



ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES WALES

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A Message from our Chairman Steve Waters

One thing that all Christians have in common is we all acknowledge that no matter where we are on our walk with God, we will always have more to learn and there will always be room for improvement in our relationship with our Saviour. It is also true that all of us will struggle at sometime with different aspects of our faith; for example, some of us will think that we are no good at praying because we don't know how to do it properly. Some of us will think that we are no good at hearing God speak to us because we don't know how to do it, some of us will think that we are no good at 'keeping our eyes on God all the time' because we don't know how to do it, and I could go on and on because there will always be someone struggling with some aspect of their relationship with God. Feeling like this can be a good thing if it drives us to seek to improve ourselves in whatever area we feel we need improvement in, but before we seek to improve ourselves we need to ask ourselves the question "do I really need to improve at all?".

The trouble with some of us is that we (me included) are guilty of looking at other Christians who we perceive are closer to God than we are and therefore are better Christians than us, and judging ourselves accordingly, using them and where they are as a benchmark. We conclude, sometimes wrongly, that we need improvement because we are not as good as them, when the reality could well be that God does not intend us to be as good as them, and that we are where God wants us to be at the moment. The passage below written by Samuel Moor Shoemaker really put things into perspective for me when I read it so, I would like you all to read it through prayerfully as often as you like, and see if God speaks to you through it as he did me.

'I stand by the door, I neither go too far in, nor stay too far out; the door is the most important door in the world - it is the door through which people walk when they find God. There's no use my going way inside and staying there, when so many are still outside and they, as much as I, crave to know where the door is, and all that many ever find is only a wall where a door ought to be. They creep along the wall like blind people, with outstretched, groping hands, and feeling for a door. Knowing there must be a door. Yet they never find it So I stand by the door.

'The most tremendous thing in the world is for people to find that door – the door to God, and the most important thing any person can do is to take hold of those blind, groping hands, and put them on the latch – the latch that only clicks and opens to the person's own touch. People die outside that door, as starving beggars die, on cold nights in cruel cities in the dead of winter, die for want of what is within their grasp. Others live, on the other side of it – live because they have found it, and opened it, and walked in and found him...so I stand by the door.

'Go in great saints, go all the way in, go way down into the cavernous cellars, away up into the spacious attics – it is a vast roomy house, this house where God is. Go into the deepest hidden

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casements of withdrawal, of silence, of sainthood. Some must inhabit those inner rooms and know the depth and heights of God, and call outside to the rest of us how wonderful it is. Sometimes I take a deeper look in, sometimes I venture in a little farther; but my place seems closer to the opening.... So I stand by the door.

‘There is another reason why I stand there. Some people get part way in and become afraid lest God and the zeal of his house devour them; for God is so very great, and asks all of us, and these people way inside only terrify them more. Somebody must be by the door to tell them that they are spoiled for the old life, they have seen too much. One taste of God, and nothing but God will do any more. Somebody must be watching for the frightened who seek to sneak out just where they came in, to tell them how much better it is inside. The people too far in do not see how near these are to leaving – preoccupied with the wonder of it all. Somebody must be watching for those who have entered the door but would like to run away, so for them too....I stand by the door.

‘I admire the people who go way in, but I wish they would not forget how it was before they got in. then they would be able to help the people who have not yet even found the door, or the people who want to run away again from God. You can go in too deeply, and stay too long, and forget the people outside the door. As for me, I shall take my old accustomed place, near enough to God and hear him, and know he is there, but not so far from others as to hear them and remember they are there too. Where? Outside the door, thousands of them, millions of them. But – more importantly for me – one of them, two of them, ten of them whose hands I am intended to put on the latch. So I shall stand by the door and wait for those who seek it. I had rather be a doorkeeper! So I stand by the door.’

