

The LINK

digital edition

June 2020



The Parish Church of
St Michael Braintree
www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk



The Light of the World

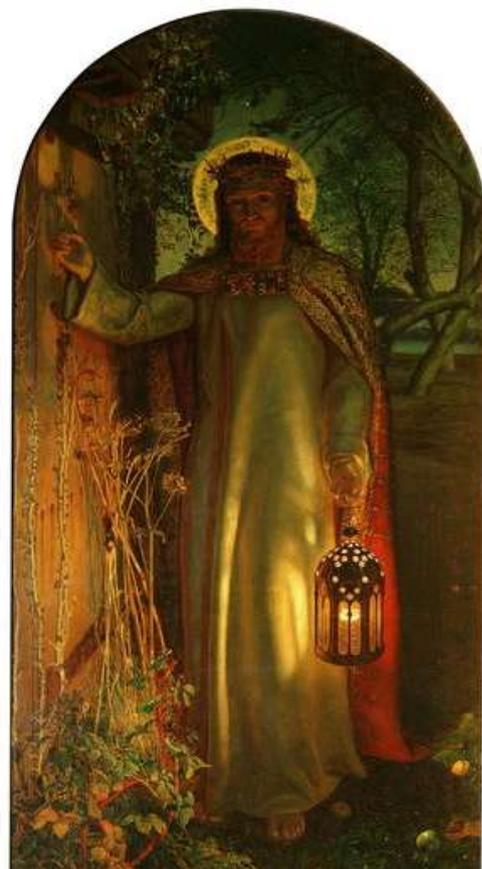
Dear Friends,

I am very conscious how hard our current coronavirus restrictions are for a number of people, particularly those who have been bereaved.

In preparation for Len Dove's funeral in May, his family mentioned how much he loved the picture by Holman Hunt titled, "The Light of the World".

The picture illustrates Revelation 3:20, where Jesus said, *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me."*

The picture is described as allegorical, as it depicts Jesus standing outside a door and knocking. There are two distinctive features about the door. Firstly, it is overgrown and hasn't been opened for some while. Secondly, there is no handle on Jesus' side of the door.



This picture depicts each of our lives. We may have left Jesus outside the door of our lives for some while. But he doesn't force his way in. He stands outside, knocking on the door of our lives. Waiting. Inviting us to open the door and let him in. We can talk to Jesus in prayer anytime, anywhere.

Whatever our struggles right now, we need not face them alone. Jesus longs to come in – to help us and to change us.

I hope you are coping with the continuing coronavirus restrictions and am praying for wisdom and safety, for each of us and for churches nationwide.

Wishing you every blessing in these hard times,
Nigel

MISSION OF THE MONTH OPEN DOORS

It wasn't long ago that Graham Walker visited us on Suffering Church Sunday (Nov 2019) and spoke eloquently about the work of Open Doors.

Open Doors is an international ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide. Open Doors is widely known for their publication of the World Watch List – an annual ranking of top 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution – an effective way to mobilise and raise awareness of the plight of persecuted Christians.

Emergency relief is one of Open Doors focused area of work and the current Covid-19 pandemic has brought this piece of work into greater attention. Open Doors is currently fundraising for Covid-19 Crisis – donations are welcome!

To find out more about Open Doors and upcoming events please visit their website (see below).

Prayer requests for this month are also available on their website. Prayer requests for this month are particularly focused on churches and young church leaders in North Africa – a region that is severely impacted by the coronavirus crisis. We are also asked to pray for persecuted women in Middle East – where many face abuse and are afford no rights.

For more information, visit: <https://www.opendoorsuk.org>

Ade Odupitan



A CONTINUATION FROM LAST MONTH...

JOHN NEWTON: 1725-1807.

In these days of 'lockdown' I sometimes daydream about walking from my chair where I have been sitting with my fellow contestants in the Mastermind Studio and taking my place in **THE** Mastermind Black Chair and John Humphrey's saying to me... Your name... and your chosen subject is... and my reply...

