

A RM (Wales) Magazine

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ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES WALES
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Encouraging people to live in a closer relationship with God

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Cover picture: Whirlpool Galaxy-M51 (courtesy of NASA and STScI
<http://heritage.stsci.edu/2001/10/big.html>) We behold the Glory of thy Creation

LATEST DATE for copy for the Winter edition – October 31st 2008

We welcome articles, letters and news of your Renewal events.

Please send to me at: Blaenpentre, Rhos-y-Garth, Llanilar, Aberystwyth SY23 4SE

Sun of my soul.
 Thou Saviour
 dear.....



It is not easy to write this last editorial as I so much want to write something encouraging as well as relevant. I ask what the Lord wants and can only think of the first verse of a hymn that has helped me in the last few months. The line “*It is not night if thou be near.*” speaks strongly. As I dwell on it I can rest in peace for it means that it never need be night and I can sit in the Light and Sun of our Lord Jesus.

This is what I need as life is stressful at present and I echo the prayer “*O let no earth – born cloud arise to hide thee from thy servant’s eyes*”. I wonder what the state of John Keble’s mind was when he penned those words. We all go through times of trial and testing and guided by our Lord become stronger. We are not suffering more than others and it is good to reflect on the state of the world and the needs of those whose countries are in conflict, those who suffer homelessness and famine and the many who have not heard the Good News of the Kingdom.

What does God want of us? Reflective prayer is something I want to encourage. For me it often leads to contemplative prayer simply because I haven’t got the answers but I know that the Lord will be there amongst those who are suffering. I have spent much time in the past wondering what good can be done by such prayer. But I’ve worked through that and know that God will use us as he chooses and as we just “*Gaze on Him*” we might just see something from a new perspective that will make a difference.

Recently I have looked again at the writings of Christopher Bryant SSJE (1905-1986). He was a member of The Society of St John the Evangelist an Anglican Order known also as the Cowley Fathers. I read some of his work a few years back when I did a dissertation on Intercession. But last year I picked up his book “*The Heart in Pilgrimage*”. The sub-title is *Christian Guidelines for the Human Journey*. There wasn’t time to read it then in the midst of study but now I am doing a course on Spiritual Direction and have found it extremely valuable. But what has surprised me is that he describes situations that are very similar to those of people I know and therefore I have had the assurance that here there is helpful advice for many of us.

The Heart in Pilgrimage -
 Christopher Bryant
 (Darton, Longman &
 Todd 1980)

His chapter headed "**Friendship with God**", speaks generally and yet so specifically if you are in that situation. Sadly, we don't always see our need to have that friendship with God or more likely, we are unaware that we can.

He speaks much of the Love of God and how we can love him. He quotes from St Bernard of Clairvaux, "*the chief reason for loving God is God*". But he goes on to show that the main reason we don't love God is that we don't really know him. This chimes so well with our strapline that we must read on. "*If we truly knew him then our whole being would dance with delight in loving him.*" As many of you know from **Flames of Fire** gatherings that I have just had to dance before the Lord as an expression of worship with my whole body. But Christopher Bryant points out that loving God is not only a duty of obedience it is a gift, and a gift that God wants to give. He says, "*Love is both the beginning and end of human life as God has designed it.*"

He speaks of the tragic results of those who for one reason or another were denied love in their childhood, and of our need for healing which is available because "*the divine strategy of healing and restoration is Christ once crucified but now alive.*"

But a chapter that I personally find helpful and must consider more is about the sanctification and management of my time. I know that we so often do too much when we try to serve the Lord. We are so keen to serve God and his church that we end up working in our own strength and deny ourselves that precious time with God that should be our major preoccupation.

Didn't John Wesley say something about having so much to do one day that he needed to spend more time in prayer?

I hope that my major contribution to A.R.M. (Wales) will have been to encourage you to think about prayer. I make no claims for my own skills and freely acknowledge that real powerful prayer is a gift and we shall not achieve by copying or forcing it. Sometimes it comes and we rejoice because we can sense God at work. In the end it has to be his prayer but he loves our feeble attempts, he just wants us to start. For prayer is a journey - a pilgrimage of the heart - and it is leading into the very **Heart of God**.

May the Lord bless you and keep you and may his face shine upon you and give you his peace.

Mary

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An Arab chief told the story of a spy who was captured and then sentenced to death by a general in the Persian army. This general had the strange custom of giving condemned criminals a choice between the firing squad and the big, black door. As the moment for execution drew near, the spy was brought to the Persian general, who asked the question, "What will it be: the firing squad or the big, black door?" The spy hesitated for a long time – it was a difficult decision – he chose the firing squad. Moments later shots rang out confirming his execution. The general turned to his aide and said, "They always prefer the known way to the unknown. It is characteristic of people to be afraid of the undefined. Yet, we gave him a choice." The aide said, "What lies beyond the big, black door?" "Freedom," replied the general. "I've known only a few brave enough to take it." How brave do you feel? Every day God brings to each of us a choice – we can live by fear or by faith. If we choose fear we will live our entire lives never fully experiencing the great satisfaction of taking a risk for God. If we choose to walk in faith we will experience a new-found freedom that will lead to a personal assurance that we are living life to its fullest.