The one beautiful thing about being a Christian is that we should be able to accept that we are who we are because God made us like that, and we are where we are in our walk with him because he wants us to be where we are at the moment. Instead of looking to other Christians and judging ourselves by where they are we need to enjoy being who we are and where we are at the moment safe, in the knowledge that as we keep our eyes on God and are obedient to him, as best we can, he will progress us as and when he knows we are ready. So the word for us all this month is, be happy with who we are and where we are, because we are where God wants us to be.

God bless

Steve Waters



Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. By Mary Newsom

In the April editorial I said that, ‘we need to promote A.R.M.(Wales) in a way that will encourage those who are already Christians to move into a closer relationship with God’. We have now produced a strapline to go on our publications so that must be my starting point. I wanted to write about freedom and being set free from bondage but wasn’t sure where to begin, however the more I look at these ideas the more they all seem to come back to holiness and sanctification.

In the last issue I considered the relevance of the Cross to renewal and found myself again considering Galatians 2:20, and concluded that the meaning of renewal is to allow Jesus to live in us through the Holy Spirit, and that he is the one through whom we can communicate with God.

As I read and pray more about this I am convinced that we must link renewal with sanctification. We want to come close to God and that means that we must do so in a state of holiness but we are apt to back off with excuses as to our unworthiness or sinfulness. We forget that to be holy is simply to be set apart for God and that is what Christians are, or should be. Yes we are holy because we were sanctified when we were born again and if we are Christians we are born again. When we became Christians we were washed clean by the precious blood of Jesus and we were justified and sanctified at the same time. It was through coming into silent contemplative prayer, after I had heard the Lord say draw closer, that I began to understand the meaning and importance of holiness and sanctification. God showed me the right scriptures and pointed to a number of books, some that I had already read but had not of themselves taken hold of me in the way they did after I realised the importance of holiness in renewal.

I have said before that people don’t like the word renewal but we none of us dare say that we don’t like the ideas of holiness and sanctification; they may indeed frighten us and we might stand in awe of them but it is vital that we take them on board if we are to become the people of God in the world. I urge you to consider this. We shall never become completely sanctified on this earth but it is a pathway that we must tread. As St Paul said,

“continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”

(Phil.2:12-13.NIV)

But this prompts me to ask, what better model is there for us than Jesus as Paul describes him in Philippians chapter 2? We must meditate on these verses and allow Jesus to grow in us, only then will we know how to encourage others and so promote renewal and all that is dear to us.

I find this exciting and it can become a new beginning for A.R.M.(Wales).

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When I got the new set of magazine covers printed I had to allow the four designs to be repeated for three years. This was the economic way to do things as we only use four or five hundred for an issue. Therefore we have again the doorway from the picture I took at Laodicea last year. At the time we also had a problem with overprinting and that issue was meant to say "See I lay before you an Open Door". We have now solved the problem by using our own printer for this job but I have been concerned to find a suitable note to give the cover a fresh look. Now the Lord has provided a magazine with several references to open doors and made it very clear to me that the door into his heart is always open. But remember too that in the letter to the church in Laodicea he said,

"Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."
(Rev.3:20-22 NRSV)

Note that he was not speaking to non-Christians but to Christians, and he is still saying that to us today, he wants nothing more of us. He will do the rest.

I wrote this editorial to this point on my return from the Keswick Convention, where I was pleased to see that the theme was the Church in the Power of the Spirit. This was exciting and I was encouraged that many are considering how that can happen. One seminar was with Graham Dow, now Bishop of Carlisle, (many of you will remember his talks to us at Flames of Fire). He and his diocese are now engaged on a campaign of growth under the title From Survival to Revival. When the title was suggested even the Bishop thought it a bit strong but slowly they came to realize that it was God given. There are already signs of growth as each parish has developed its own vision and the laity are participating in many more activities. Truly they are acknowledging the power of God in their midst.

I had hoped to finish the magazine in the few hours I had before coming to Cardiff for my second Summer School. Now I have just a hour between this morning's Eucharist and lunch and I want to tell you how much I was thrilled by the sermon given by Bishop David Yeoman. He spoke of the people of God being living stones (Eph. 2) and made it very clear that we must not keep looking inward at the buildings etc. We must set Christ free to do his work amongst us and in the world.

