

Am I over-sensitive? Am I prudish? I don't really think so. Have I lost the plot? Well, maybe.

I am, however, struck by the way in which our lives are being fashioned by a recent phenomenon in television programmes which seem to emphasise aspects of being human which go against so much that the christian way of living proclaims. Cast an eye over the schedules and look at the number of programmes which are about individual success at the cost of other people. Just think what their titles are. 'The Weakest Link', 'Greed', 'Who wants to be a millionaire'. Then there is the family of 'reality' programmes in the 'Big Brother', 'Survivor' mould.

It may well be that, like governments, we get the television programmes we deserve, either through our apathy or for any other reason. I don't really think it is as simple as chicken and egg. Television programme makers are very aware of what audiences will bear, and audiences will vote with their remotes. But on the other hand television programme makers reflect the realities and desires of their potential audiences.

So what is going on? Some might well argue that moral standards are declining. I'm not really convinced of that. Others will indeed feel that our society is changing rapidly and that programmes about beating others and the survival of the quickest, the strongest link or the greediest simply reflect our post-modern world in which the individual is far more important than the common good.

'Careless talk costs lives' was a slogan from the Ministry of Information during the Second World War. It had a clear message. It seems to me that the words we use do convey a lot more than the meaning of the words themselves. The language we use to communicate to others speaks also about our values and our view of the world, indeed of our faith. Careless talk may not cost lives today in Hampton Hill, but does cause damage. For the words we use also communicate our thoughts and the value systems by which we live our lives. So the names of hugely popular television programmes also say something about the society in which they are broadcast. Is 'Greed' and wanting 'to be a millionaire' really something we can hold alongside our christian faith? Is being a 'Survivor' at the cost of others, or dismissing 'The Weakest Link' something we can believe is agreeable with our christian pattern of life?

If we want a television programme which speaks of our faith maybe we ought to call it 'Scandal'. This is at the heart of the Good News, the enormous scandal that God never deserts us nor abandons humankind, however much we care to turn our backs upon the love which rejects greed and cherishes even the weakest link. So switch on to 'Scandal' and really set the airwaves humming.

Brian Leathard

CHRISTIAN AID 2001

Christian Aid
We believe in life before death

Many thanks and congratulations to all who donated so generously and collected so successfully for Christian Aid this year. St. James' contribution of £4400 reflects this generosity and success; last year our total was £3130 so you will see what a splendid increase has been made!

Thank you also to all those who filled in the tax reclaim slips on the envelopes; this augmented our giving by about £400 which will be repaid by the Inland Revenue to Christian Aid. If everyone had filled in their envelope slip, about £830 could have been added: tax on even the smallest amount can be repaid, if the giver is a taxpayer.

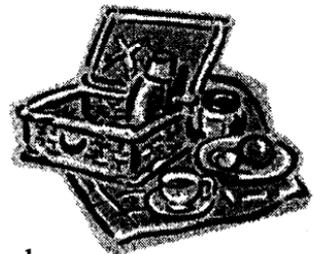
My responsibility for organising the collection at St. James is always made easier by the willing help of many - my personal thanks to you all, for whatever kind of contribution, and from Christian Aid, great gratitude for your splendid result.

Margaret Taylor

St. James's Day - Sunday 1st July

11am Parish Communion with the Band
Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and Brownies parade

A picnic in Bushy Park will follow -
use the gate opposite the URC church and turn right.



Bring your own food - drinks provided.



BOOKS FOR
A BRIGHTER
SUMMER - No. 2

***Eleni and A Place For Us* by Nicholas Gage**
published by Bantam Books
(Both available at local libraries)

Nicholas Gage's book *Eleni*, about his mother, was received with much acclaim when it appeared in 1984. It tells the story of a Greek peasant woman from a small rural community in northern Greece who brought up her five children alone, visited occasionally by her husband who lived and worked in America sending money home for the family. In the war life was impossibly hard, but happy for the children, until Eleni was taken, tortured and shot by guerrillas from behind the Iron Curtain. They thought her a traitor for marrying a wealthy "American". She made her children promise to go to America to join their father and they escaped from the mountain village to a totally different life in the US. *Eleni* tells of their mother and *A Place for us* of their father, who became a single parent to four teenagers at the age of fifty-six. *A Place for us* is the story of every person who has ever been uprooted and plunged into a new life, and of every child who feels conflicting emotions for a parent. *Eleni*, said the Financial Times, is "a book of burning intensity, made the more searing because all the names, places and dates are real".

