



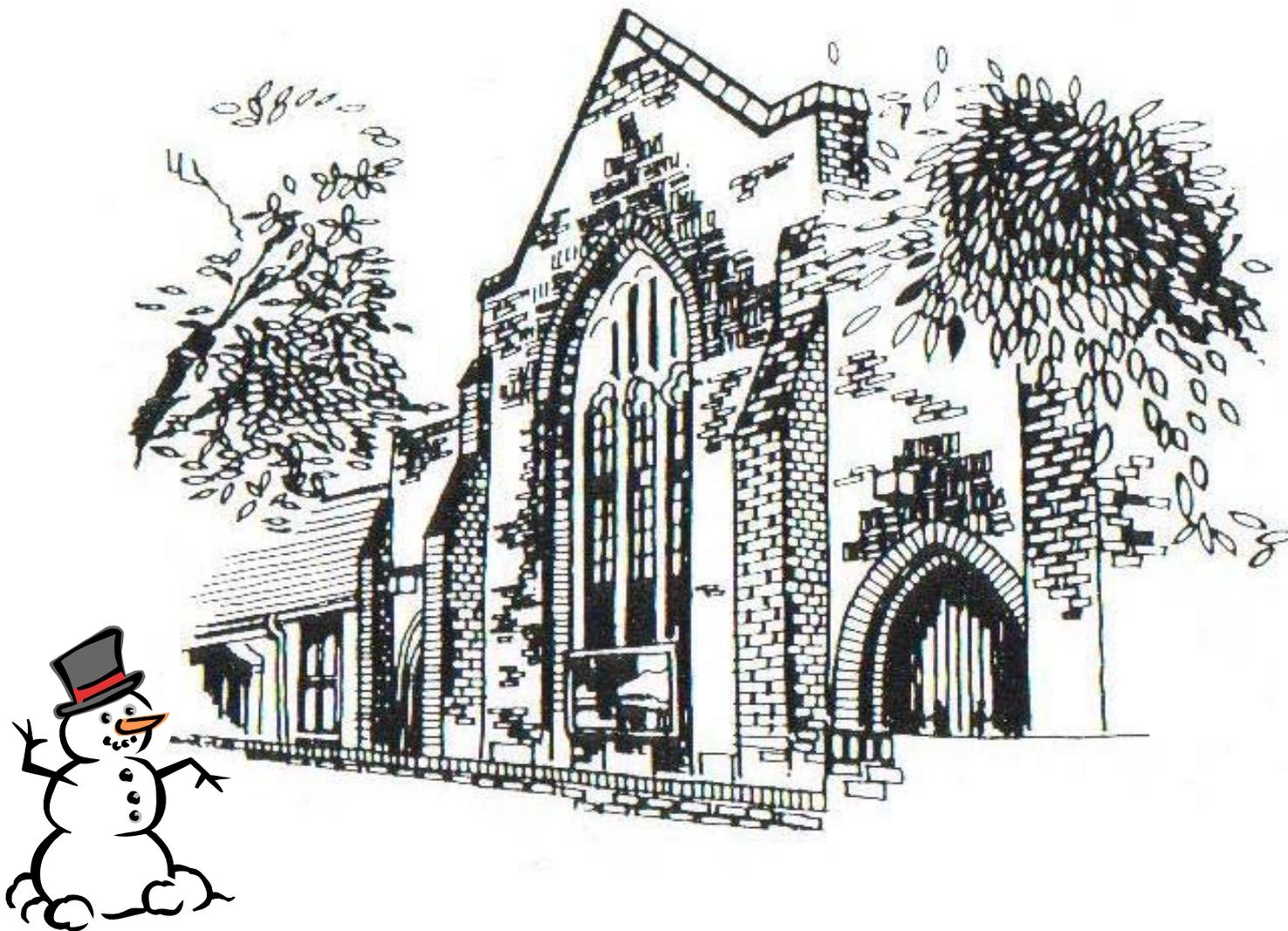
Peace  
on  
Earth



Peace  
on  
Earth

**THE MAGAZINE**  
**OF**  
**HIGHAMS PARK BAPTIST CHURCH**

Cavendish Road, E.4.





# CHURCH PROGRAMME



**SUNDAY SERVICES:** 10.00 a.m. Morning Worship (including a crèche and groups for children and young people)

Holy Communion is conducted regularly within the Services. We invite all who believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour to eat and drink in Communion. Please see the Church Diary (at the back of the magazine) for details.

**Monday** Gathered Prayer 10.00 – 11.00am at the Church  
An opportunity to pray for the life and work of the Church and for the local community

**Friday:** Boys Brigade and Girls Association:  
  
Anchors (For boys and girls in school years 1-3) 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
Juniors (For boys and girls in school years 4-6) 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
Company Section (For boys in school years 7+) 7:30 - 9:30 pm

**Cell Groups:** The cell groups are small groups of people that meet together every other week for friendship, support, Bible study / application. It would be great if you wanted to try one of the groups. Details of the dates when the groups are meeting are available from Jonathan.

