

ARM (Wales) Magazine

Summer 2012 Issue 62



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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 image by Marcia Gibson-Watt

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We welcome articles, letters and news of your Renewal events.
Please send to me at: Blaenpentre, Rhos-y-Garth, Llanilar; Aberystwyth SY23 4SE
or email: malcolm@gcsposters.co.uk
Malcolm Dye

by Dick Shenton
Vice Chairman

From the Vice Chairman

At a recent "Quiet Day" organised by the parish, we were encouraged to listen to God and were given licence to find some 'space' and wait to see what happened. This was not a new experience for me so I sallied forth into the rather damp garden (it was summer after all) and waited. This is what passed through my mind.....

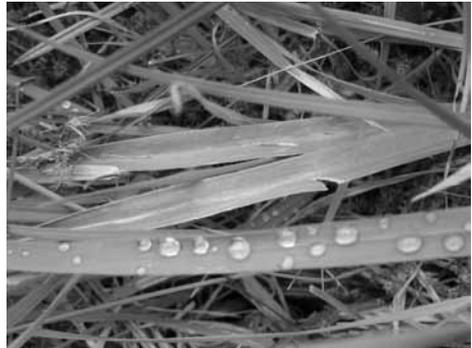
I saw a blade of grass with four raindrops on it, like orbs reflecting the light, each an individual; even when the sun was behind a cloud they still glistened. No two drops were the same and I thought "is God teaching me that we are each individual?" That didn't seem right. The wind picked up, it was cool and refreshing after the heat in the building. Then I noticed another blade of grass which was thicker and stronger carrying many more drops on it which prompted me to consider that everyone can support another, maybe one, perhaps a group but if you try to carry too many you will bend and all will fall to the ground.

Since that time I have been pondering this, wondering whether it was a negative or positive message from God or merely an idle thought which was of little consequence. Past experi-

ence has taught me that when God speaks we do not always get the meaning straight away, I suspect it may have to do with how well we are tuned into Him, rather than how much we are looking for an answer to that which concerns our present situation. There usually comes a time when your understanding seems 'right' and you are at peace with the word or picture even though it may not be fully comprehensible. Often uncertainty indicates that it is meant for another person with whom it may resonate.

My further thoughts about raindrops falling from a surface are these:-

As they run off they may fall upon a hard surface and form a small pool resulting in the joining of individuals. This is a greater resource which is more



Past experience has taught me that when God speaks we do not always get the meaning straight away...

Passion for Christ will produce prayer and his people will unite in their weakness to be filled with his strength.

by

Huw Jones

I recently came across a young man who has a dream. ...to compete in the Paralympics in 2016.

accessible.

Alternatively from the hard surface they may just run away and be part of the watering process of the plant world. The drops could just fall to the earth to sustain the plant itself.

Following this I chanced upon some thoughts that I had some years ago as a result of my quiet time and they resonated with me once again.

- When our churches are prepared to open their doors and those within open their hearts to receive God in the fullness of his Holy Spirit and truly welcome all comers, then there will be one church.
- The trappings and structures behind which we hide will be stripped away. Passion for Christ will produce prayer and his people will unite in their weakness to be filled with his strength.
- Careless of their pride and human status they will seek to be one in Christ Jesus.
- Denominations will be irrelevant, all criticism crushed, only Jesus will matter as we realise that we are all one in Him, sons and daughters of God our father.
- Traditions are not relevant; we construct them to satisfy our own needs, not Gods' wishes. Habits will be broken as we are shaken.
- Worship, glorification and prayer will be first, and performance, pomp and self gratification last, as we allow God to put the words on our lips and the prayers in our hearts or the visions in our minds. We will once again cry out "Come Holy Spirit, open us, cleanse us, and fill us".

Becoming torchbearers of the spirit

'In the last days, God declares, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men dream dreams'. (Acts 2.17)

I recently came across a young man who has a dream. His name is Ben, he is 16 years old, and his dream is to compete in the Paralympics in 2016. Ben was born with only one leg, and his sport is wheelchair basketball. He hit the news when he carried the Olympic torch for 100 metres through Royal Wootton Bassett. Determined not to use his wheelchair, he carried the torch in one hand and used a crutch with the other. It was an impressive feat. In fact I was so impressed that I immediately signed up for Twitter so that I could send him a message!

There has been something infectious about the Olympic torch relay. Watching the flame being carried around the country, and learning about some of the ordinary and not so ordinary people from all walks of life who have been chosen to carry the torch through their local communities, has been a moving and hugely enriching experience. On Saturday 26 May, the day before Pentecost, the same flame that Ben had carried a few days earlier passed through my own community in Bridgend. And as I stood with my neighbours and total strangers cheering it on its way, I thought: if the Olympic torch can generate this much excitement, then how much more excited should we be as Christians as we celebrate Pentecost and its gift of the Holy Spirit!

