

THE NET

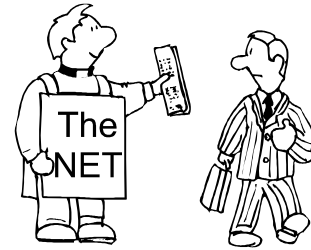
The Newspaper of i-church
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An online Christian community based in the Diocese of Oxford, part of the Church of England.



Change, change, change

The thing about change is that it is so hard to get right. Some people want lots of action, to the point of impatience. I think I might well be like that; as soon as I hear or have a good idea, I want to be getting on and doing. I know of others who are change averse, the complete opposite of me. They are like the churchwarden who was visited by his Bishop on the occasion of his (the churchwardens) 30th anniversary in that post "Goodness", says the Bishop, "30 years! You must have seen a lot of changes in all that time?" "Yes", replies the good churchwarden, "And I have opposed every one!"

Somehow we have to try and get a balance between the impetuous and the moribund. And all in all, I think we are doing a pretty good job here. The very fact that we get complaints that "we are going too fast" and "we are going too slow" in fairly equal measure is a good indication that we are treading the middle ground. Over the next few months the results of all the work going on behind the scenes will become apparent – we are working on a new web site, with more facilities for everyone who is not a member of i-church and that will achieve some of our mission objectives.

If you are one of those who like things the way they are right now (in all things) please bear with us and give some of the new ideas a chance to become familiar. And if you are someone who wants everything to be done now!, please bear with us as we think through the implications of the many good ideas we receive so that when we do implement we do so properly. And if you are someone who finds the pace we move at OK, then you can look forward to many more OK changes in the future.

We are reorganising our internal site, and have introduced some new Special Interest Groups where small groups of members who share the same passion can "meet" together to discuss and enjoy their interest. If you want to know what is available take a look in the Forum Index topic which you will find in NEWS & Information on the member home page. There is even a topic on how to form your own special interest group.

The NET is mostly designed for viewing on your computer, but I imagine a number of our readers also print it out either to read or to take elsewhere. If you do please let us know; and tell us if you experience any difficulties in printing it out. If you want to share The NET with friends, please do so; it's available online on our external site so you can distribute freely if you want.

Phil

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Next Issue will be published on October 5th.

Pastor's Letter

Joe Parrish



Here we are, month two into our search for a new web pastor.

A few of us are coming around to Oxford on Monday, October 15, for a breakfast with our Bishop, Colin Fletcher, and Alastair Hunter, the head of our Trustees. They are deeply into the Vicar search for us at the present, so we need to keep them in our daily prayers, please.

And if you're able to share a bit of breakfast with us, we are each paying for our own, but we would love to know if you could join us. Let me know by PM or email <joe@i-church.org> if you are planning to come, please, so we can plan this a bit.

We will begin with Morning Prayer at 0745 led by the Bishop. The breakfast and prayers will be at the Linton Lodge Hotel where one of our i-church members works; hotel's address is 11-13 Linton Road, Oxford, OX2 6UJ. Near to the hotel (within walking distance) is the University Parks. We currently have the Garden Room at the hotel reserved for us.

Sunday, October 14, at 11:15 AM we plan to worship together at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford, so join us if you can! We aren't actually participating in the service, but they know we are coming and may speak a note of greeting to i-church. They asked whether we were coming 'virtually', and we answered, 'in the flesh!' It will be a lovely sung Anglican Eucharist, so we expect all may enjoy it, be you Anglican or not.

It would be wonderful to see you in Oxford if that happens to be possible for you and your significant other, friends, whomever!

Peace and blessings, Joe.

i-church Council Announcements

It was agreed earlier in the year that we would look for a **Technical Manager** to take on the responsibility for all the technical elements of i-church. Up until now this task has been done by Russell, who had been combining the roles with his Web Pastor duties.



With the support of our Trustees, the i-church Council has appointed Mark Gibbens as our Technical Manager with effect from August 1st. Mark will also become an *ex officio* member of the i-church Council. Mark is a freelance web designer, living in Sheffield, and is looking forward to working with the technical team and all members to create an internet experience that will be world class. The importance of this role can be seen in the fact that Mark will receive a modest salary for his work here. Mark brings a wealth of relevant experience to i-church and we wish him every success in his new role.

Tim H(utchings) has been appointed i-church **Historian**. Tim is currently working on his PhD looking at Internet Churches and so this extra task fits nicely with his work. What Tim will be doing is creating a historical document that traces the history of i-church from its earliest roots until the present day. Mark, our new Technical Manager, believes it may be possible to create a collaborative system on our web site which will operate a bit like wikipedia; allowing lots of different authors to contribute to the developing history of i-church under Tim's watchful eye. Exciting stuff! If Tim asks for your earlier memories of i-church please do dredge your memory for your earliest recollections.



Ps & Qs

Puzzles and Quandries on the Way

Richard Haggis

What is Anglicanism?

“The Church of England is a marvellous church in which it is possible for almost anyone to believe almost anything, but no one does”, so said a cynical observer of the Anglican scene some years ago. I wonder if they would come to the same conclusion these days? The implication that, like the Church of Laodicea in the book of Revelation, the C of E is lukewarm would surely be refuted by the passionate fury that our latest controversies about sex have unleashed. I suppose it's only natural to be passionate about sex, but it would be a shame for the whole Anglican tradition to be shunted into the dead-end of private morality.