The book of Exodus tells us about the Israelite people leaving the bondage of Egypt for the freedom God had planned for them. They have just seen God's hand work in a mighty way. They have witnessed the ten plagues; they have experienced the first Passover; they have just been released by Pharaoh after 400 years of bondage. You would think that they will be filled with faith and be happy to be free, but instead they are crippled by fear, and that fear which also affects us, has a fourfold effect on us.

1. **It makes us sceptical**

Look at Exodus 14:11a: *Then they turned against Moses and complained, "Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren't there enough graves in Egypt?"* When we are afraid, we begin to doubt. We doubt ourselves, we doubt God, we doubt other people, we become sceptical. Studies have shown that cynics, at the root, have basically a problem with fear. We often ridicule what we're afraid of.



Facing your
Fears

Exodus
14:1-16

2. It makes us selfish

When we are afraid, the only thing we can think of is ourselves. We don't think about God, we don't think about anybody else, we're just focusing in on me. The Israelites blamed Moses for all that was happening to them, and that's exactly how we react. When we're afraid, we accuse others, we excuse ourselves, we pass the buck, we blame other people, we run from responsibility.

3. It makes us stubborn

We resist change when we're afraid, and fear keeps people from growing, it keeps businesses from growing, it keeps churches from growing, because it causes us to be stubborn. God was ready to set the Israelites free from 400 years of slavery and all they could say was, "Leave us alone!" and it can have the same effect on us, we say to God, "please leave me alone".

4. It makes us shortsighted

When the Israelites were confronted with the Red Sea, they said, "*Our Egyptian slavery was far better than dying out here in the wilderness.*" They wanted to go back to the "good old days" in Egypt. They wanted to return, they wanted to retreat, they wanted to go back. They had so little faith that God would come through for them and grant them freedom that they preferred to return to bondage in Egypt. And you know what? Many people today are living the exact same way. They would rather live in the bondage of their own sin, rebellion, and guilt, (things that they are familiar with) than to risk taking a step into what they see as the unknown and be set free by Jesus. I'm sure that a lot of people have been living in fear for so long that they really don't know what it means to live by faith and be free. If you are going to live a life that's free of fear then you've got to let go and launch out. You have to trust God and take that vital first step. You've heard the saying, "Turtles only make progress when they stick their necks out." Well, it's true about human beings, too.

Have you ever watched a circus trapeze artist? The Trapeze

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necks out."

artist is a hundred feet high in the air, they swing out on one bar, and the other one's coming out the other way for them to grab. But those things are spaced apart so that they have to let go of this one before they can grab onto that one, and kind of leap for it. And when they leap for it, there is a point in the trapeze act, that that person is suspended a hundred feet above the ground, holding on to thin air, for a split second. For the moment that they let go of this one, and before they actually are able to grab the other one, they're sailing there, a hundred feet above the ground, holding onto nothing. That's pretty scary isn't it? But it's a good mental image of what it means to live by faith. God wants to work in your life, but you have to let go of the past before you can grab hold of the future. You've got to let go of security in order to grab opportunity. This is very important, because the most difficult part of taking the risk is the letting go of the old. We want to hold on to the old job, until the new job is secure. We want to make sure that everything's set up in our new home, before we move out of the old home. It's about throwing away the crutches we've been using. We have to let go and launch out – and that's difficult.

When we make the decision that we want to be free and step out, sooner or later we will reach a point of no return, a point where we have to face our fear. That's where the children of Israel were at the Red Sea. God had backed them into a corner. There were mountains on either side, there's an ocean in front of them, and the Egyptians and Pharaoh were hot in pursuit, waiting to slaughter them all. They have an opportunity to believe, to have faith, but instead, they responded in fear. And they became sceptical and stubborn and short-sighted. And when all this happened, they said, "Hey! Moses! We should have just stayed in Egypt. Why don't we go back to Egypt? The good old days." And fear always does that – it causes you to retreat, to turn around, to go back. To prefer slavery to uncertainty. They were saying, "We know it was bad, but at least we knew what was happening there, and we don't know what's going to happen here. So let's just go back."

So why do we stay in destructive situations? Why do we not step forward in faith? Why do we hold back when God says to launch out? For the same reason the Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt. We are afraid of freedom because it represents the unknown. We

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may be in captivity, but captivity is our comfort zone and we are afraid to leave. But if this is true, how do you get the courage to let go and launch out and face your fears? We put our trust in God.

When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid... (Psalm 56:3-4) Don't forget, God won't abandon us he will be with us all the way with as much strength and encouragement as we need, all we have to do is take that hard first step.