Sunday Cell Group : 7.30 - 9.00 pm at 21 Falmouth Avenue, contact Margaret on 8527 3544

Thursday Cell Group: 2.00 – 3.30pm at 212 The Avenue, contact Sheila on 8531 5480

The deadline for items for the next edition is Sunday 17th January 2016  
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**Cavendish Road, London E4 9NG**  
**(☎ 020 8527 8993)**  
**December 2015 / January 2016**

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Church Secretary Until 31/12/2015</i>	<i>Church Secretary From 1/1/2016</i>
Rev. Jonathan Boyce 21, Warboys Crescent, Highams Park, London, E4 9HR  ☎ 020 8531 0620	Dr. G. F. Norris, 21, Falmouth Avenue Highams Park, London E4  ☎ 020 8527 3544	Mr. Philip Slaney, 49, Chingdale Road Chingford, London E4 6HZ  ☎ 020 8524 6258

Dear Friends,

I read this week that the department store chain John Lewis teamed up with Age UK to produce its highly anticipated Christmas TV advert. The comment is that the John Lewis advert has become a festive tradition for many people. Also, that some people say it is the first sign of Christmas. This year's advert features the story of a lonely old man living on the moon. I wonder if you have seen it yet? Apparently it caused quite a flood of reaction on social media. The #ManOnTheMoon hashtag was trending in the UK, the United States and Ireland. Waitrose's campaign features chef Heston Blumenthal. I understand that Boots employed a pop video director, while Harrods have an animated mouse and Asda's advert shows a family decorating their house. The department store Harvey Nichols' Christmas advert features 'Lucy' who receives a series of gifts from her family members. Each gift causes her to pull #GiftFace – it's explained: '...ever wondered what you call that face you pull when you get a rubbish Christmas present but have to pretend you like it?'

I found some comments on the internet from people who were explaining about some of the Christmas presents that they had received: 'My father-in-law is tops when it comes to cheap, horrible gifts. One year he gave me a government publication he got for free at work, something about the history of nuclear materials handling'; 'My grandmother used to knit me an itchy, too small cable knit sweater every year for Christmas. I then had to wear the thing for the rest of the day. As a bonus, she would knit a matching too small cable knit sweater for my dad. I don't remember him wearing his all day'; 'A Power Rangers comic book. I was 15 at the time'; 'Two years ago I got this musical jewellery box from my mum. I'm a 22 year old male by the way. Also, I never wear any sort of jewellery. The worst part is pretending that I liked it. I felt really guilty about not liking it because I'm sure it had some sort of sentimental value. I just sort of put it in the corner of my wardrobe and then forgot about it. She would ask me where it was or if I had put anything in there and I'd be like "Uhm, yeah...see, I really like it. Thanks for the great present mum."



At Christmas we not only enjoy giving and receiving gifts but, most importantly, we celebrate God's wonderful gift of Jesus to the world.

On the night that Jesus was born there were some shepherds on the hills outside Bethlehem. In his announcement to the shepherds, the angel told them (recorded for us in Luke 2:11): 'Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord.'

I read that 'although our first picture of Jesus is as a baby in a manger, it must not be our last. The Christ-child in the manger has been made into a beautiful Christmas scene, but we cannot leave him there. This tiny, helpless baby lived an amazing life, died for us, ascended to heaven, and will come back to this earth as King of kings. Christ will rule the world and judge all people according to their decisions about him'.

The clear message of the Bible is that we all need someone to rescue us (from our sin – all of the different ways that we get it wrong before God who is perfect) so that we can be in right relationship with God. As the angel expressed to the shepherds, Jesus is the Saviour who God sent to rescue us. We secure this rescue, and can experience all that God has for us now as a result, as we put our trust in Jesus and what he has done.

Hence, whether we currently understand it or not, indeed, whether we currently believe it or not, God really has given us all the best gift that we could ever receive.

Most likely thinking of the breath-taking love, grace and mercy of God demonstrated to us in the gift of Jesus for us, the Apostle Paul writes: 'Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!' (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Happy Christmas!

Jonathan



*We would like to wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a New Year which brings all that you would wish.*

*The Magazine Team*



# C VENDOR SH CIRCULAR AR



Recently we have enjoyed taking our two youngest grandchildren to see the Christmas decorations adorning local garden centres and department stores. At seven months and two and half years old they are attracted by the glittering lights, tinsel in all colours and lavishly decorated Christmas trees, although we're not too sure about the luminous pink ones! We are usually persuaded to purchase a small tree ornament or lantern with mock candle by our granddaughter, but on our last visit she went straight for a gold and silver tinselled star placed prominently near the entrance! Although rather larger than the discreetly-sized star we normally put at the top of our Christmas tree we couldn't resist bringing it home and it now has a temporary place hanging in the window until we can put it on top of the tree. It is fitting that the star should take a prominent place in our Christmas celebrations and we will enjoy explaining to Thea the significance of its' guiding light, bringing us to the very heart of Christmas - the birth of our Saviour - Jesus Christ.

While the festive season is a time for joy and thanksgiving with family and friends we continue to remember in prayer those of our fellowship who are undergoing health issues at present. Phil Slaney's brother Steve remains seriously ill but has recently been allowed home from the hospice where he has been receiving care. We also remember our former Church Secretary, Beryl Alvarez and Joyce Stanborough (formally our Church Treasurer) who has been caring for her. Beryl remains at home in Frinton and is gaining benefit from the care package that has been arranged to help her.

