Pentecostal Church**
Sundays 10.30am, 6.30pm
5 Park Road, Cheriton, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 4DG
cheritonpentecostalchurch.co.uk

KNOCKHOLT

- **Knockholt Evangelical Church**
01959 534732

LANCASHIRE

ROSSENDALE

- **Menorah Faith International Congregation**
01706 218683

LEICESTERSHIRE

LEICESTER

- **Cropston Evangelical Free Church**
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LONDON

WESTMINSTER

- **Emmanuel Centre & Church**
020 7222 9191
9-23 Marsham St, Westminster, SW1P 3DW
www.emmanuelcentre.com
enquiry@emmanuelcentre.com

SURREY

GUILDFORD

- **Bethel Christian Assembly**
01483 898083
Sundays 10am
Shalford Village Hall, Kings Road, Shalford, GU4 8JU
office@bethelchristian.org.uk
www.bethelchristian.org.uk
- **New Hope Church**
www.newhopeguildford.org

WALES

LLANDUDNO

- **Emmanuel Church**

VALE OF GLAMORGAN

- **Rhose Village Church**

“Don’t give in to fear,” says cancer survivor Michael Bushby



In 2013 I was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and today I am alive! So I'm saying as Jesus said to the devil, “Coronavirus, get thee behind me!”

Take strength from the Bible! Read Psalm 91 (on the first page of this paper) and make it your prayer. You may also like to read these comforting words from the prophet Jeremiah:

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity.

(Jeremiah 29:11-14)

Michael Bushby's account of healing can be read at www.heartpublications.co.uk

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How do I become a Christian?

BEING A CHRISTIAN is about a relationship with Jesus Christ, the only Son of the living God, who died in our place, to pay the price for our sin. He desires to welcome you into God's family here on earth and into heaven when you die.

To start this relationship, simply pray the prayer below; if you mean it, he'll respond, because the Bible says that God looks at our hearts.

The churches featured in this paper will be happy to welcome you and explain the importance of daily Bible reading, daily prayer, baptism, being part of a congregation where the Bible is preached and believed, and telling others about what Jesus has done for you.

“ Dear God, I am a sinner and need forgiveness.

I believe that Jesus shed his precious blood and died for my sin.

I am willing to turn away from my sin.

I now invite Christ to come into my heart and life as my personal Saviour. ”



God knows

God knows who and where you are right now. In fact, Jesus said that even the hairs on your head are numbered. Why not look up all the healings that Jesus and his disciples did in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and the book of Acts?

Bible Week 2020

"David Recovered All"

Are you seeking a time of spiritual refreshing, Bible based teaching and an opportunity to enjoy an affordable summer break by the seaside?

Join like minded believers for a time of Christ centred fellowship and teaching of the Word in the beautiful surroundings of glorious Devon.

Speakers include...



John Angliss



Ian Huxham



David Noakes



Praying for Jewish and other Believers in The Land and for the salvation of all Israel
Derek Rous (Director of P.F.I.)
for an Israel prayer and focus time

Keith Parker, Paul Sherbird, Peter Bond, Samson Jebutu and others...

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ADVERTORIAL FEATURE

"And David recovered all"

Your invitation to a week of Bible teaching in sunny Devon, 8-14 August 2020



Tower of David in Jerusalem

South West Bible Week, now in its third year, is a wonderful opportunity for the remnant Church to come together.

Situated in the glorious countryside of East Devon, Bicton College is just a short hop from the nearest beach and the seaside towns of Budleigh Salterton, Exmouth and Sidmouth. There is plenty to do and enjoy for all, including the obligatory cream tea!

However, it is the spiritual feeding which is of primary importance; this year, as previously, a number of excellent speakers are lined up to bring edifying messages based around this year's theme, "And David recovered all".

Over many years, as the social and political climate has altered, the Church has too often attempted to compromise and

alter, too. In her attempt to remain culturally relevant, the Church has lost much, for the cultures of the world and the Church are mutually exclusive. Too frequently these days, it is not the world that is changed by the Church, but the Church that is changed by the world.

However, we should not be discouraged - when the King comes, he will indeed recover all. Until then, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, why not join us that we might exhort and encourage one another, and all the more as the day approaches.

Hoping to see you soon in glorious Devon!

Pastor Ian Huxham, Evangel Church, Sidmouth

A wonderful opportunity for the remnant Church to come together



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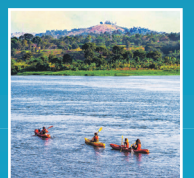
Whether you want to escape the hustle & bustle of everyday life, grow in your Christian faith or pack in as much activity as possible, we are confident you'll find what you're looking for at one of our Centres or Coach Holidays. At this point holidays are continuing as usual, obviously we are daily following government guide lines.



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS by Andrew Halloway



Deserted streets in the quarantined city of Wuhan

Christians at the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak are standing firm in their faith.

The Root and Foot Christian Church (RFCC), a megachurch in Wuhan, China, has vowed to continue its ministry despite the draconian measures introduced

to tackle the disease.

According to Faithwire, when thousands of people fled the city before the lockdown was imposed, Pastor Huang Lei decided to stay and look after those left behind. His church has organised special prayer groups

and offers practical assistance for those in need.

Lei also hopes that this difficult time will open hearts to the Gospel. In a webinar he said: "The Wuhan Pneumonia (COVID-19) is a rarely seen disaster in human history, yet everything presents an opportunity to glorify God."