So ask yourself this question now, what is my personal Red Sea? What is it that scares me to death, that frightens me? What is it that's got me worried? That seems an impossible barrier? That looks unpredictable? That seems overwhelming? Whatever it is that's your Red Sea. And God's message to you is, "Quit running and face the issue, face it in faith, move against your fear, do the thing you fear the most." In Christ's name, go for it, once you do you'll never want to turn back to slavery again.

God Bless

Steve

Pathways

Who can dare to walk an unknown pathway?

To tread the mud of forgotten dreams?

To venture a mappless region of uncertainty,

YOU were born for this.

Bob Pitcher

(from his booklet *Versicles and Responses—*
Questioning poetry by a searching vicar - 2008)

I've not written here for some years so I thought I'd remind myself and you of my life-long conviction of the authority of "Biblical Christianity". My way of asserting this is to call myself an evangelical. I wasn't taught to be one, did not "join" a party or pressure group, but found I was one by my years of reading the Bible and by my personal experience which I dare to say has been sometimes in the Holy Spirit. Before I make a number of points I begin by affirming that we can believe nothing and are nothing if we do not trust the honesty and integrity of the New Testament writers.

A Letter
from
Phil Rees

A former
Chairman

Everything we are and believe hangs upon the faithful transmission, by the writers, of the person, words and works of Jesus. Of course there are conventions in the text which we come to understand as we have to live with the words. Probably he would not be called Jesus originally, but Joshua ben Joseph.

I often think that we would do well to recover a lot of the original "Jewishness" of these writings. Again the word "Jews" in John's Gospel does not mean the nation, but clearly is used by John to mean the opponents of Jesus. We can make many comments like the two I have just made. I trust the integrity of the New Testament writers, I have not found anything like these books anywhere else in the world, and have based my life on them for about 46 years.

The shorthand way to explain where we must begin as Christians is to say that we must be Biblical Christians or Scriptural Christians. I could not recognise the authority of any other source. So the Christian Family, church or Body of Christ, is not developing or changing but always seeking to return to the original scriptural roots. Jesus has not changed, and human nature in its lost state has not changed. And so the Church under the Holy Spirit should always be seeking to be a New Testament Church, with the priorities of the first Christians.

Recently I have been thinking through once more the age old discussion on real authority - tradition or scripture. Jesus was constantly engaged in controversy with the "church" leaders of his day. Please do note that as well as the vital question of truth and falsity, revelation or lack of revelation, there is also often in

us a “religious“ spirit, which is just about religion and which misleads, and has a background from the enemy.

All churches of every complexion give a degree of authority to the Bible, but may the church add to the Bible the authority of tradition? If what had been handed down were just the Bible, the words of scripture and tradition would be synonymous and there would be no problem.

In Jesus’ controversy with the Pharisees, he taught three important principles.

1. Scripture is divine while tradition is human. The only tradition that Scripture recognises is Scripture. (see 2 Timothy 2:2; 3:16).
2. Scripture is obligatory whereas tradition is optional. Jesus did not reject all traditions but put them in their place. The second place. Jesus opposed the Pharisaic insistence on the observance of tradition and the attempt to enforce it as essential.
3. Scripture is supreme whilst tradition is subordinate. In Matthew’s Gospel the Pharisees asked, “Why do your disciples transgress the traditions of the Elders?” (Matt. 15) So Jesus taught the divine quality, the sufficiency and the supremacy of Scripture. The Reformation brought these distinctions clearly into the open.

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All non-biblical tradition is fallible and needs to be corrected by Scripture. Worship songs which are anointed come out of Scripture. They help me to worship Jesus and the Father in the Holy Spirit and they reinforce my knowledge of the Lord in Scripture.

What tools do we need to be disciples of Jesus and bear fruit?

1. A personal relationship with Father through Jesus.
2. A growing knowledge of Father and Jesus at every point in my life, which comes through the Word of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit.

It is in the Gospel that we get to know Jesus best. His love and character is revealed to us as we feed on the words. Pray first for the Word to be revealed to us in our reading. Then take time, and small portions, and repeat the process. The reading is the destination. It is not quantity that counts but depth. If you don’t know

it already you will come to love the Word when you see it "lit up" by the Holy Spirit of God. There is, and never will be, anything like it. The Lord our Father can speak in many ways, but the best and clearest is by the written Scriptures being revealed by the Holy Spirit.

He will show us Jesus.

Phil

Wanted An Editor - is this a job for You?

I am thrilled that the magazine now has a more professional look thanks to Malcolm Dye and his design skills and the fact that we are now investing more money into the production. I have wanted this for a long time and I know that I am leaving it in the hands of those able to make it an attractive presentation. We have had some encouraging comments and we hope it will draw more people into A.R.M. (Wales).