Just what is that tradition? What does it mean to be Anglican? Originally, it just meant to be English, and some writers used to refer to “The English Church”, meaning not only the C of E as it came to be after Henry VIII's reformation, but the whole English Christian tradition going back through the Mediaeval period and having roots in the Dark Ages. Since those times, though, “Anglican” has come to have a more specific significance in terms of theology (what we think about God, and how we come to our conclusions), and ecclesiology (what we think the church is, and how it ought to operate).

From the start, the English reformers were very particular that their church was a continuation of the Church of the Apostles. They believed that Western Christendom under the Papacy had gone astray in important ways, and it needed to be reformed, and conformed, to the standards of the earliest Christians. This is why it was important for them to be able to claim that the Church of England, *Ecclesia Anglicana*, was “Catholic **and** Reformed”. “Catholic” meant a continuation, “reformed” meant a new and improved version of the old product. In practice this meant a sort of middle way, *via media*, between what was old and familiar and corrupt, and the radical new and possibly rather unstable ideas that were coming over from the continent (where the true Protestants were to be found). As the Book of Common Prayer has it in its preface: “It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England, ever since the first compiling of her Publick Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variation from it”. Loosely translated that means “We're open to change, but not change for change's sake”.

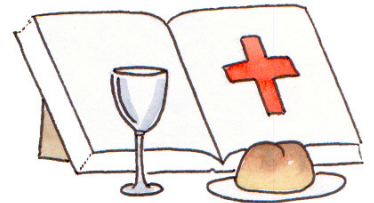
Over the centuries it seems to me – and I realise that Anglicanism is very often written in the prejudices of its beholder – that this tradition has three particular distinguishing marks: it is scholarly, it is liturgically inclusive and it is pastoral. Of course all churches have their scholarly, liturgical and pastoral elements, but I do believe that in Anglicanism they are brought together in a unique blend, one that complements the other Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed and Radical traditions of the Body of Christ in the world. Let me explain what I mean.



From the first, the Anglican divines were men (yes, all men, until recent times, unless you count the peerless Queen Elizabeth I) of solid scholarship. They were versed not only in the Latin texts which were key to late Mediaeval Catholic theology, but also in the Greek texts of the so-called “new learning” – the New Testament itself, and the Eastern Orthodox Fathers. No questions were out of bounds, none were answered simply by recourse to “authority”. There were no authorities – the brain was to be engaged, and answers appropriate to the times teased out. Ultimately, the individual's conscience was the final arbiter (both of theology and of moral choices), for each must

speaking for themselves before God. This, of course, was going to raise a whole lot of questions that people were going to row about, so they also leaned on a new expression of the old doctrine of *adiaphora*, “things indifferent”. This meant that some things could be judged not core to the faith, and so legitimate matters for polite disagreement, but never grounds for schism – formal parting of the ways. Anglicanism became a questioning and open approach to faith.

Its liturgy, most of all the Book of Common Prayer, is seen by many as the great gem in the Anglican crown. The 39 Articles of Religion of 1562 sum up a rather Calvinist approach to the faith, but search the Prayerbook and you will find something very different. “Liturgy” means the public work – the worship – of the church, and you can learn a lot about a church from how it prays together. From the start, being a national church part of whose purpose was to keep the peace, the liturgy had to offer something to everyone (which is why it had to be in English, not Latin). Take the order for Holy Communion. At the time there were great arguments about what exactly happens in this sacrament. Was it just a memorial? Was Christ really present? If so, how? Did the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ? If you read the Prayerbook, you will see that something is offered for almost every kind of view you could hold on these questions. Most important of all was to get everyone there – let them pray together, whatever their private thoughts, or “I do not desire windows into men’s souls” as Queen Elizabeth I sagely expressed it. The purpose of the Anglican liturgy was to bring Christians to pray together, realising that what they had in common – Christ – was greater than what divided them. The C of E became an opt-out rather than an opt-in Church – you’re a member unless and until you decide not to be, and for centuries there was no rite of admission for those who had previously belonged to other churches – baptism alone is the Anglican definition of a Christian, and it doesn’t matter who does it.



From the start the Anglican tradition set out to be a pastoral church, sensitive to the needs and concerns of its members. To some degree it protected the status quo – the private property of the rich and military service, for instance. But it also challenged rules like clergy celibacy. The widespread ignoring of this rule (that’s why so many people have surnames like Parsons and Vickers – their ancestors were the children of priests) brought the clergy into disrepute, but also raised the sensible question of why such a rule was imposed on clergy but not laity. Cranmer himself was married – illegally and secretly for many years – and maybe it is for that reason that he was able to write into the marriage service that part of its benefit is the “mutual society, help and comfort” the couple may provide each other. No one before had thought to add this to the marriage liturgy. In the 20th century, the Anglican churches were the first to acknowledge that contraception has a proper place in regulating procreation within marriage, and also to see divorce as something for which people need care, not punishment. These changes have come out of paying real attention to the people the churches serve. The Gay Question now provides a challenge in the same tradition.



Well, that was a rather longer account than I was planning, but I hope it sheds a little light. Above all, Anglicanism is not a particular church, it is a way of doing things – a way of approaching theology, prayer and pastoral care. The nice thing is that you can be an Anglican Catholic, or an Anglican Evangelical, or Methodist or Baptist or Quaker. Sometimes we raise more questions than we can answer, sometimes we have to admit we don’t have all the answers. Is that so surprising when the subject is God? Anglicans are on the Way, but we know we haven’t arrived yet. For those who must have certainties, this can be infuriating. For those who can live with a little mystery, it is a journey of faith, and hope and love.

i-church Elections

Normally we hold elections each Spring, following the pattern set in the Church of England. With the approval and permission of our Trustees, the i-church Council has determined to hold elections early so that the Council can be brought up to full strength.



