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## MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends

CHRISTMAS WARNING: If you want to keep your Christmas as a children's nativity play please turn over the page now and don't read this: and I am serious about that.

OK, if you're still with me I presume you are happy to go on a journey with me. My family think I'm a bit of a Christmas Humbug, which may well be true, but my issue is with tea-towels, little donkeys, a permanent baby Jesus and reducing the Christmas story to sentimentality. Don't get me wrong I loved watching my kids in those plays, but the Christmas story of my faith was and is much more. And I think we lose so much if we stop at nativity plays.

I cannot go into great depths here, space does not allow, but I want to ask the question "How do you read the birth narratives?" For years I was taught that these stories were factual. I don't believe that now, and rather than destroy or reduce my faith in some way it has, if anything, made it more real. I now read and understand these stories as parable. And by reading them as such I find more truth in them than I ever did as factual accounts, and there is a huge difference between truth and fact. For example there are great *truths* in Jesus' story of the prodigal son, but it is not a factual story, and not being factual does not diminish its value in any way. For me the same is true of the birth narratives of Jesus. I see them very much as Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan do in their excellent book *the first Christmas* and that is as subversive story, and parabolic overtures to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. They are an invitation at the beginning of each gospel to see things differently in the world rather than a 'taken-for-granted' norm. For one example, Borg says that the narratives ask "Who is the light of the world? The emperor, son of Apollo, the god of light and reason and imperial order? Or is Jesus, who was executed by the empire, the light in the darkness, the true light to whom the wise of this world are drawn?"

This theme is picked up by Matthew in his story of the Magi. And no matter how many times today's media try to identify the star the Magi followed they will fail because this is not a story about an actual star or comet, or nova or night-sky phenomena, but a parable, a *truth story* about Jesus and how his birth is the coming of the light that draws the wise and learned of the Gentiles to its radiance.

I hope that this Christmas you will find some new truth in the old Christmas stories that help you, and others to find the real message of God's way, truth and life for humanity.

Christmas and New Year blessings...

Till next time

**Andrew**

## **WORSHIP IN DECEMBER**

- |    |       |                                  |                |
|----|-------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 01 | 10.30 | Dr. Karen Illingworth            | Gift Service   |
|    |       | All Age Worship, Parade Service  |                |
|    | 6.30  | <i>St Edmund's</i>               |                |
| 08 | 10.30 | Rev. Andrew Atkins               | Holy Communion |
|    | 6.30  | Rev. John Mason                  |                |
| 15 | 10.30 | Rev. Andrew Atkins               |                |
|    | 6.30  | Rev. Andrew Atkins               | Holy Communion |
| 22 | 3.00  | Mr. Peter Harper                 | Carol Service  |
| 24 | 4.30  | Mrs. Patricia Davies             |                |
|    | 11.30 | Rev. Andrew Atkins               | Holy Communion |
| 25 | 10.30 | Rev. Andrew Atkins               |                |
| 29 | 10.30 | Mr. John Clay                    |                |
|    | 6.30  | <i>Moor Allerton Care Centre</i> |                |
|    |       | <i>Carol Service</i>             |                |

## **WORSHIP IN JANUARY**

- |    |                        |                        |                         |
|----|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 05 | 10.30                  | Mr. Edward Britton     |                         |
|    | 6.30                   | <i>Chapel Allerton</i> |                         |
| 12 | 10.30                  | Rev. Andrew Atkins     | Covenant Service        |
|    | 4.00                   | <i>Oakwood</i>         |                         |
| 19 | Christian Unity Sunday |                        |                         |
|    | 10.30                  | Rev. Andrew Atkins     | Ecumenical Service Holy |
|    |                        | Communion              |                         |
|    | 6.30                   | Rev. Palo Tshume       | Holy Communion          |
| 26 | Homelessness Sunday    |                        |                         |
|    | 10.30                  | Miss Mary Patchett     |                         |
|    | 6.30                   | <i>St Andrew's</i>     |                         |

## **LADIES' GROUP**

Our Carol Service (OPEN to ALL as usual) is on Thursday 12th December at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall and there will be refreshments provided. Our President's chosen charity is Botton Village. This is the last Meeting of 2013.

9th Jan. is the date of our New Year Party - and you will need your wits about you for this one! Venue to be arranged and notified later. Obviously, there will be food provided, it is a party after all. . If anyone has any dietary requirements, please will they contact Val Faint before then.

23rd Jan. Christine Rayner will be telling us about "The Art of Patchwork", and bringing samples of her work to show us. I know some of you have been eagerly awaiting her visit.