Read these compelling books, "remarkable feats of technique and of soul", and compare them with *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. As you read imagine the world of the asylum seekers in countries strange and foreign.

Margaret Taylor

SUMMER SERENADE

The Royal Star and Garter Home

Richmond Hill

On

Saturday 14th July 2001 at 7.30pm

Cantanti Camerati - Conductor Geoffrey Bowyer MMus
Musicians from the Royal Military School of Music Kneller Hall -
Director of Music Lt Col G Kingston

Tickets in aid of The Home from 8894 3773

FAITH FOR TODAY

Jack Spong, the Bishop of Newark, spoke at St. Columba's House in Woking on the 29th May. The title of his address was: "Beyond Fear and Prejudice into Wholeness and Faith". He was introduced by the Pelican Trust, a Roman Catholic group who are working for greater participation of the laity in their church's affairs.

It was a remarkable address. The bishop spoke for over an hour without a break and without referring to any notes. Remarkable in itself, but even more remarkable in that he held our attention for every minute. He was one of the most powerful and exciting speakers I have ever heard.

He has had a lifelong burning desire to discover more and more of the meaning of Jesus' ministry. This has led him to intensive study of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and the apostles. It has also led him to a wide and deep study of the first century Middle East culture: its historical traditions, religions, superstitions, legends, morals, politics and the beliefs about physical phenomena. Perhaps this might be said of many priests, but the bishop's studies have led him to some unusual conclusions, some very controversial, even shocking.

Inevitably the culture of the writers colours the new testament. Inevitably this colouring, some very alien to us, makes some of their writings very strange and puzzling. The bishop would go further. He would say that our lack of awareness of the colouring has led us to distort the essential message, treating metaphor and fictional ornament as a factual part of it. He gave many examples. To the gospel writers, (though not to Jesus), women were inferior to men, and could not be teachers, let alone priests. Slavery was not wrong. A divinely inspired teacher would have a supernatural birth. Supernatural events would occur at his death. An angry god can be appeased by a blood sacrifice.

The bishop sees the church today dying because of its attempt to keep the true good news constrained and twisted by such beliefs which form no part of its essence. He has found for himself a Christ who is a man divinely inspired, needing no miraculous birth and death to give him unique authority. Nor does Christ need theological sophistry to fit him in to a unity which is also a trinity. The bishop experiences Christ as source of life and love. He asks us the question: was Christ's real mission on earth to die to save us from our sins, or to live to show us a way to wholeness and faith?

Dick Wilde

Drop the Debt

**G8 Summit, Genoa
20th - 22nd July 2001**

**Website: www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk
Website: www.dropthedebt.org**

As I sit down to write, some words of Fergal Keane in my Saturday newspaper are fresh in my mind. His article was about the moral abandonment of millions of HIV/Aids sufferers by the developed world; victims who already suffer the ravages of poverty.

Fergal wrote of a new community of conscience around issues such as debt in the developing world, arms sales to corrupt dictatorships and the kind of world we want at the start of the new millennium. He added that the campaign run by Jubilee 2000 succeeded in shaming governments into action beyond anyone's wildest dreams and that we all need to start "screaming" about Aids.

It is true that the persistence of large numbers of people has made a difference on debt. Protestors crowding the streets of Birmingham in 1998 and Cologne in 1999 played a considerable part in achieving an enhanced programme of relief (Enhanced RWC for those of you in the know!) and in influencing the wealthiest countries to promise 100% bilateral debt cancellation. Progress has been made, but the 22 countries that have started to receive some debt relief are still spending more on debt repayments than on health care for their people. Even without the Aids pandemic, this is blatantly unacceptable.