But we have to change and that means we are now giving everything to the Lord for a spring-clean or revamp. The Web page is now being redesigned by Mike Smith (Rachel's husband) as I haven't wanted to spend time learning more about an ever advancing technology.

Please pray for these new projects - in particular the content. I know that we have many excellent magazine articles on the web site and it would be a shame to lose them but they need to be indexed in a way that will make them easy to find.

So we are building a team that will be responsible for our publicity but do need someone to collect suitable magazine articles, edit and organise them.

Brian has also written about the need for a secretary so please consider these opportunities for service. I see A.R.M. (Wales) as the handmaid of the Lord and Brian and I can honestly say that you the members have given us a great deal over the years, it has been a joy to serve you.

Mary Newsom

The Lord
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Holding on
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Vision

I don't know about you but I love the story of Joseph. This wonderful young man who, despite every kind of hostility and difficulty, found God's full purpose for his life. Recently I've again been thinking quite a lot about him and it seems there are principles in his life which might be helpful in our way forward as people of vision for renewal in Wales. His name means '**God will add sons**' and the prophetic word given him by his dying Father Jacob was that he would be a fruitful vine or bough.

"Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall". (Genesis 49:22)

Rev. Bob
Pitcher

More sons and fruit. Wow, that's something we all long for in our churches isn't it? We've been waiting for a move of God that will bring about this for decades now. So what can we learn from the man who was a fruitful vine whose name means *God adds sons*? A man who lived with a vision.

A man of vision.

God showed Joseph something of what he would become early on in his life. Although to be honest the two dreams he had, 'the bowing sheaves and the bowing stars' only gave a hint of God's purpose for him. This was a revelation which his family found just a bit unhelpful. He simply knew that God was calling him to some special place of authority. Where? What for? Who for? He simply didn't know. That's often the way it is with a vision of God. It builds into us an expectation and hopefully a commitment to the Father and it gives us a sort of '**compass heading**' which we trust will lead us to its fulfilment. Rarely if ever does he give us the full picture. But, importantly we know from later on when Joseph was in prison that, that word was deeply ingrained into his soul. It wasn't just a piece of information which he had on a take it or leave it basis. We know this because when it looked impossible that it would ever be fulfilled, it tried him. In other words he was tested to see whether he would believe God or his circumstances? He passed the test because it was a part of him.

*He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word came: **the word of the LORD tried him.** (Psalm 105:17 –19 KJV)*

Many of us who have lived with renewal over the past few decades have known what it is for a 'vision' to be birthed in our souls. Sometimes something quite hard to articulate, yet a profound gut feeling that God is going to do something very significant which will include good growth of every kind. With this has come a sense that we will somehow be involved with the process. It's been called **'revival', 'restoration', 'the latter rain'**; all sorts of things. Dates have come and passed but, despite disappointments, still in our hearts burns a flame that is so easily fanned into a passion.

Vision is an odd sort of a thing because, I think, it's a lot more than just the information we have in our heads about what we think God is going to do. It is accompanied by a deep longing for it to be fulfilled. It is something that has become a profound part of someone's being. When God called Abraham for instance to leave his home and his folk, I really don't think it came as a surprise to him. For a long time I imagine he'd been going to the edge of his homestead and looking at the horizon and asking, "I wonder what is over those hills? What lands, peoples and possibilities are out there? I would so love to go and see. I wonder, I wonder." So when God finally spoke to him, it didn't really come out of the blue. His heart had been prepared. I'm sure a similar thing happened with the fishermen on the shore of Galilee. For a long time I assume they had been saying, "I hope something will happen soon. Do you think perhaps the Messiah will come? Do you think we'll ever be part of something that will change things?" So when Jesus came along and asked them to leave their nets and follow him, it was already in their hearts to do something like that. I have found that God's will for me has often been like that. The thing he asked me to do has been the very thing I have been longing for. Not always but often. As David Wilkerson used to say, "The will of God grows on you."

Joseph of course had vision, and a vision he wasn't going to let go despite everything. How did he manage that? Well the main reason, as we are learning, was that he hid the word in his heart. It didn't just remain an odd bit of information, a sort of Holy wish. This needs to happen with us. It's so easy for us over the years to let vision go. This is so counterproductive because as it says in Proverbs 29:18:

T here is
a deep
longing
for it
to be
fulfilled.

Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him.

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint. (NIV)

Without a vision the people perish. (KJV)

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For a vision to be implanted or hid in our hearts there are stages to go through. Its rather like eating. Firstly we need to put food into our mouths. That's to taste it. For instance we might be in a meeting where we hear a visionary talk, or a passage of the Bible offers itself to us as the Word which God is speaking to us at that specific time, or we may indeed have a picture or a dream or be given a prophecy. So we taste it. But unless food is swallowed then it will never be part of us. It will just remain the memory of a taste. Swallowing is equivalent to our willingness to believe the vision, our openness to receive its implications for our lives. Of course if it doesn't taste good we don't swallow, but if it does then we chew it over and swallow it. As a result it eventually becomes part of us. It's a bit like the good soil in Jesus' parable of the sower. But that's just the beginning of the story.

