

THE NET

The Newspaper of i-church
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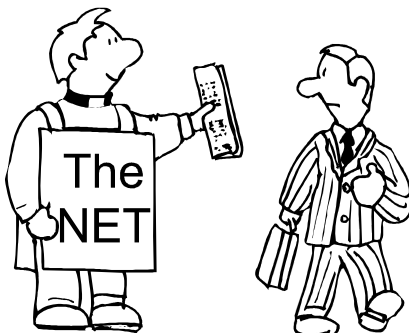
An online Christian community based in the Diocese of Oxford, part of the Church of England.

Read all about it!

It doesn't seem so long ago that Paula and I were chatting, as you do, and thought "wouldn't it be a good idea if i-church had a newspaper?" And as Paula worked for a real newspaper, we had her talent to draw on, so why not give it a go? And here we are, at issue number eight, still finding interesting items include.

Of course, if we were a real newspaper, like the Times of London, or New York Tribune we would be interested in our circulation—are we winning in the print wars? As it is, we have no idea how many people read The NET, or what they do with it. Do you read on your screen and then delete? Or maybe you prefer to print it out for a leisurely read later on, over a biscuit and tea perhaps? Do you read it alone, a solitary activity, or do you share our news with others? Maybe there are no readers at all out there; it's all a myth and once typed on screen our thoughts simply evaporate into the ether that is the internet.

Another advantage we have over a more conventional newspaper is we are not at all constrained by space—we don't have to have a number of pages which is exactly divisible by 4 . This means that if a lot of good stories come into the virtual editorial office we don't



have to choose between them; pretty well everything can get into print. Indeed, at one point this issue looked like being a 12 pager, then

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Next Issue will be published on Friday May 4th

it became 14, then 16 and now it has ended up as a bumper 18 pager! Not only that there are a few items which were not quite ready so we have been able to put those to one side ready for the next issue. The final task is to add in pictures, partly to illustrate the articles and partly to add some colour and shape to each of the pages. This means that if you get an artistic urge you can always send your masterpiece to us and we'll print it—it could be the start of a famous career for you!

All this points to why, we hope, The NET is an interesting read; it's the variety of authors and items that gives The NET its distinctive feel. This month we have more new contributors, so there is an even greater range of items to win you attention. Please keep items coming in. And do tell us what you do with your copy.

Happy Easter, Phil

Pastor's Letter

Joe Parrish

(a reflection on Luke 20: 9-19)

Typically as we grow into adulthood, we no longer have to worry about parental discipline; we supposedly have internalized the boundaries we were taught by our parents or guardians. However, and most all of us know this, we only superficially internalized much of what we were taught to do or not to do. We finally felt our freedom from any restraints, and probably as teenagers if not before we do just about anything that feels good, especially if our parents or loved ones can't find out. So as teenagers we lived a secret life that only we and a few of our closest friends knew about. We occasionally get caught, but as we get older we become cleverer and more clandestine. Perhaps that is a rather dark interpretation of how our rebellions begin, but it may be a close approximation of it. It seems to explain why accidents are the leading cause of death for ages 14-23, and why car insurance rates for those ages are so high. We risk too much, and on the occasion of our crossing the boundaries of danger too many times, statistics catch up with some of us, and the rest either learn from their friends' problems, fatal or otherwise, or we slide into the mud ourselves, and perhaps claim to enjoy wallowing in it, assuming we survive. All along this journey I believe God is calling us to come home, to return or to discover the rich safety of the spiritual life. But our rebellion just seems too sweet, and we tend to plunge deeper into the mire. An encounter with death possibly occurs to snap us out of our feeling of invulnerability, most commonly associated with teenage-hood, but which often goes many years beyond. This may take a few or many years, but inevitably we face some sort of traumatic ending that we had never encountered before or imagined would happen to us. Then we either heed the warnings, or we face the future as a high-wire walker with no net, daring danger and flirting with death.

Back in the days before the air industry had perfected a way to refuel planes in the air, there were daredevil "wing-walkers" who would actually walk out onto the wing of one aircraft in flight, carrying a five gallon gasoline can on their back and then hop onto the wing of another plane who sidled up to be refuelled. Inevitably they would eventually slip to their deaths, and there are stories of that happening to several of the wing-walkers, sometimes due to a parachute that would malfunction.

I sit on a community board in Manhattan that hears occasionally about tragedies that occur on the sides of those large skyscrapers, "construction accidents" they call them. But those accidents often result in the loss of lives. There were well over a dozen people killed last year in Manhattan by falling from or on scaffolding, and over eighty percent of them were undocumented aliens—they were the ones that had nothing to risk but their lives. Finally we heard of legislation we could support to help control and eliminate those unsafe practices. It turns out that the scaffolds were rarely checked in the mornings before the workers used them; the last worker off the scaffold at the end of the day simply checked over the scaffold after leaving it and certified it to be A-OK. If it hurled into the side of a building during the night because of winds or whatever and became damaged, no one checked it in the morning except very cursorily. So now the legislation will require a trained person certify each scaffold on the morning it is to be used.



Another item that concerns me is how safe these tall building are. I live in a thirty-three storey building and wonder how one would escape in the case of a fire that high up—I live on the second floor. Now near my neighbourhood five buildings are to be constructed that will loom over and dwarf the United Nations Secretariat building by a factor of two; these will be fifty to sixty-five storey

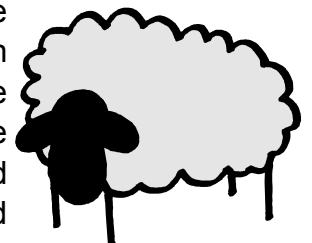
buildings. No manner of my complaining can get anyone to be concerned about how we could ever safely evacuate folks from that height in the case of fire or any catastrophe. One senior person commented to me that if the City will allow the construction of a 1776 foot tall Freedom Tower skyscraper, how on earth could we go up against that sort of folly and claim our sixty-five storey buildings might not be so safe? He has a point there. We are helpless to stop this madness. The Freedom Tower already is more than two-thirds rented. And probably many of the same companies who lost employees during 9-11 are likely the ones who will still be seeking the highest floors. Our teenage rebellion is a permanent fixture in our lives sometimes; and money does not make us wiser, but more daring, especially if it is someone else's life at stake.