In Acts 2, we hear how the Holy Spirit appeared like tongues of fire upon the first disciples, and how, filled with the Spirit, they proclaimed in various tongues the Good News of what God had done for them in Christ Jesus. They became torchbearers of the Spirit, so that they could relay the Good News of Jesus Christ to all peoples. That torch has been carried by the Church for the past two thousand years. And we can be sure that, unlike the Olympic flame which will be extinguished at the end of London 2012 and won't be relit until the next Games, the flame that was lit at Pentecost will never go out. The flame of the Spirit will continue to inspire Christ's Church in every generation, and all Christians are called to live in the Spirit, to be inspired and on fire with the Spirit – to be its torchbearers.

The Pentecost flame has been carried by some extraordinary people during the centuries. Some of them – the heroic ones, the great spiritual athletes, like St Paul, St Francis of Assisi – are honoured as saints of the Church. Others were ordinary people living out their Christian lives in obscurity in their local communities. But all of them were torchbearers of the Holy Spirit.

I want to share with you some brief reflections on what it might mean to be torchbearers of the Holy Spirit.



...if the Olympic torch can generate this much excitement, then how much more excited should we be as Christians as we celebrate Pentecost and its gift of the Holy Spirit!

The flame of the Spirit will continue to inspire Christ's Church in every generation, and all Christians are called to live in the Spirit, to be inspired and on fire with the Spirit – to be its torchbearers.

...the Spirit is a gift – a free gift: grace. We don't have to be worthy in order to receive it.

...if we are to bear the torch of the Holy Spirit for a lifetime, then we need to nurture our capacity to carry it – and that requires commitment and dedication.

The prize, eternal life with Christ, is open to all who are prepared to carry the torch.

Firstly, the Spirit is a gift – a free gift: grace. We don't have to be worthy in order to receive it. In fact, it's only when we acknowledge our unworthiness by turning to Jesus in repentance that we can receive it. Only then can we become worthy of it, and that requires a lifetime of prayer and commitment and dedication.

Secondly, the flame of the Spirit is to be passed on. It's a relay. It has to be passed on, from person to person, and from generation to generation. But, unlike the Olympic torch, passing it on doesn't take the flame away from us – we each continue to bear the torch for our lifetime, and into eternity. It's a gift that can be passed on without diminishment. Passing on the Spirit enlarges rather than diminishes the flame.

Thirdly, it needs to be visible. We are called to be torch bearers of the Spirit in our local communities. The Spirit is a living flame, one that needs to be seen and felt if it is to inspire others and be passed on.

Fourthly, if we are to bear the torch of the Holy Spirit for a lifetime, then we need to nurture our capacity to carry it – and that requires commitment and dedication. It requires stamina, character, and practice. We need to get into spiritual training so that we can bear and pass on the flame that has been entrusted to us. We need to practice the art of prayer, so that we might become channels of blessing and consolation. We need to practice doing good: loving our neighbour and engaging in a Christ-like, Spirit-filled way with those we come into contact with. We need to practice forgiveness: saying sorry for our own trespasses, and being ready to forgive those who trespass against us. And, above all, we need to practice the art of love – the kind of self-giving, sacrificial love that we see in the Scriptures in Christ Jesus. Being a Christian, bearing the flame of the Spirit, requires of us all of those things; and none of them are easy, so we need to be continually in training.

St Paul famously compared the Christian life to that of an athlete in 1 Corinthians 9. He talked about the discipline and self-control that athletes need to have in order to compete and win the race. And in Hebrews 12 we are exhorted to 'run with perseverance the race marked out for us'. Thankfully, though, the Christian life isn't a competition – we are not called upon to compete with our fellow Christians in order to get the prize (although St Paul tells us that we are to run in such a way that we could win it). The prize, eternal life with Christ, is open to all who are prepared to carry the torch. We don't, thank goodness, have to go head to head with St Francis of Assisi in the spiritual 100 metres! The Christian life is perhaps more like the Olympic torch relay than the Games themselves: we go at our own God-given pace.

And it's no good doing all this spiritual training if we are not prop-

erly nourished. Exercise alone is not enough: we also need a balanced and healthy diet. We need our spiritual food, which is why we read our Bibles, and why Sunday by Sunday as the Scriptures tell us to, we receive Holy Communion, the food that Jesus gives us and that conveys to us his very life.

So, the flame of the Holy Spirit is a gift to set us on flame and to be passed on to others; and to be a worthy torchbearer of the Spirit requires a lifetime's commitment, dedication and practice.

What else?