...slightly different from last time

John Newton 1725 – 1807:

His years to the age of 11 and the effect on his later life

THEN

What a delight to have spent hours 'learning' the answer to every possible question ... so to delight (and encourage) you in these days of 'lockdown' here are some answers to some questions that could be asked ...

When was John Newton born?

John Newton was born on July 24th to a Godly mother and an irreligious seafaring father.

What did John Newton learn about God as a child?

John's mother taught John the Westminster Catechism and the hymns of Isaac Watts.

What is the Westminster Catechism?

It was published in 1647 and was composed of **107 questions** and answers. The first **12 questions** concern God as Creator. Questions **13-20** deal with original sin and the fallen state of man's nature.

(You can buy a copy on Amazon for 1p or £1.29 for Kindle!)

What hymns would John's mother have taught him by Isaac Watts?

- When I survey the Wondrous Cross
- Jesus shall reign...
- God our Help

But sadly:

John's mother died two weeks before he was seven ...so no more Christian teaching because he was left to his own devices apart from two years in a boarding school in Stratford...that was his only formal education. He went to sea at the age of 11... and seemingly no thought of God until what John himself later called 'The Precious Storm at Sea' when he was 23 years old...when he called out to God 'Lord have mercy on us' and later saw the 'hand of God displayed in their favour.'

The rest of the voyage was spent in prayer and reading the Bible... How important would all that he had been taught in those early years of his life been. How much would be stored in the recesses of his mind that the Holy Spirit could bring to the forefront and use... Seven years he had been taught by his Godly mother who for seven years would have been praying for her only much loved son... and those prayers were answered greatly.

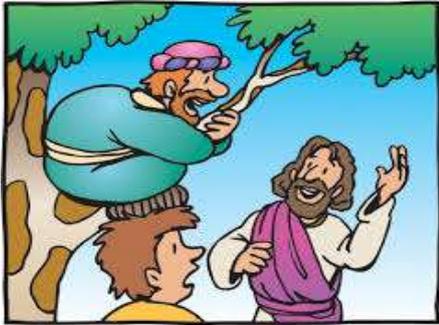
So fast forward to 1764 and he was a much-loved pastor and one of the first things that he did when he became a pastor was to begin a meeting for children on Thursday afternoons. We are told that he met with them himself...gave them assignments...spoke to them from the Bible and wrote songs for them and he wrote in his diary...200 children constantly attended...

Something to reflect on today...

How important were those first seven years of his life ... how important are Early Years!

How important and vital is Children's ministry and the songs we teach them too!!

A song about Zaccheus written by John Newton... words to reflect on...



Zaccheus climbed the tree,
And thought himself unknown;
But how surprised was he
When Jesus called him down!
The Lord beheld him, though concealed,
And by a word his pow'r revealed.

2. Wonder and joy at once
Were painted in his face;
Does he my name pronounce?
And does he know my case?
Will Jesus deign with me to dine?
Lord, I, with all I have, am thine!

3. Thus where the gospel's preached,
And sinners come to hear;
The hearts of some are reached
Before they are aware:
The word directly speaks to them,
And seems to point them out by name.

4. 'Tis curiosity
Oft brings them in the way,
Only the man to see,
And hear what he can say;
But how the sinner starts to find
The preacher knows his inmost mind.

5. His long forgotten faults
Are brought again in view,
And all his secret thoughts
Revealed in public too:
Though compassed with a crowd about,
The searching word has found him out.

6. While thus distressing pain
And sorrow fills his heart,
He hears a voice again,
That bids his fears depart:
Then like Zaccheus he is blest,
And Jesus deigns to be his guest.

Jennifer Bailey

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH PIPE ORGAN

I am very pleased to report that at last the organ is now fully operational.

Organ builders from Finchingfield carried out repairs needed as a consequence of significant flooding from a leaking roof. Our organ has 1,400 pipes and about 100 were removed to accomplish the repairs. (By comparison, the York Minster organ has 5,400 pipes, all of which were removed in the current £2m "Once in a century" complete overhaul.) We were very fortunate that the damage suffered was not as bad as in 1951 when the roof also leaked and melting snow caused serious and costly damage to the soundboards.