There are three (3) places available, and the successful candidates will serve until the Spring of 2011, a 3 and a half year term of office. The Council is made up as follows:

Ex-officio members: Joe Parrish (Assistant Pastor), Phil Wright (Treasurer), Mark Gibbens (Technical manager).

Elected members: Ailsa Wright (2010), Jayne Tite (2009). Jennifer Ducker (2010), Tim Hutchings (2009), Paula Franke (2009), Susanna Collins (2010).

Candidates must be nominated and seconded by i-church members who are eligible to vote and each candidate will be permitted to publish a statement in support of their candidacy. To be eligible to participate in the election, members must be on the roll of i-church on the day before the voting starts. A full list of all eligible members will be published in a special election forum.

The announcement of the election was made on **September 1st** and voting will commence on **October 1st**. The poll will be open for 10 days, closing on October 10th with the results announced on or before October 13th. Voting will be by single transferable vote, which means that electors place the candidates in their order of preference.

Election rules can be viewed by clicking on **Docs** in the member website.

Back to Church Sunday

Ailsa Wright

In dioceses across the country, local churches are taking part in Back to Church Sunday, an initiative which encourages church members to invite those who have stopped going to church, or those who have never attended, to go with them to church on September 30th. Churches will be making a special effort to be visitor friendly on that day and to let those who attend know what the church can offer them.



Here in i-church we are also getting involved. We are having a week of special services starting with the 0200GMT (Compline USA) one on September 30th. The theme for the week will be creation/harvest with a harvest festival service at 2000GMT on Friday 5th October. There will also be services that concentrate on pets, animals generally, Sabbath, St Francis and whatever the leaders decide. We hope all our worship leaders will get involved during the week to give lots of variety in what's on offer. If others want to help with services they would be very welcome indeed.

How do you go back to church in an internet church? For those of you who are already members of i-church, you may want to come into chapel for the first time (you never know, you might like it!). Those of you who are not members of i-church might like to consider joining us. You may not feel ready to attend your local church, your commitments may make it difficult to get there or you may be rather shy about going to church at all. In i-church we are 24/7 and have up to four services a day so it's much easier to find a good time and the lack of face to face contact can make it easier for some to get involved. Why not give us a try? A warm welcome awaits you.



Bible Study Group

Alan Shaw

A new forum group is being formed to discuss the Bible. We will use the “post format” to communicate with each other; in what I think will be a beneficial way. This will enable us to “cross time-zones” to have a truly global, 24/7 Bible study.

The way this will work is that each week, I’ll start a new topic that will include a section of scripture. We will then be free to share our thoughts, questions, concerns, etc by replying to the post. We’ll be able to respond off of the previous messages in a way that I hope will grow into a dynamic conversation. After a while, I’ll start a new topic with the next section. Conversation can continue on all open sections, as long as anyone has anything additional to say.

I am also hoping to form continuity and community within the group, therefore I’d like to keep it small, at least to start. I’m going to initially restrict membership to twelve (1 for each tribe!). If you’d like to join, send me (Alan Shaw) an email and I’ll forward it to the administrator. If there is sufficient interest, I’ll create multiple small groups, so all are welcome.

The first book we’ll study will be Mark.

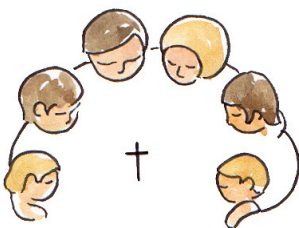
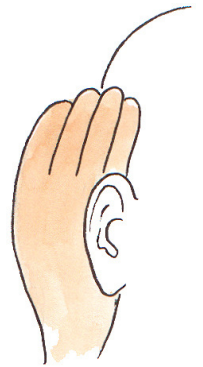
I look forward to seeing you in the Bible Study Group.

Vocations Group

Ailsa Wright

Another new group that is just getting underway is the vocations group. This will be led by Karen Wellman and is for members who are exploring a call to a recognised ministry in the church, either lay or ordained. It is also open to those who feel they have valuable experience they can offer as advisors to those exploring vocation.

This is obviously a sensitive area and the sharing is likely to be very personal. The group needs to maintain confidentiality and will be classed as pastoral in nature, so the leader needs to be approved by the Trustees.



Spiritual Direction Group

Ailsa Wright

The spiritual direction group used to work by email but now has its own forum as a small group under the leadership of James Johnson. The format of the group is adapted from a small group program developed by the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation.

The idea is for a member of the group to post something that is on their mind or that they want to share. While this person is thinking about how they will write the other members of the group are holding them in prayer. Once the post is written the other members read carefully what is written and listen to what has been said with a prayerful attitude. The rest of the group can then post in response, and in so doing will hopefully be used by the Holy Spirit to speak.

The member posting has the opportunity to be really listened to. The other members are there to offer their support and presence. They are not there to solve problems or judge and criticise. The group is pastoral in nature and maintains strict confidentiality with the leader being approved by the Trustees. The group will be kept small but a second group could begin if there was the need for it.

Reunion 2007

In October we are holding the first ever i-church reunion - where members can meet face to face. There will be a meeting in Yorkshire on the weekend of October 6th and in Oxford on the following weekend, October 13th/14th.

For the most up to date information please visit the discussion which is under "The Sofa" (it's called i-church Gathering). We'd like as many people as possible to meet, and we will have i-church visitors from the USA with us on both weekends!

