



ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES WALES

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Symbols or Cymbals

This issue looks at the need for Healing in the Church and making it what Christ wants. Why are we so broken and fragmented, why don't we present a loving image of Christ Jesus to the world? Some of the things that cause our divisions are not necessarily wrong but we have made them important as we would like the church to conform to what we think is right when it might only be "best" for us. When we try to speak of Unity as being important somehow people hear the word Uniformity. When we talk of ways to cooperate with other churches only a few seem willing to experiment, loyalty to the local church outweighs our commitment to the Kingdom.

From the outside we are seen as muddled and having no clear image to show the world, O the pain that this must bring to our Lord. Recently I reread a book "The River Within" by Christopher Bryant.* It spoke in chapter 9 (The Pilgrim People) of sacrament, worship and symbolism and it caused me to consider my attitude to my brothers and sisters who prefer to do things differently. But let me quote from the passage that set me thinking:

"A sacrament is meant to be a living symbol in the sense of a powerful sign, focusing the imagination, releasing the emotions, moving to action. Unfortunately symbols can go dead, they can lose their power to speak to our depths, they degenerate into mere signs which express in a kind of shorthand that could be put more fully and accurately in words. The dead symbol can be restated in propositions which the mind can grasp, but it cannot move us. Corporate worship should use every means to bring the old symbols to life, to enhance their power to grip the imagination, stir our depths and rouse us to action. In practice public worship has been intellectualised, it has been made too much a matter of words and intellectual concepts, there is too little to appeal to the senses and to the imagination; the body is not enough involved as it needs to be if worship is to fulfil its function."

He speaks of new liturgies but mentions some of the ways through which parts of the Church are learning to express their worship in symbolic acts...

"The kiss of peace, whether an embrace or a handshake, signifies the union and fellowship of the worshipper. Lifting up the arms expresses a certain openness to God and also the spirit of praise. Walking in procession symbolizes the Church as a pilgrim body on the move. Danc-ing expresses the spirit of joyful celebration. The act of cor-porate prostration signifies the spirit of worship and adoration....."

Here is a mixture of what goes on at our Flames of Fire conferences and also in the traditional Anglo-Catholic services, he continues with:

"There are certain traditional gestures of the priest in the celebration of the Eucharist, in some groups the worshippers as far as possible make the same gestures, signify-ing that the whole congregation is celebrating the Eucharist with the officiating priest....."



The thought of dancing and prostration appeals to me but genuflection does not. He was encouraging us to experiment saying that it would take time for people to learn new ways of worship, but that it would lead to a “a conscious realisation of the presence of God.”

This excited me but I realised that there is an enormous amount of repenting and reconciliation needed if we are going to really embrace the unity for which Christ prayed.(John 17). I ask, “Are the Evangelicals guilty of walking over our more Catholic brothers and sisters in our enthusiasm to take the gospel to the world? Have we hurt them and actually slowed the pace of advancing the Gospel?

I have sought articles from people within A.R.M.(Wales) who would open our eyes to a broader horizon. We meet both wings of churchmanship in A.R.M. and yet here we find the Lord overrules our differences, (well most of the time), but many Christians feel strongly that these differences matter. I have found that when praying with a group of Christians, churchmanship and denomination are irrelevant, what matters is that we love God and know Christ crucified to save each and every one of us. He draws us into a unity with Him and therefore with each other. We are the body of Christ, but what have we made of that body? Our prayer must be for a Holy Church, reconciled to God and to each other, this will come when we have let God into all the dark places in our churches, when the sins of the past have been acknowledged and repented of and the hurts and wounds are healed.

So I pray that you will appreciate what our contributors are saying and see a richer tapestry within the Church. Since coming into Wales I have come to appreciate the ways of the Anglo-Catholics I believe that I have gained from it and recognise that we are “All One in Christ Jesus.” (Gal.3:28)

It is a great pleasure to include an article from Russ Parker. We can learn much from his teaching on Healing the Land, the Church and the Nation. (His tapes from last conference are still available.)

