

A RM (Wales) Magazine

Winter2008 Issue 51



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

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LATEST DATE for copy for the Spring edition – March 14th 2009

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

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



by
Steve Waters
Chairman
ARM Wales

...SO

I
stand
by
the
door

I Stand by the Door

I stand by the door. I neither go too far in, nor stay too far out. The door is the most important door in the world – it is the door **through which people walk when they find God. There's no use my going way inside and staying there, when so many are still outside and they, as much as I, crave to know where the door is.**

All that many ever find is only the wall where a door ought to be. They creep along the wall like blind people, with outstretched, groping hands, feeling for a door, knowing there must be a door, yet **they never find it...**

...so I stand by the door.

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

...so I stand by the door.

Go in great saints, go all the way in – go way down into the cavernous cellars, away up into the spacious attics – it is a vast roomy house, this house where God is. Go into the deepest of hidden casements, of withdrawal, of silence, of sainthood. Some must inhabit those inner rooms, and know the depths and heights of God, and call outside to the rest of us how wonderful it is. Sometimes I take a deeper look in, sometimes venture in a little **farther; but my place seems closer to the opening...**

...so I stand by the door.

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

continued overleaf...

Have you
found the
door yet?

leaving – preoccupied with the wonder of it all. Somebody must watch for those who have entered the door, but would like to run away. So for them too...

...I stand by the door.

I admire the people who go way in. But I wish they would not forget how it was before they got in. Then they would be able to help the people who have not yet even found the door, or the people who want to run away again from God. You can go in too deeply, and stay in too long, and forget the people outside the door. But as for me, I shall take my old accustomed place, near enough to God to hear him, and know he is there, but not so far away from people as not to hear them, and remember they are there too.

Where? Outside the door – thousands of them, millions of them. But, more importantly for me, one of them, two of them, ten of them, whose hands I am intended to put on the latch.

So I shall stand by the door and wait for those who seek it. I would rather be a door keeper in the house of God than live in the tents of the ungodly. So I stand by the door.

Have you found the door yet? If not, or if you're not sure where to start looking, there is always someone near to you who has found it and who can put your hand on the latch, and help you enter the Kingdom of Heaven right now.

Blessings

Steve

Answers to Prayer

How many times have you been asked “Does God really answer prayer?” and have you been ready with convincing answer?

As years go by our store of encouraging experiences either increases excitingly or becomes unnoticed in the busyness of life.

Recently I was reflecting upon the changes in the life of our parish over **the last 10 years. Many members were frustrated by the ‘sameness’ of the worship and the lack of parish activities, excitement and enthusiasm in church life. People began to pray for renewal but some were hardly daring to hope for answers, and went to Flames of Fire, Spring Harvest or New Wine conferences to find teaching and encouragement and sought out Renewal Days at Brecon to celebrate the new life that was**



by

Kath Shenton
Parish of Coity
with Nolton

welling up inside them.

So all this time God was changing me and others and, as we became more willing to pray and share our faith with those around us, he moved mountains and broke down historical barriers in the parish and the work continues.

We regularly pray as a parish in these words:-

“Father, pour out your Spirit on the people of this parish
and grant us a new vision of your glory,
a new experience of your power,
a new faithfulness to your Word,
and a new consecration to your service:
that your love may grow among us,
and your kingdom come.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen”

And God is faithful in answering our prayers.

The following list demonstrates the new activities that have been established in the last few years.



Church, music groups, retreats, pilgrimages, parish musicals (Roger Jones), Christmas Tree Festival.

Praise the Lord, and keep praying with expectant hearts!



God is
faithful in
answering
our prayers

Prayer groups, Bible study groups, Alpha groups, Pastoral visiting team.

A variety of monthly services - healing, Taizé, and occasional all-age **services and ‘High Mass’** Eucharists.

Youth Group, Messy

The
Life
Of
Brian

Brian Newsom, S ervant and Friend

Many mentioned Brian's quietness and wry sense of humour, therefore it is right to reveal a little more of his life. He would have smiled if it was called, THE LIFE OF BRIAN.

Mary and Brian met in 1955 when studying for part-time Chemistry Degrees at Birkbeck College, London.