Well, there is one final thing ... it should bring with it a sense of enthusiasm, excitement, and joy. The Olympic torch has generated a lot of excitement as it has made its way through local communities across the country. Sadly, there isn't always a great deal of excitement or even much enthusiasm in our churches – we so often fail to capture the public imagination in the way the Olympic relay has done; our worship can be uninspiring and dull. But we are supposed to be on fire with the Spirit, enthused by our Christian faith, joyful in living it out and in proclaiming it. That is the Pentecost challenge. May God grant us the grace to face it, and to become enthusiastic torchbearers of the Spirit.

Taken from a sermon preached by Huw Jones M.A.

Huw is a Licensed Reader in the Parish of Coity, Brackla & Nolton in Bridgend

Prayer Pointers 7

The congregations of just one official church in Vietnam have increased by 100,000 in the past year. In addition just one unofficial house church has received 8000 new believers at the same time¹. There is an awakening to the living God in Vietnam at the moment. And in the coming articles I hope to share news of awakenings happening now in countries overseas. But here, what happened in the revival in Wales in 1904-05? Evan Roberts put two challenges: first, 'you must put yourself entirely at the Spirit's disposal'², second, 'Do you believe that God can give us 100,000 souls now?'³

The revival began like this.

Roberts held a youth meeting at Moriah Chapel, his home church in Loughor, near Swansea, after the regular prayer meeting on Monday 31 October 1904. Roberts told the



...one final thing ... it should bring with it a sense of enthusiasm, excitement, and joy.

by
**Revd Gervais
Angel**

There is an awakening to the living God in Vietnam at the moment.

He invited them to declare their Christian faith there and then.

'We are on the eve of a great and grand revival'

Many were on their knees for a long time, owing to their agony and distress of soul.

17 listeners about his visions and night sessions with the Lord. He invited them to declare their Christian faith there and then. They didn't want to, but by 10pm they all had, and he rejoiced that his three sisters and his brother Dan had openly confessed their faith in Christ. From then on they held family prayers at home. On the Tuesday (1 November) Roberts spoke at Pisgah chapel about being filled with the Holy Spirit. On Wednesday (2 November) he spoke at nearby Gorseinon. And back at his home church he set out the four points of his basic message:

- 1 put away any unconfessed sin
- 2 put away any doubtful habit
- 3 obey the Spirit promptly
- 4 confess Christ publicly.

On Thursday (3 November) he taught the children to pray, 'Send the Holy Spirit to Moriah, for Jesus sake.' That evening he preached, 'We must believe that God is willing and able to answer our prayers'. On Friday (4 November) he wrote to a Sunday paper for a quote and told the editor, 'We are on the eve of a great and grand revival'. On Saturday (5 November) his young people's meeting lasted 5 hours. On Sunday (6 November) Roberts preached the evening sermon on 'obedience', and people felt an Awe of God. On Monday (7 November) the ordinary prayer meeting was packed out at 7 pm, at 8 Roberts arrived for an after-meeting and announced that the last chapter of Malachi was about to be fulfilled in Loughor. At midnight there was great fervour and they finished at 3 am. On Tuesday (8 November) the meeting was cold. They pleaded and pleaded the love of God. At 3 am his mother and others got up to go home, and Roberts challenged her, 'It is better for you to come back. The Spirit is coming nearer now. On Wednesday (9 November) the Keswick magazine announced that 'a cloud no bigger than a man's hand had arisen in Loughor'. On Thursday (November 10) a Cardiff newspaper described what was happening in Moriah Chapel, 'Many who have disbelieved Christianity for years are returning to the fold of their younger days. One night, so great was the enthusiasm invoked by the revivalist that, after his sermon which lasted two hours, the vast congregation remained praying and singing until two-thirty in the morning. Shopkeepers are closing early in order to get a place in the chapel, and tin and steel workers throng the place in their working clothes'⁴. Moriah was crowded on Friday 11 November with 800 people and an overflow. Many were on their knees for a long time, owing to their agony and distress of soul. On Saturday 12th the town was crowded with visitors, with Roberts preaching in one chapel and Sidney Evans in the other. The crowd dispersed at daybreak. People went

straight from the mills and pit-heads to chapel and bypassed the pubs. Roberts went from Loughor to Aberdare, announcing that a great awakening was coming to the whole of Wales. And so it was, since awakening to God with freedom, in place of formality, was experienced at Keswick-type meetings in Tregaron, and in Rhos in NWales under R B Jones, and Sidney Evans in Cardiganshire before Roberts visited Aberdare, and in Pembroke, and powerfully at Ammanford, under the ministry of Seth Joshua the visiting evangelist. Roberts went to Pontycymmer, the Rhondda, and Caerphilly. He refused to go to Cardiff, went home for Christmas and started again in the Swansea Valley, attracting 2.5 – 3k to a chapel in Morriston. The Revival was spreading in NWales in Rhos, Bethesda, Bangor, Talysarn, Pwllheli, and on Anglesey. Dr FB Meyer and Lord Pontypridd noted that 'No money was spent on advertising the Revival meetings'; there was no need of posters on the hoardings; 'There are no bills, no hired halls, no salaries'⁵. People went for an appointment with God, not to listen to Roberts, since he would often go to a meeting and say very little. F B Meyer commented, 'He will not go in front of the Divine Spirit, but is willing to stand aside and remain there in the background unless he is perfectly sure that the Spirit of God is moving him. It is a profound lesson.'⁶ The people in the congregation carried on the extraordinary work, praying, testifying, praising, singing, exhorting, with no tiring of spirit. Gipsy Smith commented on a meeting at Maesteg, 'Anybody would sing, even a little child. There was no speechmaking'⁷.