This is a great chance to meet friends in the flesh. Whilst it is wonderful to get to know people via our keyboards, there is nothing quite like being able to sit and chat in real life, so to speak. We already have confirmation that Paula Franke from Kentucky and Nick Battaglia from Chicago (along with his wife Phyllis) will be visiting the UK and joining us at the Wakefield and Oxford events. Joe Parrish will be in Oxford too.

Saturday October 6th

Open house at the home of Ailsa & Phil Wright in Crofton, Near Wakefield in West Yorkshire. Cold buffet lunch, BBQ in the evening. The exact address and directions will be posted in the Social Club forum.

We will try to get accommodation sorted for anyone who wants to stay over. We can try friends and there is a reasonably priced B&B down the road.

Sunday October 7th

11.30am sung Eucharist in York Minster.

Afternoon - Have a look round the Minster, walk round the walls, visit one of the attractions in York, Jorvik perhaps.

Monday October 8th - Visit to Castle Howard for Paula, Nick, Phyl and the Wrights. Join us if you fancy a day out.

Tuesday October 9th - Visit to Fountains Abbey and possibly Bolton Abbey

Friday October 12th - Travel to Oxford.

Lunch - Gee's: 100 year old greenhouse housing a restaurant

Afternoon - look around Oxford including the Upper Library.

Evening - pub crawl with food. Meet at Linton Lodge Hotel.

Saturday October 13th

10.30am Eucharist at St Andrew's Church Oxford, Revd Pam Smith.

Lunch - Far from the Madding Crowd (one of Oxford's best pubs, with food)

Afternoon - sightseeing round Oxford with Richard. Maybe including the Museum of Oxford and botanical gardens finishing with evensong at Magdalen or New College.

Evening - pub crawl with food (carry on where we left off the night before!)

Sunday October 14th

11:15am service at Christ Church

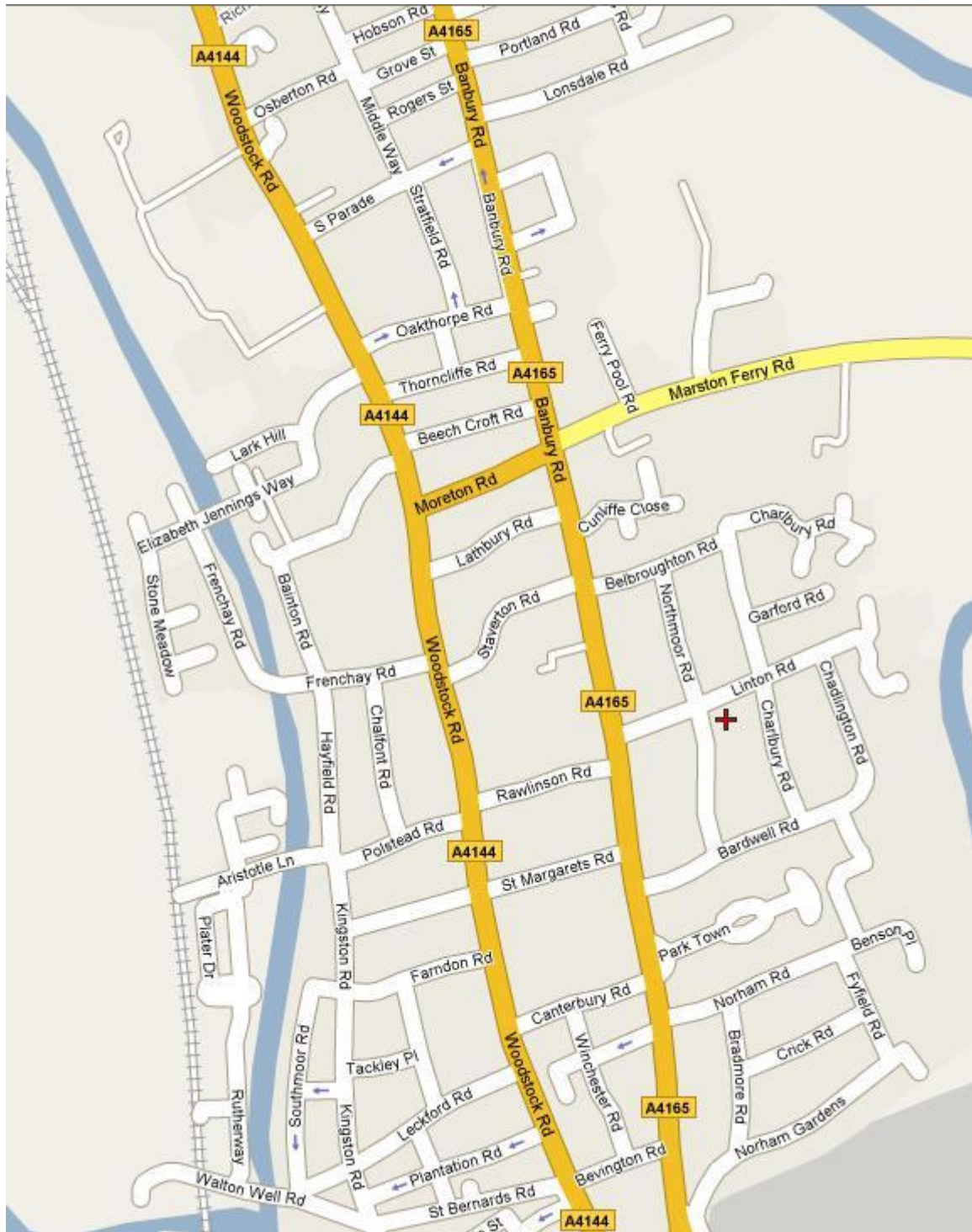
Lunch - at the Big Bang (sausage restaurant, voted Britain's best, local bottled beer)

Monday October 15th

07:45am matins with Bishop Colin in the Garden Room, Linton Lodge Hotel.