Living with contradictions.

"How exciting," Joseph must have thought, "God has called me to a place of special authority." That's better than being called to a people that won't listen or to a Pharaoh that won't let his people go or to go in a whale to Nineveh. *Although the last one was of course God's permissive not his perfect will.* He might well have wondered what the steps would be. "Local Lord then Regional Overseer, then onto 'Top Bod'?" No Joseph! The next step is to narrowly escape being killed by your brothers and to be sold into slavery in a far country. It's to be treated as a nothing after having been your father's favourite and to endure hardship and possible cruelty.

On the way to the fulfilment of a vision there is almost invariably a time of testing. In Joseph's case, severe testing. It seems to me, though, that the testing we're experiencing, in waiting for God's promise for Wales, is quite different to that of Joseph. I know we experience a little bit of marginalisation because we lift hands, lay on hands and hold hands etc. but its not really hardship, cruelty and dehumanisation. No. The test we are far more likely to face is in the sheer softness of life living in Britain in the 21st Century. We're more likely to have the vision put to sleep than destroyed by hardship. That's not to diminish the intense trials many go through in their own personal situations. But in general we have it pretty easy. The principle, though, is the same for

us as it was for Joseph. That is to hold onto the vision when so many things try to tell us its not going to happen.

The Psalms note that iron entered into Joseph's soul (Psalm 105) That doesn't mean he became a hard person. Evidently, by the way he forgave his brothers later on in the story, he was anything but hard. What happened was that in the difficult times of Potiphar's house and in prison, by holding onto the vision, he developed enormous spiritual strength. Oswald Chambers wrote that a vision has three stages, the Vision, the Valley and the Verity. Or as it has been said, by another, "**The Revelation, the Reduction and the Realisation**". In other words between receiving a vision and its fulfilment there comes a time of difficulty where it is more than possible to become disillusioned. A time to hold on. A time to become the people who can be trusted with the fulfilment's demands. Too many times have I seen Christians doing nothing because their situation is not the one they felt called to, not the fulfilment of the word the Lord has given them. This is a time both to wait and pray and to act and serve.... as Joseph did.

Being made ready for the promise.

There are three things God develops in this time of waiting:

- 1) **Spiritual gifts**
- 2) **Natural gifts**
- 3) **Character**

1) Developing spiritual gifts is comparatively easy. Joseph had a bit of practice with the butler and the baker before the great day, but as far as we know that was about it! The history of the Church has shown that people can exercise all sorts of remarkable spiritual gifts whilst their lives have been a moral mess. Something to do with "**God's gifts and his call being irrevocable**" (Rom 11:29), I imagine. We spend a lot of time in renewal circles, or at least have done in the past, on teaching people how to receive and develop charismatic gifts. This is of course essential, but not to the detriment of the development of anointed natural gifts and a Christ-like character.

2) Joseph's natural ability was that he was an amazing administrator. I have one in my parish. She's called my Janet and she's my wife.

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Joseph got lots of practice at administrating. He ran his home and, whilst he was a slave, he rose to the place where he was running Potiphar's house; all of course in preparation to run Egypt! He hadn't been long in prison before he was running that too. But he could well have blown it. He could have said, "This is not what I'm called to. God has called me to be in authority, not a slave. Certainly he hasn't called me to be in an Egyptian prison!" As a result he could have sat in the corner and sulked. He could have become bitter and given up the ghost spiritually. How often in my early days of ministry did I chafe at having to do administrative stuff, sit on irrelevant committees, even give advice on the size of aggregate in the foundations of a Ugandan School. Asked to do all sorts of things I didn't believe was my calling! "I am called to be a pastor and a teacher not an office boy", I said. But Paul the tent maker speaks to me through the centuries. Joseph the slave tells me serve God in whatever your hand finds to do. Besides which, however was Joseph going to be able to administrate Egypt unless he'd first learnt how to organise canapés for Potiphar's guests and order bread and water for the cells?

I cannot
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Glory.

I have thought long and hard but I cannot think of a single natural gift which cannot be used for God's Glory. Usually, though, that gift has to go through the mill of God's dealings. There's a natural way and a spiritual way of using natural gifts. Ask a treasurer whom God has taught! So we need to give our natural gifts to God and let him develop them in his way for the particular purpose he has in accordance with the vision.

3) What about our character? Now there's a real problem. Sorry Joseph but, when you lived at home being Daddy Jacob's favourite, you were a bit of a prig and the trouble is you didn't recognise it. If you had, you wouldn't have shared your dreams, the way you did over breakfast. If you'd had an ounce of sensitivity, you'd have realized how much you were hated. There you were wandering around in your technicolour coat, handing out orders and having superior dreams. You didn't mean to be like that but you were. No wonder you got what was coming to you.

