

THE NET

The Newspaper of i-church
www.i-church.org

Sacrifice

For once I find myself stumped for words, and not just words, but ideas. For a couple of weeks I have battled with the problem of putting an editorial together for the February edition of The Net. It is not that I have nothing to write about, but rather that I can find nothing that is not too controversial, yet topical. Finally I can put off writing no longer, and I cannot simply erase what I have written, close down, and wait for inspiration another day. Deadline approaches, and I find myself looking at the various controversial issues that are current in i-Church and must settle for one, rather like "pinning the tail on the donkey".

So let me ask a question, is it Christ-like to sacrifice the few for the benefit of the majority? And before people start jumping up and down let me say that I am well aware that one man sacrificed His life that all might find everlasting life, freed from the guilt of sin by Gods Grace.

But that man went willingly, knowing what He faced and accepting the necessity of His act of sacrifice. Throughout history we continually come across people who have given their lives for others, by their own choice, and I am not talking about soldiers in time of war, though these too may come into this category. Voluntary sacrifice, whether it be one person saving the life of another, or groups willingly sacrificing themselves for the benefit of the larger community. In that context I would say that it is Christ-like to offer oneself for the benefit of the majority. Greater love hath no man, than he lay down his life for his sheep.

But what of those occasions when the majority demands the unwilling sacrifice of a minority, in the name of overall social benefit? Should one ethnic group who are in the majority be able to exclude, drive out, or even totally destroy a smaller ethnic group, in the name of the good it will bring the majority? Do

Issue #6

February 2007

© i-church 2007

An online Christian community based in the Diocese of Oxford, part of the Church of England.

not the minority have the right to live in their own homes, where their families have lived for many generations, where they have built a viable community where they shop, school their children, celebrate their religious beliefs, and engage in their local social life with friends and family?

There are those who would say that in a democracy these minorities must bow to the will of the majority, regardless of the pain of loss and grief that such uprooting must cause. In the western world we frequently find communities being uprooted in such ways. Mostly some form of compensation is paid to a proportion of those affected, but many do not qualify for such, they have to rely on their own, frequently meagre, means.

For communities forced into such situations by the so called democratic process I would say, do not give up without a fierce fight. To quote Dylan Thomas, but in a different context to what he was writing about, I offer the following advice, which I find singularly appropriate.

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,

Do not go gentle into that good night.
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

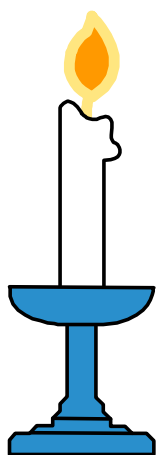
Jayne Tite

Pastor's Letter Russell Dewhurst



Over the last couple of months it has been wonderful to see so many getting involved with praying, thinking, and discussion around i-church's vision. There have been so many good ideas and insightful posts. Following the face-to-face meeting of a subcommittee of the Council, which took place here in Oxford, the Council are getting ready to finalise proposals.

It's too early to give any details yet, but I hope it's not giving too much away to say that the proposals will take i-church in exciting new directions. I hope everyone will find that they keep all the good things about i-church but open us up to more flexibility and potential for growth. The Council have been listening to the whole membership, and we think we are pulling together some good proposals. Watch the forums for more details!



Here we are at the end of the long Christmas season, which finally ends at the feast of Candlemas (2nd February), when the Church commemorates the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. This is one of the two great cycles in the church's year, during which have been celebrating the Incarnation of the Son of God who came among us as Jesus Christ. We now turn to look forward to that other great cycle: Lent and Easter.

In a few short weeks, we will enter Lent, which is the period of preparation for Holy Week. In Holy Week we recall the event's of Jesus' last week in Jerusalem, culminating in Good Friday and then the resurrection on Easter Day. The Easter season then lasts until we celebrate the Ascension and Pentecost.

Every year, in these two "cycles", we recall the greatest events of the Christian story. Promise - birth - appearing. Penitence - death - resurrection - the gift of the Holy Spirit. In i-church as in any church, our worshipping and praying life draws us into these stories as a way of living, a way of thinking, a way of being. We hope and pray that living with these stories will shape us more and more in the image that God wants us to be.