Our friend Jean Owen is caring for her seriously ill mother who has been frequently hospitalised recently, meaning that Jean is unable to travel down to help in the BBGA where she has been a loyal worker for so many years. Linda Lewis-Azayear has recently had her long-awaited hip operation cancelled but hopes to be operated on soon.



We give thanks that baby Harrison Dorrington has recovered well from his recent operation and is reputedly now enjoying some delicious 'proper' food!

At our recent AGM the following members were duly elected : Phil Slaney as Church Secretary, Robert Edwards re-elected as Treasurer and Jacquie Lyus elected as Administrator. Muneyi Antoniou was elected for the role of Deacon, Sheila Humphrey and Ruth Underhay were both re-elected as Deacons. Thanks were expressed to all who served on the Church Council. Especial thanks go to our outgoing Church Secretary Geoff Norris. Geoff began his many years of service on the Church Council in 1968 as an Elder and has served the Church faithfully and with wisdom since then in different capacities. He now feels that the time has come to step down from the role of Church Secretary. We thank him for all he has meant to our fellowship and send him and Margaret our loving best wishes for the future. Jason Close steps down from the Council after completing his six year term. We thank him also for his hard work and commitment over this time and for his continuing work within our fellowship.

At the AGM a vote was held to choose which organisations we should support in our Christmas offering. Spurgeons and Waltham Forest Youth For Christ(WFYFC) were the choice of the meeting and we shall be dividing the offerings over the Christmas period to them.

**SPURGEONS** serves hundreds of thousands of vulnerable children in the UK in need of care and protection, helping them to lead happy and safe lives, free from neglect, abuse and exploitation. It is one of the UK's most well-respected charities and has been working tirelessly since it was founded 140 years ago. Spurgeons works at the heart of communities, responding to the needs of children who have been ignored and broken.

**WALTHAM FOREST YOUTH FOR CHRIST** exists to work with local churches bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to the young people of this borough. They have been dedicated to spreading the Gospel relevantly to the youth of Waltham Forest for 30 years. Their 'Big Vision' is that every child and young person in Waltham Forest will hear the gospel and see it lived out in at least one person within each five years. WFYFC also works in schools and churches to develop young leaders.

*JL*



The 17th Pals' Battalion Band was once again invited to lead the Leyton Royal British Legion Remembrance Day parade. Prior to the parade a remembrance service was held at the war memorial in Coronation Gardens during which the buglers from the band played *Last Post* and *Reveille*. Both remembrance events were very well attended - the parade was from Coronation Gardens, along Leyton High Road to the parish church of St Mary in Church Road. Various dignitaries were present including Councillor Chris Robbins, the leader of Waltham Forest Council.

The 17th Pals' Battalion Band was initially formed in 2012 as an 'Old Boys' Band' for former members of our BB Company. However, due to the ongoing work undertaken by Steve Jenkins on the story of Clapton Orient's major contribution to the Footballers' Battalion (17th Middlesex) in the Great War, various opportunities arose for the band to get involved so it was agreed that the band would represent both the 17th Waltham Forest Boys' Brigade, as well as the 17th Battalion Middlesex Regiment. The band is no longer an 'Old Boys' Band', it is a fully active band which is always looking to improve and to provide a service as and when required. Practices are held on a Wednesday evening and new recruits are always welcome.



*Picture shows (from left to right) former members of the 17th Waltham Forest Boys' Brigade: Norman Coe, Chris Thorndyke, Steve Jenkins, Paul Dupuy, Barry Payze, Bob Sargeant and Ian Lepley.*



The band is booked to travel to northern France in July 2016 as part of the O's Somme Tour and will be playing at some high profile locations, including the Thiepval Memorial where the names of over 72,000 British and South African soldiers without a known grave are commemorated.

The band will also include pipers as it will be joined by a number of other musicians. Over 200 people will be making the trip in four coaches and whilst the tour has been oversubscribed for the past eighteen months or so, should anyone be interested in joining up and coming in their own vehicles please contact Steve Jenkins -

Plans are already being put together for the O's Somme Tour in 2018 along with the strong possibility of the band also going over to Ypres with the O's to play at the Menin Gate in 2017.

Whilst the band has a cymbalist for the forthcoming Somme trip it is in need of a permanent cymbalist, so should anyone be interested, please contact Steve Jenkins.

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*And is it true? And is it true?  
This most tremendous tale of all,  
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,  
A baby in an ox's stall?  
The maker of the stars and sea  
Become a Child on earth for me?  
No love that in a family dwells,  
No carolling in frosty air,  
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells  
Can with this single Truth compare -  
That God was Man in Palestine  
And lives today in Bread and Wine.*

*from CHRISTMAS by John Betjeman*





## POST EARLY FOR CHRISTMAS!



Dianne and David Kendrick are donning their postie costumes this year - we are very grateful to them.

These are the delivery and collection dates:

**Sunday, 6th December - EARLY BIRD DELIVERY**  
(no collection available)

**Sunday, 13th December - DELIVERY. COLLECTION**  
after Service only.

**Sunday, 20th December - LAST SUNDAY FOR DELIVERY**  
Collection available after Service only

**FRIDAY, 25th December - LAST MINUTE COLLECTION ONLY.** Please DO NOT deliver cards to Church on this day as there will not be time to sort them for collection.