**Lynne Pullein**

## **A BIG THANK YOU**

Once again I wish to thank my church friends for their kind thoughts, prayers, cards, phone calls and visits, and especially the flowers, prior to and after my recent pacemaker implant.

Although I haven't had my initial pacer check up everything seems to have worked fine and I feel confident that I will be given the "all clear".

It has been heart-warming to know that people have known and cared. Thank you all so very much.

**Andrew Walker**

## **SIMON ON THE STREETS**

The project to help fund the work of Simon in the Streets and to get a better awareness of the situations they deal with was completed at the end of August with a total of £13,080 being raised during the year. £30 had already been handed over (cheques made payable to the charity) and a cheque for the balance of £13,050 has now been sent. The project team are very grateful to all those who supported the various events and for the many donations. Apart from the team several others were directly involved in events and we are particularly grateful for this. We discovered much about how the charity operates in giving new hope and improved prospects to those who have fallen on hard times and seem to have nowhere else to turn. The work is entirely dependent on charitable giving and our contribution has been very much appreciated.

The monthly Saturday coffee mornings continue to play a big part in project fund-raising whilst providing a relaxed inclusive social occasion and there were several other project events attracting a wider community as well as our own people. In particular the much acclaimed “Streets in flowers” flower festival had visitors from quite distant parts of Leeds and donations to the fund (including gift aid) came to over £1,500. The Drama Group, the Ladies Group and the Monday house-group made generous contributions and there were many individual donations. Other events included the band concert, the Wendell Singers, a quiz night, a puddings evening, coffee evening chez Wilks, a posh afternoon tea, a history trail, and car boot sale. Calendars featuring the late Donald Nicholson’s nature photographs were sold and Margaret Lee again proved that looking after the pennies could produce a significant result.

At a Sunday morning service Clive Sandle gave an insight into the circumstances of those the charity cared for and Link items illustrated particular experiences. There was no doubt that this was a very worthy Lidgett project.

**Fred Langley**

## **FESTIVAL OF CRIBS**

Last year some of you may have visited the Festival of Cribs held at Moortown Methodist Church. If you did, you may remember the crib that Junior Church produced.

This year it is going not quite global, but ‘District’ (and full details are given below). Churches from across the Leeds Methodist District have been asked to provide cribs. It will be held at

Leeds Methodist Mission, Oxford Place  
Monday 9th – Saturday 14th December 2013  
10.00 am – 2.00 pm

Do call in if you can, you may see our 2013 version.

## **VICKY ATKINS EXPLAINS THE FESTIVAL OF CRIBS**

Dear Friends

Deacon Jenny Jones and I are hosting a District ‘*Festival of Cribs*’. It will be an opportunity for people across the District and within the city to find space during Advent for spiritual reflection and preparation. We are all very aware of the fact that Christmas has become a commercialised holiday and sadly in the rush to buy presents, make holiday plans etc. the true meaning of Christmas often becomes submerged in the commercialised chaos.

We want the District to come together and offer people an experience of Christmas that does not involve big dinners and expensive gifts.

One that will celebrate this important event in the Christian calendar and reflect the true meaning of the holiday. Where better than to host such an event than at the centre of commercial ‘busyness’, at Leeds Methodist Mission, Oxford Place in Leeds city centre. Many people will go into the city to shop during December and we want to be able to offer them some sacred space for reflection and time to escape into the peace of Christmas.

Each Circuit will provide a minimum of five, maximum of eight nativity sets. Each Circuit will have a designated table upon which their nativity sets will be displayed.

The event will run from Monday 9th to Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> of December from 10 am – 2 pm. As well as the exhibition of cribs there will be refreshments available in the Nurture Cafe (10 am – 2 pm) and the chapel will be open for quiet reflection. There will also be a table available for Churches to advertise Christmas services, events etc or sell Church charity Christmas cards.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact:

**District Evangelism Enabler: Deacon Vicky Atkins: 0113 2681757/  
07972833834**

**Minister at Leeds Methodist Mission: Deacon Jenny Jones: 0113 242  
5254**

Every Blessing

**Vicky Atkins**

## CAPTION TIME

*I've been sent several pictures this month where I have no idea as to what is going on. They obviously call for your imaginative captions.*

*Send them in and I will print the funniest. (If I remember – Colin Watson is still aggrieved that he sent in a corker a few issues ago and I went and lost it).*

*I'm sure there is an innocent explanation for the one below and, if so, Andrew probably needs to give it to Kathy as soon as possible.*



## **THE FORGOTTEN ARMY**

Years ago, when I was much younger, a very large army was fighting in the fetid swamps of the Arakan, on the Burmese border. In addition to fighting the Japanese, they had to combat malaria, cholera, smallpox and other deadly diseases. They called themselves 'The Forgotten Fourteenth', because they never got a mention by British newspapers or by the B.B.C.