The impact was immense, 70k converts in 2 months, 85k in five, 100k in six and 80k of them were still church members in 1914. Bibles were sold out; prayer meetings were held in coal mines, trains, trams and places of business. At some court sessions magistrates were handed white gloves, the sign that there were no cases to try. No one was charged with drunkenness in Swansea courts over the New Year 1905. In Cardiff charges of drunkenness dropped from 10,528 in 1903 to 8,164 in 1905 and to 5,490 in 1906. Songs of praise were sung in a court session in Anglesey, and at Maesteg a tradesman received a live pig in payment of a debt that had been outstanding since 1898. The coal miners cleaned up their language to such a degree that pit ponies could not understand their orders and refused to work. In Bangor University hymns were sung in the student lounge and lectures were cut to allow for prayer meetings. The meetings were marked by –these are prayer pointers for tonight - Honouring to the Holy Spirit as a presiding presence; plain preaching of Christ; earnest united prayer; the power of sacred song; dependence on God, not men; direct dealing with the unconverted. This last point is the one I want to stress. On Christmas Day 1904 a visitor to Moriah, Dr G Campbell Morgan, said at Westminster Chapel in London, 'The movement is characterised by

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...there was no need of posters on the hoardings; 'There are no bills, no hired halls, no salaries'

The coal miners cleaned up their language to such a degree that pit ponies could not understand their orders and refused to work.

The movement is characterised by the most remarkable confessions of sin, confessions that must be costly.

Those who are called white in the Book of Revelation have a distinct mark: they are washed white.

And what distinguished the so-called dead at Sardis from the few in the church who were white was how they coped with sin.

the most remarkable confessions of sin, confessions that must be costly. I heard some of them, more rising who have been members of the church and officers, confessing hidden sin in their hearts, impurity committed and condoned, and seeking prayer for its putting away⁸ This was the key to bringing the dead to life. It was for the church in Sardis. Nearly all church was spiritually dead, but the few live members had the key to reviving the dead, they had grasped the power of the blood of Christ over sin. Christ in his glory told the church at Sardis that they were in a perilous condition that needed to be reversed,

'I know your conduct that you have a reputation for being alive, but you are actually dead! 'Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die ...Remember...what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent' (2-3 NIV). Yet a few church members were on target. These few members had the key to bringing back to life the dead ones and strengthening those on the way out. People knew who they were. Christ in his glory says, 'Yet you have still a few people [names] in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy'⁵ If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes.'(3:4-5)

What was it about those who had not soiled their clothes? Those who are called white in the Book of Revelation have a distinct mark: they are washed white.

The white are washed white in the blood of the lamb. For example, a picture of heaven in Revelation 7[:9-17] includes these words, 'Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes – who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know". And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night'. The point is very clear. Those who have not soiled their clothes in Sardis are those who have kept them white in the blood of the Lamb. To err is human. And what distinguished the so-called dead at Sardis from the few in the church who were white was how they coped with sin. It is so easy to live by non-Christian standards (1) because we do not see that our standards are not Christian; (2) because our reputation for being an alive place socially can take the edge off our keenness to be the best we can be for Jesus spiritually; (3) because we are so upset by non-Christian standards all around us in and out of the church that we throw in the sponge and go with the non-Christian flow. Those dressed in white at Sardis were no less sinners than the dead at Sardis, 'for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God', says Paul, and 'if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us', says John. But they kept on

returning to what they had first learnt when they received Christ, that there is power in the blood of Jesus. For when they saw sin in their life and in the lives of others they were moved to wash their sins in the blood again. They applied it to themselves and shared it with others. There is no other starting point for churches today once we see our weakness and hear the call to wake up. Jesus issued this call to be awake, to be alert to God, to his disciples, especially in light of his coming. Paul issued the same call to the Thessalonians in AD52, he issued it to the Ephesians in AD 62, and John issues it here in AD 92. How did the faithful few at Sardis keep themselves on the cutting edge of Christ's call to them? They did it by washing regularly in the blood of Jesus.