But Christians in the city of 11 million, all living in quarantine, are also asking for prayer. Barnabas Fund reports that all churches are unable to meet and pastors cannot visit people in person, so ministries are continuing online. People are only allowed out of their homes for food once every two days, and there is a shortage of masks and medical staff.

Meanwhile, in the USA, Vice President Mike Pence has been mocked for praying against the virus. Social media photos show the committed Christian, who is leading the national response to the pandemic, leading his government team in prayer.

Critics, including Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, have vilified Pence for "praying away" the virus, whereas in fact he was praying for guidance to help tackle the crisis – while also planning and taking medical advice.



Robert John Wenman

A Canadian man who lived as a woman for 18 years is begging Canadian politicians not to ban so-called "conversion therapy".

Robert John Wenman is opposing Bill S-202 that would "prevent LGBTQ people who are struggling with mental health issues from getting much needed help".

Wenman says therapy saved his life by helping him to return to living as a man. His video testimony states that he is living proof that counselling helped him overcome his delu-

sion that he was a woman in a man's body.

Campaign Life's Jack Fonseca says: "We're talking about loving, standard talk therapy. There's nothing forcible about it; people are going there voluntarily." But "dishonest media outlets and even more dishonest LGBT activists" are pushing the lie that gays and lesbians are being forced to convert to heterosexuality, he adds.

As a Christian, Wenman says he now accepts his biological gender as a "blessing, not a mistake".

TEARFUND APPEALS FOR ZIMBABWE FAMINE

Drought in Zimbabwe is tipping farmers who are already desperately poor into a hunger crisis, so Tearfund has made them the subject of their Lent appeal.

Sixty-year-old father of seven Mtshale said, "There hasn't been sufficient rain since 2016. The last time I tilled [my land] was in 2017, but even then, I did not harvest anything as the crops all died in the field."

Tearfund's Earnest Maswera says: "6.7 million people – the equivalent of every ninth person in the UK – are going hungry every day in Zimbabwe."



Mtshale stands at his now barren farm which he describes as a semi-arid desert

Democrat frontrunner wants more gay rights

Presidential hopeful Joe Biden has unveiled radical plans to advance "LGBTQ+ equality" regardless of religious liberties.

Biden, currently leading the race to be the Democratic candidate for US president as HEART goes to press, has laid out how he would enforce homosexual and transgender "acceptance" at the expense of religious liberty and conscience rights if he beats Donald Trump.

Biden pledges to fill judicial and administrative vacancies with LGBTQ+ supporters and implement "implicit bias training" for federal employees and contractors. He would also force state-financed adoption and foster agencies to place children with gay couples, overturn Trump's religious freedom protections on LGBTQ+ matters, and introduce new "hate crimes" measures.



Courting the pink vote: Joe Biden

Putin puts God into constitution



Russian premier Vladimir Putin is proposing that Russia's revised constitution should refer to God and confirm marriage as a heterosexual institution.

One of the president's amendments pledges homage to the "ancestors who bequeathed to us their ideals and a belief in God".

Putin's other amendments are political power play, but these moral and religious elements may also be passed by the Kremlin-controlled parliament before the new constitution is put to a public vote on 22 April. The amendments passed the first hurdle when they were backed by Russian MPs on 11 March.

Controversially, on 11 March, the lower house of Russia's Parliament has passed a proposal allowing President Putin to serve for an additional two six-year terms when his tenure expires.

Islam on course to "take over" France

The chairman of a French conservative think tank says that "Islam stands a very good chance to simply conquer... this country."

Michel Gurfinkiel of the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute claims that massive Muslim immigration and poor integration mean that Islam is already "transforming the fabric of French society". Surveys indicate that 10-15 per cent of the French population is now

of Muslim origin, which rises to 20-30 per cent among under-25s.

In addition, he says, radical Islam is growing in acceptance, but even moderate Muslims tend "to think of themselves as a new nation" which they hope will supersede "the present Judeo-Christian nation".

Meanwhile, Catholicism is declining and the birth rate is dropping among the native French.

DAVID PAWSON AT 90

As evangelical elder statesman David Pawson celebrates his 90th birthday, HEART looks back on his extraordinary teaching ministry

Bible teacher David Pawson remains a household name among UK evangelicals.

Outspoken, often controversial, his remarkable life is testament to his commitment to teach the whole Word of God with uncompromising conviction. His clear expositions of Scripture have benefited believers worldwide.

Now confined to a wheelchair, David lives in a nursing home, having been diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer which has spread to his bones. Despite suffering a serious fall in 2019, he told supporters in a 90th birthday message in February: "Over this last 12 months, I have continued to gain strength and know now the Lord still has work for me to do – so I'm ready to continue on wherever he leads me... I am just so grateful to everyone for the love and kindness I receive."

A unique legacy

The whole Bible

Perhaps David's greatest gift to the Body of Christ is his book, 'Unlocking the Bible', which continues to be a worldwide bestseller.

His passion to help believers understand the whole Bible was birthed when he was a Royal Air Force chaplain in 1957. Realising men liked 'meat', he did a series of talks taking the men right through the Bible, to ensure they had a richer diet than a few favourite passages. "We tend to know texts, rather than context."

Word and Spirit

Having become uncomfortable with infant christening, he left Methodism early in his preaching career to become a Baptist, where he could practise believers' baptism by full immersion as a "bath for the dirty and a burial of the dead".