As you read this we shall have just celebrated Easter let us continue to live in the light of the Resurrection and rejoice that Christ lives in us and would reveal Himself to the world. So COME NOW IS THE TIME TO WORSHIP, and let us praise Him on the well tuned Cymbal!

Mary Newsom

A Letter from our Chairman Phil Rees

Dear Friends

I have been thinking a lot lately about our condition as a Nation and a Church. How can we, in a world controlled by international financial interests, be the Church Jesus wants for the

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Nation? I don't think the priorities ever change, and we have all the guidance we need in Scripture and history.

Consider the following:

'The Church should spend most of its time preaching the gospel.'

'The number one priority for Christians must be down-to-earth involvement in community issues like housing and unemployment'

'Without signs and wonders in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel will never radically change our society.'

Many of us have heard, or said, statements like these. Individuals and churches seem to have their different priorities and emphases - but what are Jesus' priorities? In which order would he put the three statements?

Maybe his answer would be this: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18)

Jesus is here quoting from Isaiah 61; and his three years of public ministry, followed by the experience of the early Church, demonstrate a perfect balance of the three facets of evangelism:--

Proclamation — the good news announced in words and warnings

Presence — the good news demonstrated by a worshipping community and by works of mercy in society

Power — the good news authenticated by wonders in healing and deliverance

At different times throughout the history of the Church varying emphases have been given; sometimes one of the facets is ignored, at other times one aspect is magnified to the exclusion of the others.

Perhaps one of the temptations for us today is to seek more of the signs and wonders in the power of the Spirit, but at the expense of the social action side of the gospel. If that is so, then we need to remind ourselves that good works are definitely on God's agenda for the Church (Ephesians 2:10), that our involvement in them, or not, affects our destiny as 'sheep' or 'goats' (Matthew 25:31), and that good works, inspired by the Holy Spirit, bring glory to our heavenly Father (Matthew 5:16).



God is grieved by oppression, corruption and exploitation, and by hunger and poverty. That is one of the reasons that Leviticus 25 was written. It talks about the Jubilee which was to be observed every 50 years in Israel - a year of liberty and release for slaves and debtors - designed to build justice and righteousness into the structures of Jewish society. Israel largely failed to live out Jubilee teaching, hence the many warnings of the Old Testament prophets against evil and injustice.

Much of Jesus' teaching uses Jubilee precepts as its foundation - indeed, the Church, God's new humanity, can be seen as a 'Jubilee Community'; sharing resources, giving to the needy and feeding the hungry (Acts 2:44).

The answer for us does not involve withdrawal into a spiritual ghetto - though I often long to do just that, because I find the rapid rate of change, and the power of "outside" influences, overwhelming. In the end you and I stand where we are just like Jesus had to, and we must grow up in the answers that He gave.

Every Blessing

Phil

SYMBOLISM A personal view by Michael Bennett

A symbol is an object, action or form conveying to the mind some idea, simple or complex not essentially involved in it, but imposed on it by custom or authority.

Some years ago I visited Durham Cathedral after an absence of some twenty years. Going in I was immediately struck by the sight of two large candle stands with lighted candles on each side of the nave. These are a feature of many Anglican Churches today though they have always been a feature of Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

People, who may not feel particularly religious and are not committed members of the Church, nevertheless feel meaning in lighting a candle to remember a person or a situation. They may not feel able to say a prayer but their action articulates their feelings.

When Princess Diana died I can remember many people laying flowers in Wrexham Parish Church, or just coming in to be quiet before they went for a night at the nearby clubs. These often were people who one would in no way describe as regular worshippers in any church.

Therefore I believe that through symbolism the Church can reach those outside. Before the invention of writing, symbols furnished primitive society with a useful system of sign language. Among civilised communities symbols are used to impress the imagination with the dignity of monarchy, the law, parliament for example, and the doctrines of the Church and the function of Christian Ministry.



All fully developed religions have had recourse to symbols for the expression of religious and ethical ideas and of this the religion of ancient Israel is a notable example. Every detail in the elaborate adornment of the Temple had symbolic significance.