And, forgive me, but I have seen demonstrations of how fast an icicle travels when it breaks off high up: a simple icicle falling from a large height can kill a person. If a patch of ice forms say on the side of a building five or six hundred feet up, and it is dislodged by melting or wind, it will be plummeting down at a dizzying speed directly on those standing in the park below, a natural guillotine. The builder simply gets the building department to sign off on such construction, because they did it before on a multitude of other buildings, by noting rarely do people die from such events. But I tend to give wide birth to such buildings, *if* I notice how tall they are and how sheer their sides are! There is much wisdom built into the Empire State Building that modern builders simply ignore. We don't really learn from our mistakes. We are at heart rebellious, daring God to be God.

What the builders use is critically important. Jesus said the builders in his time and ours have rejected the cornerstone of the building, the keystone of the arch. And who are these builders? Perhaps they are the teachers that refer only to the radically impersonal solutions for society. If we don't consider those who are vulnerable, helpless, unwary, and unsophisticated, we have not considered the critical importance of all whom God has created. And all of us at some time in our lives are vulnerable, helpless, unwary, and less sophisticated than someone else. So if we hope others are "looking out for us" when they are not, we are being lured into trouble: the pornographers, the con artists, those who cut the corners of safety in buildings, those who listen more to the ka-ching of their cash registers than the ker-lunk of their products, those who claim we should shut our borders while still hiring immigrant workers at below par salaries and in sub-safe conditions. We have to be on the outlook for the inconsistencies in others' stories about how moral and ethical they are, even multinational companies who have recently been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

The wave of unrepentance is legion in our society. Now no one is really wrong. But all are shading the truth just a little or a lot. And the result of all that shaving off the right way to live are compounding the problems of our world.

The first step however is ours. We have to live lives that are consistently loving, consistently concerned for the well-being of others, consistently on the outlook for how the down and outs are kept that way by the strictures of 'proper' society. We as Christians are indeed the leaven of the world, the salt that should make all life palatable, the light that shines in dark places to keep things honest, upright, fair, equitable, and above all holding every child of God as precious in our sight as they are in God's eyes. When we can cease our own rebellion against God and God's ways, we can then turn our eyes to help solve the world's many problems. But the change has to come first in our own hearts. If we can become loving, trustworthy, peace makers, we will be the means by which God brings God's kingdom to earth as it is in heaven. We are the minds, hearts, hands and feet of the Almighty. We are the ones called out to gather God's precious children into God's fold. As we turn our own lives over to God, through God's Son Jesus Christ, we will find the way to turn others towards God and God's Son. And then we will indeed be the sheep of God's pasture, for today we will have heard God's voice.



My Early Days in i-church

Kate T

I was approached by Ailsa earlier this month who asked if I would be willing to produce something for 'The NET' on my early days in i-church – what a scary thought, what have I got to write? Then I started to think about it and the floodgates opened.

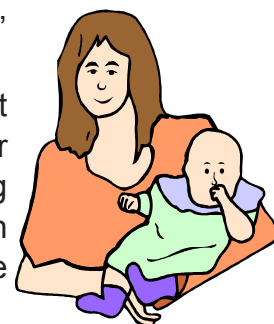
For me to give an insight into my early days, you need a little background, so bear with me ...

Church and 'Church Goers' always seemed a bit strange to me – vicars with white hair, lots of dried flowers and tweed. Why would all of these people willingly decide to go to church every week to pray to a god that we don't even know exists – if fact, I absolutely believed that he didn't. I was never quite sure about Jesus, I was sure he existed, but that he was probably a bit of a 'do-gooder' or something.

I actively argued against the whole 'institution' of religion and church with friends and relatives – "I am a logical, intelligent woman. I need proof and until I get that proof, there is no swaying me".

Then, I had two children. Neither of them wanted to be born in a straight forward manner and both scared the big purple pants off us with problems during their 'extraction', especially our youngest. We could seriously have lost her – very sobering.

After the birth of my children, how I viewed the world changed, not slightly, but dramatically. I became thoroughly angry with the world, how we treat each other and the environment and would become incredibly upset if I saw anything negative with children. After finally giving in and going to the doctors after each birth, I was diagnosed with depression, therefore put onto tablets – which to be honest did help.



Now let's move to a few months ago. I started feeling very down again but I didn't want to go back to tablets. I wanted to try to solve the underlying problem. I needed to be able to speak to others, to find comfort in a different way. I'd also had 4 years with a best friend who is a Christian. Her father is a retired vicar (yes white hair) and they all attend church every week as a family – but I stopped thinking of it as odd and quirky, and started seeing how wonderful it all was for this family. How through a love of God and the church, their lives were thoroughly enriched.

I spent many an evening thinking; I didn't save my youngest daughter's life, she was saved by pure chance – I had been in the right place at the right time ... fate? – for once, I wasn't convinced.

So the only answer I could come up with was that intervention had been taken, I had been 'guided' to that right place by other means and that could only have been God. So started my belief in him – a very simple belief, but certainly a belief.

Why I came here

Having argued against God so much in the past, it was going to be a little difficult telling my family (who are absolute non-believers and quite full of character) that my opinions had changed, but I wanted to start going to church. I wanted to thank God for watching over me and my children, but I also wanted to question why some of the awful things going on in this world were happening – and there was only one person to challenge with that – him upstairs.

I still didn't really want to go to a 'traditional' church (or B&M as I have now learnt – I thought that was some weird club somewhere at first!).

So one day whilst on the internet, for some reason – and I still don't know why, I typed in 'internet church' and what did I find – i-church at the top. So I visited and had a look – this went on for a while until I decided to register and I have never looked back.