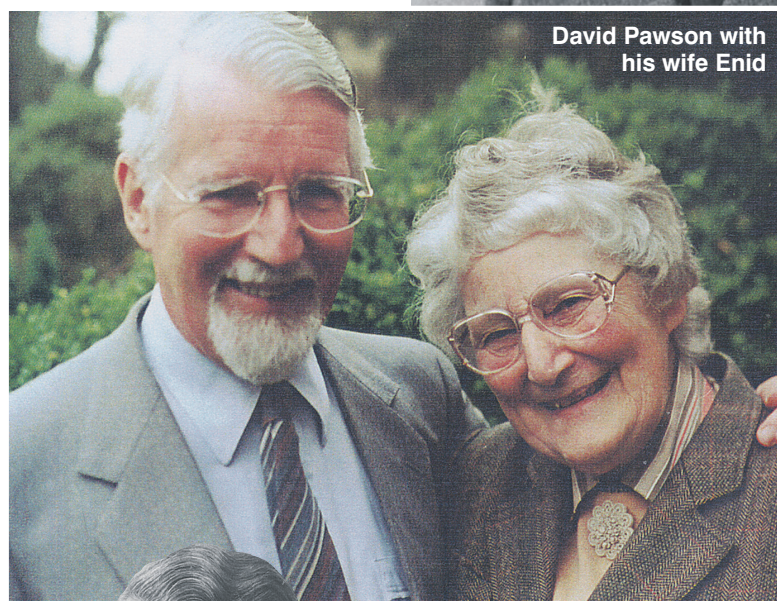
He was 'baptised in the Spirit' just as the charismatic renewal was getting underway in the early 1960s, an experience which closed speaking opportunities at some evangelical gatherings, but revolutionised his spiritual life. While interceding for a church member who had been opposing him and was bedridden with severe hay fever, he found himself praying 'in tongues' for the first time.

David then went to pray for the man, and in a few days his critic was fully healed and became a close friend.

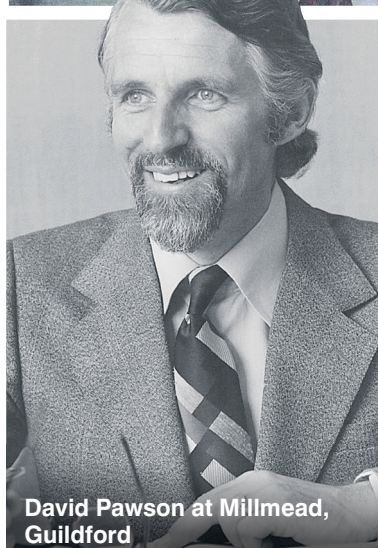
In his book, 'Word and Spirit Together,' he nevertheless cautions against any spiritual experience not based on Scripture: "Theology without experience is barren. But experience without theology is dangerous."

Controversial views

David's eclectic combination of convictions, born out of thousands of hours of intensive Bible study, mean he has been



David Pawson with his wife Enid

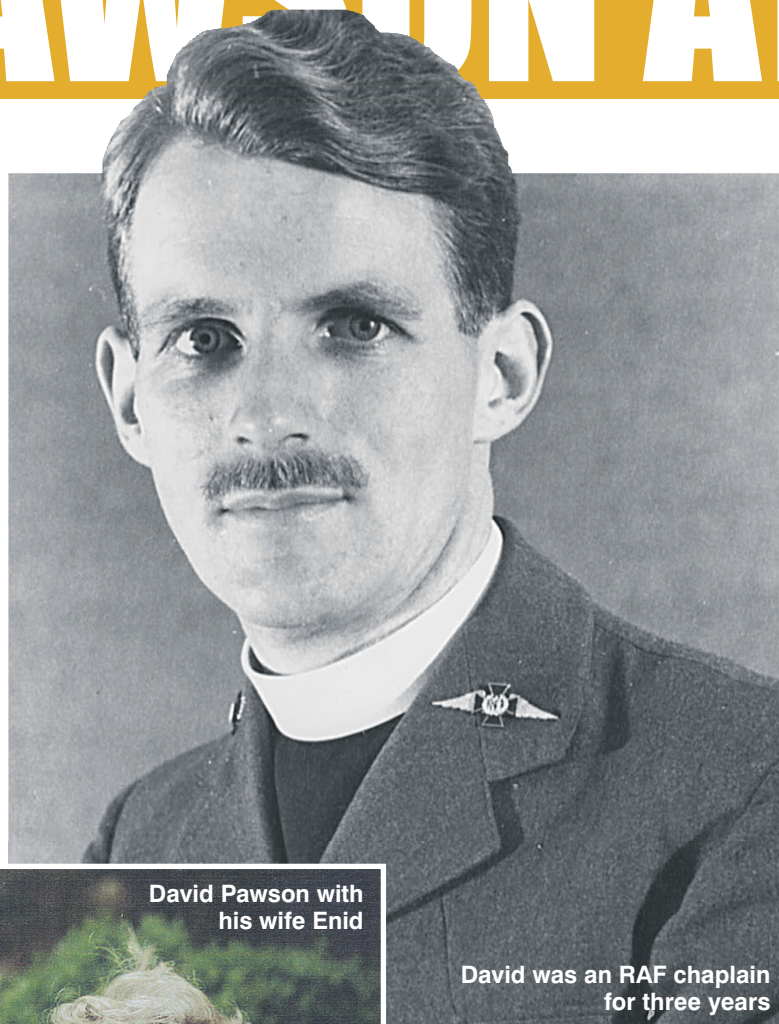


David Pawson at Millmead, Guildford

"shot at" by Christians on both sides of many issues.