Our organ builders had to remove pipes in order to access and take out the Swell Drawstop Machine and wind chests for repair in their workshop. The Great Trumpet stop pipes had corroded and were also taken to their workshop to be repaired, re-voiced and retuned. Leather parts, felts, valves and electrical components were also replaced where necessary.



Parts of the instrument are almost 170 years old. About 1850 George Holdich commenced building the organ which then had just one manual (Great) plus pedals. In 1886 the organ was relocated from the end of the Jesus Chapel and August Gern, a German organ builder who had trained in Paris, installed a Swell (second manual) and additional stops. The pipework he added is very like that found in a French Romantic organ.

The instrument has been remarkably reliable since being rebuilt by Noel Mander in 1975. However, 45 years-worth of dust in the pipes has degraded the sound and some of the elderly electrical components and internal wiring merit replacement in due course.

I should like to thank my friend Alan McQuade for his invaluable advice. Alan was the organist here for many years and is extremely knowledgeable on the workings of pipe organs generally and this instrument in particular.

Norman Plastow

STATUES

I am sure you know that Westminster Abbey is full of statues many from the distant past. Among them is one to a hero of mine – Janani Luwum. You are probably wondering who he was and why he is one of my heroes.



Janani Luwum was archbishop of the Church of Uganda in the nineteen seventies when his country was ruled by a cruel and capricious dictator Idi Amin. In many of our newspapers Amin was presented as a rather comic figure but he was nothing of the sort. He was a cruel and vicious tyrant. Many people were taken and killed and others simply disappeared. As Archbishop, Luwum was safe, as long as he kept his mouth shut and restricted himself to purely religious matters.

However, the gospel of Christ affects all of life. It is not simply a personal preference like which football team you follow or which type of steak you prefer. For those like Amin, and many in the west today what we believe as followers of Jesus should be kept behind closed doors of our home in a sort of permanent self-isolation from the world in which we live. It affects how you do your job, spend your money, why you vote the way you do (if you live somewhere you can vote), what you believe about abortion on demand, euthanasia, race.

As a Christian leader Janani Luwum could not remain silent about the evil that was being practiced in his land so he spoke out, politely by a letter drawing attention to the evils and protesting against them. He was arrested, and with two government ministers, he was taken to a barracks and shot. In his case his body was later found to have been riddled with bullet holes. The official story when the three bodies were discovered in a ditch by the roadside was that they had been shot trying to escape. The evil regimes today have no monopoly on fake

news but what they do not have is men (and women) of real faith like Janani Luwum who stood up against the evil at any cost.

I wonder how far our faith has an impact on the way we live, on the things we stand for?

Roger Cooke

PASSENGER

Ezekiel 33:11

Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel!'

Since the first human beings have sinned and turned their backs to the Creator they live apart from God. From their own initiative they don't return to God. Because of this He needs, from time to time, to build a deviation so they find Him again. Sometimes he arranges for people to meet Christians 'by accident' who will show them the route back to the Saviour.

So, tells us an evangelist: 'The student stood on the motorway and would have liked someone to take her along for some distance. Of course, she could not know that a Christian would come along. When she asked me if I came back from holidays I talked to her of my evangelistic work.

At first, she was quiet then she asked me: Why do you this? Now I had an opportunity to tell her of my own conversion and how Christ had changed my life and given me the task to do this work.

My passenger listened to me keenly. From her questions I got the impression that she was keen to be saved and to have assurance. I then asked her if she wanted to give her life to Jesus Christ. Immediately she said she would like to do it right now. I stopped at a layby. Despite of a lot of other cars having parked there we started praying together. The young woman gave her life to the Lord Jesus. When we got to the place where she got out of the car she said: 'This was God's Leading.'

Translated from a Swiss church article by Peter Schaad

ORBS AND SCEPTRES

I wonder if you have ever thought about the message given by the two things the Queen, and in due course her son, hold at the coronation. The orb is the round ball like object and the sceptre is the stick shaped one. To call the sceptre a stick is a bit rude as it is a heavily jeweled “stick”. Ditto the orb. So, are they just ornaments, there to make the ceremony more splendid, to impress us with the panoply of monarchy? There is that to it but there is also a more subtle and important message and one that not only reflects the faith of our present monarch but physically symbolizes two important truths.