What I found

After I got the email explaining that I was now a member, I took some time to visit and was incredibly surprised to find that I had a few messages offering warm welcomes and guidance – now I have been a member of ‘forums’ before and that was a first. I wasn’t ignored, I wasn’t ostracised for not knowing everyone or not having reached 10,000 posts on a topic – so it was immediately apparent that this was a different type of place.

One of the areas that I was pointed to was the New Members board, so I decided to undertake a first post and introduce myself to all. When I was typing that introduction, it felt wrong. I was typing things like ‘happy mother of two’ etc etc, so I deleted it and started again ... Hi From the Miserable One If I was joining somewhere where truth is important, I had to tell the truth, so I explained that I was not the happiest of souls and didn’t hold my breath; people would have to take me as I come.

Well, what a reaction! So many kind and caring replies from people I don’t know ! Amazing, words of comfort and words of welcome. I therefore put on my ‘bravery suit’ and decided to join in prayers one evening – having no idea what I was doing. I didn’t need my suit, it was lovely. I was helped all the way through, no one moaned at me for not really understanding why I was there or what I had to do. It was a calming experience and I realised that I didn’t have to put on a false personality; I could be myself, say my prayers either silently or typed – somehow they feel stronger to me when I know others can read them and get an insight into my very personal thoughts and learn.



I was still feeling down, maybe even getting worse, so I asked for a prayer to help me – this made me feel incredibly selfish, and I thought people would think that too. I was wrong. I received numerous unexpected responses –people were thinking of me and hoping for a positive change, I was in people’s prayers – what an honoured place to be. Then Ailsa found me and has been what I like to feel is a ‘quiet mentor’ taking time out of her extremely busy life to talk to me, to let me argue about God and this world – she set me on my path to building a simple relationship with God, and, on what I hope is going to be a path of recovery for me with his help ... I certainly feel much better and no tablets !

What effect its had on me, my life, my faith

Well, my faith is very much a ‘work in progress’, but I feel, because of li-church I have a quiet place I can go to, to learn, to pray, to question and I don’t have to announce it to the world unless I am good and ready or indeed, want to. At the moment, this is mine, it’s private and precious.

I don’t understand the ‘ins and outs’ of church, the terminology used, I don’t own a Bible and I have no idea about the differences between all of the religions in this world, even in this country. But it certainly doesn’t seem to matter, nobody laughs at me, nobody ‘tuts’, my questions are answered honestly and I am accepted for what I am. Here you have a group of people from all over the world, all walks of life and all with different ideas about life, faith and the universe who come together for a couple of reasons : to worship God and to enrich their lives with friendship.

There are two things from my infant membership of i-church that I will never forget, one is the astonishing warmth of the other members and the other is from a few days ago.. waiting in the chapel one morning (having not realised there was no one to lead) I thought I would say some private prayers when a member from across the world joined. We lead each other in prayer and then stayed a while and chatted about our day ... like it was perfectly normal to speak to someone thousands and thousands of miles away about the Daffs out in Spring !!! Lovely.

Ps & Qs

Puzzles and Quandries on the Way Richard Haggis

Innocent Man Executed: Who was to blame?

If it happened today there would be a government enquiry, or at the very least an inept cover-up, but in the first century, life was even cheaper than it is today and the death of Jesus served the interests of several groups. As we begin Holy Week, with its dour focus on the agony of betrayal, torture and violent death, I thought it might be interesting to root around in the stories to see who has blood on their hands (that's a phrase we'll come back to in a moment).

Traditionally, the villain of the piece was Judas. He took money to lead Jesus's enemies amongst the Jewish leadership to him. The deed done, he returned the money and either hanged himself (Matthew 27:5) or spontaneously died (Acts 1:18). However, the Gospels themselves are not very clear that any of this was necessary. Jesus wasn't secretive in his ministry, and as he says himself, he was easy to find teaching in open places, synagogues and the Temple itself. If he was easy to find by day and, fair enough, they wouldn't want to risk an arrest in the daylight with a crowd around, would he have been so hard to find by night? Did Judas need to be bribed to reveal his whereabouts? The logic is elusive. Even more puzzling are Jesus's words in Matthew (26:50) - he calls Judas "friend" and tells him "do what you are here to do". A sideways take on the story is that Judas - who may have been a Zealot in the past, the nickname "Iscaiot" maybe referring to a preferred terrorist weapon - was trying to force Jesus's hand, confident that Jesus would triumph over Jewish religious authorities and the Romans alike. Case against Judas not proven.



So, what about the chief priests? The religious authorities were the first to arrest and try Jesus, and it is all too understandable that they were deeply threatened by his message, his radical claim to a deeper understanding of God than theirs. Religion is inherently conservative, and Christian history is littered with the mutilated corpses of the radicals and reformers who lost. It's enough to make us sure that the Jewish religious leaders would have wanted Jesus out of the way. So, they tried him, the trial was a mess, but possibly sufficient to get a false condemnation - why not just stone him to death? Why then hand him over to the Romans? The story invents an excuse - that the Jewish authorities couldn't execute people (John 18:31). That doesn't seem to have been much of a brake in the story of the woman caught in adultery. Maybe they couldn't get a crowd together sufficient to get the job done? Or could they?

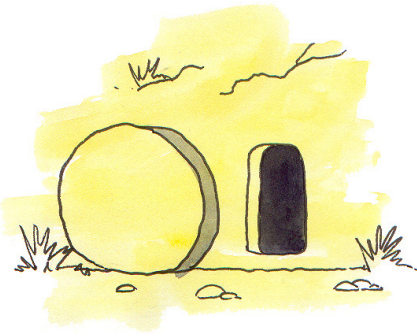
That leads us to another problem - the role of the crowd in Jerusalem who apparently voted for Jesus Barabbas (Matthew 27:16, a name which means "father's son" and may really signify just "everyman" - Jesus called himself "the Son of Man") rather than the prophet from Nazareth. However, there's no evidence anywhere else of such a custom, and for an occupying power to engage in such risky tactics seems absurd. Matthew goes so far as to show Pilate washing his hands (a ritual taken from Deuteronomy 21, not very likely Roman reading-matter), and the crowd shouting "his blood be upon us". Now it's starting to look like a cover-up.