There have been times in Christian history when symbolism has been looked on with suspicion in that it has been seen by the Puritan elements in the Church as leading to idolatry.

I feel the acid test here is to ask the question, "Is the symbolism likely to promote right thinking and right living?" If it is, let it be retained, if not let it be abolished. This was the question the Anglican Church faced at the reformation and has many times since.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that. "God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." For the Samaritans Mount Gerizim was their sanctuary, for the Jews it was the Temple. But Jesus talks of a time when the place won't matter, true religion will be a matter of the heart. (John 4:19-24)

All Christians go in for symbolism. A plain evangelical church may have no crosses, statues or candles but the plain communion table makes a statement about their theological standpoint. The Eucharist is a memorial meal which Jesus commands us to eat in memory of Him. The bread and the wine are symbolic of His body and blood and the service is conducted with the simplicity of the last supper in the upper room. Many people are happy with that form of symbolism and simple ritual, for ritual it still is.

It used to be said at college that the Anglo-Catholics added as much as they could to the Eucharist - that was their ritual. The Evangelicals were said to be just as ritualistic in what they sought to leave out.

Whatever our position, we have our symbols, and if they lead us to the Lord then I believe that they are valid.

When praying with people for healing or deliverance I find symbols helpful. I have no problem with a crucifix because it reminds me of the fact that Jesus won the great victory over the power of Satan at Calvary. A victory which I share and I am reminded how Jesus suffered so much for me to take away my sin and the sins of the world.

Holy water is a cleansing and it reminds me of the waters of baptism and the water from the side of Jesus at the crucifixion. Holy oil represented the Holy Spirit's anointing for healing and empowerment.

In private prayer I burn incense to remind me that my prayers join with the prayers of the Saints to be a sweet smelling savour to the Lord.

I do not believe that the Saints live in idyllic idleness in Heaven. They pray for us. When you go into hospital you ask the people in church (the saints on earth) to pray for you. So is it so wrong to ask the Saints in Heaven to pray for you? I see Saints as Intercessors. I am very

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conscious at the shrine of Pennant Melangell that St. Melangell is still praying for us, 1500 years after her death. Many people who would not call themselves Christians feel that they are in a very special place.

Some years ago in Walsingham I was praying in the slipper chapel in the Roman Catholic shrine. Before me was the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham, Mary holding the infant Jesus. I prayed that I would know from the Lord where Mary stood in the scheme of things. I felt the Lord say that in spite of all the religious arguments and rituals it was all very simple.

He said, "I love my Mum and I want you to love her too."

As Adrian Plass has said, "The Protestant Church has thrown out too many healthy babies in its panic-stricken fear of being polluted by dirty bath water. We have suffered loss and deprivation as a result. Negative knee-jerk responses to Mary the Mother of Jesus, have left us with an impoverished appreciation of the female elements of divinity and an unattractive, disrespectful attitude to a very special and heroic lady." (Foreword to Requiem Healing by Michael Mitton and Russ Parker.)

To me, praying the rosary, far from being vain repetition is a spiritual discipline, meditating on what God has done for us in Jesus and through the intercession of His holy mother.

Of course there are dangers of an unbalanced theology but this can be just as true of Evangelicals as well as Catholics. Some Catholics place too much emphasis on Mary and the Saints, some evangelicals place too much emphasis on the second coming.

One of the great joys of the Renewal Movement is seeing an appreciation by Christians of different traditions of each other's spirituality. I am an evangelical in that I respect the word of God and acknowledge Jesus as my own personal Saviour. I am catholic in that I regard sacramental worship and symbolism as very important. To me ritual, holy pictures, statues and holy water are aids to worship. A statue or a holy picture is not a graven image as it represents a holy person from Heaven not some demon from Hell as the pagan deities were.

One of the greatest symbols in my life is to bathe in the waters of Lourdes. It is a symbol of baptism, a washing clean from defilement. Other people feel the same about bathing in the Jordan. We all have different symbols. What they are doesn't matter as long as they are godly symbols and lead us into a deeper relationship with Him.