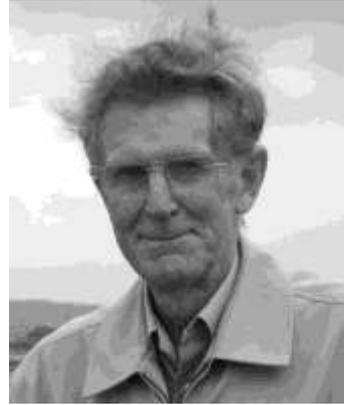
They both wanted to walk in the mountains and go to classical concerts at the Festival Hall and the Proms. He was at Kodak at the time and had his arm in a sling as a result of being injured whilst playing rugby for Kodak.

However he had to give up rugby but remained a rugby enthusiast. They married at the conclusion of the course. After another 3 and a half

years study and with a Ph. D. in Biophysics he got a 3 year fellowship with the Australian Government in Melbourne, working on tanning of sheep skins, collagen chemistry having become his speciality. They **didn't see as much of Australia as they might have done because they** decided to start a family and Mary gave up work. Both John and Robert were born there and so have dual nationality. They enjoyed a good time and it was not easy to choose to come home.

Whilst still in Australia Brian was offered a job with Unilever Research in Bedfordshire. It was only 10 miles from his family in Bedford which is where he had lived since the age of 6. Incidentally his family had been bombed out of London during the war thus Brian always considered himself to be a Londoner.

Their first house was in a small village in North Bedfordshire where Peter was born in 1969. When the children had just about left home Brian was approaching 55 and that year Unilever were retiring many of their scientists. Brian hated the idea, he loved the laboratory bench and was not an ambitious man so had never sought promotion. He almost felt ashamed at leaving early and would not speak of it, he kept it secret from his brother and many friends. One of his interests was Scouting which he introduced to his sons. When he left the Movement he was Assistant District Commissioner.



by
Dick Shenton
Vice-chairman
ARM Wales

At that time a family came into a neighbouring village and bought the Old Rectory with the intention of setting up a Christian centre. It was a place to help ex-prisoners and to encourage local Christians and churches. They brought with them another Christian couple. Howard was an Anglican clergyman who was into Renewal, always enthusiastic about any new project and had travelled extensively. The Lord had already taken Mary into Renewal but Brian was not interested. He had **come regularly to church but still wouldn't be confirmed. It was** Howard who made the difference in his Sunday night talks at the Stables Christian Centre. Brian now saw his early retirement as part of **God's plan and an opportunity to serve the Lord. Together they began** to look for openings overseas and went to the Keswick Convention in 1988, camping with BCMS now Crosslinks. At the missionary evening celebration Brian responded to the appeal to dedicate the rest of his life to the service of his Lord.

They were accepted by BCMS to go as missionary teachers to Zimbabwe along with 6 others. But now to that confirmation question. It was pointed out by the International Secretary of BCMS that his failure to take communion in Africa would be misunderstood and seen as a rejection of them. So at Easter 1989 he was confirmed in St Albans Abbey – Brian never did things by half!

Going to Zimbabwe for 2 years taught them how to leave home for another culture with just 2 suitcases each. The school was just like an old English public school with sport every afternoon and Brian got involved in coaching both Rugby and Cricket. Teaching did not come easily to Brian. Being a scientist he was used to lecturing which was OK with 6th form A level Chemistry but the younger children need notes.

Poor Brian didn't realise such children with no attention span existed.

In 1994 they moved to Wales and both began the St John's course for Christian studies. They chose the church in Llansantffraid because the vicar Lyn Rogers introduced them to ARM (Wales).

Brian always said that he was the least "Charismatic" person in the organisation. However having finished his studies in 1998 he was licensed as a Reader and enjoyed 10 years of sharing his faith in his sermons. Each year they went to the Keswick Convention, this was not only for spiritual growth but also to enjoy the hills and mountains of the Lake District, a part of Britain that has always been a special place.

It was at this time that Brian became Secretary to ARM (Wales) a task for which he claimed to be the least qualified. Once again his trust in

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continued overleaf...

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the Lord ensured that he steered our organisation through a testing period which required a cool head and a sound understanding of Charity Law.