God has taken on a huge project with us too. We have so many flaws both visible and invisible to us and He doesn't only want us to be reasonably nice people or even very nice people... he wants us to be like his Son. Wow! What a mission!

Now actually this is more important than being able to speak in tongues, prophesy the news or even raise the dead. Without the character of Jesus i.e., love, and all that means, it counts for nothing (1 Cor: 13). Where did Joseph gain this? He gained it in Potiphar's house, as a slave whilst he struggled to forgive his brothers for getting him there. He learnt it in prison where he struggled to forgive Potiphar's wife for her shenanigans and Potiphar for believing her. He learned it again in prison when he needed to forgive the butler for not remembering him to Pharaoh. Forgive, forgive, forgive. This most needed choice, (and it **is** a choice and not a feeling) is the doorway to transforming grace in our lives and it transformed Joseph into the man who could glorify God in administrating the mightiest nation in the Ancient World as well as showing love and acceptance to his undeserving brothers. All the time he was forgiving, though, he was faithful to the thing at hand. That's why he was always rising to the top. Faithfulness is such an important quality. Paul tells Timothy to look out for those who are **faithful** and **able**; not just those with ability (2 Tim. 2:2). There are too many Christians who want to serve God on their terms. i.e. when and how they want to. That's not faithfulness. This is a key principle for us in this time of waiting. We need to be faithful and committed in the thing which we find difficult. Things perhaps like P.C.C. meetings or our dealings with the flower arrangers and the musicians and those in power who are sympathetic to tradition but not to its life. **Forgiveness** and **faithfulness** are two key words at this time.

He wants
us to be
like his
Son.

Wow!

But then in one day God took Joseph from the deepest dungeon to the highest throne on Earth. He had been made ready in the school of adversity and at last his destiny was being fulfilled. What about us and the promise? What about us and the vision and the longing? When will it come? Who knows, but it will surely come. Are we the lantern bearers or the fire itself? Do we carry the vision and pass it on or shall we inherit it as Joseph did. Although in the big picture even he was just one step in God's purpose to have a covenant people for himself. Some feel sure they know the answers to these questions. All that I know is that like Joseph we hold on in the darkest hour and delight at small foretastes of the main meal. But above all we guard carefully the flame of the vision entrusted to us.

What a
mission!

John Meason

1st twin, born in Birmingham in September 1938. Left Secondary School age 14 worked at C.W.S as cabinet maker then as a baker's mate until I joined the R.A.F. with my brother Joseph at age 19 (National Service). Whilst there I was accepted for Ordination training but my parents objected. Married 1961, divorced 1970, married Jackie April 1971. We have 3 sons born 1972, 1973, 1977 and a daughter born 1975. We also have 4 grandchildren.



From 4, attended Bethel, then age 8 joined St Paul's Church Choir. Age 9 gave my life to the Lord, age 10½ contracted Diphtheria, sent to hospital to die but Lord said I would be made well. He had work for me to do. At 14, I was confirmed and played a part in Sunday school and youth club. From 18 served on the P.C.C. In 1974 joined St Peter's Church Harborne where I was made a licensed Elder and trained for the Healing Ministry.

I came to Wales in 1990 and did the Bishop's Certificate then the Readers course in St Asaph Diocese. I became a Reader to the Deanery of Pool 13th June 1988.

Sheila Griffith—S.O.M.A. representative

Born and brought up in Pembrokeshire I have three brothers who are married and 5 nephews and two great nephews. I have lived in Letterston for nearly 60 years.

I was known as 'Sheila the Bank', as I spent 37 years doing various jobs until I became a service branch officer with the responsibility of running the branch in St Davids. But I left the bank early in order serve the Lord in other ways.

I gave my heart to the Lord as a little girl when an evangelist came to the local Welsh Baptist chapel. We were encouraged to share our faith and as a young person I took part in organized outreaches to local churches and chapels through music, testimonies and the sharing of God's word.

When our minister moved to Carmarthen and I was looking for more of the Holy Spirit, Bill and Chloris Lewis came to the local church and I felt God asking me for a commitment to them.

I was confirmed and have worshiped in St Giles church ever since. I am a worship leader and people's warden – I also share God's word and sing when invited to some of the local chapels.

I have been on mission teams to Kenya and India with S.O.M.A. I am also the chairperson of Ladies Christian Viewpoint of Pembrokeshire (an inter-church work which organises functions for ladies to spread God's work).

I have been doing the job of Secretary for eleven years, but now, as a consequence of ill-health and old age I shall be resigning at the A.G.M. In any case we need some more new blood on the Executive Committee. Already the advent of some younger members has yielded dividends in the improvement of the Magazine and a greater awareness of the direction of modern trends. So to make things easier for younger people in employment who have less spare time on their hands than we retirees, we are considering dividing the Secretary's job into three, smaller, separate parts.