BANNERS - for freedom Christ has set us free by Ros Lee, Gary and Marie Anne Essam

During the last 5 years we have enjoyed an unexpected adventure of discovery, finding a window in on God's Truth through the use of banners in worship. Our journey began with a desire for freedom of expression in praise, but as we have followed simply, Jesus has opened our eyes in many ways to the riches in the Word of God, and we feel very privileged to be "flies on the wall" as God, true to His promise, uses His Truth to set His people really free.

The first mention of a banner in Scripture is in Exodus 17 when the Amalekites were defeated as Moses' arms were held up on the hilltop overlooking the battle. "The Lord is my banner!", declared Moses. The Israelite camp was marked out according to its standards, each one providing identity and cover for every family, tribe and clan. The rally point in battle, the enemies fled as they saw the ribboned banners advancing ahead of the victorious troops. Psalm 20.5 says "We will shout for joy when you are victorious, and will lift up our banners in the name of the Lord." Isaiah 31.9 declares: "Their stronghold will fall because of terror; at the sight of the battle standard their commanders will panic."

Emblem and hue have conveyed significant aspects of God's Truth throughout history; Jewish tradition suggests the colours of the High Priest's breastplate stones were symbolic, and as the Church took up the baton of God's mission to reconcile the world to Himself, colour has been meaningfully used down the ages to express what Christ has done for us. We believe the colour vocabulary we use in banner worship, though by no means exclusive, is helpful in communicating and expressing the Word, in worship, in warfare and in prayer, and as we have met others involved in Banner Ministries we have found a remarkable degree of cohesion regarding symbolism.

In brief, then, we take up the Red banner to represent Jesus, and His blood shed for us; the Orange speaks of the Fire; Yellow of God's Promises; Green of His mercy, compassion and healing; Blue of the Word, the River and Heaven; Indigo of Kingship and Worship, Violet of the Passion. Gold symbolises the Glory of the Father, Silver, the Holy Spirit, and White speaks both of purity and the Bride.

There is no power inherent in a flag on a pole – the whole essence of the banner is Jesus Himself, as Moses said originally. By faith we lay hold of God's multi-coloured Truth, and find Him ever steadfast in bringing wholeness in our lives, individually as we worship, and corporately as we allow ourselves to be prompted by Him to pray, to prophesy or proclaim His victory using these simple "visual aids". Our observation is that raising a banner catalyses faith in the heart of a believer, and so it is not surprising that there comes a liberating revelation of the Truth, and effective, simple prayer. All that we are experiencing is Jesus, at work as He promised through His Word.

Banners have the advantage of crossing many barriers – age, ability or disability, language, culture and denomination. Jesus' Truth is for us all. Raising a banner does not require agility or strength, though many enjoy more movement with a banner than they have previously

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experienced in worship. We have seen so many different people surprised by joy and liberty with a banner in their hand, and witnessed the power of God bringing healing and deliverance with a gentle dignity and grace again and again. We have never sought to advertise or promote the "ministry" God has given us, but have happily run in His wake as He has opened door after door for the banners – knowing that all He is doing is making way for His Son, removing the obstacles, establishing His Kingdom.

Song of Songs reminds us in chapter 2:4 that "His banner over me is love." To speak the Truth in Love is our mandate as His children, and we pray that the banners God has put in our feeble, human hands will only ever "speak" that Truth in Love, as He is Love, eternally at work in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. We want to see Jesus lifted high.

Signs of the times The power of holy places and the pain of hurting places by Russ Parker

Who can forget the graphic scenes of floral tributes which carpeted the streets of London following the death of the Princess of Wales. Outside Kensington Palace, her London home and also St. James' Palace, every available space was covered in photographs, poems, flowers, dolls and other toys and a host of prayers, flapping with the wind inside their plastic envelopes. Thousands of people including tourists from around the world came to read the prayers and touch the often moving tributes written to Diana. Just near the scene of her tragic death in Paris there now stands a statue in tribute to her life. Yet this need to touch and decorate the location of tragic death is not confined to this idolised princess. Similar scenes were witnessed on the grounds of Liverpool Football Club following the death of nearly 100 fans who were crushed whilst watching their team play in the semi-final of the FA Cup at Sheffield United's ground in 1989. Flowers were placed beside the railway tracks where the four year old Jamie Bulger's body was found. It is now a regular feature of our nation's life to find wreaths and flowers suddenly appearing on the sites where people have violently died.