And so thousands of debt campaigners are going to yet another G8 Summit, myself included, to try and secure a New Deal on debt that would see 100% debt cancellation from the multilateral lenders, namely the IMF and the World Bank. The G8 countries, as major shareholders, have the power to instruct these institutions to do this.

I know of at least 30 debt campaigners who are travelling to Genoa from this area and we all hope to express our great concern in a peaceful and effective way. Please remember the Summit and all decision makers in your prayers.

Ann Peterken

The Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture has many remarkable techniques for helping their thousands of clients regain their self-respect and rebuild their lives. One of the most successful and inspiring involves music.

Finding a Voice Through Music

Music Therapist Matthew Dixon

will reveal how he does his work

On Thursday 12th July at 7.30pm in the Hall

ALL WELCOME

Please call Halcyon Leonard on 020 8546 8884 if you would like to attend



St James's Church

St. James's Chronicle 1901

THE SPIRE

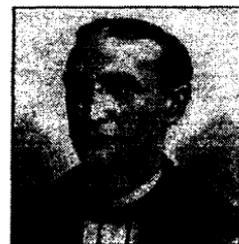


The Hampton Hill Parish Magazine 1901 Extracts from the July Issue

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

The Sunday School Excursion to the Crystal Palace on the 14th ult. was in every way satisfactory. Our total number was 254. We left Fulwell Station at 10.14 am, and were all safe within the Palace in less than an hour. The day was spent in examining the Naval and Military relics and wonders and in visiting the side shows, &c. At 4 o'clock we assembled for tea, for which all were ready. At 7.52 we started for home. The Railway Company had forgotten to reserve carriages for us, and so we had to scramble in anywhere, much to the discomfort, no doubt, of the ordinary passengers.

The Lad's Brigade Band was ready for us when we arrived, and with a great display of flags we marched to the centre of the village, and after giving cheers for everybody, we went tired to bed, thankful for a happy day and no disaster. Nearly all the teachers were present, and they were most kind in their care of the children. The conduct of the children was beyond reproach.



I imagine and hope that all our minds are now centred upon the coming Sale of Work. It promises to be considerably larger than was contemplated by some of us at the outset. The greatest willingness to help has been shewn on all hands. I am very glad to be able to announce that the Lord Bishop of London has most kindly promised to come and open the Sale on the first day at 2.30p.m. I need scarcely express the hope that a very large number of our friends will be present to welcome his Lordship, and he is sure to have some wise words, well worth hearing, to say to us.

At a School Managers' Meeting held on June 21st, it was resolved that a Meeting be held in the Vestry, on Wednesday evening, July 10th next, for the purpose of electing a Manager in the place of Mr. W. C. B. Hall, resigned. Those entitled to vote are subscribers of ten shillings and upwards during the past year. One vote can be given for every ten shillings subscribed, but no subscriber can give more than six votes. Votes may be given either in person at the meeting, or by letter addressed to the Chairman before the meeting. Notice has been given that Mr. E. A. Joseph will be proposed for the vacancy. Other names may be proposed if desired.



I am, my dear friends, Yours very sincerely,
CHARLES R. JOB.

A LETTER TO HEBREWS

BOOKS of



the BIBLE

★ HEBREWS ★

Love at first sight ? No! Just glancing at this letter is not a good idea. We're likely to stumble across animal sacrifices, priestly rituals and obscure Old Testament texts - all leaving an impression of remoteness and irrelevance. It was, when all's said and done, a letter to *Hebrews* - written to Jewish Christians, still struggling to make sense of their Christian faith without wanting to let go of their 'Jewishness', only a few decades after the resurrection.