08:15am followed by i-church breakfast

Please contact Phil Wright for further details if you want to come to any of these events, especially the Yorkshire ones. Matt Clayson has negotiated a special deal with the hotel in Oxford for accommodation - although as we went to press there are only a few rooms left. See details on page 13. Alastair Hunter, the Chair of Trustees hopes to join us on Monday morning with the Bishop. We look forward to seeing as many people as possible. Map of Oxford on next page.



Directions to Linton Lodge Hotel

From the M40/Birmingham

Take the A34 exit at Junction 9. Continue south on the A34 for approximately 6 miles and take the exit at the Peartree Interchange signposted Oxford. At roundabout take 2nd exit to Summertown, at next exit take 3rd exit signposted Summertown/Oxford, approx 2 miles turn left (through 4th set of traffic lights) into Linton Road, the hotel is on the left hand side.

From the M40/London

Take A40 exit at Junction 8. Take the third exit at the roundabout and continue along the A40 Ring Road for approximately 4 miles. At the roundabout take the first exit towards Summertown and City Centre. Go through Summertown along the Banbury Road and through 4 sets of traffic lights. Linton Road is the next road on the left. The hotel is 200 yards down on the left hand side.

Open House—First Tuesdays

Richard Haggis

We thought it would be good to invite a guest to Open House from time to time, as has been done in the past, and open them up to grilling by i-church members. So, the format will be more a question-and-answer session, although all present can contribute comments and ideas too. Our aim is to choose people whose knowledge or experience we can tap into, both for i-church and our own benefit! To make it easier to remember when something different might be happening, we'll try to keep them to the First Tuesday of each month.

Our first two lucky victims are to be:

On Tuesday, 4th September at 8pm (1900GMT) Jenny Lowery, national president of British Anglican Cursillo, will be present in café to answer any questions you may have.

Cursillo started in Spain after the Spanish Civil War as a renewal movement centred on Santiago de Compostella. Since that time it has spread throughout the world and from the Roman Catholic Church to other denominations sometimes getting a new name e.g Walk to Emmaus, Tres Dias. Kairos is Cursillo for prisoners and Happening is Cursillo for young people aged 15-25.

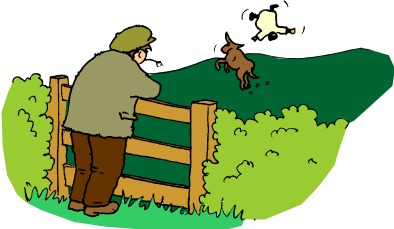


Cursillo begins with a three day weekend, normally Thursday to Sunday but that is just the beginning. Having been surrounded by love and prayer over that weekend and having looked again at the Christian faith, participants go out into the world to live out their 'Fourth Day' i.e. the rest of their lives. They are supported in this by being encouraged to join a small group and by monthly services of encouragement called Ultreyas. There are national gatherings too, this year in Canterbury on September 1st. Jenny will still be on a high from this when she visits us in café.

For more information on Cursillo please visit <http://www.ukcursillo.org/>, but best of all come along on Tuesday night and find out more about Cursillo and its organisation, the weekends and local groups – you might discover that it's the lift to your spiritual life that you were looking for ...

And:

On Tuesday, 2nd October we will have two special guests, Martin and Margot Hodson. Martin is an environmental scientist at Oxford Brookes University and Margot is Chaplain at Jesus College. They belong to Sage which is a Fresh Expression of church taking the form of a Christian environmental group in Oxford Diocese. It was formed in 1990. It is open to Christians of all denominations, ages and backgrounds.



Sage produces a newsletter, Sage Words, which looks at climate change and simple living. It also organises walks such as 'Walk with the Creator'. Practical involvement with the environment includes work at Boundary Brook Nature Park which is a nature reserve. Members of the group also give presentations and preach at services about the environment. So you can see that the link with them in our special creation/harvest week is ideal.

To find out more look at <http://www.sageoxford.org.uk/>. We often guess about environmental matters – here's a chance to ask two real experts what we can – and should be doing – for the future of our fragile planet.

Do please come along to either or both, and if you have ideas for further victims to grill, let me know through the usual i-church channels.

The Youth Group that Keeps on Rocking!

Jacqui H & {Catherine}

That was then

Picture the scene...

Two of us sitting in the church meeting room, waiting anxiously to see whether anyone will turn up for the first meeting of the new youth group. I was 23, with a whole year's experience of working with teenagers (and a few weeks' Scripture Union children's work), so I believed that I was well-equipped for this new venture. My colleague was a few years older and a lot wiser, so he was more nervous. We had prayed hard, done our homework, and agreed that it would be worth carrying on if we had 6 members by the end of term. That first evening, six of the most delightful girls you could ever wish to meet became the founder members of what they named 'Rock Group' (it is St Peter's Church!).



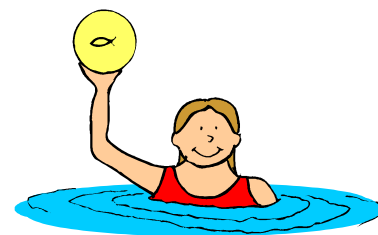
If you had told me my own child would one day be a Rock Group member, I would have said:

1. What child??! I'm only 23, I live in a bed-sit, and I'm not married.
2. Youth groups don't last that long. Young people and leaders come and go, so things will have changed many times before I have an 11-year old.
3. Do you really think a groovy, trendy person like me will still be coming to an old-fashioned, middle of the road church like this?!