There is a need within us to mark the wounded places of our land in an effort to remember the person who has so tragically died; to honour and respect them and in some way; to say that it was wrong that they died in the way they did and to bring healing to the actual place. By and large we are talking about people who do not have a committed Christian faith and yet what they are doing is completely true to what the Bible has to say about the importance of land and place. The scriptures open with the Genesis account of the creation of the earth and end in the book of Revelation with the healing of the land in creating a new heaven and earth. On the whole the Bible teaches us that there are two types of land, holy places where the presence of God is experienced and hurting places where the sins and wounds of humanity still cry out for healing.

The Power of holy places. "Surely the Lord is in this place" Gen.28:16



Jacob was a refugee from his family and sleeping out in the desert he chose a place that had been prayed in before. It was here he had a momentous revelation of God which changed his life, for from this moment he had the assurance that no matter how far he wandered, his real home was with God. So he marked the occasion by setting up a pillar of stones and dedicated it to God and called it Bethel which means 'house of God.' Here we have some clues as to what is a holy place; it is where God has touched the earth with something of heaven. It is a place which has a particular focus on the ministry and purpose of God. It is a place where we encounter God more intimately. They can vary from the Airport church in Toronto whose message seems to be that of the God who cherishes us to that of the shrine of Lourdes which speaks out the power of God to heal and do miracles. Jacob, at Bethel, hears the message that he belongs to God. Holy places, whether they are shrines, our local church or some quiet place in the countryside, help us to sharpen the focus of our faith on the living God who wishes to draw us into intimacy of his heart from which we emerge refreshed with wonder.

The pain of hurting places

“The Lord said, ‘Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground” Gen. 4:10

Cain has just killed his brother Abel and God comes to challenge him about the deed. What is so awesome about this passage is the fact that God literally knows where the bodies are buried, listens to the story that goes with the deed and challenges the living to do something about it. Cain’s response is to run away from the site in an effort to forget it and so the innocent blood of Abel goes on crying out its story. God has not changed, he still challenges us with the unhealed stories of our land and waits for us to do something about it. We cannot alter history but we can heal and deliver the living from the consequences. It is interesting to know that one of the definitions of the word “atonement” is ‘to deliver from the effects of.’ Consequently, as Christians, we have a mission to bring the healing power of the death and resurrection of Jesus to those places in our land where violent and tragic death have scarred the landscape and the hearts of the people living there. It would not seem strange to the grieving at all, as they place their flowers of remembrance on such sites, that we join them in prayers of healing for the place and the people affected by what happened there. This is also true for healing places long associated with painful stories and evil and which still have some power to upset or distort peoples’ attitudes. I have taken part in healing services at the battle sites of the Boyne in the Republic of Ireland and at the Somme in Northern France. On both occasions they were opportunities to begin healing old tribal animosities which still shaped the hearts of people who carried within them the unhealed stories of their peoples’ history. I am part of a group building a peace memorial park at Aughrim, the site of the bloodiest battle ever fought between the Irish and English. Here members of the Orange Lodge are planting trees in the name of Catholics who died in the battle and Roman Catholic families are doing the same for Protestant dead. It has become a window through which the Irish look to understand about reconciliation and healing.



Christian signs of God's times and purposes.

We must take seriously the subject of the human story and how it has and still does affect the location on which it took place. It would be careless of us to abandon such sites to become the haunts of demons. We must wake up to God who calls us to listen to the wounded stories that cry out from the ground. In listening we must also understand the story and how it still goes on shaping the present day community we seek to win to the love of Christ. Then by the power of the Holy Spirit we must act and literally touch the place with prayer and sacrament; the signs that God is at work to heal the land and make it more of a place for people to hear the good news that Jesus saves and redeems us from all the sins of the past into a future full of promise.