Salvation

A self-described "unorthodox evangelical", he disagrees with both the Calvinist position of



David was an RAF chaplain for three years

taken over by Israel. He also believes that Christians will be on earth for the tribulation, claiming that "much of the Church believes in escapology rather than eschatology!"

Women and divorce

Other aspects of church life he has warned about include casual worship ("a lot of worship I attend... is little better than a disco"), evangelical liberalism (for example, teaching that hell is not everlasting torment), declining standards (he disagrees with remarriage after divorce) and feminisation of leadership (he had a file of grateful letters for his book, 'Leadership Is Male', all from women).

With many divorcees and remarried couples in churches, not all share David's views on divorce and believe God has a more merciful stance.

Islam

In 2002, David delivered a sobering prediction that England will become Islamic. He suffered a stroke affecting his mouth and throat before he recorded the message, in which he warned of "a backlash against the anarchy and disorder of an amoral society".

Today, countless believers continue to benefit from David's decision to make his extensive audio and video teaching library available free of charge.

Rachel Cary

A teacher of teachers

David Pawson entertainingly described his long career in his autobiography, 'Not As Bad As the Truth'.

Born in 1930 into a Christian family (his father was a lay preacher who led family prayers), David studied agriculture at Durham University.

When God intervened and called him to the ministry, he went to the Shetlands in 1950 as a Methodist lay preacher for a year, before completing an MA in theology at Wesley House, Cambridge. He spent a year working in Yorkshire with the Methodist Home Mission Department before becoming a chaplain in the Royal Air Force for three years. He married Enid in 1956 and they had a son and two daughters; tragically, one daughter passed away aged 36.

After leaving Methodism and joining the Baptist Church, David pastored Gold Hill in Buckinghamshire from 1961 to 1968. Here he instigated the successful experiment of reversing the order of the Sunday service to have the sermon first, then the worship, based on the early Church model.

In 1968, he and Enid moved to the Millmead Centre in Guildford, which became the largest Baptist church in Britain, with attendance double the membership number.

In 1979, David started an international itinerant ministry, becoming a much sought-after conference speaker, particularly of church leaders.

Over the years, he has written a large number of books, booklets and daily reading notes. Millions of his messages have been distributed in over 120 countries.



Kissing in public: David and Enid Pawson celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 2016 at a meeting in Jerusalem



PERSECUTION WATCH by Andrew Halloway

ASIA BIBI FORGIVES HER PERSECUTORS

"I knew it was going to happen," says the mother held on death row for over eight years

In France for the launch of her new biography, persecution survivor Asia Bibi met President Macron and said she forgives those who tried to kill her.

The Pakistani Christian, who spent eight years on death row on blasphemy charges, was invited to France by Emmanuel Macron, and has filed an initial application for asylum there.

However, after meeting Macron, Bibi said she had not yet decided where she will settle when her asylum in Canada runs out at the end of this year.

"I need time to think," Bibi said. "Canada has been good to me. France has been very good to me."

In fact, Bibi's new book is co-written with French journalist Anne-Isabelle Tollet, who campaigned for her release. 'Enfin Libre!' ('Finally free') was published in French in January and the English version is due in September.

Bibi said she now wants to work with Tollet to urge Pakistan to free others imprisoned under the anti-blasphemy laws that nearly led to her death.

Hannah Chowdhry of the British Asian Christian Association reported Bibi was introduced at the launch as a "very devout Christian, who believes that whatever happens to her, happens from God". The spokesperson also explained how Bibi "prayed every day during her imprisonment – it was her faith in God that gave her the strength to continue through her difficult life." In the book, Bibi says that a small white bird visited her in prison

during her lonely eight and a half years in isolation. She felt the presence of God through this encounter and it gave her strength. The bird became a reminder to pray daily and she never lost the belief that one day, she would be free again.

A small white bird visited her during her lonely isolation

At the book launch, Bibi spoke of her forgiveness of all those who hated her, and added: "God saw my tears and heard my crying and when he felt the timing was right, he set me free... I never doubted God..."

"A priest at my baptism told my mother that one day I would suffer greatly, but that God would release me from this at an appointed time. I knew it was going to happen one day, as my parents had forewarned me many times."



Asia Bibi with the co-author of her new book, Anne-Isabelle Tollet

CHRISTIAN LEADER IN INDIA RUN OVER BY MOTORCYCLES

Violence against Christians in India hit a new level when Hindu extremists ran their motorcycles over a key evangelical leader after beating him.

Armed with bamboo rods and a thick metal chain with a heavy lock on it, the ten Hindu nationalists in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh state beat Isaac Paulose, 48, and then ran their five motorcycles over him, fracturing one of his ribs, said Uttar Kumar Deep, pastor of Grace Fellowship Church of CEA (Christian Evangelistic Assemblies), Sehore.

Isaac, an elder at the church and coordinator of the New In-

dia Evangelistic Association for Madhya Pradesh, was attacked shortly after dropping his 5-year-old son off at school on 3 March. His wife, Elizabeth, said he was just 300 metres from their home. Pastor Deep said that the men "scorned and taunted him, asking him to call on the name of Jesus". They also threatened to kill him if he continued to convert people.