It is not my wish to review World War Two, but to draw attention to another forgotten army, which is with us today. Recently, as has often happened before, the preacher drew attention to the magnificent work done by Christian Aid and other well-known relief organisations. Once again, I waited in vain for any mention of the Methodist Relief and Development Fund. This Fund is unique, because virtually the whole of its administration costs are provided free, gratis and for nothing, by its staff. Thus, anything contributed to this Fund will go much further than any of the others.

I wonder, therefore, why it is never mentioned in our Church. Is it, perhaps, because either the preacher or many of the congregation have never heard of it? If so, it is high time they did!

**KEN MASSEY**

## **PRAYER FOR CHANGE**



Be with us lord , when we go shopping.

If we have little money, help us to choose wisely and not to hanker after things we cannot afford.

Make us content, in spite of all the voices around us inviting us to spend, spend, spend.

Help us if we are well provided with money. Save us from self indulgence and extravagance. Help us to contribute to the needs of those who are hungry.

Be Lord of all our lives including our money.

## ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S QUIZ

Each clue involves the name of a British river and what you have to put in it to get the final answer. (eg The learner driver fell into the river but remained serene. (1,3) Answer: L and CAM = CALM)

1. Putting British Telecom in the river is a bit thick! (2, 4)
  2. The expensive car in the river should linger. (2, 3)
  3. Allow it in the river or eradicate it! (3,3)
  4. Put the record in the river and go. (2,4)
  5. If the policeman falls into the river he will blow up. (4,3)
  6. Put the record in the river to get these US native homes. (2,4)
  7. Put the sixth character in the river and set it alight. (1,4)
  8. The French may enter the river to reach their territory. (3,3)
- 

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. BT, OUSE = OBTUSE    | 2. RR, TAY = TARRY   |
| 3. LET, DEE = DELETE    | 4. EP, DART = DEPART |
| 5. PLOD, EXE = E XPLODE | 6. EP, TEES = TEPEES |
| 7. F, AIRE = AFIRE      | 8. MAI, DON = DOMAIN |

*One play, two performances, two reviews:-*

### MURDER AT MIDNIGHT

Dorothy L Sayers once wrote a thriller called "Murder must advertise." I don't know what steps the Drama Group used to advertise their latest epic, but they were certainly successful. At 7.30 p.m. every seat was taken, and the audience was chattering like a multitude of magpies. It used to be said that if the audience clapped the set, that might be the only applause they got. Not so now. A barely decorated set was soon filled with a galaxy of talent, firing jokes like bullets from a Kalashnikov.

One member, (who shall be nameless) used to be unkindly accused of using the "Gist" system. Now, it was certainly the "Jest" system. And what a stroke of genius to portray a host of characters, all of whom richly reserved the chop! I was so enthralled that I forgot to be anxiously awaiting the promised hot meal.

What about those who sadly missed the show? They will be relieved to know that Gordon, using the latest technology was recording all, with a view to making a DVD.

We can hardly wait for the next pantomime, though it is unlikely to be the revised version of "Cinderella!"

Like Asquith, we must "Wait and see!"