Even though these same cycles, these same stories, come around year after year, we hope and expect that they will have new and unexpected effects on us. The Christmas nativity play may always be the same. The resurrection gospels may never change. But they can change us, in new ways, every time. They are an inexhaustible source of nourishment, growth, and transformation.

So Christianity is always about the same stories and the same God; but our Christian response is always new and always changing. That's partly why it's good and right that i-church will continue to grow and change and respond to God in new ways. Anything that changes and grows is alive; anything that is alive can be open to the Spirit of God. We should build upon what has gone before; we must be faithful to the faith that has been entrusted to us. But by being faithful, we can be led to new and exciting pastures.

It will take a while to implement the new structures and features within i-church. It will probably be Easter before most of them are ready. But what an appropriate time for a burst of new life! I am very excited by the directions it seems God is leading us, and I hope that i-church members will be too. Let us pray that God, who constantly brings new out of the old, will bless and hallow all our endeavours.

In this Issue

Editorial—Jayne Tite	page 1
Pastor's Letter (Russell)	page 2
Video meditation	page 3
Vision "face to face" meeting	page 4
Stamp appeal	page 5
Joke time	page 5
Recipe - coriander chicken with grapes	page 6
Poets corner	page 7
Forum tech tip	page 8
October Meet	page 8
Donations	page 9
Prayer vigil	page 9
Worship Times	page 9

Next Issue will be published on Friday March 2nd

i-church Lent Video Meditation

Jon Burdon

Reaching out to other web communities?

I have been a member of i-church since early December now, and have been excited, intrigued, enriched and challenged by much I have discovered in our community. During some discussions in the 'alternative visions' forum it occurred to me and some others that there are other community building websites out there that have a broader interaction between members. I also felt that our worship together could perhaps benefit from making use of technology to the maximum effect. As a daily user of multimedia IT in my classroom, I quickly saw the potential advantages in the idea of sound and video. I was immediately spurred on by a few other supportive members.

We are aiming to create 40 or so videos. These include scripture, liturgy, as well as modern songs and just thoughts on Lent. I have asked a range of artists and websites for permission to use their material. The idea is that these videos could be slotted in to a busy 5 minute lunchbreak or similar. We are hoping to create a program to take users all the way through Lent on a journey of videos, each day.

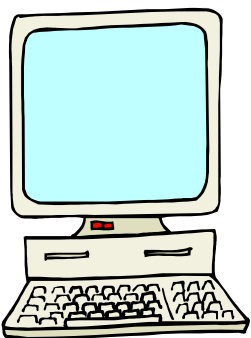
I'd like to invite you to participate in this project, so I'll tell you a bit more. Now that I have been working on this project for a few weeks, I have found it stimulating and challenging. I'm from quite a 'low church' background I suppose, although I have worshipped in lots of different types of church. As such, I find myself lacking of ideas and running dry a little when I come to think about what the seasons of the church year mean to me. The more my mind dwells on this, the more I am attracted to the images and prayerful themes I find. This has been a good opportunity for me and the other contributors to express what Lent means to us. I have also found the process of searching for pictures and music to match words of meditation has been a prayerful and rewarding experience itself.

The count is currently 17 videos..... so of course we need help! People are needed to:

- Put sounds and images together into video files
- Source royalty free music, texts, and images

The software (Photo Story 3) we have been using is free to download and very easy to use. It is just a 'slideshow' type of program that outputs a video file. If

you have ever used Powerpoint or inserted photos in to Microsoft Word, you probably have the level of skills required. Honestly, no expertise is required, and you don't need a camera. I can suggest sites for royalty free photos and text – because it is important to observe copyright regulations.



Please PM Jon Burdon to volunteer, or sneak a peek at:

<http://www.myspace.com/ichurchvids> or <http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=ichurchvids>

If you're busy, or not feeling too confident with your computer skills that's fine. I hope you might feel the materials we produce might enrich your prayer life a little during the season of Lent.

I'm no great expert really, and I'm sure some of you out there work as IT professionals. I would really like some people to add comments about the videos on either of these sites, or PM me with feedback so that the usefulness and quality can be polished a little.

Thanks for reading, and I hope you have enjoyed the videos so far. I notice some have clocked up quite a few views already.