Isaac has had surgery to his left hand, which was also frac-



Church leader Isaac Paulose in hospital after Hindus attacked him in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh state, India

tured, and stitches to his head.

Hemant Lal, a Christian leader from Bhopal, told Morning Star News: "I was amazed at his faith. He told me he was not scared... but that he was glad that he suffered for the name of Jesus."

Hindu extremists routinely attack Christians for "conversion" despite the practice being legal in India.

Shot for building a church

Two Pakistani Christians who were building a church have been shot by locals who don't want the church in their village.

Religious freedom charity CLAAS-UK report that Muslims in the village of Sahiwal in Punjab attacked the Christian community when building started on the church.

Christians Gulzar Masih and his son Azeem, who had donated land for the project, were opposed from the start by some of the Muslims.

After a confrontation about the church on 1 February, Gulzar, Azeem, four other Christians and six Muslims were arrested and then released on bail on 2 February. But later that day, the same Muslim men and others carrying guns began demolishing a boundary wall around the church.

According to the British Asian Christian Association (BACA), they also gathered around the



A BACA representative (left) meets wounded Azeem Masih, his wife Humaira and young son Tabeel

Christian enclave that night, shouting abuse and threatening to rape the women. They challenged the Christians to come out of their homes to face them, and even kicked down doors and dragged some Christians out.

When Azeem and his cousin Sajid Masih did come out, the attackers shot both of them in the head, and another man was injured with an axe. Azeem, 32, is now off the critical list and is slowly recovering many of his senses, though he is still unable to speak and has been moved to Lahore for brain surgery.

Azeem has been married to Humaira, 30, for just two years and they have a baby son, Tabeel, who was just 8 months old at the time of the attack.

Humaira said, "Azeem was a healthy and committed husband and father - a man of God who wanted to strengthen the church with a new building. I cannot understand why these men have



One of the wounded men being treated in hospital

MURDERED FOR USING WATER FROM A WELL

In an echo of Asia Bibi's case, a 22-year-old farm worker has been murdered after washing with water from a Muslim's well.

Pakistani Christian Saleem Masih died on 28 February, three days after he was tortured by other farm labourers on the orders of a Muslim cattle farm owner.

Saleem had rinsed himself in water pumped from the well after unloading husks from a vehicle. The enraged farm owner accused Saleem of "polluting"

the water at Baguyana, a village in Kasur district, Punjab province.

Calling Saleem a "chuhra" (a term of derision commonly taken to mean latrine cleaner) and a "filthy Christian", the farm owner ordered his men to tie Saleem's hands and chain his feet before they tortured him with sticks and heated iron rods. They rolled a heavy iron rod over Saleem's body, causing multiple fractures and internal injuries.



Martyred Saleem Masih lies in agony on his arrival in hospital, where he succumbed to his torture injuries

acted so violently, as they were not provoked by us – we have tried to live peaceful lives."

She continued, "I am heartbroken. I do not know if my husband will ever be able to speak to Tabeel again. I am not used to seeing Azeem like this, so dependent on others, whereas he was always the first to help them."

BOOK
REVIEW

PERSECUTION WATCH

Our kidnap ordeal served as a warning that the Western Church isn't ready for Jesus' return

David and Shirley Donovan were held hostage for 22 days in the Niger Delta. Their traumatic abduction was, they believe, a warning against lukewarm Christianity

'Counting the Cost: Kidnapped in the Niger Delta'

By David and Shirley Donovan
Christian Focus Publications
ISBN 978-1-5271-0306-1

This gripping account of kidnap and murder in the Niger Delta serves not just as a harrowing real-life story about faith under fire – but also as a prophetic warning to the wider Church.



A small riverine community in the Niger Delta



Ian Squire

HEART has previously reported the murder of Surrey optometrist Ian Squire; this is the story of the survivors of that ordeal.

Now based in the Scottish borders, Dr David Donovan and his wife Shirley have spent over 15 years running their charity, New Foundations medical mission, in the Niger Delta. They set up a school and clinics in remote rural communities based near rivers, training indigenous people to be medical missionaries to their own people.

Although the area was also home to bandits, for whom Westerners were a lucrative prize, in autumn 2017 they were joined on one of their regular mentoring visits to the mission station by young optometrist Alanna Carson from Co Antrim, and Ian Squire, who had his own eye care charity.

Three men lunged into their bedroom, shouting and brandishing guns

All four were asleep during the small hours of 13 October, when they were woken by what sounded like "a wild monster... rampaging in the house". Three men lunged into their bedroom, shouting and

brandishing guns. Herded out wearing little more than their nightclothes, the group was taken to a hideout, where the gunmen demanded one billion naira (almost £2.5 million) in ransom money.

David later said the men were "initially very intimidating, extremely unpredictable due to drugs and alcohol, very adrenaline fuelled, extremely violent, extremely intimidating."

To boost their morale while in captivity, they sang 'Amazing Grace' with Ian leading on his guitar. Then we find out why the Donovans have dedicated the book



Shirley admitting a sick child to the clinic

A dehydrated child in the ward



couple reveal what they believe is a message for the Western Church. Warning that Jesus' return will come "as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2), they caution against



David and Shirley with one of their workers and her mother

to Ian's memory: "Two cracks pierced the silence, staccato and loud, then a short salvo of ammunition fire. Ian looked ahead, expressionless, his eyes empty. He stood motionless, already in the presence of his Saviour, the very one he had been adoring only seconds earlier, worshipping in spirit and truth. He fell forward, without a sound, into our laps."