Our challenge is to keep on being faithful and ready to stand out as different and, hopefully, be better, because we are practicing the art of coping with sin and keeping our clothes washed. Then our awareness of God in society, our commitment to be Christians in society has to go up a notch and Christ will have a majority in these islands. The price of such dedication is high.

There was a man who had a vision of Wales being lifted to heaven. He dared to ask for 100,000 people to turn to Christ. He gathered a small team of young people; he shared the vision with others who wanted people to turn to Christ. Together they pursued the vision. And their method was to focus on God the Holy Spirit. Their challenge to themselves and others was to put away any unconfessed sin, to put away any doubtful habit, to obey the Spirit promptly, to confess Christ publicly. They washed their robes and were faithful to the Word. And 100,000 people made a profession of faith in six months. These are our prayer pointers tonight.

Footnotes:

1. Bible Society appeal letter for Bible for Vietnam, July 2010
2. Letter to his brother Dan, J E Orr, The Ready Tongue, 1968, 44
3. Roberts to Sidney Evans, his colleague, Orr, 1968, 44
4. Orr, 1968, 51
5. Orr, 1968, 59
6. Loc cit
7. The Christian, January 1905
8. G C Morgan, sermon in Westminster Chapel, 25 December 1904

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by
Dick Shenton

It has been
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The Church in Wales Review 2012

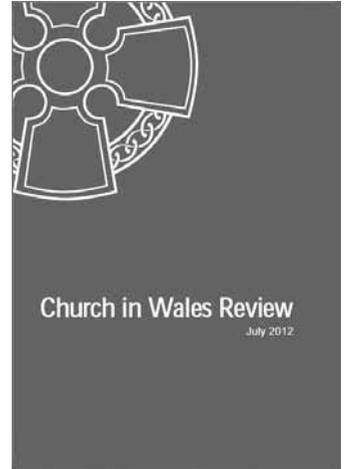
Recently I took a cursory look at the Church in Wales Review (churchinwales.org.uk) released on the 20 July. It has been a year in the making by 3 distinguished people: the former Bishop of Oxford, Lord Harries assisted by Professor Charles Handy, a former professor at the London Business School and Professor Patricia Peattie, Church of Scotland. They were charged with producing a new vision for the future of the Church in Wales and their discussions with clergy, laity, young and old have resulted in some positive recommendations:

- *Parishes replaced by much larger 'ministry areas' which would mirror the catchment areas of secondary schools, where possible, and be served by a team of clergy and lay people;*
- *Creative use of church buildings to enable them to be used by the whole community;*
- *Training lay people to play a greater part in church leadership;*
- *Investing more in ministry for young people;*
- *Developing new forms of worship to reach out to those unfamiliar with church services;*
- *Encouraging financial giving to the church through tithing.'*

Inevitably the press focussed upon what they saw as being most controversial, the 'parish shakeup', which appears to be the most threatening to most church members. However we should not be diverted from other important considerations which we should be doing our best to engage with.

"Creative use of church buildings"

Most of us recognise that in the main, Anglican church buildings are attractive to historians, traditionalists, and romantics. We love them because they are familiar ground but generally they require a great deal of expensive maintenance, are probably listed buildings, and filled with almost immovable pews. If you really want to worship in the past then they are the perfect setting. We are aware that some former Victorian chapels are now used as nightclubs which attract the young; however they lose the interior décor by switching the lights off! We will have to be much more innovative about the way



our buildings are ordered so that they are more easily adapted for different forms of worship, other weekday uses, and lower heating & maintenance costs. It can and has been done in some parishes, sensitively and with great benefit to the wider community as well as church life.

“Training lay people to play a greater part in church leadership”

Due to the lower number of clergy available the increased use of lay people has been forced upon most dioceses, however other than licensed Readers training has been somewhat spasmodic and not always taken up by those who need it most. My experience has been with the Scout Movement, where the dependence for a weekly programme lies entirely with volunteers. Training is in the main mandatory for anyone wishing to become a leader and certainly before they are officially accepted (inducted). This applies also to those who change roles or responsibility. The training is quite costly both to the movement and the individual but the result is a secure knowledge that the leaders are up to the job and their dedication and enthusiasm drives them to acquire better skills so that they are confident and satisfied with the service that they are providing. I am sure that this is similar in every voluntary uniformed organisation. Why then has the church not followed a similar requirement for those volunteers that it relies upon - Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, etc.? In so many areas the law has forced us to conform with child protection, health & safety, fire, catering, first aid legislation; but how little are the controls extended to improve the skills of those who also serve others?