**Ken Massey**



## PLAYING AWAY

Having missed the ‘Murder at Midnight’ at Lidgett Park (!) Joan and I decided we’d catch up with our theatre group at their performance for Christchurch, Ilkley. We’d (I’d) misread the start time so arrived prior to 19.00hrs which the steward pointed out was the time the doors opened. “I hope to have everyone seated and quiet by 7.20pm”, he said—they must be better behaved than our lot we/I thought. So we chatted and waited until someone else arrived and joined the conversation then – enter the writer/producer with a box clearly marked ‘Murder Weapons’. I wonder how many presbyters have wished they could come into church similarly armed? Anyway, Irving was followed by the rest of the cast at regular intervals and the remainder of the would-be audience, so we went into the sanctuary, seated ourselves near the front, and waited expectantly. Reading the programme, we prepared to be open to every false suggestion, clue and partial account the cast would put before us, then discount almost everything prior to the supper choice of murderer and victim. An entertaining escape from a cold Friday evening seemed in store. As those of you who attended performances at Lidgett Park will remember, the play is about a disgruntled theatre group who rehearse in a church hall. The scene is set by Tom (Irving Theaker) and Fred (Peter Harper), discussing the forthcoming pantomime and its possible cast, in somewhat uncomplimentary terms. As the rest of the players assemble, it becomes apparent that they are, without exception, a divisive and arrogant bunch! Charlotte (Catherine Johnston) intent on playing Cinderella; Florence (Pat Brooke) a gentle Mother Goose, but clearly a cunning creature with an as yet undisclosed mission; Janet (Carol Russell) “I’m not going to be an Ugly Sister again”; then Debra (Mary Patchett) has drawn the short straw as ‘wardrobe mistress’ and is only informed on a ‘need-to-know’ basis at the last possible minute! There is David (Ian Russell) the producer, who has a new, socially and politically acceptable slant on the Cinderella story, and a newcomer, Penny (Alison Yorke) whom David has been brow beaten into accepting as Cinderella. Finally, Brenda (Marion Colbeck) the local paper’s owner/editor who always has a part in the play, but is treated with loathing by the rest of the cast. Not a happy group, and the scene is set for murder. Act 1 ramped up the discord at a rate of knots until Debra struck midnight on her gong, a shot was heard, shouts of dismay, and the audience went for supper. An excellent stew (beef casserole in politer terms) served with Yorkshire puddings, together with a selection of desserts. After those who so desired had consumed seconds, at our table we got down to filling in the questionnaire as fully and as imaginatively as possible – as instructed.

Joan and I were seated with two long standing friends of John Gileyad who are active members at Christchurch. Apparently Malcolm and John walk 10 or more miles, every Friday, come rain, snow or shine, whilst Margo,

Malcolm's wife, was an instigator of the knitting, dedicating and giving of prayer shawls for the local community. Together we thought we had provided a plausible solution, however Act 2 followed and showed us what had really happened, not as we had predicted. The actors were assured and convincing—a definite 3 points away from home for the Lidgett Players.

**Michael Bowers**

## **HYMN 50 SINGING THE FAITH**

Hymn 50 was the first hymn chosen for the Remembrance Sunday morning service. I find this hymn impossible to sing, and I don't think I am alone. Is there any chance of finding another tune to go with the words? I think the present tune is suitable only for those who have real musical skills. It seems a pity to have a hymn where the majority of the congregation struggle to join in.

**Gillian Clements**

## **FORGIVENESS**

*The following was prepared for Oasis on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013.*

Last year something happened which caused me to think about forgiveness and exactly what it means and entails.

The dictionary definition of forgiveness says: to pardon, to overlook, to be merciful. The definition for mercy: forbearance towards one who is in one's power, a forgiving disposition, compassion for the unfortunate. The definition for pardon: to forgive, to allow to go unpunished, to excuse, to tolerate, to grant forbearance of sentence, forbearance.

I then turned to the Good News Bible and looked at the three passages quoted there for forgiveness: Matthew 18 21-35, Acts 13 26-39 and Ephesians 4 31-32.

Matthew gives us the parable of the Unforgiving Servant. I didn't find this helpful as it is about forgiving a monetary loan – not the sort of forgiveness I was concerned with.

In Acts it says that “everyone who believes in Christ is set free from all the sins from which the Law of Moses could not set you free”. Still nothing to say exactly what forgiveness entails.

In Ephesians it says “Get rid of all bitterness, passion and anger. No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort. Instead be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ.” This passage was more helpful.

In *The Shack*, Mackenzie (the father of a murdered child) speaks to God about forgiveness. Naturally, Mack wants to punish the murderer but God

points out that the murderer is as much a child of God as Mack is, and God wants to redeem him.

Here are a few quotes from pages 224-227.

“Forgiveness is not about forgetting.”

“Forgiveness is an incredible power – a power you share with us (*The Trinity*), a power Jesus gives to all whom he indwells so that reconciliation can grow.”

“Forgiveness is first for the forgiver, to release you from something that will eat you alive; that will destroy your joy and your ability to love fully and openly.”

“When you choose to forgive another, you love him well.”

“Forgiveness does not create a relationship. Unless people speak the truth about what they have done and change their mind and behaviour, a relationship of trust is not possible. When you forgive someone you certainly release them from judgment, but without true change, no real relationship can be established.”

“Forgiveness does not excuse anything ... you have no duty of justice in this. I will handle that.”

I found these quotes helpful.