This year Brian was due to retire at the AGM and it is a great shame that he did not live long enough to receive all the plaudits that he deserved to hear. Those who worked alongside him realise that with quiet determination and dedication to the aims of our organisation his influence ensured that we followed a true course towards our goal.

During his 12 years service in this position his level of commitment to, and knowledge of the job was unsurpassed. He brought to the role of secretary a level of competence that will be very hard to equal, and several former chairmen of ARM (Wales), have been fortunate to have such a person alongside them offering wise counsel and support. He accepted any task given to him with good grace and for many years worked quietly behind the scenes assisting in the essential task of **recording and producing the speakers' tapes at the Flames of Fire** conferences. One of his many gifts was that of book reviewer, this was put to very good use in this magazine edited by Mary. I am sure that his words encouraged many to read a volume that they might otherwise have overlooked.

(With the exception of the last few sentences, these words have been distilled from the tribute paid to Brian by his wife Mary at the service celebrating his life).



by
Marcia Gibson-Watt

Christian Centre For Rural Wales

One of the round towers at Entrance A on the Royal Welsh Showground has been our meeting place for the past four years and, as we hoped, it is being used more and more frequently by Christian organisations as well as the Trustees.

A second Alpha Course is being held this autumn-winter running up to Christmas to complement the very successful one held two years ago from which followed the HTB study of Philippians. This gathering developed into a monthly Fellowship Group which has had a regular 30 or so attendees.

We have been grateful for the support of ARM (Wales) and the URC who have held regular meetings in the Christian Centre. The Farm

Crisis Network, whose members come from as far afield as Leicestershire and Pembrokeshire, and the Christian Rural Network, travelling similar distances, use the Centre and the Evangelical Alliance have held very encouraging and supportive Prayer meetings there on a regular basis. The Trustees have kept to their original daily booking charge of £20 and would welcome any interested parties who wish to meet in mid-Wales.



In April this year, the Trustees hired the Montgomery Pavilion on the Showground and hosted a performance of Jailbreak – the story of the escape of Paul and Silas from jail. A local choir, 50 strong, from Rhayader and district, called Voices in Unity, sang most wonderfully and we were treated to a stirring address by the Rev Stuart Bell of Aberystwyth in the interval. Well over 100 people attended.

There are six Trustees running the Christian Centre ably assisted by a volunteer husband and wife secretarial team of Barbara and Roger Tonkin.

Our vision is to maintain a Christian presence on the Showground throughout the year, and to be there to help farmers or members of the rural community who need a chat, a prayer or just a cup of tea in these increasingly uncertain times. We want to build up the body of Christ and we know we need to be open to whatever the Lord wants us to do.

Nearly 1,500 copies of the hard-backed book, A.C.T.S. 1, have been sold and the proceeds have gone towards the Centre which has proved to be a very valuable source of funding to help pay our rent of Entrance A. If you want a copy for Christmas they cost £10 each and can be obtained from Marcia Gibson-Watt, tel. no. 01597 822874 or online at :- robin.gibson1@btconnect.com. We make a charge for postage but try to deliver by hand.

Our vision is
to maintain a
Christian
presence on
the
Showground
throughout
the year



by

Rachel Smith

Grace is a
short word
but the
meaning
can fill
books

A Personal Reflection on the Mid-Wales Renewal Day

In September Stuart Bell spoke at the Mid-Wales Renewal day in **Llanidloes on the subject of “The Grace”**. **When Stuart said he’d be** talking about this my ears pricked up and I sat up straight in my chair as the word GRACE has always been a problem for me.

I work as a sign language interpreter and an important part of my job is to understand the meaning and concepts of English words and phrases so I can better translate them into another language and find appropriate signs that match the meaning.

GRACE is a relatively short word formed by 5 letters but the meaning and ideas behind the concept of what those 5 letters stand for can fill books. It is therefore impossible to put all that wealth and depth of meaning into one or two simple signs.

In fact if I were to interpret it faithfully I would still be signing its meaning whilst everyone else has finished their end of service tea and biscuits and are heading home.

The Deaf community use the sign for HELP which doesn’t represent the true meaning of the word but in the same vein do many people understand and use the English word appropriately?