There is more encouragement for you from John Leach on page 5 and on page 11 words from our dear brother Brian Favell who went on to be with the Lord in June. The Pub Church, soon to be referred to as the Barge Inn Church!, has sent us a progress report, see The Church in the Pub

May He bless you all.

Mary Newsom

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Fresh Expressions of Renewal by John Leach

Although I say it myself, the course had gone very well indeed. It was a taster group, made up mostly of existing members of the congregation, and the idea was for them to see whether they wanted to adopt the package for their church. People had been hungry for biblical teaching and seemed to enjoy the worship each week. The group discussions, which had begun as completely alien and outside people's experience, saw the punters gradually thawing and relaxing, to the point where many regarded it as the highspot of the week. The awayday had seen people meeting powerfully with God, and many received prayer for the filling of the Holy Spirit. So it was downhill all the way now, I thought. That was until the final week.

The notes told me I was supposed to do a 'now-you-must-all-start-coming-on-Sunday-mornings-or-you'll-lose-the-plot' kind of a talk, but sadly I no longer believe that, and in any case they already did come on Sunday mornings. In fact the last time I ran the course I told the new and unchurched converts that whatever they did they should not even consider coming on Sunday mornings since they'd hate it. I only went because I was paid to! Instead we planted 'Alpha Plus', a new congregation which continued to meet on Thursday mornings following the same format.

So I thought I'd use the opportunity to rewrite the talk and explore 'Fresh Expressions' of church. I explained how traditional services, however lively, were unlikely to connect with any significant numbers of people out there in the real world, how church culture was increasingly alien to non-churched (as opposed to de-churched) people, but that fantastic work was being done by Archbishop Rowan's Fresh Expressions team to explore how we might do church differently. I showed a couple of clips from the brilliant 'Expressions' DVD, defined church simply as 'God's people getting together with Jesus to do "Jesus things"', tried to explain from Acts 2 what I thought some of those 'Jesus things' might be, and then sat back to see what hit the fan.

Two things happened. The younger people there thanked me and said that it had all been music to their ears and when could they begin? But some of the older people immediately got all defensive about their wonderful church, and explained to me that in fact people would start to flood to their Solemn Parish Mass since it was so brilliant, friendly, welcoming and so on. Alien? No way! I just didn't understand!

Now this particular church, which actually is pretty welcoming and friendly, would not by any stretch of the imagination call itself 'renewed' or 'charismatic'. But I noticed there that evening a tendency which I have seen a lot in my travels around the Diocese. Many people seem to be in utter and complete denial about the sheer irrelevance of most of what we call 'church' to those outside the club.



Every church I visit tells me how friendly it is: none ever tells me that they see this as a danger, since the more we love one another the harder it can be for new people, and particularly new people who are different, to penetrate the circle. As I talk about new ways of being church, many people appear simply not to see the need, or what the problem is with church as we have it.

As Director of A.R.M. England I spent five years keeping a close eye on the renewal scene, and it's my conviction that the Holy Spirit has entered a new phase of his work. Since the 60s (and even earlier) it has all been about personal renewal. His job was to get as many Christians as possible filled with his power, and the results have changed the church scene worldwide, through what one sociologist called the 'megatrend' of worldwide renewal. There simply has never been a movement like it in the history of the world. The results have included new styles of worship, greater effectiveness in evangelism, and phenomenal amounts of social action programmes. Some of the stiffness and formality of church life has been melted down, and there is new joy and community.

But I believe that the Spirit is now doing something new. It isn't that he's stopped doing personal renewal: he's still in that business. But I believe he is wanting to do for church what he has been doing for individuals. I see 'Fresh Expressions' as being at the cutting edge of God's work, and already the same kinds of results are showing: new forms of worship, relaxation of the formal structures, new power in evangelism, and so on. How tragic, then that people (including, sadly, some charismatics) are reacting in the same ways we saw people reacting against personal renewal forty years ago: we don't need this, it's too messy, where is that in the Bible, we're perfectly fine as we are, thank you very much, it'll divide us so it can't be God: you know all the stuff.