The conclusion I came to was that people who break the law of the land should be prosecuted according to that law regardless of whether or not the victim forgives the perpetrator. Prosecution of illegal offences and forgiveness are separate issues. For other hurts, forgiveness for those who acknowledge their offence can lead to a restitution of the original relationship (although this depends on how severely trust was damaged). For those who do not acknowledge their offence, forgiveness means not seeking revenge but does not mean carrying on a relationship with the offender as if the hurt had not happened.

## Gillian Clements

### **TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF METHODIST MISSION – A CELEBRATION IN LEEDS!**

As a recently returned Mission Partner from Belize, I was invited to attend and take part in the 200th Anniversary Celebrations of the Methodist Mission Society. When I discovered that it had all started in Leeds – my home city –



there was no question about my attendance! In addition, I also felt I was there representing Mum and Dad – John and Anna Hatton, who also served as missionaries with the Methodist Church in the 1940s / 50s in Nigeria.

6<sup>th</sup> October 1813 witnessed the beginnings of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in Leeds. Two hundred years later, there was a celebration service as close to the spot where it started as was possible.

In fact it was a full weekend of celebrations. Saturday saw the World Mission Forum, at Leeds Mission, at which both the President and Vice President of Conference were present, along with three World Church Leaders, from the South Caribbean, Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone – the first three places to which missionaries were sent from the Methodist Church here. We heard stories from the past and the present, to inspire and to break our hearts, and all the while the list of 18,318 names of the missionaries and mission partners who have served over the past 200 years, scrolled by on the wall.

Sunday started with a service at the same venue, then, after lunch, we walked to the other end of Leeds City Centre, where the Blue Plaque was unveiled by Rev'd Ruth Gee, with many more ex-mission partners, and others, joining us. This was followed by a service of thanksgiving at a packed Leeds Minster, where all the ex-mission partners present were acknowledged, and we heard from the World Church Leaders, watched 'Applecart' re-enact the first Mission Society meetings and the departure of Dr Coke for Ceylon (Sri Lanka), as well as a sermon from Dr Daleep Mukarji. But one of the most moving parts of the service for me were the prayers of confession, where the British Methodist Church asked for forgiveness from its Partner Churches, for failures in the past: to recognise where God was already active in indigenous cultures: for not valuing their history: and for fostering a dependency on the British Church. The service ended with an act of commitment and a challenge from Ruth Gee for us all to work together as we participate in God's Mission.

## **Maggie Patchett**

### **YOUR BUMPER HOLIDAY QUIZ SECTION**

*Here we go with two pages of assorted quizzes to keep your brain ticking over during the holiday period. Thanks Gillian for all the work you have put into this. Answers will, of course, appear in our next issue.*

#### ***Quiz 1.***

Each answer can be changed into a different word by putting another four-letter word in front. This four-letter word is the same for all the clues, and is part of the Christmas story.

1. During the Cold War, would you fear finding this under the bed. (3)
2. Call. (4)

3. Allow or lease. (3)
4. Does this have a chairman? (5)
5. Find this in water or on the moor. (4)
6. Heath? Not moorland. (3)
7. Sound as a bell. (4)
8. Used to sing with Sonny. (4)
9. Plant which sounds like a viral skin blemish. (4)
10. Can't see much without it. (5)
11. Not more. (4)
12. TV – “Don't get done get \_\_\_ \_ “. (3)

### ***Quiz 2.***

When you've answered all the clues, rearrange the words to make the start of a Christmas carol.

1. Royalty or a book. (5)
2. Demeanour or orientation. (7)
3. The east. (6)
4. Cross. (8)
5. Knock a point off the sheep to get us. (2)
6. Almost tiny. (2)
7. Distance found in a safari. (4)
8. Trio. (5)
9. Add a note to Read Only Memory. (4)
10. Presents. (5)
11. Take the first from an archaic weed. (3)

### ***Quiz 3.***

Each clue gives rise to two words which differ by one letter. These differing letters spell out something which is often used as a decoration at Christmas.

1. When the ancient word was translated it read “dried plum”. (4,5)
2. I worked hard to get slated. (6,5)
3. Can you play a trick to get money? (3,4)
4. The water bird went for a ramble. (5,6)
5. Cut the hair on the eyelid. (5,4)
6. I look at the bright object in the sky. (5,4)
7. Father could hear the \_\_\_\_\_ of tiny feet. (5,6)
8. Use it to encourage your horse or dig in the garden. (5,6)
9. I don't think this mathematical diagram can transport blood. (3,4)
10. Is it a very sore place on your foot or a potential oak tree? (4,5)

#### **Quiz 4.**

The clues are straight rather than cryptic, and all the solutions have something in common.