The rest of the story follows the Donovans' 22-day ordeal as they grapple with their Christian faith amid deeply traumatising experiences at the hands of the kidnapers, the threat of rape and their own murder only too real.

They were eventually released, thanks to intervention by the British High Commission and the Nigerian authorities. Remarkably, the couple suffered no PTSD, crediting God with healing them as they read the Bible aloud while held hostage.

After raising the "Why us?" questions you'd expect at the end of such an ordeal, the

preoccupation with prosperity and personal comfort: "We saw our abduction as a microcosm of what the Church could face if it is not watching for the return of Jesus Christ... not ready, not dressed and stumbling in the darkness, unprepared."

They finish with a stirring call for renewed holiness and obedience, no matter what the cost.

Chris Eyte
and
Rachel Cary



Shirley in the New Foundations school



David and Shirley Donovan

ATTACK ON CHURCH SERVICE LEAVES 24 DEAD

A church service in Burkina Faso was a scene of devastation when suspected jihadists entered and killed 24 Christians, including the pastor. Another 18 people were wounded.

No Muslim extremist group claimed responsibility for the attack, which was perpetrated in the northern town of Pansi, Yagha Province, on Sunday 16 February, although several jihadist groups, including the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), are operating in the Muslim majority country.

The attack followed a raid on nearby Sebba in which attack-

ers killed the pastor, his son, two nephews and a deacon of an evangelical church, according to Christian charity Open Doors.

This and the murder of 50 Christians in 2019 have seen Burkina Faso race up to 28th on Open Doors' list of "50 most dangerous countries for Christians", after not even appearing on the list the previous year. The organisation reports: "Many Christians are too scared to attend church services or send their children to school. Some churches have stepped up security."

MUSLIMS BEAT UP STREET PREACHER

A Christian street preacher in Trondheim, Norway, was abducted, beaten, robbed and threatened with death if he didn't convert to Islam.

Four Muslim men asked Roar Fløttum to pray for a friend who, they claimed, had injured his foot. Instead, they pushed Mr Fløttum down a flight of stairs, assaulted him, stole his bank cards and mobile phone, forced him to tell them his PIN numbers and stole money from his accounts.

Finally, they demanded he convert to Islam, threatening him with a knife. He told reporters later: "I feel traumatised after the event, but I have no plans



Norwegian street preacher
Roar Fløttum

on letting this incident stop me. I only want to tell others about God's love."

letters@heartpublications.co.uk

HEART is sent free to any church which accepts it, so our letters page provides a forum for Christian opinion, where members of different denominations or none can exchange views.

Only concise letters of up to 100 words giving your name and town are likely to be printed and may be edited for brevity and clarity.

Comments sent via our website will be assumed to be for printing unless marked 'not for publication'. All letters will appear on our website after printing.

Deadline for the June/July 2020 letters page is 24 April.

Email: letters@heartpublications.co.uk

Churchill the Zionist

I must be one of many who are grateful to Dr Elizabeth Allan for uncovering the truth about Churchill's motives in his policies relating to the Jewish national homeland ('Restoring Churchill's reputation', Feb/Mar 2020).

Dr Allan has removed the disquiet over the anti-Zionist judgements made about Churchill, the man who said in 1921: "The Zionist ideal is a very great ideal and I confess, for myself, it is one that claims my keen personal sympathy" (quoted by Martin Gilbert in 'Churchill and the Jews').

Edith Powney
Wimborne, Dorset

Free speech anniversary

As well as Brexit Day, 31 January marks 'Deliverance Sunday', the anniversary of our deliverance from the threat of up to seven years in jail under the so called 'Religious Hatred Bill'.

The 'Protection of Freedom of Expression' clause 29J in that Act of Parliament succeeded by just one vote on 31 January 2006. Ironically, one missing vote was that of PM Tony Blair!

Thanks to that victory, someone charged with an offence would have to be shown to have used "threatening" language - rather than "threatening, insulting and abusive" - the test in race cases. Also the prosecution has to show "intention" to foment such hatred by the accused rather than intention or "recklessness" as the government had proposed.

Every Christian's email, letter and prayer was vital in securing such an extraordinary victory over that government with its massive parliamentary majority.

Informed Christians consider the EU to be the primary source of such repressive laws. So perhaps our departure from the EU on this same date is a hint that the Lord is working out his purposes.

Roland Parsons
Gloucestershire

Environmentalism and a new earth

Your piece, 'Eco-concern: a new religion?' (Gardner's World, Dec/Jan) makes a mistake regarding 2 Peter 3:7, which states, "The present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, by being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly." This translation is one of several incorrect interpretations of the Greek.

In fact, the verse says that the forces of evil will be destroyed by fire, not God's earth. Revelation 11:18 warns that those who destroy the earth will themselves be destroyed. This aligns with the science of anthropogenic global warming that has caused our current 'climate emergency'.

The Greek word referring to a "new earth" in 2 Peter 3:13 means 'renewed' (kainos), not 'replaced' (neos). This has been explained by theologians such as Richard Bauckham, J Richard Middleton, Tom Wright, Chris Wright, Dave Bookless and Ruth Valerio.

God has a saving, covenant relationship with life in all its biodiversity (Psalm 150:6, Romans 8:19-22). We are to cherish the earth and manage it well in preparation for the return of his kingdom.