Even Stuart had to admit that he almost never uses the word because **he’s never sure if he really grasps what it’s about. To be honest I was** relieved to hear this because as I said I have a big problem with the word too. In my quest to better understand what GRACE is all about I have read many books on this topic but I have always been left wanting to know more.

Stuart explained that each part of The Grace reflects a characteristic of the Trinity, The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. According to the apostle Paul, Grace is the chief characteristic of how Christ deals with us. When Jesus met **people he showed them grace. For me to use the sign “help” wouldn’t** really be appropriate in this context so what exactly does it mean?

Well Stuart used some really good examples to explain this. Maybe one illustration that many may be able to relate best to is what would happen if your spouse borrows your beloved car and accidentally crashes it? Rather than get upset and angry and criticise their driving you show concern about their wellbeing, offer to organise and pay for

the repair, not worry about the car... that's Grace.

To treat the people who've done offensive things against us just as though they haven't. To give them no hint, no clues about what they've done, to not remind them, take revenge or become remote... that's Grace.

It's not pretending though, trying to conceal your feelings or reactions. Having forgiveness and understanding, resolving the issues inside of you without letting others know you are having to do so because they've upset or offended you. Behaving as though there have been no words between you, no atmosphere...that's Grace.

Take for example the woman caught in adultery. She received no criticism or reprimand from Jesus. He could have rubbed her nose in the fact that she'd been caught out and laid before her every shameful secret sin to make her feel even more wretched than she felt. Instead he treated her with dignity and forgiveness...that's Grace.

Jesus deals with us in the same way. His forgiveness is complete. Even when we mess up time and again his attitude towards us does not change. Jesus treats the guilty as if they are innocent. He doesn't raise the issue again. We never get an atmosphere with Jesus. He accepts us without reproach. There's no remoteness, distance or reminders to keep us in line. Nothing I can do will make him love me more or make him love me less...that's Grace.

Whereas Mercy is not giving us what we deserve, condemnation, punishment and judgement, Grace is giving us what we don't deserve, forgiveness, acceptance and heaven.

I may still not have that single sign or a short straight to the point interpretation that I was hoping for but what Stuart spoke about really challenged me concerning my attitude to others and how I should treat people in future.

How I react to people is a result of 40 years learnt behaviour which I can't change overnight. However the process of renewal is a continuous and life long one. The Holy Spirit empowers, encourages and guides us as we seek to become more like Christ. Therefore if Christ is full of grace, to be Christ like is to seek to be a grace filled person.

If Christ has forgiven me and does not hold a grudge after all I have done and continue to do, then having received this Grace, I must also show it to others. It won't be easy but how much of becoming like

continued overleaf...

no
atmosphere
...that's
Grace

...to be
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filled
person

Christ is?

As Christians we are all a work in progress on God's construction site called grace. So let us practice patience with one another as God hasn't finished with us yet.

Faith is a Gift



by
Mary Newsom

At the end of September, just twelve months ago, I celebrated my 70th birthday and I said at the time that any more time was a bonus, I had had my three score years and ten and if God gave me longer then that time really belonged to him.

So as I find myself now I must honour that pledge and look to what he wants of me. Missing Brian as I do I am very aware that there is still a big world out there where life goes on. New lives start daily, some destined to be in affluent society but many millions to live in poverty and despair. I have been fortunate and apart from a few years suffering from clinical depression I have been happy. I look at my circumstances now and know that I have a great deal to be thankful for. But perhaps because of that time when I suffered depression I know that my life depends on God and my faith in the Trinity. He got me through those years and he will get me through this grieving process.

I have to choose to live rather than exist (see Deut. 30:19). But it is life in its fullness that I want. Jesus said that he had come that we might have life and that we might have it to the full - or abundantly. He told us this in the context of being the Good Shepherd caring for his sheep and extending it to be the door by which we must enter the fold (John 10). I acknowledge that I need that care more than ever and I know he is offering it. Life starts afresh each day as we acknowledge that there is a purpose in life.