1. To take a look at (slang). (6)
2. Money (slang). (5)
3. To pucker. (6)
4. Glutton. (3)
5. This would please a golfer. (5)
6. To tail someone. (3)
7. Not a nice thing to call a small person. (6)
8. To dupe. (4)

#### **Quiz 5.**

Fill in the blanks to find the animals. All the solutions contain at least one more animal (eg SEA-LION (SEAL, LION)).

1. \_ E \_ \_ \_ E
2. \_ A \_ \_ \_ ER
3. \_ AR \_ \_ O \_
4. \_ \_ EL \_
5. \_ O \_ \_ RO \_ \_ \_
6. \_ \_ AL \_ I \_ \_ \_
7. A \_ \_ A \_ \_ O \_ \_
8. \_ IT \_ E \_ \_
9. \_ A \_ \_ O \_ A \_ Y
10. \_ O \_ \_ O \_ \_ E

#### **COMMENTS ON SERVICE**

During Stan Pearson's service on the 13<sup>th</sup> October a number of views were expressed which are worthy of further discussion. The main two were the claims that Jesus was homeless and that Jesus was a refugee; circumstances that organisations like the Occupy Movement, especially when camping



on Christian Churches' property, are happy to latch onto to spuriously draw the Church family into their causes. I wholeheartedly accept that there are

deep rooted problems of homelessness, poverty and, through no fault of their own, displaced people. What I find difficult to accept however that is through the rather flowery account of the birth of Jesus and the subsequent questionable “Escape into Egypt” in Matthew’s Gospel the Christian religion should somehow be more amenable to the previously stated circumstances.

With regard to the homelessness aspect we are reminded, at least once a year, that Mary and Joseph travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem (Luke 2 v4) to do their duty in the census and then returned to their home in Nazareth (Luke 2 v39). The large increase in population and the dearth of temporary accommodation during the census period does not, in my opinion, constitute homelessness in relation to the birth of Jesus.

The account of the “Escape into Egypt” giving rise to the refugee status is highly questionable and seem to reinforce the Introduction to St Matthew’s Gospel in the Good News Bible that “it tells of the fulfilling of the promise God made to his people in the Old Testament ” I called my son out of Egypt” with, in the same chapter “Rachel weeping for her children” (v18) and v23 “He shall be called a Nazarene”.

The “Escape” story is diametrically opposed to St Luke’s version of the period following the birth of Jesus. The two accounts, to me, appear incompatible. In St Matthew’s Gospel we have Joseph taking “the child and his mother”



immediately into Egypt following a dream and staying there a number of years whereas Luke has the more prosaic Jewish custom of circumcision taking place 7 or 8 days after the birth and with the ceremony of purification in Jerusalem apparently a little later. No doubt some reader will enlighten me on the correct interpretation of Jewish Law, especially as dictionary definitions for circumcision include “a religious ceremony of spiritual purification”.

Noting the location of Bethlehem and the family’s home in Nazareth the natural route home would be via Jerusalem and therefore the stories of Simeon and Anna in Luke chapter 2 appear more logical than Matthew’s after birth events.

Unfortunately with a number of well known “accounts “ of events within the Gospels it is a case of “you pays your money..” and that choice is whichever interpretation/version it is felt appropriate to use within any given situation

and we should therefore not allow the stable and dubious journey into foreign parts to become highly charged propaganda tools.

**Colin Watson**

## **JUDGE NOT!!**

*Irene Rajah often forwards me inspiring stories from the internet and I don't often publish them because I like the magazine to be produced by members and friends of Lidgett.*

*But the following anonymous verse made me smile as did the associated comment about the garage (on page 27). So I hope you like them too.*

I was shocked, confused, bewildered  
As I entered Heaven's door,  
Not by the beauty of it all,  
Nor the lights or its decor.

But it was the folks in Heaven  
Who made me sputter and gasp--  
The thieves, the liars, the sinners  
The alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade  
Who swiped my lunch money twice.  
Next to him was my old neighbour  
Who never said anything nice.

Bob, who I always thought  
Was rotting away in hell,  
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,  
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, 'What's the deal?  
I would love to hear Your take.  
How'd all these sinners get up here?  
God must've made a mistake.

'And why is everyone so quiet,  
So sombre - give me a clue.'  
'Hush, child,' He said,  
'they're all in shock.  
No one thought they'd be seeing you.'