### PLEASE REMEMBER TO:

**PRINT names with Surnames** clearly, and put your cards in **alphabetical Surname order**. This helps the organisers to quickly and easily sort the cards, while also enabling them to get to some of the Morning Service.

**Please note that this service is for the exchange of cards that are for personal collection or that can be collected on behalf of somebody - it is not for cards that need posting on as normal mail.**

Remember also that the money saved on postage by using this system can go to the Christmas offering!



*The Advent clock is ticking  
the countdown has begun.  
December shops are twinkling  
with fake snow covered fun.  
Unwritten cards lie waiting  
among the Christmas wrap.  
Oh, why is it...  
...that every year...  
we fall into this trap?  
The perfect tree for Christmas  
with added piney smell.  
Co-ordinating tinsel  
with shiny silver bell.  
The TV ads all sparkle  
with things that we should buy.  
If money is a problem  
give the credit card a try.  
The turkey and the trimmings,  
the cake that no-one eats.  
We've rammed the fridge to bursting  
the cupboard full of treats.  
We've baked our favourite mince pies  
and sung a Christmas song.  
So why the nagging feeling...  
...that something is still wrong?  
So stop the clock of Advent  
and listen to the words  
of love and joy of giving  
which came into the world.  
And as the gift is given  
with angels join to sing.  
Then wonder came and all is still  
in worship of our King.*

*This verse is taken from a presentation used during Advent worship.*



# Junior Church



Colour the picture, then each day colour one star, beginning with number 1. (You could also use star stickers instead of colouring the stars.)



Since the last time that I updated you on the 17<sup>th</sup> Waltham Forest Company we have had the passing of Barry White who was an Officer when I was a boy in the Company. He would take us to band events, and the Royal Tournament, and was always supportive of the Company, wanting to know how we were getting on. We then had the passing of Les Edwards, who did so much for so many in the Company, Battalion and for so many young men and Officers for so many years. He was a man we all looked up to. We give thanks for all Barry and Les did, and for the time they gave to the Company.

The Company finished the summer session with our annual summer camp, in the New Forest again. The weather was mixed, and once we had set up I found out that I had not packed the roof for the main meeting tent! We made do and were thankful that it only rained for two days. We had a good programme, including the beach - where the sun did shine - cinema, bowling, rifle shooting, games, run outs, swimming and more. We finished the week with canoeing and then our Camp concert and BBQ. I know both the young people and staff all had a good time and it was a great family BBGA holiday. My thanks also go the Officers who gave up their week to ensure it was a great success.

We started the new session with a good number of children and young people in all sections and it was nice to see our Company section grow to ten young people. The Anchor and Junior Section have been running on Friday nights with games, craft, and badge work, also bible time. As I write, they are taking part in the Battalion football and handball competitions, and at the end of the month they will be attending the Battalion carol service. The Company Section have had their normal Friday nights, all in full uniform, learning new things and have started to watch a DVD, 'Rogue Trader'. We have had a high jump evening, a night walk followed by McDonalds, and will be taking part in a Battalion bible competition, table tennis and colour drill. As for the staff: both Gemma & Jonathan are running the Anchor & Junior Section. Due to the ill health of Jean's mum it has not been possible for Jean to attend this session. We wish both her and her mum well and look forward to seeing Jean back with us soon. We continue to have Stephen Close, Sandeep Christian and



Lee Dorrington (when not with his son) running the Company Section with me. Please do continue to pray for all the Officers in everything they do.

Finally, on behalf of all the Officers, staff and young people, we hope and pray that you have a happy and joyful Christmas whatever you are doing, and good health for 2016.

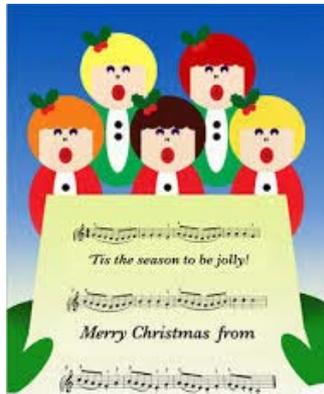
Jason

### Pictures from Summer Camp





*Object – The Advancement of Christ’s Kingdom among Boys & Girls, and the promotion of Habits of Obedience, reverence, Discipline, Self-respect & all that tends towards a true Christian Manliness*



*The Women’s Group is holding a  
Christmas Refreshment and Carol Singing Event  
On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December at Kerstin Dixon’s home  
- 22 Harford Road, Chingford E4  
Between 2 and 4 pm.  
Please let Kirsten know if you can come  
8257 6695*



*In the last magazine we paid tribute to one of HPB's longest serving members. Les was Captain and President of the Boy's Brigade. Steve Jenkins, as a member under Les's leadership, has provided a personal tribute:*

### Les Edwards

The dynamic reputation of the Company Section had filtered through to us youngsters in the Life Boys', consequently we always took the opportunity of marching alongside the band as it paraded down Cavendish Road to the playing of marches such as 'British Boys', 'Georgia' and 'Shamrock', quite often on a foggy morning with most of the local population still in bed – we were always so excited and our excellent attendance on a Sunday morning proved this to be the case.

When the moment came for us to be promoted from the Life Boys' we knew we were joining up with a special band of brothers with a great man leading us - 'Captain Les Edwards' - to me he was our 'John Wayne', standing so tall with his shoulders firmly pushed back and with his walking stick wedged firmly under his arm, he seemed indestructible.