A glance at the church in Kenya by Ray Smith

Kenya is a beautiful country with great charm for the tourist. Underneath the surface it is a deeply troubled nation facing economic decline. So one leading Kenyan Christian said in a sermon that the country was like being in the last days of Jerusalem before the Babylonian exile - God was still on his throne but his people had turned from his ways and disaster was staring them in the face. Kenya has been struck by three scourges. Firstly corruption is so bad (third worst in the world) that the World Bank has withdrawn aid, so unemployment is rising. Secondly Aids is having a devastating effect destroying the most economically active generation and leaving lots of orphans. Finally for the past three years there has been a severe drought - many cattle men have lost up to 75% of their herds. As a result of all these factors people are drifting into the cities and finding no work, turn to crime and violence

It is within these parameters that the Christian church operates 80% of Kenyans are Christian There is a very wide range of denominations. The Archbishop of Kenya, David Gitari fearlessly leads the united front of Christian and other faiths who are seeking to change the constitution to bring about freedom from bad government and corruption. Also the Anglican church is seeking to have an impact on society through its efforts of caring for the street children, by teaching good husbandry in farming and horticulture and being involved in higher education. Also attempts are being made to improve life within the vast slums (one for instance Kiremba - is thought to have a population in excess of I million) The church is very much seen to be at the cutting edge of society's problems

There are at least four areas where the Anglican Church of Kenya (to give it its full title) may have explored territory that is of interest to the Church in Wales. The first concerns the burdens being placed upon the shoulders of an Archbishop. They have recognised that it is not right to expect an Archbishop to be concerned with both pastoring a conventional sized diocese as well as carrying the responsibilities for the whole province. In his position of Archbishop, they have recognised too, that he has a vital role in the life of the nation. The Kenyan solution is to create a special mini diocese for the Archbishop so that he has very limited diocesan

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responsibilities and is therefore freed for a wider role in the life of the Church and nation. Ought we in Wales be giving some consideration as to how the workload for the Archbishop of our province can be eased?

Whilst dioceses may not have as many parishes as in this country, each parochial unit may well have many centres of worship. Most parishes have only one priest but there are many evangelists, lay readers and laity taking the services. Their main acts of worship are as a consequence Morning and Evening Prayer, with only infrequent celebrations of Holy Communion. Many parishes are running Theological Education by Extension (TEE) courses to train up the laity for worship leadership etc. The Archbishop is encouraging the development of the theological training for the clergy

Like some Provinces, the Kenyan Church has used the opportunity given by the Communion's authorisation to develop a liturgy that is locally rooted. So one tribe's curse on another tribe has been transformed into a blessing "All our problems" Response "We send to the Cross of Christ" etc There is frequent reference to ancestors and a wide range of canticles that are rooted in their spiritual experience. If we had followed the Kenyan's pattern of revision, there, most probably, would have been a greater degree of welshness and Celtic spirituality in our liturgies. Incidentally, when they sing, they do not need a music group, OHP or amplification, etc., one sets off and everybody follows. If it is in Swahili then arms legs and the body get involved in the adoration.

The church has been greatly influenced over past years by the East African Revival and all acknowledge a great debt to it. However with the passage of time there has become by many older Christians, an ossification of attitudes, so for instance some will only sing from the hymn book that was used a lot at that time Golden Bells — and miss out on all the lovely songs of these past years. There has been much talk of revival coming to Wales. We must avoid at all costs becoming rigid once the first flush of revival has passed.

GIFTS OF MINISTRY Part 2 - SERVING Brian Favell

If you've looked at Romans 12 you might think that this label 'serving' is a bit of a distortion when the Authorised Version at least calls this 'ministry'. But what else is ministry but serving? Remember in Acts when the apostles were getting overwhelmed by petty squabbles about rations for their widows (Acts 6 :2) they said "It isn't right that we should have to give over preaching the Gospel for the sake of serving at tables." And they appointed deacons to do this so that the apostles could get on with their proper job.