The orb represents the world – that’s why it is round. But it also represents the universe. If you think about it from our standpoint the universe looks round as it is all around us. At the top of the orb is a cross. That signifies the rule of Christ over the world and all the universe. In terms that made more sense to our ancestors it illustrates the empire of Christ over the universe. To us empire is very closely associated with the idea of taking over other lands, of conquering and dominating other people. For some of us the very idea is a bad one (me included). However, “empire” had another meaning. It means a rule that is entirely independent and subject to no other authority. You and I might think that being a King or Queen implies the same thing but historically it does not. Kings were, in the past, often subject to the rule of an emperor hence the idea that being an emperor or being an empire was the only truly independent autonomous rule. You can see this idea at work when Henry VIII declared his church was not under the jurisdiction of the Pope. The Act of Supremacy (written by Thomas

Cromwell) spoke of England being an “empire” that is free of the rule of anyone but itself. Except the orb with the cross on top shows very visibly that not only is the kingdom under the rule of the cross but so is the universe. When the Queen was crowned the service referred to the Empire not of Elizabeth but of Christ.

But what of the sceptre. It symbolizes the rule of the monarch, rather like a stick for beating into submission, or for pointing where to go, or as symbol to rally folk. I can remember when taking a hundred or so teenage boys on the tube a large stick was very useful for both these two latter purposes. So, the sceptre symbolizes ruling. But at the top of the sceptre is a cross, showing that Queen Elizabeth II rules under Christ and that her rule (and that of her ministers) is to be under His authority. That her rule is that authenticated only when it is exercised under that of Christ.

Roger Cooke

JUNE DIARY

www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

(Subject to change. Times of services is the broadcast time; they are available for later watching.)

2 Tuesday

8-9pm First Priority Prayer Meeting on Zoom

4 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home “Zoom Coffee morning”

7 Sunday

The Divine Family

Ephesians 3:14-21

9:45am Worship on the Web – Children’s and Families Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/junior-church>

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

11 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home “Zoom Coffee morning”

14 Sunday

The Covenant God

Jeremiah 31:31-34

9:45am Worship on the Web – Children’s and Families Service

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

16 Tuesday JULY LINK SUBMISSION DUE

18 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home “Zoom Coffee morning”

21 Sunday

The Jealous God

Deuteronomy 6:1-15

9:45am Worship on the Web – Children’s and Families Service

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

All Age Tonight:

Who do you say Jesus is?

Mark 8:27-30

6:00pm All Age Tonight on the Web

<http://stmichaelsbtree.co.uk/website/index.php/worship/adult-service>

25 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home “Zoom Coffee morning”

28 Sunday

The Sovereign God

Daniel 4:4-37

9:45am Worship on the Web – Children’s and Families Service

10:00am Worship on the Web – Adult Service

11:00am After Church “Zoom Coffee”

BELFRY BULLETIN

BELL RESTORATION UPDATE

At the time of writing there has been no further work done on our bells and the other working parts. We hope that will change in the near future with the lockdown easing.

All the new windows and sound control have been fitted in the bell chamber. The new cupboards and seating in the ringing room have been completed and Debbie and Bradley have stained them with mid oak varnish.

We are now considering the fabric and colours to be used for the seating cushions and the carpet. This is difficult using the internet as texture and colours are difficult to determine but there seems to be a consensus forming.

My apologies for not reporting and thanking you for the support we received from the Church Family for Tesco's with The Community Fund. With your efforts we were awarded £1,100 **THANK YOU.**

We have continued with our weekly Zoom get togethers. We have held 2 Quiz Nights with Ellis as Quiz Master for one and Richard in charge for the other. The Hills prevailed on both occasions. Ellie and Peter think, as they are just individuals, their scores should be doubled. Not sure it would have made any difference to the outcomes.

STAY SAFE

Peter Smith