Les certainly knew how to wear his uniform, anyone could throw on a suit but his attire was immaculate - including his shiny shoes which were always jet black and highly polished. His service in the Royal Air Force and also before that in the 18<sup>th</sup> South Essex Company of the Boy's Brigade at Greenleaf Road Baptist Church, had obviously made an affect on his life as regards his bearing and self-respect and it was not hard to see how easily it rubbed off on the boys and staff in our Company as we strove to achieve the object. I always try to have clean and polished shoes and this was something I particularly made a point of having when I was a salesman.

I have fond memories of Les taking charge of the sports evenings, particularly the Battalion Athletics Competition - the seriousness in which he 'managed' us was to make us feel as if we were taking part in the Olympics. The tug of war used to take place on the same day and it was quite often a case of us versus the 6<sup>th</sup> Company from Leytonstone Methodist Church who contested the final. Les for the 17<sup>th</sup> and Percy Matthews – the captain of the 6<sup>th</sup>, it usually got personal with each of them going bright red in the face, smashing their fist into the palm of their hand and demanded every bugling muscle and sinew being put to gaining a hard fault victory. I can still remember glancing over my shoulder as the rope was at full stretch and our boots digging in the soil thinking that one or both of our skippers were going to have a seizure!

The other Les Edwards we came to know was the gentle-man, particularly whenever any of us was taken ill and not able to get to BB, he would always make a point of visiting his lads and I can remember back in 1974 how he came to visit me at home on numerous occasions when I was recovering from Rheumatic Fever - I was anxious to get back to joining my mates in the Company and to get well in time to go to annual camp.



Les knew how to both encourage and give sensible advice – he told me I was not returning to the Company until I had fully recovered and even then would have to take things very easy for the foreseeable future. Thanks to the advice Les gave I managed to get to camp that year and he ensured I was only given light duties whilst there in lieu of my ongoing recovery.

Les gave the impression that he was very much a traditionalist when it came to the Boys' Brigade but many of us were surprised how he embraced the changes that have taken place within the organisation over the years. Les had seen the 17<sup>th</sup> grow into a very large and successful BB Company, but what pleased him most was that it constantly achieved the object – 'The Advancement of Christ's Kingdom amongst Boys'.

The number of former members of the 17<sup>th</sup> who attended his funeral underlines how much he meant to us all.

Les Edwards – Sure & Steadfast

Steve Jenkins

\* \* \* \* \*

### *The Christmas Calendar*

*Anyone who complains today that the Christmas holiday is too long might be surprised to know that it has always been a protracted affair. Our ancestors began thinking and planning for the festival weeks in advance, and made various preparations for it on set days, all of which were given special names.*

*The dates of the Twelve days of Christmas were fixed during the Council of Tours (a meeting of officials of the Roman Catholic Church, held in Tours, France) in 567. Although the twelve-day period was one of merriment, only three days were designated official feast days: Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Epiphany.*



# 10 Radical Dissent

*Part of the 'Baptist Basics' Series  
Series Author: Dr. Nigel G Wright  
Produced by the Baptist Union of Great Britain*

Baptists are both 'radicals' and 'dissenters', but these words need some explanation. They are 'radicals' in the sense that following Jesus Christ sets them apart from many fashionable opinions in society and forces them to 'dissent' from them.

**The roots of radical dissent** - Following a Messiah who was crucified by the religious and political powers of his day makes a big difference to the way we think. Jesus plainly did not fit in with the powerful people of his day. His proclamation of the mercy of God did not suit the religious attitudes of the most powerful forms of contemporary Judaism. His claim to be some kind of king advancing a kingdom, even one 'not of this world' (John 18:36) did not go down well with the Roman authorities. Conspiring together, these powerful forces engineered his crucifixion to do away with him.

The first Christians to follow Christ were only too well aware of how different they were. They experienced persecution and opposition for their beliefs. They felt themselves to be in conflict with the powers of their day (1 Corinthians 2:8; Ephesians 6:12). They talked of not being 'conformed to this world' but being 'transformed' (Romans 12:2), just as Jesus had spoken of seeking first the kingdom of God and its righteousness (Matthew 6:33). In short, the first Christians were being shaped by different forces from those which shaped the surrounding culture. Jesus and his kingdom made them different and it was their very difference from the rest that gave them their potential to transform people and communities. This was what Jesus meant by calling his Church 'salt' and 'light' (Matthew 5:13-16).

**Nonconformity and persecution** - It is helpful to grasp that what came in with Christ was fundamentally different from what had gone before. Religion and culture in the ancient world were inseparable and reinforced each other. Religion pervaded everything. The role of religion was, among other things, to legitimise the power of the ruling classes in such a way that to question them was to blaspheme against God. Because of their ideas, early Christians were destined for a clash with the State. In the Roman Empire all religions were accepted, provided they would pay lip-service to the official religion of the Empire which proclaimed the Emperor to be a god. Occasionally this was vigorously enforced and sacrifices to the Emperor's statue were demanded. The one religion to be exempt from this duty was Judaism. The Jews with their belief in one God, were recognised as an oddity and allowed to be nonconformists provided they kept to themselves. On those occasions when the Jews were forced to conform, they rebelled against Rome. When Christianity developed out of Judaism, Roman tolerance became highly intolerant.