But what does God want of us, what does he want of me? I could just quote Micah 6:8:

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

But that needs unpacking and asking a lot of questions so instead I **respond to what Jesus said in response to those who asked, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"**

His reply was, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

Life starts
afresh each
day

So it is easy after all, - well is it? If you believe, if you have that faith **there shouldn't be a problem but...**

I have that faith and yet sometimes I just slip into existing and feeling sorry for myself and many will tell me that is normal, it is what happens **and it will take time... But I don't want to just exist... When I get into** that state I just sink lower and lower and I know that I am missing out on all the things I really want to do.

It is so easy to end up doing nothing and there is a lethargy, a lack of motivation even to accept the comfort that the Good Shepherd brings. But I did say *sometimes* **so I know that it doesn't have to be like that.** If I stop and focus on the Shepherd then things change remarkably quickly, but it requires an act of will to do that. And that act of will to sit quietly in his company is harder than the act of will to make myself **do some household or garden chore, to answer the 'phone or even** ring a friend.

I've thought about this a lot as I want to get back into the closer relationship that I want and need. It is easier to hear the enemy than the Lord. It seems to me that I need the right text, texts about resting in the Lord seem to have little effect and that is true too of most of the waiting texts which I have received many times over the years. That is except one, that the Lord gave within the first few days after Brian died,

But those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

Here there are words of promise and that is the most reassuring comfort that I need. I can wait as long as I know that it is for a purpose, it tells me that my life is not over and I will be equipped for whatever the Lord has in mind.

But it brings me back to the need for faith, and faith is a gift. A gift that I must be prepared to open up afresh each day, but it is a gift that is there and waiting for me to open.

When I look at it like this I can get excited about my God working around me. And can *Rejoice in Him Always*.

I would like to add a few words of thanks to all our friends in ARM (Wales) who have given me so much support and sent me so many lovely letters and cards. I cried over every one but they have brought so much comfort.

May God Bless you all.

Faith

is a

Gift

but

a

Gift

available

to us

all

God is
always
there to
help me

New Wine Cymru Conference

This year, in the summer holidays, I spent a week at New Wine Cymru. I have been going to the Flames of Fire conference, which then changed to New Wine, for many years and have really enjoyed my time there. Up until this year I have always gone to Messengers but this year I was old enough to go to Ignite. Ignite is a club for teenagers and it helped me to become closer to God as God spoke to me through the songs and what the speakers talked to us about. The words in the songs were like poems telling the beautiful story of Christ and his work

in this earth and how he is always with us and loves us. My favourite songs are **“Mighty to Save”** because the words talk of Christ’s salvation and **“Dancing Generation”** because it’s celebrating who we are in Christ. I have made a promise to spread the good news of God and to tell people how amazing he is, how he changes lives and how you can see his beauty all around you. I have learnt



that no matter what happens God is always there to help me along the way as a Christian.

Bethan Halstead aged 12

Soul Survivor

This year I went to Soul Survivor. It was my 1st time and I loved it. The best thing was probably the worship as I love to sing songs and also when Mike Pilavachi preached to us! (He is very funny). God spoke to me in a lot of ways. He spoke to me through the preaching by Mike Pilavachi, through the worship and he also spoke to me when I prayed.

My favourite song that we sang was probably “Living to make your name high”. Everyone loved it! I also like “Run”, “Mighty to save” and lots more! I have definitely changed since Soul Survivor. I now go to church for God, not because my parents go. I pray a lot more now and

I count on God a lot more too.

Everyone saw an amazing night when people who had a simple pain or ache in their body would be prayed for. At the end of the night, most of the people with aches or pains were healed! This really showed me that God was there.

Because I knew he was there, it's made me pray a lot more for my friends. I am closer to my friends from church, because of Soul Survivor.