Mike Buckland
Wargrave, Berkshire

In the beginning, our Creator gave mankind the authority to take care of the earth (Genesis 1:26). When we lost spiritual unity with our Creator, we also lost the power to care properly for his Creation.

Since then, Creation has been 'groaning', waiting for God's sons and daughters to be revealed (Romans 8:19-22). When Jesus returns, his children will become the true environmentalists, working with him to restore the earth. They will reign with him for 1,000 years before the advent of the new heaven and earth (Revelation 20:3-4, 21:1).

For those who are concerned about the damage being done to Creation, now is the time to become the Creator's son or daughter. Then you will dwell forever with Jesus in his wonderful, renewed Creation.

Julie Andrews
Storrington, West Sussex

Coffee to write home about

A friend recently invited me to the Pause Community Hub in Worthing for a cup of coffee, where I was so impressed by the warm welcome and modern appearance that I felt compelled to put something in writing.

Mrs E Castle
Worthing, West Sussex

My test of faith

Recently, I had a routine mammogram and was called back within five days for more tests.

My faith was challenged, but as I sat in the waiting room facing the unknown, I put my trust in Jesus. To my great relief, I was given the all clear, for which I thank God.

During the five days of agonising uncertainty, I believe he showed me the following principles:

- Shut the door on worry and fear.
- Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-3).
- Trust and obey (Psalm 33:18-22). I envisioned a handrail, with God telling me to let go. I took one hand off and asked, "Is this OK?" He replied, "Now the other hand."
- When we cry to God, "I can't bear it," he says, "Be still and know I am God" (Psalm 46:10).
- Prayer gives peace beyond human understanding (Philippians 4:7).
- Our heavenly Father knows every hair on our heads (Luke 12:7).
- God will never leave us or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6).
- Look up, not down; always give thanks (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
- Seek to share with others the amazing hope we have in Jesus.

When we are pushed outside our comfort zone and experience personal turmoil, we realise our frailty and grow in faith. We need to read God's promises and absorb them into our hearts until they become reality.

Sue Applin
Bognor Regis, West Sussex

Public praise

Rather than bad news about shootings, pestilence and 'woke' demonstrations dominating our airwaves, it's time the Word of the Lord resounded in our streets!

I foresee Christian 'flash mobs' turning up in public places and singing hymns and choruses.

This would be a modern response to Isaiah 58:12: "You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in."

It wouldn't need to be a 'tour' that requires promotion and complicated kit. Choirs and Sunday school groups could take part, as a change from performing to the "converted" at church. It would be an ideal opportunity to give out tracts about the Good News, too.

Those, like me, who cannot sing, could be part of the joyful noise while praying!

A few people might actually want to listen to our preachers, too, before the door is totally closed.

Rob Tromans
Craven Arms, Shropshire



In my own words
Readers' longer letters

Let's have a national Christian heritage week

Some years ago, I read an article stating that gay pride events would come to be known simply as 'pride' - they would become all-age celebrations of all types of sexuality.

Deep sorrow filled my heart as I grasped something of the impact this agenda would have, especially on our little ones. To our country's shame, same-sex marriage is now enshrined in law and from September, our children are to have compulsory relationship teaching, including LGBT issues, from as young as four.

As I prayed about this, I had the idea of an annual national Christian heritage week from the second weekend of June. Technically, we are still a Christian

state, yet few in Britain know anything about the Bible or true



"Technically, we are still a Christian state," says Hilary Wyatt

Christianity. We need to act while we still can.

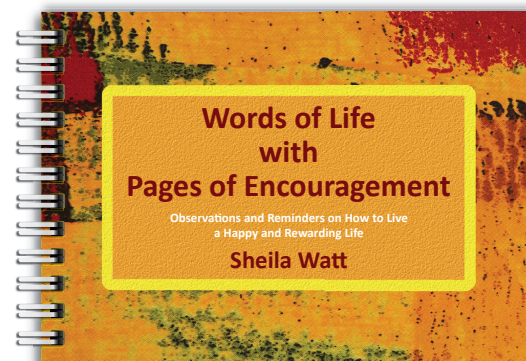
Ideas for celebrating the week include:

- Flyers highlighting how our Christian heritage has shaped our nation
- Exhibitions in churches and tourist places
- Balloons and badges with the NCH week logo (see www.nchweek.wordpress.com)
- Distributing John's Gospels
- Special church services and community events
- Gospel choirs visiting pubs, retirement homes, schools, hospitals and prisons

Jesus came not to condemn people, but to save them. The Gospel is not that Jesus came enhance our lives, but to be our life - to set us free from our natural way of living. He can set us free from our addictions, hurts and bondages.

There are many great initiatives to reach people with the Gospel, but this could be another tool to bring God's love to this country.

Hilary Wyatt
Tilmanstone, Kent



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Why not women?

It's time to tackle the thorny issue of women in ministry



Richard Cary, speaker: "For centuries, God's people have been searching for clear, biblical direction on men and women serving as equals.

"I have been encouraged and challenged to discover that the answers to our questions are in the Scriptures themselves. It's as if they are hidden in plain sight, obscured by the traditions we have grown up with.

"Come and find out for yourself what the Word of God really has to say about men and women, one in Messiah."


Pastor Marion Daniel, speaker: "I have weathered the storm during 36 years of being a woman in ministry.