Christians were evangelistic and believed they were commanded to make disciples. Moreover, they were being highly successful in this. The Christ in whom they believed had been crucified at the orders of the Roman authorities, so putting the State in conflict with God at this point. The Christians refused to acknowledge the Emperor as a god.



To them he was a human being bearing the responsibility of governing justly. They were prepared to pray for him but not to him. Instead of proclaiming, as was the custom, 'Caesar is Lord', they asserted 'Jesus is Lord'. This was an act of radical dissent and it got them into trouble. It was seen by successive Roman administrations as a revolutionary and subversive declaration of faith and was used as the pretext for persecution.

**The years of compromise** - One of the strangest stories in the church's history is the way in which the persecuted church we have described actually overcame its persecutors, but non-violently. In the year 313AD, the Roman Emperor Constantine decreed the full toleration of Christianity.

This followed on Constantine's apparent conversion to the faith. But over the next one hundred years both empire and church underwent a transformation. The church shifted from being a persecuted, powerless minority to being a persecuting, powerful majority. This was particularly evident in the reign of the Emperor Theodosius who in 380AD passed a decree establishing the orthodox Christian State, outlawing paganism and penalising heretics. The papacy in particular came to occupy an immensely powerful position. Christianity moved from practising the freely chosen and costly faith it had originally had, to being the official and compulsory religion of the Empire.

Christian attitudes to this remarkable transition have differed. Some have hailed it as the triumph of Christianity and the logical outworking of the church's mission to overcome the world. Others have seen it as the betrayal of Christ, as the hi-jacking of the church and of the Gospel in order to make the Christian faith fulfil the role of a State religion. Radical dissenters are of the latter opinion. Some have even described this transition as the 'fall' of the Church from its original faithfulness, just as human beings fell from their original fellowship with God. Nowhere is the change of the Church's position more evident than in the fact that this persecuted, nonconformist movement began as a State religion to persecute those who dissented from its own teaching.

**Baptist Dissenters** - There have always been those who have protested against what they saw to be the Church's compromise. It is difficult to square the powerless, crucified Christ who identified with the poor, with a powerful, wealthy and persecuting Church. Indeed, true Christianity makes a very awkward State religion for the simple reason that its central story, the way of Jesus to the cross, is one which shows just how wrong the powerful can be. Much of the Church however, succeeded in forgetting this historical Christ, substituting instead, images of his universal reign and glory to justify their new-found imperial power.

Yet many others remembered the historical Jesus and sought to be faithful to him. This was particularly true of the original monastic movement with its commitment to poverty, chastity and obedience. It was also true of a whole host of medieval movements which sought to return to the Christ of the Gospels.



These were all in origin, radical (wanting to return to the roots of faith) and dissenting (being critical of the majority of the church and society). Strange though it may seem at first glance, Baptists belong to this tradition. Fundamentally, Baptist Christians share the faith of the whole Church. Where they differ is in their understanding of the Church itself. Baptists (and other Christians with similar beliefs) have returned in their understanding to the early church, to the belief that true Christians are those who have submitted themselves to Christ as Lord and have done so freely. The true Church is composed consequently of these true Christians, in contrast to a State Church which includes the uncommitted and those who are Christians in name alone. To be real, faith needs to be personal and voluntary and it is likely to make the Christian different from the conformist majority. To make Christian faith compulsory is to lose something essential. Nevertheless, just as in the time of Jesus and the early church, this 'moral minority' can have a great influence for good. This understanding of what it means to be the Church is called the 'believers' church' or the 'free church' concept. It carries with it a new understanding of the State.

The State is created to serve God and for the good of humankind. It does its best when it does not claim too much for itself, when it sees itself as a servant and when it does not attempt to impose a religious ideology upon people. The State can at times exalt itself into an idol or it can at other times use religion to justify illegitimate power. A radical dissenting position argues that the State best serves God and humankind when it fosters religious liberty and other freedoms, and especially when it respects and protects the rights of minority groups. It should be understood that this approach is based on the confident belief that because the gospel is true and can look after itself, it does not need to be bolstered by State power or given preferential treatment. This conviction is normally termed the 'separation of State and Church'. It is not the same as the separation of church and society (which is impossible), nor does it mean that the church is not concerned about affairs of State. It means rather that the church does not use the State for its own ends and the State should not use the Church, or any religion, for political purposes. Baptists in England came to be called 'nonconformists' and 'dissenters' when, in the seventeenth century, they resisted the attempts of the State to impose religious conformity upon them. They were severely persecuted for their convictions.

**The shape of dissent today** - What, if anything, does dissent mean for today? We may summarise its implications by saying that Baptists believe profoundly in a free church and a free society.

*A Free Society:* Radical dissent has political implications. Baptists reject completely any form of totalitarianism, the belief that the State or the institutional Church, working separately or together, can dictate to people how to think and what to believe. Instead they emphasise freedom of conscience and religious liberty. Inevitably, this makes Baptists strongly supportive of societies which allow freedom to their citizens and value plurality, the differences between people.



Because of their history, and in faithfulness to Christ, Baptists resist attempts to impose beliefs and ideologies and are opposed to any discrimination against people on the basis of what they believe. Because of their own way of being the church which emphasises the 'priesthood of all believers', Baptists tend to support political systems which encourage the participation of all in the political process. They are, indeed, amongst the originators of the democratic political system.