People usually got filled with the Spirit in the past, I believe, when they became aware of the poverty of their Christian experience and began to long for something more from God. The Spirit did indeed fill the hungry with good things, but sent the self-satisfied away empty. I believe it's time to get hungry for our church. The greatest factor preventing Fresh Expressions from taking root is the same self-satisfaction which robbed so many individual Christians of the Spirit's power in the past. Let's stop kidding ourselves that our services, however much we love them, are ever going to connect with anything more than a tiny minority, and let's learn from the Fresh Expressions boys and girls about how we might do something new. Now that's what I call renewal!

You can find details and order the DVD from www.freshexpressions.org.uk

(Revd. John Leach is the Parish Development Adviser, Monmouth Diocese.)



A Vision for A.R.M.(Wales) by Pam Worsey

(Given at A.R.M.(Wales) Executive Retreat 2006)

Jer.6:16; 18:15; 31:21; Is.52:11

My children you stand at a crossroads
My guidance and leading you seek,
Draw closer beloved, draw closer,
Then surely you will hear Me speak.

Stand in old ways to seek My direction,
For ancient paths ask, My beloved,
The good ways My children, walk in them
Your souls with My rest to be covered.

I need you beloved for this nation,
Which flounders, forgetting their God,
From ancient paths they now have stumbled,
To byways their fathers ne'er trod.

Set road marks for you and for them now,
Place guideposts directing the way,
Return by the way of your fathers,
And I'll lead you from dark night to day.

Depart, depart from uncleanness,
For purified vessels I seek;
The Spirit can only reside where -
The hearts are submissive and meek.

Receive now a fresh new anointing,
My guidance each step of the way,
Look up, your deliverance IS coming
For Cymru there dawns a new day!

Pam Worsey



News from our Members The Continuing Story of Wyllie by Marian Barge

This story started back in the year two thousand. If you want to read up on it I am sure our secretary can dig up a back copy for you. (Available on our web-page April 2002 Issue 28)

As we start a New Year I am in the throes of setting up a program to take us through another year. I am still struggling as to how to reach this village, but unlike when I first started I have got an excellent team working alongside of me, encouraging and supporting me in every way.

The last five years have not been easy but then when Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow me", He did not say that the cross was light or that there were not huge craters along the way causing you to stumble!

One of the things that happened last year was that we lost our base house because our friend Heather went to live in Canada. We used to use her home as a drop-in for prayer time and refreshment. But I can now go into at least eight houses for refreshment if needed, perhaps one of these days one of them will become our prayer home.

The pub which we work in, not pulling pints, have seen their business as a restaurant more than double since we have been using it. I commented on this to the landlady and she intimated that she knew that it was God blessing them for what they were doing for us. Also although I did not know this family before we started our ministry there I feel that they have become part of my family. They are having a big family celebration in February this year to which Brian and I have been invited.

Bishop Dominic came to the pub to take a service last year and after the service one of the team was talking to him about whether we should just let this ministry fizzle out. He encouraged us to go on until 2007 - a good Bible number 7 - so in faith we will carry on.

We still have all the special services i.e. Mothers Day, Easter Sunday etc. as well as holding an outside barbecue with a gospel group band playing.

We have time in the history of the village (which is approximately ninety years old) the Committee asked if I would conduct an armistice service. So on Remembrance Sunday morning about thirty villagers turned out to lay wreathes and pay their respects to the fallen of the community.

After the service one of the villagers commented to my husband that since I have been going into the village good things have been happening. Hallelujah!! People know we are around.

Perhaps we have to work at gaining the people's trust before we can begin to win souls for Christ!

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So you see it is not easy when you start out on the road of evangelism but, even when the going gets tough, and we have many days like that, keep going as God is not in the business of failure rather in tile business of revival.