The Vision “face to face” Meeting

Phil Wright

A group of people met, in the flesh, in Oxford over the weekend of January 26th-28th to discuss the vision for i-church going forward. The weekend was very productive and as a result a number of exciting changes are being planned.

Initially, the recommendations from the weekend have to be considered by Council and perhaps even the Trustees. Once approved (or amended and approved!) we will publish the changes in the forum for i-church members but also here in The NET, because our ideas will be significant for all our non-member visitors to the external i-church web site.

Attendees at the Vision weekend were our 3 pastors Russell, Helen and Joe (who had flown in specially from New York to be with us), Alastair Hunter (Chairman of our Board of Trustees), John Scholefield from Council, Treasurer Phil Wright, internet researcher Tim Hutchins, Pastoral Group Leader Ailsa Wright, Stuart Tanswell (representing Individual members). In the picture below you can see Helen and Russell engaged in discussing the finer points raised while Trustee Alastair reads through the very significant amount of documents prepared prior to the meeting.



On the Friday evening Bishop Colin joined us for drinks and a chat at Russell's vicarage. We were able to ask +Colin some searching questions about his thoughts for the future of i-church, and it is fair to say the Bishop is very supportive of us all.

On Sunday those of us who were able to stay over attended Candlemas at St Frideswide's. Joe and Helen assisted Russell in the service, and Stuart acted as one of the servers (and took this photograph on his mobile phone!). Afterwards we chatted with the regular congregation of St Frideswide's before walking the short distance to a local public

house on the side of the river for our traditional Sunday roast dinner.

All in all a very successful weekend—watch this space for news of the exciting developments that will be implemented as a result.



Stamp Appeal - Help Needed!

Ian Bunyan



Sister Evangeline Ashok, and her husband are busy people. They are heading up an evangelical mission in Andhra Pradesh, Southern India. In what is largely a desperately poor, rural area, they are preaching the gospel to an increasingly large contingent of people. The Power Station, India, feeds, clothes, and gives free medical aid. In addition to this it has care for a growing number of homeless street kids, and the care of a leper village. In their most recent evangelical campaign, they have had astonishing success, with 300 odd people accepting the Christian faith. In a previous venture, the Power Station, London, has sent enough money for them to buy some 100 bibles, printed in the local language. Now it is looking at a much larger venture, to raise the funds to build a church for those 300 converts. One such method, is by selling unwanted postage stamps and first day covers etc to stamp collectors.

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. "I feel this is a fantastic opportunity to make a real difference to an awful lot of peoples lives" says Ian. "We can build the church, unbelievable as it sounds, from start to finish, for just £6730."

They 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>. Many, many thanks and God bless.

Joke time.

During the wedding rehearsal, the groom approached the vicar with an unusual offer.

"Look, I'll give you £100 if you'll change the wedding vows. When you get to me and the part where I'm to promise to 'love, honour and obey' and 'forsaking all others, be faithful to her forever,' I'd appreciate it if you'd just leave that part out." He passed the minister the cash and walked away satisfied.

On the wedding day itself the bride and groom reached that part of the ceremony where the vows are exchanged. When it came time for the groom's vows, the vicar looked the young man straight in the eye and said,

"Will you promise to prostrate yourself before her, obey her every command and wish, serve her breakfast in bed every morning of your life and swear eternally before God and your lovely wife that you will not ever even look at another woman, as long as you both shall live?"

The groom gulped and looked around, and said in a tiny voice, "Yes."

He then leaned into the vicar and hissed, "I thought we had a deal."

The vicar slid the £100 into the groom's hand and whispered back, "She made me a much better offer."