*A Free Church:* Being free for Christ involves far more than being legally free from State control. In Old Testament times, God's people were constantly tempted by idol worship. The same temptations, in different guises, are present today in our cultures and societies. Idols are usually parts of the creation which have been exalted into objects of worship and have gained a control over people which only God should have. As in the Old Testament, idols demand sacrifices, they enslave and destroy people. It is possible, even for Christians, to become enslaved to these powers and to lose their freedom for Christ. What is needed instead is radical dissent, the insistence that only Christ is Lord and the refusal to go along with the crowd. At the same time, the church is called to show people a better way, a contrasting way of living which offers to persons and communities the opportunity to be different.

Some examples of the 'idols' of our time might help to make the point. Mars, the god of war, is still in business. The international arms trade leads to the production and distribution of weapons of destruction, fuelling areas of conflict across the world. The result is human sacrifice. The church is called to reject this idol and to take up its vocation to be a peace-maker. Another idol is wealth. The worship of Mammon means that some make themselves wealthy at the cost of countless people across the world. The church's vocation is to follow Christ in his identification with the poor, to reject the view that life consists in the abundance of our possessions. Instead the material resources of the earth and the produce of human labour are to be used to meet the needs of people. The worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of erotic love, is very prevalent in our culture. It is a caricature of the God-given sexual desire which is a wholesome and healthy part of life. It leads to the exploitation of women and the illusion that sexual activity is the greatest good. The church's vocation is to affirm the value of sexuality while opposing the exploitation and illusions of our culture concerning it. In recent years the earth-goddess Gaia has returned to prominence in the claim that nature is itself to be worshipped. The vocation of the church is to affirm God's good creation, to promote ecological responsibility, while denying that the earth is itself God and making it clear that to believe it is, will ultimately brutalise and dehumanise.

**The Challenge** - The need for the church to be a community of radical dissent is as great as ever. Our society is dominated by many false gods and we are called to dissent, in order that we may offer the world a better way, a way centred on Jesus Christ as Lord who alone sets people free. It is a noble tradition and a noble vocation.



## More Anniversaries.

Over the last several issues we have highlighted some of the significant anniversaries. From the Centenary of HPB to the events of the First World War much has been noted and, in some cases, celebrated. There are two more anniversaries that we can celebrate in this magazine. Both are for 70 years of existence; both are well known; but there the similarity mostly ends!

The first event is the 70th anniversary of Christian Aid - a charity that has much resonance for church life. Over the years we have supported this organisation, initially by the door to door collection and latterly by events and collections such as at Harvest and Christmas. Although I have been aware of Christian Aid for many years - indeed Jacquie used to work for them - I had no idea of when it started. We were both involved in a small number of their events. Taking



a cup of tea with the Bishop of Bath and Wells after a Christian Aid Week service at Wells Cathedral, where Jacquie's boss gave the sermon, sticks in the mind! I can do no better than to quote Christian Aid's website about the early beginnings:

*'In the aftermath of World War II, British and Irish church leaders met, determined to do everything possible to help European refugees who had lost everything.*

*The name they gave themselves was Christian Reconstruction in Europe. Their purpose was not to evangelise, but to alleviate suffering for ordinary people, no matter what their faith.*

*Christian Reconstruction in Europe became a department of the British Council of Churches, and was eventually renamed the Department of Interchurch Aid and Refugee Service. In a decade, it raised £29,000.'*

So how did the name Christian Aid come about? Again from the website:

*Janet Lacey became president in 1952. Her appointment stamped a mark of courage, honesty and determination on the organisation that has remained ever since. Some clerics thought her views too radical, but she was not going to allow faint-hearts to get in the way of her aim to 'combat poverty' across the world.*

*We began to look beyond Europe and expanded our remit to support development work in newly independent nations in Africa and Asia, and respond to emergencies worldwide. We were involved in the creation of Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) - an organisation dedicated to sending skilled volunteers to work in the developing world - and providing grants for Palestinian, Chinese and Korean refugees.*



*We made sure that the public was aware of continuing problems in the world by organising the first Christian Aid Week in 1957, and by famously building a replica of a refugee camp in the church of St Martin in the Fields in London. Since that first Christian Aid Week five decades ago, our little red envelope has dropped through literally tens of millions of letterboxes.*

*In 1964, on the back of the success of Christian Aid Week, we changed our name to Christian Aid. The change of image worked, and our annual income reached £2.5 million by the end of the decade.*

Christian Aid continues to this day as a major player in the Disaster's Emergency Committee which co-ordinates the efforts of the main aid charities in the UK to respond to major catastrophes in the world. It also uses its strength to lobby politicians to help the resultant problems caused by these events. In some respects it is a shame that continuing world events, both natural and man-made, still need the presence of such as Christian Aid but we must be grateful that they exist and we should give them all our support.

\*

The second 70th anniversary is that of a fictional character - one that is known to most children from the books, cartoon series and the many other methods of product placement. In a recent edition of 'Songs of Praise' this character was mentioned - who was it that should deserve such mention in a religious programme?