Only when we're prepared to make an effort, does 'Hebrews' begin to throw a glorious light on our Christian faith in general and on Jesus in particular. Right from the first verse we are told with defiant certainty who Jesus is: *When in former times God spoke to our forefathers, he spoke in fragmentary and varied fashion through the prophets. But in this final age he has spoken to us in the Son . . . he took his seat at the right hand of majesty on high, raised as far above the angels as the title he has inherited is superior to theirs. For God never said to any angel 'Thou art my Son; today I have begotten thee', or again, 'I will be a father to him, and he shall be my son.'* (ch.1 vv.1-5, NEB)

No doubt, then, about the divinity of Christ - nor, indeed, about His humanity: *The children of a family share the same flesh and blood; and so he too shared ours . . .* (Ch.2 v.14)

No doubt about His mission:

. . . he suffered death, so that, by God's gracious will, in tasting death he should stand for us all. (ch.2 v.9)

No doubt about His fitness for that mission:

. . . since he has passed through the test of suffering, he is able to help those who are meeting their test now. (ch.2 v.18)

No doubt about our fellowship with Jesus:

Christ is faithful as a son set over his [God's] household. And we are that household of his, if only we are fearless and keep our hope high. (ch.3 v.6)

Those Jewish Christians were used to having a High Priest between themselves and God - a mere man, not always faithful, acting as a mediator. Well, says 'Hebrews', hang on to that idea, if you must, but

. . . think of the Apostle and High Priest of the religion we profess, who was faithful to God who appointed him . . . Jesus . . . (ch.3 vv.1, 3,)

Those Jewish Christians were clinging to their old covenant with God, with its old animal sacrifices, but those old customs were just

. . . outward ordinances in force until the time of reformation. But now Christ has come, high priest of good things already in being . . . the blood of his sacrifice is his own blood, not the blood of goats and calves . . . how much greater is the power of the blood of Christ . . . his blood will fit us for the service of the living God. (ch.9 vv.10-14)

Having presented Jesus in terms that were so familiar to his readers, 'Hebrews' has two wonderful chapters (11 & 12) on faith, beginning with that memorable definition: *And what is faith? Faith gives substance to our hopes and makes us certain of realities we do not see. (ch.11 v.1)*

and listing examples of faithful O.T. people (again very familiar to his readers) before turning to Christian faith:

And what of ourselves? With all these witnesses to faith around us like a cloud, we must throw off every encumbrance, every sin to which we cling, and run with resolution the race for which we are entered, our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom faith depends from start to finish . . . (ch.12 v.1)

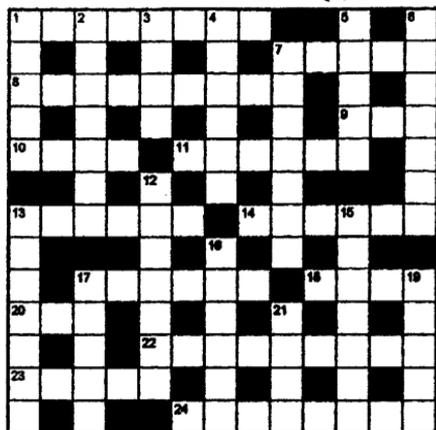
It is a letter about Jesus - who He was and who He is - *"the same yesterday, today and for ever"* (ch.12 v.8), and about our relationship with Him. It is difficult to read, but it really does help us to get to know Jesus better, and that is surely worth the effort?

Antony W. Ball

A SUMMER EXCURSION IDEA

If you are in the West Country, do try to visit the **Eden Project at St Austell**. The biggest greenhouses in the world have been built in an enormous, disused clay pit. The design, the engineering, the planting of interesting and amazing trees, plants and shrubs all combine to give a stunning impression of the wonder and variety of the works of nature and man. You will be fascinated and astounded by the grandeur of the whole experience - I think everyone who has ever visited the Eden Project plans to return to appreciate the growth and changes which are constantly happening there!