"I have met with hostility, but also with words of affirmation and sincere thanks. The Father needs every saint to be serving in the Kingdom, using all the gifts God has given them - male and female working side by side for the furtherance of the Gospel."

Feedback from a lady: "I'm amazed by the sermon about men and women. It addressed so many of the issues I have been struggling with. Topics included women's place within the Bible, Church and ministry, misogyny, preaching/teaching, modest attire and generational hurts. More please!"

Join us for our Sozo Ministries International conference on Sunday 17 May 2020.

Sessions will be led by Pastor Marion Daniel, Richard and Helen Cary and Simon Badger



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Was it Good Wednesday or Good Thursday?

When was Jesus really crucified?

The sign of Jesus' Messiahship was that he would spend "three days and three nights" in the earth. Yet we traditionally celebrate Good Friday, which does not leave three nights before Resurrection Sunday. Two Bible teachers present the alternative cases for Good Wednesday and Good Thursday

Good Wednesday



Philip Wren

The traditional chronology with the crucifixion taking place on a Friday does not easily fit with Scripture, nor does the common rationalisation that the Jews counted parts of a day as if they were a whole day.

To unravel what might be the order of events, and reconcile the apparent contradictions between the Gospel accounts, it is necessary to understand the Jewish calendar, the spring festivals, the dates for the new moons in the relevant years and the Bible accounts.

Drawing these together, a Wednesday crucifixion fulfils prophecy and thus emerges as a strong contender.

Philip Wren

To find out more, read Philip Wren's booklet, 'The Year and Day of the Crucifixion', available at <https://www.trumpetsounds.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The-Crucifixion.pdf> or as a hard copy from: Philip Wren, 48 Newlands, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6JA. The booklet contains a holy week chronology, showing how the Scriptures fit into this order of events.



The empty tomb

Good Thursday



Peter Sammons

A Wednesday crucifixion assumes that three days and three nights means 72 hours.

However, in the Bible, a 'day' or 'night' can be less than 12 hours.

In fact, Jesus was in Bethany six days before Passover (John 12:1). The triumphant entry was the next day. Five days before Wednesday would be Saturday, a Sabbath, and the triumphant entry could not have taken place on a Sabbath.

I believe Jesus ate a Passover meal – not a Passover-like meal. How could Jesus have celebrated the Passover, but the Temple Priests had not (John 18:28)?

At the time, two calendars were in use; a pre-exile and a post-exile calendar, which averaged 24 to 48 hours apart.

Therefore Jesus ate his Passover by the pre-exile Moses calendar used by truly pious Jews, but was crucified by mankind (that's all of us!) by the official calendar, precisely when the Temple authorities were slaughtering the sacrificial lambs.

Peter Sammons

To find out more, read David Serle and Peter Sammons' book, 'Three Days and Three Nights that Changed the World', available via Christian Publications International (CPI) at £16. A free article on the CPI website looks at this in greater depth: <http://christian-publications-int.com/images/PDF/GoodThursday.pdf> A detailed timeline is also available at: <http://christian-publications-int.com/images/PDF/SuggestedChronologyOfHolyWeek2.pdf>

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Melanie Symonds

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April / May 2020

Pupils lose a source of help

One casualty of the school closures is School Pastors



Front row (left to right), the new Tiverton recruits: Jonathan Schnarr, Liz Grout, Margaret Wallwork, Janice Kitchen. Back row: Helen White, Jenny Tower, Trevor Colby, Gill Sharland, Marjorie May, Sarah Colby

Pupils struggling with bullying and other emotional issues had been getting help from friendly grown-ups who are not their teachers or parents.

Dedicated School Pastors mingled at breaktimes, ready to listen to children who were lonely, stressed or in need of a chat.

"We have diverted fights"

Jenny Tower, coordinator of School Pastors for Tiverton, Devon, says their team sought to "pour calm" where they might find trouble. "We have diverted fights – boys will be boys, and it's usually the boys isn't it? If we can be in the right place at the right time, we can nip that in the bud without being a teacher."

Tiverton recently celebrated

the arrival of six new School Pastors at Cullompton Community College (CCC) and Tiverton High School. Duncan Withall of Ascension Trust, which runs the nationwide scheme as well as the highly successful street pastors scheme, officiated at the 6 February commissioning ceremony.

Local church members had also set up a rota to pray for the School Pastors.

Young people's issues include cyber bullying, uninterested parents, peer pressure and exam stress (although that has been temporarily removed by the coronavirus closures). There is also the danger of falling prey to the 'county lines' drug dealers.

In March, there had been 400 School Pastors helping at 31 schools across Britain.



Badge of office: Duncan Withall from Ascension Trust gives new recruit Jonathan Schnarr his School Pastor cap

School Pastors were willing to share their Christian faith if asked a question, and as trust built, found youngsters would start to share their worries.

Julie Phelan, headteacher at CCC, commented: "I have huge faith in what they're doing, and I'd like to give them a huge thanks for giving up their time, which they do freely and regularly."

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Where is the lion? Isa 11:6 used to say: "The lion shall lie down with the lamb." It's changed to "wolf" in all versions! Also, Mt 9:17 (KJV) now doesn't make sense: "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles." Find out about the Mandela effect! <https://thewatchmanfellowship.weebly.com>



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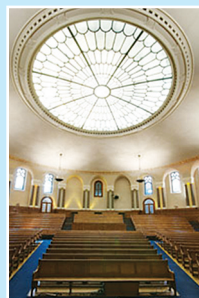
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