## REFORMATION DAY

*The piece below was written for Oasis on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013.*

On 31<sup>st</sup> October 1517, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses onto the door of Wittenberg church. He disputed that freedom from sin could be purchased with money (indulgences). Indulgences came about in 1095 when Pope Urban II falsely accused Muslims of perpetrating horrors on Christian pilgrims in Jerusalem. These accusations were made in order to incite action against the Muslims. A quote from p.384 of *A History of Christianity* by Diarmaid MacCulloch says “Urban made it clear that to die on crusade in a state of repentance and confession would guarantee immediate entry to Heaven, doing away with any necessity of penance after death; papal grants associated with this promise were the origins of the system of indulgences...” Luther believed that salvation was not earned by good deeds but was received as a free gift of God’s grace through faith in Christ. He believed that the clergy were lying to the people with regard to salvation. Luther was prompted into action when Pope Leo X raised funds from German Christians via indulgences to finish rebuilding St Peter’s Basilica in Rome (and at the same time taking care of the financial needs of Albrecht, Archbishop of Magdeburg).

Luther was fortunate to have the protection of Friedrich of Saxony, one of the seven Electors who chose the Holy Roman Emperor and who was consequently a powerful man. Without this protection, Luther would likely have been burned for challenging the Pope when he stated that only the Bible had authority.

Prior to nailing the theses onto the church door, in 1515 Luther had lectured on Paul’s letter to the Romans and at the heart of his message of salvation was the doctrine of predestination. He was excommunicated in 1520. In 1521, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V gave Luther a formal hearing at the Diet of Worms and also gave him safe conduct from the Diet – again Luther had protection from a powerful person. In 1525 Luther published *On the Slavery of the Will* giving the message that human beings could expect nothing but condemnation, and had nothing to offer God to merit salvation.

Around the same time as Luther was challenging the authority of the Pope, Zwingli was doing the same in Zurich. The actions of Luther and Zwingli started the Protestant Reformation. Luther’s ideas brought about Lutheran Protestantism and Zwingli’s ideas brought about Reformed Protestantism.

So, one set of dogma was challenged by two different sets of dogma. Regardless of which set of dogma you accept, if indeed you accept any one in

its entirety, Luther and Zwingli, by challenging the accepted norms of the Church at that time, caused Christians to rethink their faith and beliefs.

Dogma is human opinion and is divisive. Giving dogma too much importance detracts from Christ's message. In the past, people who challenged dogma were called heretics and were excluded or even killed – where is Christ in that? Today, on one hand we see religious fundamentalism (not just in Christianity), on the other hand we see many people spurning religion. I believe it is dogma they are rejecting, not true belief. People will often say they are not religious but do have a spiritual belief as they think that there is more to life than the material. Again, it is dogma which is putting them off religion, which is obscuring the real message.

What if every day was Reformation Day? What if all Christians questioned their dogmatic beliefs and asked themselves – are these beliefs a help or a hindrance in spreading Christ's message – to love others as yourself?

**Gillian Clements**

### **TEXT FOR THE TWO MONTHS: COLOSSIANS 3:16**

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts

### **SEEN IN “THE DALESMAN”**

“Is your new parson any good?

“Nay, I reckon nowt to him. It takes him forty minutes to put us to sleep. T'owd 'un did it in fifteen.”

*Andrew, this of course has no resemblance to you; you can get us all nodding off in well under fifteen minutes!*

## **ROTHWELL FESTIVAL CONCERT**

On Saturday afternoon, 26<sup>th</sup> October, Joan and I and a goodly number of other folk from Lidgett Park went to the Rothwell Competitive Music Festival's autumn concert at the Rothwell Methodist Church. We were there to listen to David Wilks (organ and piano) and Rebecca Todd (trumpet and flugelhorn) and of course, to sample the cream tea promised for the interval! The Festival gives both young (some very young) and older musicians a chance to compete and to enjoy a festival of singing and playing. There are sections for instrumentalists, singers, brass bands and choirs, and it takes place each year at the Blackburn Hall and the Methodist Church in Rothwell during March. The dates for your 2014 diary are Wednesday to Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of March.