Crucifixion was a Roman punishment, a punishment for crime against the law and against the state, not for heresy. Pontius Pilate was a notoriously violent Governor, and thousands of people



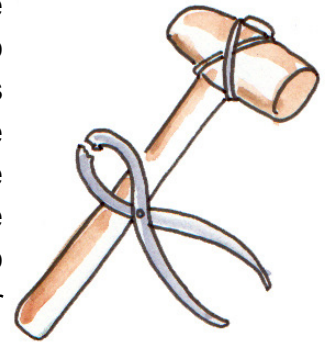
perished on crosses in Palestine during his rule. So, why should the Gospel-writers wish to underplay his role, and by extension the role of the Roman Imperial power in the death of Jesus? There are two possible answers, one theological, and one political.

The theological one is that in the time between the death and resurrection of Jesus (30-33 AD) and the writing of the Gospels (possibly 70-95 AD) there had been a lot of thinking about the significance of those events. They cannot simply record what Jesus said and did, because Jesus himself has been revealed by the resurrection to be even more important than his message. This raises big questions for Christianity's relations with Judaism, and indeed the later years of the century were the ones in which it was realised that Christianity was a new faith, and the Jewish leaders responded by throwing the Christians out of the synagogues, and denying them a share in the protection from the Romans that the Jews sometimes enjoyed. So it was natural to those writers to cast the death of Jesus in the light of a conflict of religious authority. And how very handy also to be able to single out the disciple whose very name meant "Jew" as the "betrayer"! John even goes so far as to refer to Joseph and Arimathea and the other disciples living in "fear of the Jews" - when they were Jews themselves. Here are the seeds of Christian anti-Jewishness.



The political reason is more simple - the Roman state was powerful, dangerous and capricious. It served the evangelists no purpose to antagonise it. That Pontius Pilate is mentioned in the Nicene Creed is not an accusation of blame, but an historical proof locating the incarnation in history.

There are more questions that can be asked about these world-changing events - did Jesus have to die? If he knew he would be executed, does he have anyone to blame but himself? Did God want him to die, or need him to die? Other New Testament writers have some clear ideas about these, but the Gospels themselves are not so clear. They (apart from contrary John) tell the story of the cross as tragedy, not triumph, and the bleak tone does not change until the resurrection. It seems to me that their message is of a man of immense wisdom and gentleness, and unimpeachable goodness, but who spoke with such authority that the authorities of his day could only seek to destroy him. The cross was not necessary - no violent death could ever be that - but it was inevitable. And it would happen just the same today.



Further questions, long or short, are all welcome - please send them directly to me via i-church

Suffering

John Polkinghorne

God does not bring about everything that happens in the world. Because God is a God of love, he allows creatures to be themselves and to make themselves. That sort of valuable, worthwhile, independent creation has a cost. We see think in the terrible cruel choices of humankind. We also see it in the physical history of the world. Exactly the same bio-chemical processes that enable some cells to mutate to produce new forms of life—the very engine that has driven the amazingly fruitful history of life on earth—will allow other cells to mutate and to become malignant. You just cannot have one without the other. The tragic fact that there is cancer in the world is not because God did not bother—it is a necessity in a world allowed to make itself.

The Kingdom of Heaven

Jayne Tite

By their fruits ye shall know them* Mat. 7:16a

Not everyone who says to me “Lord, Lord!” will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only He who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Mat. 7:21

How are you placed to enter the Kingdom? Many who claim the title Christian think that believing that the Christ is the Son of God, and that He died for our sins, rising to eventually ascend into Heaven, is in itself sufficient. They have faith that Jesus is Lord and that therefore they will be saved, then they go about their daily lives with little regard for His teachings, what good they do being more by accident than design, or because it is something they think others will applaud them for as it shows them to be Christians. They believe they have found a saviour that will save them from hell and damnation, that the faith they have is a saving faith. For most of these people the last thing they want is a Lord whom they can trust, and follow, and obey, a Lord who will require of them surrender of their own desires in order that they can implement His will on earth.

There are also those who are not Christians who go about doing good because they think that it is the right thing to do, and people will see them as upright citizens, respected and applauded by their fellows, often offered, and accepting, high office in the community.

Will either of these groups pass through Heavens door, or will The Christ say to them, ‘Be gone! I know you not’?

For the Christian, faith by itself is not sufficient, it has to go alongside works. Indeed it may be said that one cannot have true faith if we do not also follow the teachings of our Lord, wrapping our lives around the central core of His teachings, Love, so that that very Love radiates from us like a beacon. And what does that mean? Does it mean that we can place ourselves in a middle ground, giving some time to Him, and some to our own desires? Does it mean that we can pick and choose which of His teachings we obey?

Throughout His ministry He constantly gives us examples of how to live our lives, through His actions. Then He comes up with the supreme example of sacrificing Himself for the sins of the world, a sacrifice we must find ways to apply to our own lives. In love He lived for us, in love He died for us, without that love His teachings would have been as another prophet, wondrous, yet lacking the ultimate sacrifice to cement them in place for all times.



It surely is not enough to do works because we think it is right to do them, works require much more than that. True works come from the compassion of the heart, whether we be Christian or other, instilled there by God. As Christians we have the advantage of a living model in our Lord, a man who walked the earth, and came to know its temptations, yet who avoided them, giving us the perfect pattern to base our own lives on.

We cannot achieve our ultimate goal by just faith, or by just works, nor indeed by faith and works if we lack the compassion of love. In 1Corinthians 13 Paul sums it all up, a short chapter that we would all do well to read and reread, until it is written on our hearts.

**I want to know God's thoughts ...
the rest are details.**

Albert Einstein

Video Project Complete!