“Investing more in ministry for young people”

As a family man interested in the growth of my children and grandchildren, I am firmly convinced that the future lies in the young. Well it's obvious really! In church what do we expect when they join us for family worship? All the things that they do at home, school or youth club are alien! They are expected to sit, listen, not ask questions, sing old fashioned words that they hardly comprehend and dress 'posh'. Who can wonder that they rebel when they enter a forbidding building to be taken back in time to another age? Given the right context young people are easily inspired and can regenerate a congregation. We have to change, so that we attract 18 – 30 year olds to worship services (they will be our future youth leaders). We have to respect their gifting and ability and support and trust their judgement and new ideas even if they conflict with ours. (Wisdom is about compromise).

“Developing new forms of worship to reach out to those unfamiliar with church services”

Well of course this is a must. Not only do the young like modern

“Creative use of church buildings”

“Training lay people to play a greater part in church leadership”

“Investing more in ministry for young people”

“Developing new forms of worship to reach out to those unfamiliar with church services”

The bible encourages its followers to bring fresh ways of reaching out and demonstrating their love of God.

by

Malcolm Dye

I was very sceptical about the Review

The Diocese of St David's - A Strategy for Growth

ways of expressing themselves in music, art, drama, exuberance. The bible encourages its followers to bring fresh ways of reaching out and demonstrating their love of God. Experimentation is not taboo and every generation wishes to bring something new to worship.

You may wish to visit the Church in Wales website to read the full report which can be downloaded <http://www.churchinwales.org.uk> or visit the Church Times site to read an article about the review on 20th July www.churchtimes.co.uk

Personally I see this as yet another way in which God's church can be renewed – certainly I am praying that the recommendations will be taken up and implemented with enthusiasm.

Another look at the Church in Wales Review

I confess that I was very sceptical about the Review and feared that it would simply tinker at the edges of the Church in Wales, and so be completely ineffective. Now having read it, but not deeply enough to fully plumb it's depth, I'm not sure what to think.

It's always instructive to do a word study on documents of this sort because the most used words can give an indication of the main themes. The simplest way to do this is to paste the words into Wordle (www.wordle.net) which generates a diagram where the most used words are the biggest. The Review generated the diagram on page 16. Notice that the most used words are church, Wales, ministry, people, review, body and bishops. Coming at it from a renewal viewpoint, what's missing is any reference in the diagram to renewal, God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, outreach or evangelism. To be fair that's not strictly true, a word search does find a handful of these words.

As I was thinking what this all meant a file dropped into my in-box. It was entitled, *The Diocese of St David's - A Strategy for Growth*. Presumably this was about how St David's was planning to implement the Review. Dropping this into Wordle produced the diagram on page 17. The most used words are church(es), new, mission, people, growth/growing, diocese, ministry, and disciples. But look more closely and you will also see God, Jesus, worship, and prayer. That's more like it!

Let me pick out a few quotes from the Strategy:

'Our priority therefore is to make disciples and we will achieve this in three main ways.

To grow as disciples

To make new disciples

To live as disciples'

Under the heading *Living as disciples* the report says, 'Jesus made the world a better place and so must his disciples. We want our church communities to be at the heart of our local communities, transforming them through the presence of Christ and the love of his followers.'

'The Resurgence of the Church

Our purpose is to move from retrenchment to renewal through our growth in stature, numbers and effectiveness.'

'The strategy has four strands:

Restructuring the Diocese into Mission Partnerships

Re-imagining Ministry

Revitalising the Churches

Rejuvenating the People'

There's a lot of unknowns in this, particularly the changes in the roles of clergy and lay people. If enough lay people do not come forward to help that might leave the clergy under more stress than before. Most clergy are working to their limits now and I'm afraid the new proposals could push them beyond what they can cope with. No doubt there will have to be a lot of discussion and consultation before this strategy gets off the ground.

But the fact the document talks about discipleship, renewal and the importance of prayer is encouraging. David Watson said, "Christians in the West, have largely neglected what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. The vast majority of Western Christians are church-members, pew-fillers, hymn-singers, sermon-tasters, Bible-readers, even born-again believers or Spirit-filled Charismatics – and we have got some of those here this morning - but aren't true disciples of Jesus Christ. If we were willing to learn the meaning of real discipleship and actually to become disciples, the Church in the West would be transformed, and the resultant impact on society would be staggering." Maybe a renewed church would grow naturally and be a positive influence on society.

It is also good that the burden of church buildings is recognised. Recently it was reported in the news that All Saints Church in Maerdy is to close. Even the Church in Wales offering to sell it to the community for a token sum has not saved it. Presumably the Friends of the church have, despite their unity and enthusiasm, concluded the sums do not add up. But my guess is that the church leadership had already come to that conclusion and will have breathed a sigh of relief. No doubt we will see more stories like this as the *Strategy* is implemented. In St David's Diocese the attendance figures for 2010 show more than 50% of churches have 14 or less people attending on a Sunday and only 19% of churches have more than 30 people attending. That cannot be sustainable. Maybe many more churches will need to close and the congregations combined to create a viable church.