Wanted—
New
Secretary

Firstly it makes sense for the task of collecting of subscriptions and monitoring the Membership list to be done by the Treasurer. Secondly we need a Minutes Secretary whose job would be to attend Executive Committee meetings and take and distribute the Minutes. Clearly they would have to have access to E-mail, and preferably broadband. Thirdly we need an Admin Secretary who would be the first point of contact between A.R.M. (Wales) and the wider world, and would deal with all correspondence and jobs like organising the A.G.M. and collating the Annual Report. They would also have a hand in organising retreats and other meetings such as arise from time to time. We shall be discussing this matter at our next meeting on Saturday 11 October.

So please search your souls. Could you not give up a little bit of your spare time to help A.R.M. (Wales)? We meet four or five times a year, on a Saturday, at the RWS Builtth Wells. If you can, please let me or Steve Waters know.

Brian Newsom

A man prayed, and at first he thought that prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet until in the end he realized that prayer is listening.

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813–1855)

Defending Christian Zionism –

In response to Stephen Sizer and John Stott, by David Pawson.

Terra Nova Publications, 2008. ISBN 978-1-901949-62-9.

In response
to
Stephen
Sizer and
John
Stott.

This is a complicated and densely argued book and will not be to everyone's taste unless they have a burning interest in Zionism. As indicated by the sub-title, Pawson's main purpose in writing this book is to refute the writings of Stephen Sizer, the Vicar of Virginia Water. His first one, *Christian Zionism*, is a rather academic volume, and was written as a doctoral thesis. The second one has a more popular slant and is entitled *Zion's Christian Soldiers? The Bible, Israel and the Church (2007)*. I have not read either of them, and possibly not many other people would, but for the fact that John Stott has written a commendation on the cover of the first book and added a previously unpublished sermon to the second. Pawson is concerned that Stott's implied recommendation will ensure a wider readership, and for completion he has included Stott's sermon at the end of the book.

This book
includes a
Sermon
by John
Stott

Pawson describes several forms of Zionism and his preference is called *Christian Zionism*; which is *a movement among Gentile believers in the Jewish Messiah to advocate and support the Jewish return to their own land, convinced that they still have a God-given right to be there, in accordance with his promises recorded in the scriptures.*

Again, as the title indicates, the initiators of Christian Zionism include preachers, like the Wesley brothers, Bishop Ryle and Charles Haddon Spurgeon; politicians like Oliver Cromwell, William Wilberforce, Lord Palmerston, Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. Then there were military men like General Gordon, General Allenby and Orde Wingate.

Sizer has become the main advocate of *Christian Anti-Zionism*, which has arisen following the transformation of the state of Israel from a condition of helplessness to a major, military force. As a result much public sympathy, steered by the mass media, has turned against Israel in favour of the Palestinians. Supporters include the organisations Christian Aid and the World Council of Churches together with many evangelical, Anglican clergy. There are also *Jewish Zionists* who want to re-establish a home for themselves on their ancient territory, and *Jewish Anti-Zionists* who don't.

Four kinds of theology have been mobilised to bolster the cause of Christian Anti-Zionism. Firstly there is Liberal theology which is *inherently opposed to the divine choice of one nation over against others*. Next is Replacement theology which holds that *the international Church has replaced the national Israel as God's people on earth*. Then there is Fulfilment theology which says that *all the promises made to the people of Israel were fulfilled in a 'remnant', the person of Jesus*. And lastly Liberation theology, originating among Latin American Catholics, *and now adopted by many Palestinian Christians, where the gospel is seen as good news of freedom from injustice, deprivation and oppression*.

Having laid out the battlefield, as it were, Pawson then uses his profound, biblical knowledge and understanding, and his vast experience of exegesis to prove his case and demolish the contentions of the Christian Anti-Zionists. And an excellent job he makes of it. Subsequent chapters cover *Five Covenants, Two Peoples, The Promised Land* and *The Second Coming*. But in spite of all his diligent efforts, he has doubts: *Supposing that I am wrong!* And he begs his readers: *not to believe anything I have written until they have searched the scriptures*. Just reading the book through, I am sure that he is right, but it will take a good deal of time and labour to thoroughly validate his scholarship. If you want a scriptural challenge on a subject that has important implications for the future of the Middle East, then this is the book for you.

Brian Newsom

Two Books
to
Challenge
and
Encourage

Real Men, Real God, Real Spirit

by Carl Beech

Grove Books Ltd, 2008. ISBN 978 1 85174 667 4

We have been having the Grove Booklets on Biblical, Spirituality and Renewal subjects for several years now and have found them always interesting and sometimes very inspiring. This current booklet comes into the latter category. The author is Chief Executive of *Christian Vision for Men*, in which, he says: *I work to see men turn to face Jesus and then become gripped and excited by their faith*.