This is now



I am that 12 year old daughter, and I have been going to the Rock Group for just over a year. This is the group's nineteenth year, and although my mum isn't running it, we do still have brilliant leaders, who still lead us in various classic games such as "Find Me..." However, it's not all fun and games. In winter we have serious Bible studies, and in the summer and autumn we think about raising money for charity. We act out Bible passages in various different styles and have sections in some all age services at our church. We also go out on fun trips. We have been swimming and bowling since I joined.

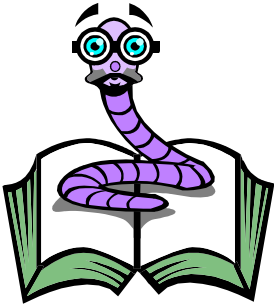


Once a year we have a weekend away in a youth hostel. This year we went to Devon. We met otters, went shopping, went swimming in the sea and even interviewed a monk. On the Sunday we went to church at the Royal Naval College. Even though my dad came with us I had a great time and can't wait until next year!

For me, however, the greatest attractions are my friends. Although there is an age range of 5 years we all get on really well and have lots of fun. Rock on!

Book Review

Richard Haggis



Leonardo Boff: “Fundamentalism, Terrorism and the Future of Humanity”

(translated & annotated by Alexandre Guilherme; published in Great Britain in 2006 by SPCK, ISBN-13: 978-0-281-05797-9; ISBN-10: 0-281-05797-4)

In a breathless 94 pages Professor Boff takes us on a whistlestop tour of all that is wrong with the world, and sets us on track for righting it. So, what’s the problem? At its heart is our failure to listen to people who are different, coupled with a way of handling power that leads to violence. Groups and nations that are too small to go to war, use terrorist means instead. At the heart of the failure to listen is insecurity, and it is insecurity which breeds Fundamentalism. Your different ways scare me, so I am attracted by a philosophy that says being different is wrong – that’s the heart of the Fundamentalist: rigid, inflexible, and judgemental.

Rather sportingly, Boff begins with Protestant Fundamentalism (original and best), before going on Roman Catholic Fundamentalism, and only then to Islamic Fundamentalism. He finds a similar mindset in different places, and judges them to be equally bad. The process of globalisation, economic as well intellectual, has fanned the flames. Protestant Fundamentalism is fiercely capitalist, and although in politics it affirms democracy, in economics the tyranny of capital reigns. Groups who in former generations would never have met, are now in competition for resources, and their ideologies in competition for hearts and minds.

So much for the problem, what about the solutions? The first is proper listening and respect. He takes Francis of Assisi as the patron saint of this process, citing his attempts to dissuade the Pope from supporting the Crusade of 1216, and subsequent dialogue – after imprisonment and torture – with the Sultan. This process will lead to peace, which he sees as “equilibrium”, and which must be propagated at all levels of society and with the environment too. He sees too many people slaving at a life they have no time to enjoy (I think that might go for rich as well as poor) and the bitterness and weariness that creates. The market doesn’t understand love, and love is what life is worth living for.

He cites the example of Brasil as a nation whose people have roots in seventy different cultures but who, in the main, manage to live peaceably alongside one another, and indeed, to mix and match and create new possibilities. He recognises the dangers of complacency and fatalism in this approach, but sees its strength as the avoidance of conflict and violent means to resolve it.

At times the style is necessarily rather dogmatic – in 94 pages there isn’t space to give full weight to opposing arguments – although the only other Brazilian writer I have tackled, Paulo Coelho, seems to have a similar way of making pronouncements. Perhaps it’s a Brazilian thing?



Does he solve the problem he identifies? No, I don’t really think he does. There isn’t space here to explore the ways in which those who are powerful might let go of their power, and how the winners might be persuaded to share with the losers. There is a cycle of violence, but he doesn’t explore the sort of courage it takes to break that cycle by taking on the violence and not retaliating. Maybe that’s the point at which we could have had just a little more Jesus, and a little less Professor Boff.

But it’s a good read, and a lovely vision of the possibilities our world may yet bring to birth.

Recipe

By Jayne

Romaine Salad with Marinated Mushrooms

This is a quick and easy to make salad, that can be served with most dishes. Serves 8.

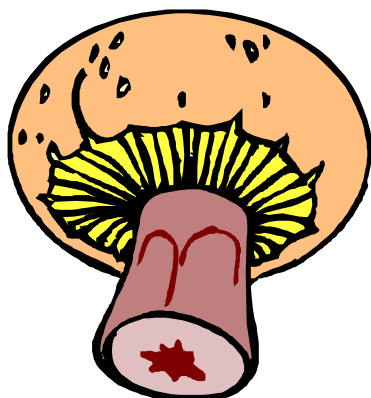
TO PREPARE:

INGREDIENTS:

1 head romaine or other greens. (Try a good cos lettuce)
3 ounces fresh mushrooms, halved
3 tablespoons chopped chives, to garnish

VINAIGRETTE:

¼ cup white wine vinegar
4 teaspoons sugar
teaspoons lemon juice
¼ teaspoon dry mustard. (You can use a ready mixed plain mustard)
¾ cup vegetable oil
3 large scallions, sliced
3 cloves garlic, minced (This can be varied, or omitted according to taste.)



Wash greens thoroughly and rough chop into bite-sized pieces. Store mushrooms by sealing in a covered dish or plastic sealable bag.