There's a lot of unknowns in this, particularly the changes in the roles of clergy and lay people.

Maybe a renewed church could look a little more like that.

Many more churches will need to close

Not only is this country not Christian any more, but there is not even a general sympathy for our beliefs.

It would also be good if this article generated discussion...

by

Pam Worsey

All over Wales, as the spiritual temperature is rising, there is a sense of increasing excitement.

Under the heading of *Restructuring the Church* it is said, *As the signs of living in Christendom continue to diminish we are increasingly living in a post-Christian society. The Church is structured to deliver pastoral care to a Christian nation. Increasingly we will need an organisational structure focussed on mission to a post-Christian culture.* Not only is this country not Christian any more, but there is not even a general sympathy for our beliefs. In an atmosphere of indifference and hostility, pastoral care is even more important.

The Diocese of St David's Strategy for Growth can be read at: www.churchinwales.org.uk/david/ under 'the way forward'.

Can I suggest that you read both the *CiW Report* and the *Strategy for Growth* because, if implemented, they will undoubtedly affect your minister as well as your own church-going experience. You can decide for yourselves if the suggested changes will be positive or negative. It would also be good if this article generated discussion within the membership of ARM (Wales) about the way forward for the CiW and the role of renewal. Please send any comments (short or long) to Dick Shenton; contact details on the inside back cover.

Are we ready for the FIRE?

All over Wales, as the spiritual temperature is rising, there is a sense of increasing excitement. Prophecies about imminent revival abound and we hear particular referral to the one concerning the Welsh Revival that is coming, as being like untameable 'wildfire'. God knows, we need a mighty move of His Blessed Holy Spirit among us to breathe fresh life into His Church and this land of His. But are we ready, or will God, coming among us in great Power and Glory, catch us totally unprepared, though we will probably be thinking that we are more than ready to meet with God in a new way. Are we getting so caught up with all the excitement of what is happening in these days, that we might be in possible danger of 'missing it'.

To state the very obvious, fire burns, sears and cleanses all in its path, so as we pray the words at the end of Psalm 139, "Search me



O God and know my heart...see if there is an offensive way in me", are we really prepared for God to do this, or are these just oft quoted words, which trip easily off the tongue and make us sound very spiritual? God is calling His Church all over the world, to walk in Purity and Holiness. His Holy Fire is coming to purge, in preparation for the works that He would do through us in the days to come, to reveal Jesus in a fresh way through His Body, to this desperately needy world of His. Lord, may You find us co-operative, ready and willing we pray.

Even as He sometimes has to come to us in gentle, even stern rebuke, our Lord follows up with His own words of reassuring and encouraging love, "Do not be afraid little flock, for Your Father has chosen gladly to give you the Kingdom." (Luke 12:32 [NAS]). What tenderness, what compassionate understanding from the Lord of all Glory, before Whom we just bow in total allegiance and say in the words of the old hymn, 'Have Thine own way Lord, have Thine own way, Thou art the Potter, I am the clay; make me and mould me after Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still'. But are we yielded, are we still? Still long enough from the hurly-burly of religious activities and meetings to hear that still, small Voice speaking just to me? Yielded to the uttermost, so that whatever life brings, knowing it can only come as God allows, we can truly offer up a sacrifice of praise, trusting as little children as we rest in the Everlasting Arms?

So how can we co-operate with this Divine Fire which even now is licking at our heels, or for some who have been through very recent refining, the likeness being more to a furnace experience? When we are offered fully on the altar, Jesus can truly be revealed through us. And how did He function as He walked this earth? In John 5:19 He tells us, He did nothing of Himself, but only what He saw the Father doing.

The Lord of Glory 'took a towel and girded Himself'. How often do we put on 'the apron of humility' delighting in our servant role? 'Inasmuch as you do it...you do it unto Me.' When God uses us, do we try and steal His Glory, or are we truly able to say and think, 'I can do nothing of myself'. When others praise us for a job well done, how do we react? Proverbs 27:21b tells us that, 'a man is tested by the praise he receives'. Jesus said in John 8:54, 'If I glorify Myself, My glory means nothing', and that is the Lord of all Glory speaking! "God did not save you to be a sensation, He saved you to be a servant", said John Hunter. Paul tells us in Romans 12:3, "Do not think of yourselves more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement..."

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How do we react when we see another fail or worse still, fall, especially if it is one for whom we do not easily experience the fullness of love?

Is this maybe because we cannot rise to the challenge of fully co-operating with His Holy Spirit to work this work in us, as the cost is too great?