Jon Burdon

Video Views: 5703 - Channel Views: 593 - Subscribers: 24

What wonderful support I have had from people in getting the video project going - thanks to all the team. Project complete!!! What about the future? Do people want to see more?

We could have meditations for many seasons of the Christian year. Any ideas on which days exactly? Up to now, just a few ideas have been passed around.

Also, promotional videos about i-church would be great. I would like to avoid cheesy voiceovers. Does anyone have any 'proper' skills or kit to do this? I am very much an amateur.

Of course it would also be nice to widen the team of people who are contributing to the project. If you would like to contribute, just let me know.

Also, would anyone like to take over and run our Myspace site? I have found I only have time to manage the Youtube presence. It would be nice to reach out more fully to Myspace with pictures, blogs etc. This is discussed in the forums at <http://www.i-church.org/forums/index.php?showtopic=3436>

Mamma's Teacup

Donna Faye Jones Caudill

The cup is a part of a set dishes Mom received as a Christmas present. The brown cup with the light brown border grew to be her mug of choice. She was a tea drinker.

One of my dearest childhood memories is being awakened in the morning seeing Mom standing beside my bed with her favorite cup in hand.

As the years passed, the cup continued to be her favorite cup for tea. I asked her why she liked the particular cup over the other cups she had accumulated through the years of housekeeping.

"It keeps the water hot," she would tell me in no nonsense way.

The debilitating disease of Alzheimer began to take away her abilities in the early 90s. I had to sit back and watch as the disease took away my Mom, a loving caring individual, deteriorate into a shell of what she had once been.

As the deterioration continued the ability to sequence the tasks to make tea was gone. Although the ability was gone, she learned how to get her tea. She would go to the cupboard, get the cup and take the cup to Dad. It was sad to watch, but at the same time -- precious.

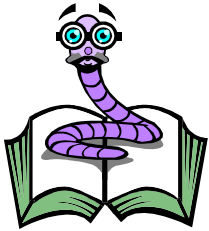
One Sunday as I awakened I looked on my nightstand and saw my Bible. I reached for it picked it up and let it open. The pages turned to Psalm 23, Verse 5: "Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies, thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over." (Psalm 23:5 KJV).

The recorded words of the 23rd Psalm has been in my heart since I was five. I can recite it, I've read it, heard it used numerous times for the text for sermons. That morning I saw Verse 5 in a brand new way. Like Mom, we know what we want, but due to circumstances beyond our control the ability to get it is gone.

Just as Mom would know how to get her tea, we can do the same with our Heavenly Father. Reach down in the cupboard of your heart, get your cup, and take it to Him and let him fill it.



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Book Review

Jayne Tite

GRACE LIKE A RIVER - Christopher Parkening

I'm cheating a little on this one as I have already been asked to write a review for our provincial paper, one of the rare occasions when they review a Christian book.

This is the story of one of the world's top classical guitarists, in fact some would say the top one. As a child he was brought up in a very basic form of Christianity, but as the years passed so did any grounding in the faith he might have had. He was also a top grade angler, winning a number of awards for fly fishing. In both his learning of the guitar and his fishing, he was encouraged and coached by his father along with many other names famous in their respective fields. Among these was Andreas Segovia, who taught Christopher much, both directly and indirectly.

Spurred on by rampant ambition to retire to the good life at 30 years of age, this man achieved in 15 years of public appearances what many equally talented find it hard to do in a lifetime. Yet with retirement came dissatisfaction with life, and from that dissatisfaction came an urge to find out more about Christianity, and the beginning of a journey that was to reshape the life he had envisioned for himself.



While this is a book of Christian witness, it is one of the more gentle ones. No massive visions or large miraculous cures, just a straight forward story of one man's life and journey to faith, with the small miracles that occur in many a life given to God. Alongside this journey are short accounts of his fishing exploits, dovetailed between the chapters often indirectly illustrating aspects of his life as a world class guitar player.

If you enjoy the classical guitar, or are interested in fly fishing this could be a book for you, giving insights into both as well as insights into his personal growth into the faith and how he came to use his music to glorify God.

As a bonus my copy came with a 20 minute CD of his later music, headed by 'Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring', which, if nothing else awakened again in me enjoyment of beautiful guitar music.

Grace Like a River - Christopher Parkening - Tyndale House publishers, Illinois - 2006

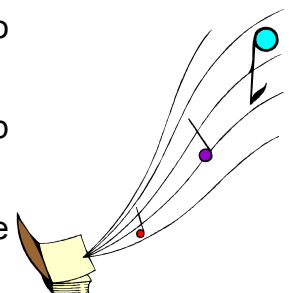
ISBN 13:978-1-4143-0046-7 (Hard cover) 13:1-978-1-4143-0047-4 (Soft cover)

Music

J S Bach said, 'All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul's refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hub-bub.'

He headed his compositions: 'J J' 'Jesus Juva' which means 'Jesus help me'.

He ended them 'S D G' 'Soli Dei gratia' which means 'To God alone the praise'.



Extending our Reach

Special correspondent

Many readers will be aware of the connection between i-church and the Mission to Seafarers, whereby seafarers who are away from home can log in via their computers and receive pastoral care and support from the MtS pastors.

This concept was recently extended to a second group of workers who find it difficult to access their pastors while away from home. I am delighted to report that the US based **Sykscraper Personnel Organising Outside Facilities** have recently signed up with i-church so that their workers can access our services whilst on their tea breaks. Spokesperson, Miss April Fooley told our reporter that it takes so long to reach the ground from the top of the tallest buildings that the steel erectors were



unable to reach their place of worship in time which was breaching their constitutional rights. The link up with i-church now means they can join in with worship from their PDAs atop the tallest buildings. (see photo, above)



In a parallel move, the **Chinese Organisation of Builders, Bricklayers, Lighting Engineers, Restorers and Surveyors** has also started to use the i-church web site to allow their Christian workforce access to worship, although they stressed that this is only possible during their free time. i-church's international breadth was reinforced when UK based **British Organisation of Girder Users and Suppliers** read about the US led initiative in their in-house magazine (Sky High) and their Head of Builders (Bob) rang his counterpart in New York to find out all about this innovative concept. As a result, building site

workers across the UK can now access their own Fellowship Group to share their personal experiences together.