Seminars would take place every day and I went to quite a lot of these. I learnt in one of these seminars that in terms of evolution, God says why, science says how. Science has no answer but God does. Mike Pilavachi taught us about a journey we could be on. We Admit to God, Commit to God, Submit, and then Transit. If you have never been to Soul Survivor or an event *like* it, I hope that what I have written will encourage you to try one out! ☺

Catherine Halstead aged 14

I knew he
[God] was
there

Mid-Wales Renewal Days

Paul and Amanda Thompson

(From St Denys Church, Lisvane, Cardiff)

'Healing the Church' and 'Healing the Body'

at St Idloes Church, Llanidloes

November 29th 2008 10.30am–4.00pm

Sunday evening 'Outpouring Meetings'

at 6.00 pm on second and fourth Sundays of each month

come and see what's happening at St Idloes Church

If you are travelling any distance please contact Bob before you come,
or to be kept informed by email send him your address

For more information contact: Revd Bob Pitcher,
Vicarage, Trefeglwys Road, Llanidloes, Powys SY18 6HZ
01686 412370 bob.pitcher@homecall.co.uk

A book review
by
Mary Newsom

This book
could
be a
template
for our
thinking

‘Surprised by Hope’ by Tom Wright (Bishop of Durham)

(Published by S.P.C.K. 2007 , ISBN 978-0-281-05617-0)

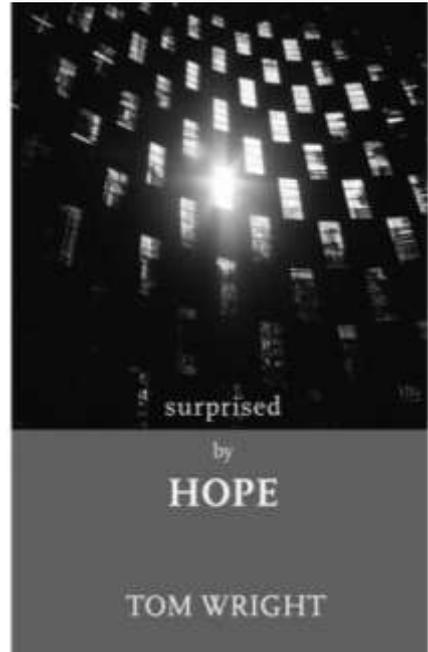
Brian bought this book back in January and intended to review it for this magazine. He discovered that it was a complex book requiring **time to take in all of the implications and we didn’t get round to** discussing it. He had previously read and taken seriously another book that Tom Wright had written on this subject and so was well aware of what to expect. On the other hand I only had a rough idea that it was about life after death and a looking forward to the return of Jesus.

When Brian died it was still alongside his chair just waiting for me to pick it up. You might think it not the best book for me at the time but I felt that I needed to clarify my own thoughts and discover why Tom Wright has spent so much time and effort on this topic over the years.

His motivation seems to be that most Christians have got completely the wrong idea of what happens when we leave this earth! We are not going to Heaven to live as disembodied spirits and neither are we going to receive our resurrection bodies and have a great time meeting up with loved ones. So much for all those who were looking forward to meeting St Paul and questioning him about his letters!

But Bishop Tom points us to resting with Christ until the second coming and the time when all will be resurrected and there will be a new heaven and new earth, the final fulfillment of the Kingdom. In fact he uses the phrase *Life, after life after death*.

At first I just dipped into a few chapters of the book but eventually realised that I needed to follow his arguments through in his extremely logical order. He challenged a number of my previous ideas, not least praying for the dead, but I soon realised that this book is about much



more than I had supposed.

But before I write more I want to suggest that this book, along with the many other related books he has written, could well become a template for our thinking within the renewal movement. At this point **just note 1 Corinthians 15:58 as he says, “The present matters.”**

He writes a useful chapter on Easter itself with a focus on what the earlier church believed. It is history that shows that they believed in the bodily resurrection of Jesus and the empty tomb. Once history is **accepted we can ask, “so how can we explain it?” And then we bring faith into the argument but not just faith but also hope and love.**

It isn't long before he is speaking of the new creation which the whole world is waiting for. But the important thing we have to take on board is what he calls the method of the Kingdom. I quote: *The kingdom will come as the church, energised by the Spirit, goes out into the world vulnerable, suffering, praising, praying, misunderstood, misjudged, vindicated, celebrating: ‘always’ - as Paul puts it - ‘bearing about in the body the dying Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be displayed’ (2 Corinthians 4:10).*

He stresses the need to understand the Ascension - We must **understand that our risen Christ is Lord and the Church is the world's servant** (2 Corinthians 4:5).