Let us be really prepared for Him to strip us, causing us to be hidden and unknown ... truly dying to self...

fullness of love? 1 Corinthians 10:12 gives us the answer to that! "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall"! How do we cope when tempted to think that we are doing very nicely, thank you! (remembering that temptation is not sin), "By the Grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Also the words of Jesus, when we have done all that we were told to do, He then says we should say, 'We are unworthy servants, we have only done our duty.' Again when we are tempted, this time to be critical of one for whom Christ died and who, like us, is 'accepted in the Beloved', do we allow ourselves to fall into sin or do we hear the gentle rebuke of Jesus, "What is that to you, you must follow Me!" (John 21:22b). Constantly I find the Lord graciously pulling me up short on these matters as He gently, lovingly prepares me for the 'Wildfire'.

When we read or hear those challenging words of Jesus from Matthew 5:48, "Be perfect therefore, as your Heavenly Father is perfect", do we really take them on board, or do we just shrug them off with the mental comment that He knows we can never be like that. Is this maybe because we cannot rise to the challenge of fully co-operating with His Holy Spirit to work this work in us, as the cost is too great? To quote Dr. A. J. Gordan, "I would rather aim at perfection and fall short of it, than aim at imperfection and come up to it". Psalm 138:8 tells us that, 'The Lord will fulfil His purpose for me' or, as in the KJV, 'will perfect that which concerns me'. And as the Lord calls us onwards and upwards, there is always the promise to hang on to, "I can do everything through Him Who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13).

Let us come, come with our sins and shortcomings, in our brokenness and vulnerability, and worship at the feet of our Saviour afresh. Let us break our alabaster jars of ointment on His Precious Head, laying our so-called glory at His Glorious feet, while remembering that He Who said, "This is My Body, broken for you" requires our very brokenness to make us available for Him to use in His purposes today. Let us be really prepared for Him to strip us, causing us to be hidden and unknown (not like people who write articles like this!!) truly dying to self, so that as our grains of wheat fall into the ground and die, they can produce a rich harvest. May the masks be dropped, the pretence be shed, the man-pleasing end and the Body of Christ in Wales fall at the feet of its Beloved Lord in adoration, worship and humility for Him to work His work in and through us in these days. Let us be God-pleasers alone! Then we will be more ready for the Wildfire. To quote Tommy Tenney, "Seeking the Reviver instead of the revival!"



ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES WALES
ADNEWYDDIAD EGLWYSWYR CYMRU

Encouraging people to live in a closer relationship with God

RETREAT

led by Bishop Andrew John

(worship led by Canon Phillips Hughes)

at

Father's House Bala

Friday 16th Nov to Sunday 18th Nov 2012



Further information: Dick Shenton, 51 Ewenny Road,
Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan CF31 3HY
01656 665368

Space is limited so please send a £50 deposit by 1st October 2012.
We will operate a cancellation waiting list if the retreat is oversubscribed.

ARM (Wales) Praise Day 2012

Praise Day at St Idloes Church Hall, Llanidloes

Worship to be lead by Greg Leavers

Come and praise almighty God with us on

Saturday 27th October 2012

in the heart of this beautiful country!

Bring your friends to hear God's word and to worship our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ – Dan Bright from Aberystwyth has been invited to speak from his viewpoint as a youth leader.

Come and hear some of the exciting and wonderful things that are happening through God's grace and mercy that don't always make headlines in the newspapers. Come and share your good news and your views and pray with us for more of God's Holy Spirit in the nation. Prayer ministry will be available on request.

You do not have to be a member, just bring a packed lunch (tea and coffee provided) and be prepared to be blessed and refreshed.

Coffee at 10 am, meeting to commence at 10.30, and the day will end at approximately 3.30 pm.

(There will be a very short business meeting at some point).

If you would be willing to share your car with others please may we put you in touch with people from your area needing a lift? Contact Dick or Kath Shenton 01656 665368

email: dickandkath@btinternet.com

Prayer Corner

- Please pray for those Executive Committee members who have been ill in the last few months - Pam Worsley, John Meason and Steve Waters.
- Please pray for more people to join the leadership of ARM (Wales). We cannot continue indefinitely without a Chairman or Secretary.



ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES

ADNEWYDDIAD EGLWYSWYR CYMRU

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 2011-2012

Chairman: Vacant

Vice Chairman: Dick Shenton

Treasurer: Malcolm Dye

Secretary: Vacant

Committee members:

Pam Worsey

John Meason

Kath Shenton

Marina Kennard

Steve Waters

Marcia Gibson-Watt

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

For all enquiries contact:

Dick Shenton

☎ 01656 665368

To join or renew your subscription contact:

Malcolm Dye

☎ 01974 241410

☞ or visit www.anglicanrenewalministries-wales.org.uk

(please use 'ARM membership' as the subject)



Datganiad Adnewyddiad Eglwyswyr Cymru

- Llawenhau yn aelodaeth Eglwys Duw
- ac yn ein galwad i'r Eglwys yng Nghymru
- ac yn cydnabod 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.

www.anglicanrenewalministries-wales.org.uk