Recognising that the PDAs needed for accessing i-church are liable to damage when carried on building sites, investigations are underway with suppliers of padded PDA cases. These will be available to purchase by the builders and will carry the logos of their professional organisation and i-church. Incorporated in the PDA cases will be a retractable reinforced cord so that PDAs can be tied to the nearest girder as an added safety precaution.

Some of the workers are too poor to afford their own PDAs so arrangements have been made with a charitable organisation, **Christian Outreach Partnership**, to offer help in the form of grants to the neediest workers. This is a charity that has constantly moved with the times. Initially set up by wealthy and pious women to provide horses for itinerant preachers associated with John Wesley, it has also bought instruments for Salvation Army bands and is now providing technology to enable people to access exciting new Christian projects such as our own.

i-church Elections

Council elections take place in the last week of April



It is the time of year in the Church of England when, apart from all the preparations for Easter, parochial church councils all over the world are arranging elections to their Church Councils, and i-church is no different.

The election was announced on March 30th; nominations are invited between April 9th and April 23rd with the election starting immediately after close of nominations and ending on April 30th. There are 4 (four) vacancies this year, three to serve for 3 years until 2010 and the fourth to serve for 2 years until 2009.

So, how is Council made up and why are there 4 vacancies? Council is comprised of a number of ex officio members and a number of elected members. The ex officio members are the formally appointed Pastors (Russell, Joe and Helen) and the Treasurer (when we appoint a Technical Manager she/he will also be an ex officio Council member). Eventually we will have 9 elected Council members, each serving for 3 years, with one third of the nine retiring each year.

During 2007 Helen was appointed as a Pastor and so changed from being an elected member to an ex officio member, which is why we have one vacancy for the remaining 2 years of her original term. In addition we will elect three Council members to serve until 2010.

After the elections we will have 3 Council members serving until 2009 and three until 2010. Next year we will elect a further 3 Council members to serve until 2011, bringing our Council up to the maximum size determined by our Trustees.

Council matters are dealt with in a separate closed forum, and all activity takes place online. This means that there is no meeting to get to, and all discussions and votes in Council take place over (typically) a two week period. This means that Council members can live anywhere in the world.

So, how do you become a Council member? As with other elections, candidates need to be members of i-church and proposed and seconded by other members of i-church. For this election, a member of i-church is defined as anyone who has signed the roll on or before March 30th - this will include everyone who was previously a Community Member or an Individual Member prior to March 9th 2007 plus anyone who has joined i-church AND signed the roll between March 10th and March 30th 2007. Nominations should be sent to the Helen (Helen W, Assistant Pastor).

Candidates may, if they wish, provide a supporting statement. This should be sent to the Council Secretary (PM or email Susanna C), who will publish in the i-church forums. Such a statement is free format and may, for example, say something about the candidate and why they would wish to serve on Council.

Nominations close at 09:00 GMT (10:00 BST) on April 23rd. The complete list of candidates will be posted and electronic voting will commence immediately, using a Single Transferable Vote (STV) methodology. Members will be invited to rank the candidates in their preferred order, ranking as many or as few candidates as they wish. So, for example, if there are 9 candidates you can rank them 1-9, or simply rank only 4 candidates, or only 6 or however many you wish. The rankings will be used to determine the successful candidates. For more details of the election process, take a look at <http://www.i-church.org/cms/docs/council-election-rules/>.

Finally, our grateful thanks go to Barbara Lee, John Scholefield and Peter Watkins who have retired from Council in 2007.

Recipe by Jayne

Here's a fairly simple finger food item, handy for parties, and pre meal drinks. Easy to prepare, the only ingredient you may not have to hand is the Parmesan cheese. (You can buy this ready grated.)

Parmesan Puffs

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup whole milk

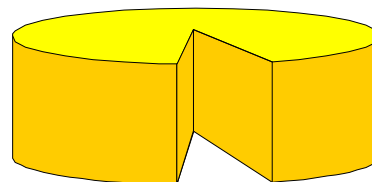
1/2 cup unsalted butter

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup Plain flour

5 eggs

1-1/2 cups freshly-grated Parmesan cheese. (Watch yer wee fingers as you grate this stuff, it's hard, and you could end up with parmesan and finger puffs.)



TO PREPARE:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. (180 - 190)

Grease 1 baking sheet.

In a saucepan over high heat, combine milk, butter and salt, and bring to a boil. Remove pan from heat, add flour and whisk vigorously for a few minutes. Return pan to medium heat and stir constantly for approximately 5 minutes or until batter has thickened and begins to pull away from sides of pan.

Remove pan from heat again and whisk in 4 of the eggs, one at a time, incorporating each egg before adding the next. Stir in 1 cup of Parmesan cheese.

Drop the batter by teaspoonfuls onto a prepared baking sheet, spacing them at least 1 inch apart.

In a small bowl, beat remaining egg. Brush tops of puffs with beaten egg and sprinkle with remaining Parmesan cheese. Reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake 15 to 20 minutes or until puffy and well-browned.

YIELD: 20 puffs.

Your Trash is worth Cash!

Jennifer D

Your office trash can be worth thousands of pounds to i-church!

Office materials that normally end up in the bin - toner and inkjet printer cartridges, and old mobile phones - can be recycled to raise valuable funds for i-church. If you're guilty of throwing away used printer cartridges and other recyclable office materials, read on!

i-church has teamed up with leading recyclers at the Recycling Appeal in an environmentally friendly fundraising scheme. Every time you donate a cartridge or old mobile phone to the i-church Recycling Appeal, i-church will earn cash. Recycling Appeal sends i-Church money for every mobile phone, inkjet cartridge (except Epson), and PDA which raises much needed funding.

i-church's Recycling Appeal is an easy way to help the environment while supporting a great cause. Our organisation is currently working to raise much needed funds to maintain our Christian community and with your support, we are confident our Recycling Appeal will be a great success.