Recipe by Jayne

CORIANDER CHICKEN WITH GRAPES

8 skinless chicken breast halves
5 ml salt (can't have salt so I'd just leave that out)
freshly ground black pepper
45 ml olive oil
2 onions sliced
2 cloves of chopped garlic
250 ml dry white wine
60 ml fresh coriander (I just love coriander!)
2 ml ground cumin
2 ml ground coriander
2 ml chilli flakes (I might rather just put in some fresh chopped chilli)
375 ml seedless white grapes, halved
(Other grapes are fine as long as they are sweet, but do try and de-pip them)
5 ml cornflour mixed with 10 ml cold water



Sprinkle chicken with salt and black pepper, and gently rub into the flesh.
Heat oil in a frying pan, (skillet), over medium-high heat.
Add chicken; cook for two minutes on each side or until lightly browned.
Add onion and garlic; sauté for two minutes or until onion is tender. (Personally I always cook my onions separately, then add, as they always seem to take longer to cook than other ingredients.)
Stir in wine, half the coriander, grape juice and spices; bring to a boil.
Cover and reduce heat, simmer for 20 minutes or until chicken is done.
Stir in the grapes and simmer for 5 minutes.
Add the corn flour and stir until thickened.
Serve sprinkled with remaining coriander.

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.



Staying in Oxford?

If you are visiting Oxford, and you need somewhere to stay then read on. i-church member Matt Clayson has fixed up a special deal at the Hotel where he works.

Double/Twin room £90 (based on 2 sharing)
Single £80

All prices include tax at the current rate and full English breakfast. Dinner is available for £20 extra per person in our Library Restaurant.

To book, either PM/email Matthew Clayson, check out the web site (<http://www.lintonlodge.com>), telephone +44 (0) 1865 553461 or send us a fax on +44 (0) 1865 559327.

All enquiries must be directed to Matthew Clayson or Karen in Reservations (or you won't get the special rate!). Bookings are subject to availability.

Poem

What do you see? By Jill Bunyan

Lord what do you see
when you' re looking at me
a servant, a mother a child?
Do you see a cracked vessel,
a record that's scratched - the imperfections in me?

I see one of my children
in pain and distress
longing to reach out to me;
a heart that is loving
and giving and kind,
a child kneeling, worshipping me.

Cracks can be mended
scratches made new
that which is broken made whole.
There's no need to tell me the things that you need -
I was there at the start child, I know.



October Meet at Oxford

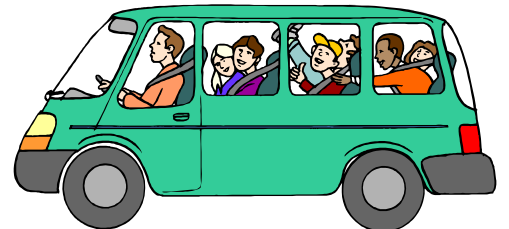
Phil Wright

Some time ago, a topic was started on the forum to arrange an i-church “reunion” meeting for 2007, and given the shorthand name of icUK07. Well folks, 2007 is now upon us and it is time to start the fine detail planning of this event.

We are planning to meet in Oxford on Saturday October 13th for a day of fellowship - I’m not quite sure what that’s going to involve yet but you can be sure that socialising and eating will figure in the day! The important thing to do is to ensure that as many people as possible converge on Oxford that weekend so that as many people as possible can enjoy the company of fellow i-churchers.

We already know that at least 3 members from the USA will be joining us that weekend, so this will not just be a UK gathering—it will have an international flavour.

A small group of members met in Oxford in January to create an i-church vision for the future (see page 4). It was a real treat to meet people in the flesh, to talk to them rather than “type” to them and we all got on famously. . . . October promises to be equally good, and with more people there probably even better! Oxford is a city steeped in tradition so we will have plenty to do. For example, the January group did spend most of the day locked in a room but some of us went to Magdalan College for their choral evensong which was excellent. There are open top tour busses in Oxford, so we might arrange a special i-church tour - we’ll do whatever takes peoples fancy!



Have a look [here](#) to check out the latest details of what is being planned. If you have any ideas for something we might do together, please do add your thoughts to the forum topic or send a PM to Phil Wright.

Also, a week before the Oxford get-together, there is an opportunity to meet in Wakefield, West Yorkshire. This may be of interest to anyone who either can’t make it down to Oxford or for whom travelling from the North is problematic. We will have guests over from the USA so there will be an international i-church flavour at this meet as well - October 6th is the date for your diary. Of course, there is no reason why you can’t attend both weekends. See you there!

Forum Tip

Phil Wright

This month I'll explain how you can put links to other web pages into your forum posts without having to type the whole link in as text.