For vinaigrette: In a container with a sealable lid, mix together vinegar, lemon juice, oil, sugar, mustard, garlic and scallions. Shake vigorously. Pour over mushrooms, seal and chill for 4 hours or overnight, stirring, or shaking gently, occasionally. (No, you don't have to get up every now and again to stir or shake.) Drain mushrooms, retaining vinaigrette.

Spoon mushrooms over salad greens and drizzle remaining dressing over all. Garnish with chopped chives and serve. (If you wish to add colour, chop half a red pepper and mix with greens.)

What women want in a man

What women want in a man, Original list (age 22)

1. Handsome; 2. Charming; 3. Financially successful; 4. A caring listener; 5. Witty; 6. In good shape; 7. Dresses with style; 8. Appreciates the finer things; 9. Full of thoughtful surprises; 10. An imaginative, romantic lover.

What women want in a man, Revised list (age 32)

1. Nice looking (prefer hair on his head); 2. Opens car doors, holds chairs; 3. Has enough money for a nice dinner; 4. Listens more than talks; 5. Laughs at my jokes; 6. Carries bags of groceries with ease; 7. Owns at least one tie. 8. Appreciates a good home-cooked meal; 9. Remembers birthdays and anniversaries; 10. Seeks romance at least once a week.

What women want in a man, Revised list (aged 42)

1. Not too ugly (bald head OK); 2. Doesn't drive off until I'm out of the car; 3. Works steadily—splurges on dinner out occasionally; 4. Nods head when I'm talking; 5. Usually remembers punch lines of jokes; 6. Is in good enough shape to rearrange the furniture; 7. Wears a shirt that covers his stomach; 8. Knows not to buy champagne with screw-top lids; 9. Remembers to put the toilet seat down; 10. Shaves most weekends.

What women want in a man, Revised list (aged 52)

1. Keeps hair in nose and ears trimmed; 2. Doesn't belch or scratch in public; 3. Doesn't borrow

money too often; 4. Doesn't nod off to sleep when I'm venting; 5. Doesn't re-tell the same joke too many times; 6. Is in good enough shape to get off couch on weekends; 7. Usually wears matching socks and fresh underwear; 8. Appreciates a good TV dinner; 9. Remembers your name on occasion; 10. Shaves some weekends.

What women want in a man, Revised list (age 62)

1. Doesn't scare small children; 2. Remembers where the bathroom is; 3. Doesn't require much money for upkeep; 4. Only snores lightly when asleep; 5. Remembers why he's laughing; 6. Is in good enough shape to stand up by himself; 7. Usually wears some clothes; 8. Likes soft foods; 9. Remembers where he left his teeth; 10. Remembers that it's the weekend.

What women want in a man, Revised list (age 72)

Breathing.

Prophets and Armageddon

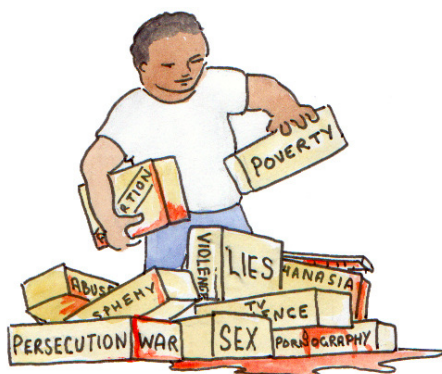
Jayne Tite

I was reading a sermon by Paul Tillich, from his book **The Shaking of the Foundations**, in bed the other night, plus a cuppa tea and a sandwich, a terribly decadent failing I have. He compares today's disasters with the Prophets' foretelling of doom and destruction, portraying a God of anger and destruction, alternated by forgiveness and mercy. I disagree with the latter, but he certainly has a strong point with the former. This started me thinking about what the Prophets were saying.

Many times, over the millennia, they have come close to fulfilment it would seem, but each time a civilisation has fallen others have grown to take their place, new empires to be followed by even larger empires and greater destruction and numbers dying, as the killing power of war increases, along with racial hate and personal avarice. And as this cycle continues so does our destruction of the world we live on.

The prophets tell us that this is all God's judgment on a recalcitrant people, but is it? Is it not rather a recalcitrant mankind misusing the gift of free will, motivated by greed and envy? We use the scriptures to justify actions that really have no justification other than the glorification of self. The

Prophets had no knowledge of today's science and technology, they could not see man's hand in the destruction they were foretelling; rather, from within their own time, they saw it as God's punishment for a wayward people.



Today people want a loving, caring God, and indeed I believe He is, but in striving to cement this vision of the Almighty into our lives we reject the prophets' view of the judgmental God, and in doing so we also push aside the very real portrayal of the world's destruction. Through the Prophets, God has warned us what will happen if we do not change our ways, and it has taken 3000 years

for such warning to start to seep into our minds, aided by the modern day prophets, the ecologist and the scientist. It will not be God's hand that brings Armageddon, but mankind's.

Future empires may come and go, and we cannot tell, nor should we try to, the time of the second coming, but we can be sure that eventually Armageddon will become a reality, and it will be our own actions, over the millennia, that ensures this.

Council report

Ailsa Wright

It's been another busy month in Council. Obviously early in the month we were still concentrating on the work that needed to be done to prepare to advertise for a new web pastor. The job description was given lots of attention and in the end consensus between Council and Trustees was reached and the results were posted in i-church Times. In September we will begin the process of advertising.

Quite some time ago Dr Louise Nelstrop was in contact with the Council regarding a research project into Fresh Expressions of church. This research has the support of Bishop Colin and has been carried out in several churches, including i-church. The research involves filling in a questionnaire. All members were notified of this and within a few days a third of the membership had downloaded the questionnaire. We look forward to receiving the results of Louise's research which will give us valuable insight into our members and what they gain from i-church membership. Louise is also organising a Fresh Expressions conference at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, which I will be speaking at in mid September.