Not only will your participation in the i-church's Recycling Appeal raise the organisation much needed funds, recycling allows you to make a positive impact on the environment.

Rob Morton of the Recycling Appeal says: "Throwing away old mobile phones and used printer cartridges sends them to landfill sites where they become part of our nation's growing waste problem. The vast majority of mobile phones contain toxic substances, which can leak into the surrounding soil and pollute it, and printer cartridges take hundreds of years to biodegrade. Why not use these products for something good? Send them to the i-church Recycling Appeal and they will be refurbished and re-used. Some of the mobile phones even end up in developing countries where little or no landline infrastructure exists, meaning your old mobile could provide a lifeline for someone."

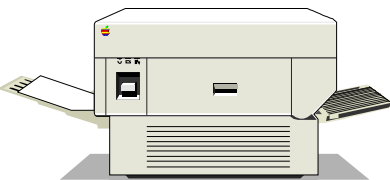


So put your old mobile phones, inkjet and toner printer cartridges to one side. The Recycling Appeal provides free collections if you have more than ten items, and freepost envelopes if you have less. You can also request recycling envelopes from us. These envelopes will also be sent to you whenever you buy something from the i-church shop. To get more details and begin recycling, visit www.recyclingappeal.com and follow the guide at the end of this article or call the Recycling Appeal team on 08451 30 20 10. Use your trash to help the environment and support i-Church. It won't cost you a penny.

A Few Facts (from recyclingappeal.com)

Printer Cartridges

More than 1.1 billion inkjet cartridges are used annually around the world - laid end to end this would be 129 times as long as the Great Wall of China. Approximately 3.5 litres of oil are required to produce each new laser printer cartridge and 90 ml of oil is used to produce each inkjet cartridge. Each discarded empty laser printer cartridge adds approximately three pounds of waste to our landfills. The plastic used in a typical cartridge is made of engineering grade polymers and is expected to take up to 1000 years to decompose.



More than 30 million inkjet cartridges are dumped each year in the UK (1800 tonnes) - the same weight as 18 Blue Whales. Industry analysts estimate a spent cartridge can be reused or remanufactured between 3 to 7 times - every cartridge remanufactured is one fewer going directly to the landfill. 20-30% of all cartridges sold worldwide are remanufactured.

Mobile Phones

23 million new mobile phones were purchased in the UK in 2004. It is expected that one billion handsets will be sold each year by 2009. There are about 50 million mobile phone subscribers in the UK. The average mobile phone user will replace their handset once every 18 months. It is estimated that less than 20% of all unused mobile phones in the UK are currently recycled. Estimates state that close to 90 million phones are hiding in drawers and cupboards across the UK (11250 tonnes) - these weigh almost six times as much as the London Eye!

Mobile phones contain substances which need to be disposed of in safe and efficient manner:

The cadmium in the battery from a single old phone could seriously contaminate 600,000 litres of water, enough to fill a third of an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Cadmium is being phased out of new batteries.

Lead - which affects the immune, endocrine and central nervous systems, and causes serious damage to children's brains - is used to solder components to the printed wiring boards.

Brominated flame retardants, used in wiring boards and plastic cases, have been associated with cancer, liver damage and problems with the neurological, immune and endocrine systems.

Beryllium, which can cause serious lung damage, is used in contacts and springs and highly toxic dioxins can be emitted if the phones are incinerated in waste plants.

Step By Step Guide To Arranging Recycling

Go to <http://www.recyclingappeal.com/index.asp>

Click on recycle now button.

Enter how many of each item you have for recycling.

When completing your details section, in the “collecting for” drop down box select other.

Where it says “organisation name” please put i-church.

The “address” is your address.

In the “how did you hear about.. “ in the drop down menu select referral from recycling appeal customer.

Click the submit button.

The recycle appeal staff will contact you to arrange collection or posting of your recycling items.



How to join i-church

Not everyone who reads The NET is a member of i-church, and if that applies to you, please read on . . . It is great to find you reading our newspaper. Hopefully reading these pages will whet your appetite to find out more about us.

If you go to our main website, www.i-church.org you will find lots of information about i-church, what we do, when we do it etc and if this sounds like the kind of church you would like to belong to, please do ask to join.

We have members in the UK, Europe, The United States, Caribbean, South America, Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. We are very much a world wide broad church, and there is usually someone around, somewhere in the world 24 hrs a day.

Whilst we are formally part of the Church of England, we have members of many denominations and varied churchmanship. It is our diversity which makes i-church such an interesting place to be. And you can be a member of both i-church AND a more conventional bricks and mortar church at the same time.

Stamp appeal

The Power Station, London, is headed by Ian and Jill Bunyan, who are also i-church members. They would love to hear from anyone who would consider passing on any old unwanted stamps, or who would consider making a financial donation. They are working to collect £6730 to build a church Andhra Pradesh, Southern India.



In the past, money has been raised to buy Bibles in the local language. The charity feeds, clothes and provides medical aid for the very poor people of the area. It also looks after a growing number of homeless children.

This is an opportunity to use something you would probably simply throw away, to really impact the lives of people.

Ian and Jill would love to hear from you, if you can help. They can be contacted on thepowerstation@gmail.com .

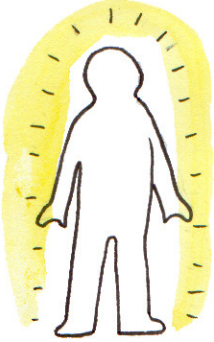
For further information on the ministry, go to <http://www.thepowerstation.org>.

Further information about this appeal can be found in The NET Issue #6.