Anyway, let's look at serving. You might think that this is an obvious one - that we know all the answers about this. Sorry, we don't. We are not, for example, talking about servers at the

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altar (at least, not directly). And we are not talking about the everyday work of running a house or a church organisation. This article is about something - and someone - special.

DO YOU KNOW someone who only ever asks you once - the first time you visit - whether you like tea or coffee, or if you take milk and sugar? She (or it could be he) only asks once because next time you come, even if it's a year later, she puts a cup before you made the way you like it..... without asking. She could be a Servant.

She remembers these things and does them because it is completely automatic for her to express her caring for people in these physical ways. She doesn't forget your likes and dislikes because to do so would not be a failure of hospitality but a gross lack of love.

DO YOU KNOW a man who - for instance in church - spots something wrong: a door needing repair or a light bulb blown? And while others are making a note to raise it at the next PCC he has already gone to fetch tools and a ladder. He may be a Servant.

When someone says, "Oh, let's just screw it back again" a Servant says, "Oh, no: the screw won't hold in the wood any more. I'll take it off and do a proper job."

When someone else says, "Oh dear, nobody's tidied up" the Servant doesn't say anything. She's already gone to fetch the mop and bucket and broom. And when others say, "No, really, we don't need to do all that" the Servant says, "Might as well do it properly: it'll only take two minutes."

ALERTNESS to see and meet practical needs: that's one of the marks of a Servant. He or she enjoys work with the hands: scrubbing, cooking, painting, cutting the grass, mending the fuse. And he is instant. See the trouble, put it right - at once. No messing about getting someone to tell someone else what to do. If the task needs money your Servant is apt to spend it first - his own money - and leave others to worry about whether they are going to repay him afterwards. For him the REAL priority is to get the job done.

He is tough: he's got stamina. It takes all an ordinary mortal can do to keep up with him, and at 11 o'clock at night he'll be the one to see just one more thing that needs doing, while those around him are saying, "Oh NO! Let's go home!"

A Servant's work is his gift to people, to church, to community, to God. And like all who give from the heart he needs to have his gift appreciated. But beware if you offer him insincere thanks or fulsome words not from the heart! Beware also if he is loaded with long term projects or asked to work to a timetable. His strength is in meeting immediate needs, doing the immediate task - and doing it NOW. And if something MUST be done skimpily or in a rough-and-ready way through time or money restrictions, don't ask a Servant: he only knows how to do it well.

People who don't understand the motivations of a Servant will find things to upset them. The instant reaction to need and the eagerness to give service may be seen as pushiness, lack of

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tact, insensitivity. Energy, ability and skill instantly applied may leave others feeling shamed and helpless. Indeed a Servant may be tempted to think others ARE slow, helpless, somewhat lacking. He may be in danger of not letting others serve him. His anxiety to work and give may deprive his own family of time or necessities. And of course he cannot ALWAYS short-circuit the official way of doing things and get away with it: he may be hurt and hurt others. And finally, in his drive to react instantly to need, he may forget that God sometimes uses an unfulfilled need to teach his children a particular spiritual lesson.

Awkward people, Servants. Martha was a typical one. No matter how clearly Jesus told her, "Don't WORRY, Martha! Something plain and simple is all I need" Martha couldn't bear to give Jesus less than the best she could provide. And he loved her, smiled at her and let her do it.

The salt of the earth, Servants, as long as it is love that drives them and not pride. Praise the Lord for them!

A Voice Crying in the Desert.....Mary Newsom.

I spoke in last quarter's editorial of coming out of the desert but that seems to mean that I write down some of what I have heard the Lord say. I fear that much will not be heard because it is a hard message and we are so attracted to twenty first century living. However the bubble is about to burst and I would question how equipped we are to live in a time of tribulation and ask how we can serve our Lord and love the world?

Those who believe that they will be "raptured" and not have to go through tribulation will not be prepared but I believe that the Church must be made ready for a time of suffering intended to bring people to their knees. We have seen floods and we are now seeing large scale job losses and foot and mouth disease which will cost the livelihood of farmers and many others in the rural and leisure economy. Stock Market crashes were prophesied a couple of years back and the level of the FTSE has now returned to that same point.