The Festival is a community occasion, produced to a very high standard, with national and international judges for each competitive category. 2014 will be it's 31st year and a personality I must mention is Margaret Wilks who is and has been a live wire on the festival scene. She was part of the group who restarted the Festival in 1984, and has been it's secretary for all it's 31 years So to the concert. The programme was almost a replica of that which the two principals performed for the Lidgett Park Ladies Group Open evening earlier this year with music by Bach; Berlin; Bernstein; Carter; Chopin; Coleridge-Taylor; Elgar; German; Goss-Custard; Handel; Johnson; Mayerl; Purcell; Sparke; Thalben-Ball and Vivaldi thereby covering compositions from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

David was playing the Johannus two manual electric organ and the church's upright piano. In her concert introduction, Margaret mentioned that David has had his fingers on literally hundreds of organ keys both here and in Europe and elsewhere – most recently on a trip to Hamburg. Earlier this year, he gave organ recitals in St Albans Methodist Church and All Saints Church in Leighton Buzzard. Rebecca played a trumpet and a flugel horn, instruments from her collection of Bb, C, D and Eb trumpets, a cornet and the flugel horn. She is also a busy musician as soloist, lead cornet with the Yorkshire Evening Post Brass Ensemble and in the brass sections of the St Peter's Chamber Orchestra, the St Celia Orchestra of Ripon, the Harrogate Symphony Orchestra and the Wetherby Pro Musica. Apparently she is preparing for the Tour de France grand Yorkshire Depart next year---as a musician of course.

Lidgett Park can be proud to have such talent as ambassadors for music, organisation and Methodism.

**Michael Bowers**

LIDGETT PARK METHODIST CHURCH



YORKSHIRE POST BRASS  
&  
WENDEL SINGERS

on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2013  
at 7.30pm



Tickets (0113 267 8506) - £8 (including  
refreshments)  
or pay on the door  
(Children £1)

**(in aid of 'Education Belize)**

.....**BREAKING NEWS....BREAKING NEWS...BREAKING NEWS...**

*I've always wanted to put that; I just wish it would scroll across the page as it does on the BBC news channel. But here goes ...*

## **NEW EDITOR FOR “THE LINK” ANNOUNCED**

You might recall that I said that I was ready to retire as editor of the Link next summer after ten happy years (for me at least).

I'm happy to announce that we have a new editor ready and eager to take over. As they say at speech days, he is a man who needs no introduction; it is our own **Dr Stan Pearson**.

We can all look forward to seeing him put his own individual stamp on the magazine and I am sure you will all support him as you have me.

*(But you still have me to put up with until September).*

*Afternoon Tea a là Betty's*



*Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December  
2.30-5.00pm*

*Come and enjoy  
dainty sandwiches,  
home-made scones  
and delicious cakes*

*£7.50  
(in aid of Education  
Belize)*

## **IS IT TRUE**

Is it true  
that long ago and far away  
there was born a child who could change the world?

Is it true  
that angels sang in the starry night,  
filling the sky with blazing light  
when a child was born to change the world?

Is it true  
that shepherds out on the cold hillside  
saw the light and were terrified,  
ran to see the new-born child who could change the world?

And is it true that wise magi  
saw a sign in the eastern sky,  
followed a star in the early dawn  
to the cattle shed where the child was born,  
the child who could change the world?

If it's true  
that shepherds ran to the stable door  
and wise men came to kneel in awe  
and the angels' song of peace on earth  
told the world of the baby's birth

When will the men of hate and greed  
hear the angels' song and at last take heed  
of the message that they brought  
and the truths that Jesus taught  
to change the world?

**Pam Wilson**

## **THOUGHT FOR THE TWO MONTHS**

Remember... Just going to Church doesn't make you a Christian any more  
than standing in your garage makes you a car.

**Anonymous**

**MORE CAPTIONS REQUIRED**

**Before**



**After**



## **ACTION FOR CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013.**

If you are planning any outings over the Christmas period, then this festive evening is not to be missed! The concert will take place at the prestigious Royal Hall in Harrogate & will feature performances from four local schools. We will have music from the show choir DanSing & tremendous performances from Boroughbridge Orchestra. It really will be a wonderful & festive evening & it would be great to see as many people there as possible.

Action for Children helps 250,000 of the UK's most vulnerable children, young people and their families each year through 650 projects across the UK. We aim to enable children and young people to achieve their full potential through a wide range of innovative services as well as by campaigning for policy change. Money raised from the concert will go towards Action for Children's work with vulnerable & neglected children in Yorkshire.

The concert will start at 7.pm on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December with doors opening at 6.30pm. Tickets are available from the Harrogate Theatre box office: 01423 502116. Priced £10 for adults & £8 for concessions.

If you would like more information on any of our events, or about the work of Action for Children in general, please telephone us on 0113 200 7066, email [lisa.morton@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:lisa.morton@actionforchildren.org.uk) or visit [www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk).

**Please help us to be there for as long as it takes.**

Thank you. **Lisa Morton Partnership Fundraiser**