The problem he is facing is that we are losing men from the UK church at an alarming rate. According to *Christian Research* this amounted to 38% of men across the whole age range between 1980-2000.

Beech mentions some organisations who are trying to address this problem, such as *Lionhearts*, *Christian Vision for Men*, *New Wine* and Eric Delve's book *Echoes in Eternity*. And here I feel I must put in a plug for *Through Faith Missions* and *The Walk of a 1000 Men*, founded by Daniel Cozens, who also noticed that the great majority of Anglican congregations consisted of women, and decided to do something about it. Having been on three of their missions I can testify that living and working for a week in the company of another ten Christian men from all walks of life is a spiritually uplifting and faith-building experience. And the effect on the local churches that these missions have had is one of galvanism and growth.

Beech analyses the character and needs of the typical Englishman (and I am sure the same applies to the Welsh), and concludes that the Church is not meeting his spiritual and emotional needs. In particular, the ones who are really missing out are the White Working Class Men, because *most of what happens in church is geared towards middle class women and their children*. One stumbling block is that: *The church has failed to respond and training colleges simply must gear up for the missing millions. With training schemes for ministry still heavily reliant on academic prowess we exclude hundreds of very able men who would be fantastic at reaching out to their working class mates*.

Regarding Renewal Beech suggests that: *the most profound work of the Holy Spirit is not tongues, prophecy or healing, important though they are. The Spirit's most profound work is seen in Romans 8:15 :*

So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God's very own children, adopted into his family—calling him "Father, dear Father." When we know deep down that we are God's children, his sons, adopted, loved, secure, valued and cherished, it builds an incredible depth of inner security. (NLT)

The author then gives some powerful testimonies from a number of different men who have come to faith, and concludes with some invaluable ideas for reaching out to the missing men, and books for further reading.

Brian Newsom



ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES
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Encouraging people to live in a closer relationship with God

We welcome all Christians to join with us in supporting our work.

Membership fees per annum (minimum):

Individuals — £10

Families — £15

Organisations — £25

Benefits of membership include receipt of the Magazine (3 issues a year), the Annual Report and voting rights at the AGM. The AGM is where you can express your opinion and elect the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee 2007-2008

Chairman: Steve Waters

Vice Chairman: Dick Shenton

Treasurer: Malcolm Dye

Secretary: Brian Newsom

Committee Members:

Jane Evans

Marcia Gibson-Watt

Sheila Griffiths

John Meason

Mary Newsom

Kath Shenton

Rachel Smith

We trust that we may glorify God's name through our activities in Wales and we look to the prayer support of our members.

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Datganiad A dnewyddiad E glwyswyr Cymru

- Llawenhau yn aelodaeth Eglwys Duw
- ac yn ein galwad i'r Eglwys yng Nghymru
- ac yn cyndnabod mai drwy weithgareddau'r Ysbryd Glân cawn fwynhau perthynas personol gyda'r Duw Dad a Iesu Grist.
- Rydym yn ymrwymo'n hunain mewn aelodaeth ffyddlon i'n heglwys, yn ffyddlon i'w harweiniad a'l fframwaith.
- Dymunwn ymuno â llawnder rhoddion grasol Duw i'w Eglwys, i ddangos ffrwyth yr Ysbryd Glân, ac i ymarfer doniau'r Ysbryd a roddwyd inni yn ac yn freiniol er mwyn nerthu'r Eglwys.
- Ac idyfu fel unigolion ac fel eglwys i efelychu Crist.
- Drwy ddyfalbarhad i adnewyddu, gobeithiwn fel unigolion, yn gorfforedig ac yn undebol, cawn ein harwain gan yr Ysbryd i annog yr Eglwys mewn:
 - addoliad sy'n ein harwain wyneb yn wyneb â'r bywiol Dduw
 - deisyfiad i gael ymuno yng ngwir gymundeb â'r Ysbryd Glân, i'n galluogi i roi argraff gyhoeddus o eglwys fywiol, gariadus a gweithgar.

A statement from Anglican Renewal Ministries (Wales)

- Rejoicing in our membership of God's Church
 - and our calling within the Church in Wales
 - and recognising that through the activity of the Holy Spirit we are brought into a personal relationship with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,
 - we commit ourselves to be faithful members of our church, loyal to its leadership and structures.
 - We desire to enter into the fullness of all God's gracious gifts to his Church, to display the fruit of the Spirit and to exercise the gifts of the Spirit as he sovereignly and freely distributes them for the building up of the Church
 - and to grow as individuals and Church into the likeness of Christ.
 - Being dedicated to renewal we hope that individually, corporately and by open gatherings we can be led by the Holy Spirit to encourage the Church in:
 - a worship which expects to encounter the living God
 - a desire to be caught up into the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the communal expression of a living, loving and serving church.
-