But this is less than half way through the book that we are going to have to read – and not just once either if we are going to be able to apply it. The book is actually in 3 sections but the third section is the practical handbook. It is sub-titled: *Hope in Practice: Resurrection and the Mission of the Church.* In it we rethink Salvation. We are not saved in order to spend eternity with the Lord but rather to work for his kingdom whilst we are on earth.

We get teaching on the Kingdom and our part in Building for the Kingdom. Then there are two chapters on Reshaping the Church for Mission.

Well I'm exhausted just reading and thinking about it but we must remember that God has already equipped us for his work. However I ask the question: **‘Are we going to let him work through us and take us nearer to that great day of his coming?’**

In Bishop Tom's last paragraph of this chapter he writes: *When we eventually yield ... We find to our astonishment that he is infinitely gentle, and that his only aim is to release us from our prison, to set us free to be the people he made us to be...*

Resurrection
and the
Mission
of the
Church



A personal perspective of 'Made New for Mission in the Countryside', held at Wrexham in April 2008 by John Meason

First of all a big thank you to all who made the day possible; the ReSource Team (Alison Morgan and Martin Cavender), the ARM (Wales) Team, the Worship Team (Garry and Jan Harney) who came **at short notice, the ladies from St Giles' Church who provided the tea and coffee and the staff of St Joseph's (Catholic and Anglican) School** for their warm welcome. All worked hard to make the day a day to remember. And thank you to those '*although small in number*' who attended; because of you it was worth the effort and made the long day seem too SHORT.

To help you to see the event in perspective these were some of the questions posed on the day, and some of my reflections on the day's proceedings.

The morning started with worship followed by a talk by Alison Morgan who gave us several opportunities to get together in groups for discussion. She challenged us with several questions under the following headings:

1. A Culture in Crisis

People's needs and happiness

In our communities we have people who have broken marriages, no job prospects, unable to work, finding it hard to cope with money or to put food on the table. We all have some or all (and more) of the problems that are listed here. What can the local church do to meet and reach all of those needs?

Some people look to drugs, gambling and drink, while others may just stay at home and watch television or play on their computers or take pleasure in playing football or just being a nuisance and annoying the neighbours. Is happiness found in any of those situations?

People are looking to anything that may offer comfort, but is not of lasting value; the church has all the answers for their needs, if it is open to the voice of God.



2. Individuals Made New

What is the best way forward for a church community in bringing a spiritual direction to those who are hurting? Does the language used in Church put people off entering into a relationship with God because it does not make any sense to them? What changes can you make in order for those with no church background to feel welcomed and comfortable?

We all have a longing to know Christ Jesus because it is inbuilt in our hearts. So in this light what does it mean to you and me as individuals to be made new in Christ? How do people see us as members of the church, and does our faith and actions bear up to scrutiny in the community we live in?

3. Churches Made New

Young people “are the church of today”, not of tomorrow. When we make a conscious effort to bring young people into our places of worship, prayer is the first thing that should happen. Ask the Lord what he wants to do in the life of your community, without that prayer we will fail. But do not be disappointed if nothing happens for a while, wait upon God and he will supply your needs; the right people to run your youth ministry and provide the money to run the project. I speak with conviction here as prayer has never failed to produce results in the church I attend.

The local church should be the hub of any community whether Baptist, Methodist, Unitarian, Catholic (etc) or the Established Church. We are in it together and we have the heart and mind of God. We provide a safe haven for the community to be welcomed and nurtured and given the opportunity to know the God of love, who loves each and every one of us however bad things may seem in our lives. We are living witnesses and a testimony to his great love for us and for those who are hurting.

4. Made New for Mission in the Community

Every community is different so we need to consider what ‘mission’ means in our own context. In particular we need to seek God about how He wants us to build bridges into our communities.

Mission may be broader than we now think. The five marks of mission adopted by the Anglican Communion are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers



Martin Cavender

- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Alison gave us this wonderful quote in relation to:

Getting to grips with what it means to be church ...

“There is nothing like the local church when **it’s** working right. Its beauty is indescribable. Its power is breathtaking. Its potential is unlimited. It comforts the grieving and heals the broken in the context of community. It builds bridges to seekers and offers truth to the confused. It provides resources for those

in need and opens its arms to the forgotten, the downtrodden, the disillusioned. It breaks the chains of addictions, frees the oppressed, and offers belonging to the marginalized of this world. Whatever the capacity for human suffering, the church has a greater capacity for healing and wholeness. Still to this day, the potential of the local church is almost more than I can grasp. No other organization on earth is like the church. Nothing even comes close.”