Poem

Opening the Window Jill Bunyan

As a man awakes from a deep slumber
So my soul stirs, stretches and seeks
to shake off all thoughts of sleep
A light shines in a place long covered in shadow and darkness
A window opens and a light breeze blows through dispersing dust
and a stale, musty smell
freshening the air.
A voice calls gently, coaxing - Step forward
Move out of the darkness and into my light, my love, my will
You are my precious child in whom I delight
No matter where you are - I am with you
No matter what you go through - I am there
I feel your pain
Your frustration
I see and cry your tears
Each tear is as precious as it is painful
I weep for my world, my children, my church - I
weep for you
Walk with me, talk with me, spend time with me
as you used to
I miss you spending time with me
Trust me, believe in me - I will never let you down or let you go
Your name is written on the palm of my hand and across my heart.



Be Thankful

Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire.
If you did, what would there be to look forward to?
Be thankful when you don't know something, for it gives you the opportunity to learn.
Be thankful for the difficult times. During those times you grow.
Be thankful for your limitations, because they give you opportunities for improvement.
Be thankful for each new challenge, because it will build your strength and character.
Be thankful for your mistakes. They will teach you valuable lessons.
Be thankful when you're tired and weary, because it means you've made a difference.
It's easy to be thankful for the good things.
A life of rich fulfilment comes to those who are also thankful for the setbacks.
Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive.
Find a way to be thankful for your troubles, and they can become your blessings.

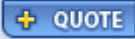
Forum Tip


Paul Walker

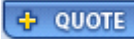
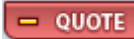
Multi Quoting for Dummies



Hopefully, if you followed the previous guide you'll have figured out how to use the quote function to include some or all of a previous post in your reply.


In this guide, we're going to see how you can go one stage further and master the art of 'multi quoting' – which means including more than one post in your reply. Don't worry it's not as hard as it sounds!

OK, first up you'll need to locate this button . There is one of these on every post in the thread, so you'll see them all over the place!

What you need to do is to click on  button for every post that you're going to want to be quoting from. Don't worry – you can click more than one of these babies without switching off the one you pressed before.

And just to make things easier, when you press the  button it, the plus sign turns to a minus sign and it turns red, like this .

Once you've got all the  buttons you need, you hit  and you'll be presented with a posting window with all of your 'red' quotes already copied in. You can then edit down those posts if you like and type your replies.

TIP Don't hit the  button – you'll end up quoting only that post.

Try and make sure that your reply is correctly 'parsed' – that means the every [QUOTE] tag must have a corresponding [/QUOTE] tag. Otherwise you'll end up with a mess of incomprehensible stuff!

TIP Your reply has to go between the end quote tag of the post of your are quoting [/QUOTE] and the open quote tag [QUOTE] of the next post. Bear that in mind and you should be fine

Follow this simple guide and you'll soon be multi quoting like a pro....

Previous Forum Tips

You may have missed some issues of The NET and so be unaware of what has been covered before as forum tips. Below is a list of what our techies have shared in the past 7 issues. If you have any question about the technical side of i-church that you would like help with just send a PM to Phil and the answer will arrive in the next issue. For back issues of The NET go to our external website at <http://www.i-church.org/cms/category/the-net-newspaper/>.

Issue 1 Avoiding inadvertent smiley faces; finding your recent posts.

Issue 2 A guide to various buttons on posts.

Issue 3 A guide to using the gallery.

Issue 4 Using board settings to save bandwidth.

Issue 5 How to have two separate windows open at once.

Issue 6 Putting links to other web pages into posts without having to type the whole link in as text.

Issue 7 Quoting in posts.



Scrooge writes

If this were the Christmas holiday rather than Easter, I'd be able to start off this piece with "Bah Humbug" . But I can't. Not only is it not Christmas, but I have to report that the generosity of i-church members does appear to be on the increase, thanks to a couple of new donors who have discovered the delights of internet banking and have transferred money from their bank account into the i-church coffers.

As a result Scrooge has been able to draw down some matched funding from the Cutting Edge fund—you may remember we said that for every £1 donated by members, we would get twice as much as a grant! In other words, the more we help ourselves, the more we can get help from the Cutting Edge Fund.

This is really worth doing—since January 2007 our members have donated (through standing orders, directly or by using the internet donation button on our external site) almost £1,388—which means we can claim a double matched funding grant of £2,776! That is, of course, fantastic news but we need to do even more if we are to be able to continue to pay our way through 2008 and beyond.

We are looking at a number of ideas to help raise funding—Jennifer Ducker has been doing fantastic work behind the scenes to set up the re-cycling for cash concept and we have an ebay Shop under discussion—watch this space, and don't throw out any junk just yet! What is junk to you can fetch good money on ebay!

Please do give whatever you can to help support i-church; it will not be very long before we are very much financially standing on our own two feet, and the only way we will be able to remain viable is if we raise the cash we spend on stipends, technology and webspace. Thanks, Scrooge.

Worship in i-church

The current times are shown on the right. There is always the opportunity to offer extra worship times. These need not be daily but could be weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

There are a wide range of worship styles on offer so there should be something that appeals to almost everyone. There are still opportunities for new Leaders to come forward—this is not as daunting as it may sound and a number of people have started a new ministry in worship through i-church. This really is a place where every member ministry is encouraged and flourishes.

In addition to the advertised times, there are special services on occasion. During Holy Week there have been special services arranged for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday in addition to the normal times of worship which will have appropriate content for the season. Meditations have also been posted for those who wish to use the material alone.

Service Times

Keep this guide by your computer to help you remember when all the service times are. There is space for you to write in the local equivalent times:

<u>Worship</u>	GMT
Mon to Sat	08:00
Sunday	09:00
Daily	20:00 & 21:00
As advertised	11:00
<u>Open House—Tuesdays</u>	
Study	19:00
Chat	19:30
Worship	20:00

NB - These are GMT times. Daylight saving, or Summer time changes have affected many countries in March. You can now get services in your local time on the member Home Page. Check it out.