Crossword No. 1 (Answers in next month's issue)



Clues: Across

1. Where the sacred utensils are kept (8)
7. (and 6 down) He was stoned to death (5,7)
8. Prepare it on 'Stir up Sunday' (9)
9. Ram (3)
10. He collected what sounded like pears (4)
11. Room in a church (6)
13. Frozen, north and south (6)
14. Taken without permission (6)
17. Planet (6)
18. Deeds in the bible (4)
20. Large Deer (3)
22. Written name at the bottom of document / letter (9)
23. "Light's abode, Celestial..." (5)
24. His day is 23rd April (2,6)

Clues: Down (continued)

- Clues: Down
1. He was called Peter (5)
 2. Opposite of Convex (7)
 3. Object (4)
 4. Subjects (6)
 5. Godliness (5)
 6. See 7 across
 7. Law (7)
 12. Name giving (7)
 13. Sounds like to make angry (7)
 15. Shiny paint (7)
 16. Not dark (6)
 17. Kills (anagram) (5)
 19. Riddle (5)
 21. Kismet (4)



Thanks to all who helped arrange the successful Quiz Evening in May, especially to Brenda Smith who organised the questions and was the Quiz Master. It was a very enjoyable evening and with the raffle raised £106 for Christian Aid.

The Parish Weekend was held at Wychcroft over the weekend of 23rd and 24th June. It was a much enjoyed and appreciated weekend about which we will write more next month.

Congratulations to Jan Crony and to Ramani, who have both have new responsibilities at work.

Iain and Jane Butler have become the parents of Catherine Jane - congratulations to the family.

Thank you very much to all who responded to this year's Magazine Appeal. *The Spire* has received a total of £1668, which will help pay towards the productions costs for 2001.

The Magazine Committee will miss the valued contributions to the production of *The Spire* from Rosalie Meyorowitz and Elizabeth Gossage. We would very much welcome new members to the Committee, which meets once a month to compile the following month's issue.

This month we have been sad to say goodbye to John and Elizabeth Gossage who have gone to live in Wales. We thank them for their contribution to the life of St. James's and wish them well in the future. They will be returning from time to time to visit Jean, but will be delighted to welcome visitors from St. James's at any time. Their address is Coed Canlas, Lawrenny, Kilgetty, Pembrokeshire SA68 0PY.

Our good wishes to Margaret Leatherdale who is in Kingston Hospital. We hope to see her back in St. James's Road soon.

We also send our good wishes and every blessing to the Hampton family as they move to Notting Hill Gate, where Alison will take up her curacy at St. James, Norland and St. Clement. Rose and Katrina will go to Frances Holland School in September and the boys will continue their education individually.

Apologies to Marion Dewey, whose name we forgot to mention in her contribution to Books of the Bible series. Marion wrote about Job in the May issue of *The Spire*.

DATES TO NOTE IN JULY

1		St. James' Day our Patronal Festival
	11am	Parish Communion followed by Picnic in the Park. All Welcome.
3		St. Thomas the Apostle
6		St. Thomas Moore & John Fisher, Reformation Martyrs, 1535
8	6pm	Open Parish Meeting to report back on our Mission Action Plan
11		Benedict of Nursia, Abbot 550
14		John Keble, Priest and Poet, 1866
22		Mary Magdalene
27		Brooke Foss Westcott, Bishop of Durham, 1901
30		William Wilberforce, Social Reformer, 1833
31		Ignatius Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits, 1556

I have an ALMA Link video called "Place of Hope" which is worth a look and available to anyone who would like to see it - please call me on the number below. Also a reminder that Andrew Payne is coming to the church to give an informal talk on his travels to Lebombo a year ago, and the Link in general, on Monday 9th July at 7.30pm. Please come and give your support!

Elizabeth Wilmot 020 8977 9434

FROM THE MAY REGISTERS

Baptism

13	William Nettleton, 66 Tudor Road, Hampton
20	Alice Saskia Mosey, 39 High Street, Hampton Wick
	Alice Elizabeth Shaw, 44 St. James's Avenue

Weddings

19	Peter Carr & Marnie Smith
	Craig Cowell & Sarah Cooke

Funerals

8	Joyce Louise Norville, 75 Uxbridge Road	71
	Dennis Robert Corke, 157A Fairfax Road, Teddington	78
9	Harry Mason Horner, 64 St. James's Avenue	81
10	Elva Brown, 3 Bayleaf Close	79
18	Marge Manly, 20 Hemming Close, Hampton	87
24	Irene Murton, 44 Cedars Road, Hampton Wick	81

COPY DATE FOR AUGUST 2001 MAGAZINE: 10TH JULY