Bill Hybels

Later in the morning Martin Cavender led a meditation on personal renewal, when some of us discovered the lovely chapel at the school as well as something about our individual walk with God.

After lunch there were Afternoon Workshops and Martin Cavender led one on **‘Living waters in the countryside; the connection between renewal and healing’ and Jan Harney’s was entitled ‘New every Morning; life in all its fullness?’**

I went to hear Tim Feak the *Diocesan Under 25 Officer* in St Asaph Diocese



Jan Harney

whose workshop was on 'Children in country churches.'

It is not as easy as people think to change people's perception on young

people and change the mindset of the person in the pew or, in some cases, the clergy; as we get older we become set in our ways and the status quo is OK. **'Don't change things vicar we are alright as we are!'** **'Thank God for children as long as they are not seen or heard in church'**. This may seem far-fetched; but in some cases it is not, the comments made in discussion groups bears out the fact that we do not really know how to handle young people in a Church situation.

On my travels as a Reader in and around the Deanery, I see no children in some of the churches on each of my visits.

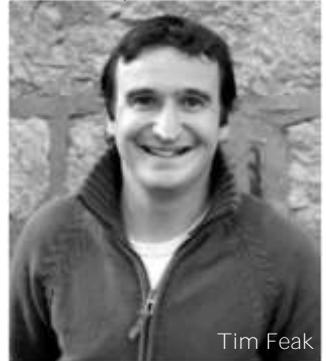
That is a sad situation particularly when it is clear there are families living around the local church. Change has to come to make a way of inviting families into a welcoming friendly church. It is frustrating for those parents who see the church as unwelcoming or dull and with services that are not geared up to meet the needs of young people.

But thank God, the Dioceses are making money available to resource people like Tim Feak to bring together like minded people to train as youth pastors with a view to helping the local church grow its young people. We need young men and woman to come forward and lead **the way in making our 'sometimes large churches available'** by introducing drama, laughter, fun and games and yes, liturgical dance and **singing of choruses into services. 'NOT always hymns' or words that** are not understood from the Word, but using a modern Bible translation in modern family services with projectors etc. I can see some people cringe at the idea, but think about it! **What would Jesus DO in today's world with all the technology we have? He would use it.**

Although the main meeting finished with worship and prayer Ministry at about 4pm there was also an evening session. There was a music group from the River Dee Community Church in Connah's Quay leading the **worship and Martin Cavender continued the day's theme in his talk.**

There was healing ministry at the end and the whole evening was uplifting and meaningful and finished off a lovely day. Thank you all once again.

Some comments from the feedback form; 'inspiring and uplifting', 'encouragement', 'reassurance', 'stimulation', 'good times of reflection', 'stories and love shared', 'more clergy should attend' (amen to that) and 'longer times in small groups for discussion.'



Encouraging people to live in a closer relationship with God

How do we do it...

- Organizing Conferences
- Supporting and Encouraging Renewal Events
- Collaborating with ReSource
- Publishing a Magazine
- Publishing a Prayer Diary
- Maintaining a Web Site
- Providing Bursaries and Grants

But we need your support...

- Pray for us and our work
- Become a member
- Join the Committee
- Give a donation
- Attend our meetings
- Tell us your ideas

Please talk to us if...

- You need help in running a Renewal event
- A bursary or grant could help you or someone in your church
- You have a view about ARM (Wales) and what we should be doing
- You want to get involved in running ARM (Wales)
- You have suggestions about improving our magazine or web site
- etc.





ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES
ADNEWYDDIAD ELWYSWR 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 2007-2008

Chairman: Steve Waters

Vice Chairman: Dick Shenton

Treasurer: Malcolm Dye

Secretary: Vacant

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.

For all enquiries contact:

Look on the web site for contact details.

Web page: www.anglicanrenewalministries-wales.org.uk



Registered Charity Number 1053180

Datganiad A dnewyddiad E glwyswyr 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.
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