As you will see elsewhere, the part of our vision process that looked at setting up new small groups is now in place. Guidelines for the setting up and running of these groups were agreed with the Trustees and we have three groups now running: Spiritual Direction, Vocations and Bible Study. Already members are showing interest in being part of these new groups and there are others in the pipeline. We hope that there will be more as interests and needs are detected in the membership.

Council has spent some time looking at its own procedures and policies. We have agreed a new way to handle our agenda and are currently looking at the way the Council forum is organised for ease of use. We have also had the agreement of the Trustees to move the April election forward and elect members to our three vacancies in the light of losing two Council members. We have finalised our Copyright and Copying policy which can be viewed in Docs. We have also added to the moderator guidelines to cover copyright issues in more detail.

We advertised for an i-church historian and, as you will see elsewhere, Tim is going to take on the role. We also have Mark in place as our Technical Manager and he is working hard on the new website. We currently are looking for a PR person and have had one applicant. If others are interested in this post we would like to hear from you.



There has been some discussion of an idea that was around last year but not concluded. This was to have Christmas cards designed by i-church members as fundraisers. The discussion seems to favour electronic cards and is now being held for a while until the new website is launched.

Those of us who can get to Oxford for the get together now have a possible extra bonus of being able to meet for Matins and breakfast with Bishop Colin and Alastair Hunter (Chair of Trustees) on Monday October 15th.

Anyone is welcome to attend. Details are given elsewhere in The NET.

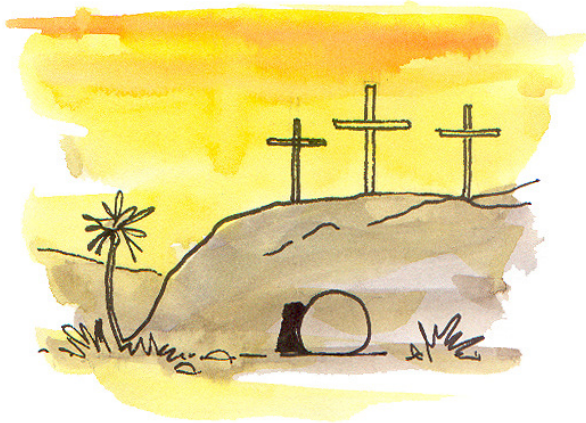
As a result of the Churches Media Council Conference that Tim attended we are getting involved in Back to Church Sunday. We are still working on the full details but part of our response will be a week of special services in chapel starting on Back to Church Sunday and continuing for a week. Extra members have joined the Worship Leaders Forum and we hope to have as many people leading as possible. Further details are elsewhere in The NET.

A meeting was held in Open House so that members could ask questions about the work of council. It was attended by three council members and five others. It was an interesting time when several subjects were discussed and answers were given as far as possible. It was decided that these meetings will be run every quarter.

Names

The gospel message was hidden in the names of the first ten generations of humankind—God's provision for us from the beginning of history:

ADAM	means	Man
SETH		(is) appointed
ENOSH		mortal
KENAN		sorrow;
MAHALALEEL		(but) the Blessed God
JARED		shall come down
ENOCH		teaching (that)
METHUSELAH		His death shall bring
LAMECH		(the) despairing
NOAH		rest.



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.

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.



Scrooge writes

For the first time for a long time we are running i-church without a Web Pastor - it has happened before but that was before my time. The Trustees are looking for a replacement, but these things take time and the summer months (I know, what summer?) are not normally a good time to be searching to fill vacancies.

As with most things there is both an up side and a down side to our current state; at least when viewed from the perspective of the man who counts the pennies. The upside is that for every month we operate *inter regnum* we save all the costs of paying and sustaining our Web Pastor. I should be rubbing my hands in glee, for without doubt, the biggest single bill we "pay" each month is for our Web Pastor's stipend and associated costs. As a rule of thumb, every month we don't have one is another month we can operate before the piggy bank is empty.

So, what's the bad news? Well, that depends on how our members feel in this period of change. You see, some might be thinking "well, if i-church doesn't have a Web Pastor they don't need my money". Well, we do! Probably more than ever. From where I sit, this period is one where we can build up our financial resources so that once we finally do have a new person in post we can afford to pay them for longer! At the moment we can see our way through for another year; maybe until December 2008 if the current level of regular giving continues. If we are to have a long term future we need more than a year's grace - after all we want to attract the best possible candidate we can and that means we need to have as large as possible nest egg to help pay . So, this is not the time to be holding back; if anything we need to dig a bit deeper to build a nice pile of cash.

Worship in i-church

Being a 24/7 church is a constant challenge. We have had several discussions about what would be good times to meet for worship and the best we can manage is always a compromise.

The new compline service designed for members in the US is beginning to be attended regularly by some, not all of whom are in the States. We seem to have some insomniacs in the UK who are attending also. If you haven't tried it yet, do pop into chapel on Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday at 10pm EDT (Sunday, Wednesday & Friday 0200GMT). You will be warmly welcomed.



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 Fri	08:00
Sat & Sun	09:00
Daily	20:00 & 21:00
Sun & Wed, Fri (i.e. Sat, Tue, Thur 10pm EDT)	02:00
As advertised	11:00

Open House - Tuesdays

Study	19:00
Chat	19:45
Worship	20:00

NB - These are GMT times. You can now get services in your local time on the member Home Page. Check it out.