Suppose you want to ask people to look at a particular web page. Let's also, by way of an example, imagine you wanted people to go and look at the latest sermon posted on our external website. You could write "please go and look at <http://www.i-church.org/cms/category/sermons/>

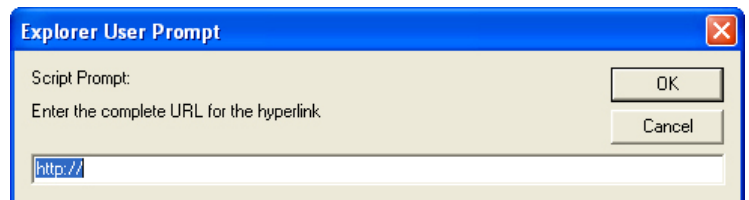
Now, that's quite a mouthful! There is another way, you can simply write "have a look [here](#)". Then, all readers have to do is click on the word "here" and the web page will load in a browser. So, how is it done?

First thing to do is open the web page you want people to look at. In a separate browser window, open a new topic or reply to an existing forum post and then write your text. In your text, say something like "you can see the page here". Now highlight the word "here". Look above the text box and you will see a tool bar that looks like this

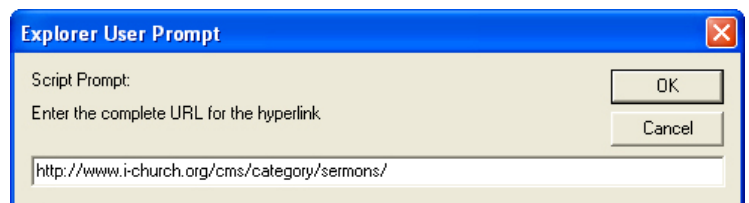


The sixth icon from the left is the "insert link" tool. (It looks like a globe with a chain link below) Click on this. Now, your browser may be set up to prevent scripts (this is a security measure) - if so you will get an alarm sound and a message near the top of your browser screen "This window is using a scripted window to ask you for information. If you trust this website, click here to allow scripted windows . . ."

If this happens, click on the message and then click on "Temporarily allow scripted windows". Then go back and highlight the word "here" again and click on the "insert link" icon again. Now a new window will appear like this. (see right)



Now go to the webpage you want to link to and copy the full web address from the address bar. Then paste that address into this box. In our example it will now look like this. Click OK and the word you highlighted will become a link to the web page you specified.



Hyperlinks are shown underlined and in a different colour—usually blue. This makes them easier to spot in text. That's it—you should now be able to add links into your posts without long <http://www.somesortofwebaddress.intheworld.com> scripts spoiling the look of your postings.



Donations over the Internet

In early January we caught up with all the internet donations that had been made since July 2006—and discovered that £350 had been donated by members—thank you all very much.

Our UK members have a number of methods for giving to i-church; we especially favour regular standing orders through your bank. However, it is perfectly possible to donate online—simply visit <http://www.i-church.org/cms/giving>, select an amount to give and click proceed. It's safe and secure and although i-church will receive sterling, you will be charged the equivalent in your local currency. You will, of course, need a credit or debit card in order to make the payment. If you have any questions about giving, email treasurer@i-church.org.

Prayer Vigil

Ailsa Wright

In preparation for the vision weekend some of us decided that we would hold a prayer vigil in chapel for 24 hours. It seemed right to spend time in prayer as we sought God's way forward for i-church. We felt that as a 24/7 church we should be able to cover the period. It took quite some time for people to volunteer to cover half hour periods and even as we entered the 24 hours there were some times not covered. However, as the time went on people volunteered to do extra times and some who were not sure if they could make it popped into chapel. It seems that in the end we covered all but 15 minutes of the 24 hours. I am sure that helped things to go smoothly over the weekend. I would imagine we may try a vigil again one day.



February Calendar

Birthdays as per Calendar on members forum (in February there are 7 birthdays to celebrate)
February 24th Deadline for The NET—do send your items in for publication!

Worship in i-church

There have been some alterations in worship times in the last couple of months. 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.

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	09:00
Sunday	10:00

Daily 21:00

Compline 22:00

Open House—Tuesdays

Study 20:00

Chat 20:30

Worship 21:00

You can now get services in your local time on the member Home Page. Check it out.