There has been so much prayer for revival in recent years and that is after all what we all want, but did you think it would come without pain? We have not shown ourselves very good at proclaiming the gospel and non-Christians do not seem able to hear! We don't seem to have anything to give to a society which has such a material outlook on life. New Age philosophy is exciting many as it offers them relief from stress and cures to twenty first century ills!

If the Church is to reveal the answer there is a cost, a price to pay!

I quote from Romans 8:18-21: "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing

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for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.”

The Lord is asking us, in fact pleading with us to consider our relationship with Him. That relationship can only grow if we spend time with Him, it has to be a relationship in which love encompasses everything. Easter has been a time to remind us of that, but we must live in the love of Good Friday always. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit after the Resurrection but have we received Him?

Friends I know that you have heard the scriptures but it may be that you have heard without understanding just like those living in New Testament times (Matt.13:14-15). I beg you to study and contemplate the whole of Romans 8. For we are the “children of God” spoken of in verse 19. God has laid this verse on me to pray into for the last couple of years. Like most of you I’ve had no problem with praying to my heavenly Father and yet if you had asked me who I was in my relationship with God I would have looked first at, “part of the Church, - the body, - the bride of Christ”. That would make me first an obedient servant and loving spouse but I had lost sight of the fact that I was primarily a “child of God”. Often it is our enthusiasm to serve or even to sit quietly at the feet of Jesus and know him as “lover” that causes us to be blinded to how Jesus intended His church to work! We cry out, “Why is the Church so powerless? Why are there not miraculous healings in our churches when we hear of mass healings in other parts of the world?” It is not enough to say we do not have enough faith, it is to do with being the “children of God”, and that is where the faith must be directed.(Gal.2:26-27)

It is through the action of the Holy Spirit that we are the children of God that the whole of creation is waiting for. So our whole lives are to be modelled not only on Him but by Him. Look at Romans 8 verses 5-9, although we profess to be Christians, sadly we do not allow God this control of our minds and bodies.

Paul then tells us that we have an obligation because the Spirit of God lives in us, we are dead to sin if we have the Spirit of sonship and we must, as co-heirs with Christ, share both His suffering and His glory. But what is this glory that will be revealed in us? Verse 30 says: “And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.” Clearly it is what God wants, look again at the quote of verses 18-21.

We need to know the Love of God and build a relationship with Him before we are ready to surrender to His Will and His plan for His Holy Church. He will never force us - there has to be a sharing in a relationship of LOVE - and in the meantime we run the Church our way! Far too many think they “know” how to run “their church”.

So if we are God's children we have a part to play, there is a mystery here as only through His grace can creation be set free, but we are invited to become the vessels through which this grace can flow. I find confirmation in Christ's own words, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for



they will be called sons of God", for it is in this way that we might truly be ambassadors for Christ, permitted to be involved in the reconciliation.(2 Cor. 5:17-21)

So are we willing to allow God to have His way, by preparing the way, for Him to walk, into all areas of our lives into all parts of the church and repent of all that is not holy, all that is not true? To call first the churches and then the world to repentance.

But the starting point is with each of us and our relationship with God, to become like Jesus, and to allow God to act in and through us so that it is clear to the world that we are His sons and daughters. When shall we be able to say "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."(Gal.2:19-20)

THE ALABASTER BOX by Pam Worsey

Child of My love, the fragrance of your offering
Rises to My Throne as I am glorified in you;
Painful obedience will always bring My blessings
Hearts that are faithful will always find Me true.

Alabaster box of precious, spikenard ointment
Smells no sweeter to Me than the perfume of your life;
Gladly I receive this token of your love Child,
Mindful of your pain, I share the tears, the strife.

Lean on My Breast as I seek to lead you higher -
Deeper than you've known into My healing Heart of love;
From that blessed place, compassion new I'll give you,
Gentleness and care rest on you from above.

Child of My love, together we will work and heal,
Vessels that are purified are ready for My use;
Trust for the future - My purpose I'm outworking,
Hearts I will unite, and lives and wills I'll fuse.

Pam Worsey