None other than our favourite blue engine - Thomas the Tank Engine. He has two pointers to being something of interest to church goers. Firstly he was created by an Anglican cleric - The Reverend Wilbert Awdry. The stories of his character came about by being made up to tell his son Christopher (in a similar way A.A. Milne dreamt up Winnie the Pooh to tell his son Christopher). Thomas was loosely based on a toy train owned by his son and the family home being near a railway line no doubt helped! Rev. Awdry was convinced that his stories would be suitable for children other than his own. In fact his first book 'The Three Railway Engines' was not about Thomas but Edward, Henry and Gordon. He appeared in the second book where he was described in terms of appearance but also as 'being cheeky' and in subsequent stories this was proved. Perhaps it was this that struck a chord both with children and their parents. In a way, this linked into the second pointer of interest - although cheeky and, sometimes, downright naughty Thomas



was always made to see the error of his ways and was usually punished by being sent to the engine shed - the equivalent of the naughty step perhaps! It could be this example that has made him so popular with buyers of the books. Thomas now has far

more friends amongst the trains he works with than when he was just a character in stories for a small boy. May he and his moral compass last for many more years.



Yet another anniversary to note – that of the Highams Park Society being 10 years old. The inaugural meeting was held in All Saints Church Hall on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2005 starting with a lecture on Highams – the manor house which is now the Woodford Girls School. About 55 people attended including your editors and it was a very interesting talk.

Since that time the Society has gone from strength to strength. It has played an important role in putting Highams Park on the map and telling people about the varied history of our area.

They have given guided tours of the blue plaques in the district; have been instrumental in playing a large part in Highams Park Day. Perhaps one of their noteworthy achievements, as we hark back to the Service of Remembrance, is the recovery and re-erection of the memorial to the employees of the Halex Company who fell in the two World Wars. This is now sited in our library and a short service is held there at Remembrance time. They also run the film showings held in our Church on a monthly basis - the next two films are:

19th December: Moonlight Boy

23rd January: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

They still hold lectures - indeed we only found out about one too late for the last magazine. This was on the Chingford (railway) Line by Chris Pond a local historian. He has also written an excellent book on the same subject called 'The Walthamstow and Chingford Railway' - if you are interested in our local area it is a very good read. It may be available from V & A Books run by Andrew Golds and his wife who have been great supporters of the Society.

We will try to get news of events run by or involving the Society so we can give you the information in good time.

DL



## *Christmas Thoughts*



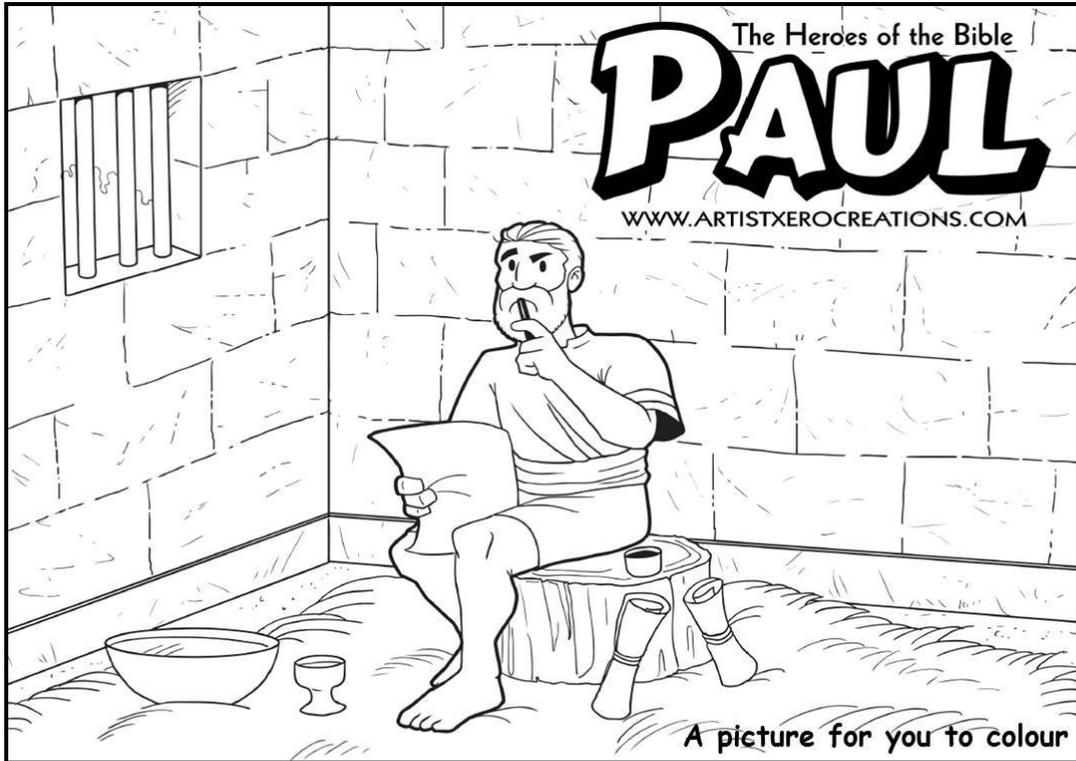
*Every year, Christmas arrives more heavily wrapped than the year before. One must tear through many layers in order to get to the real Christmas.*



*The Spirit of Christmas enters our lives when we are able to not see Christmas merely as an event that comes and goes in the course of a day. Then its spirit remains with us all year round.*

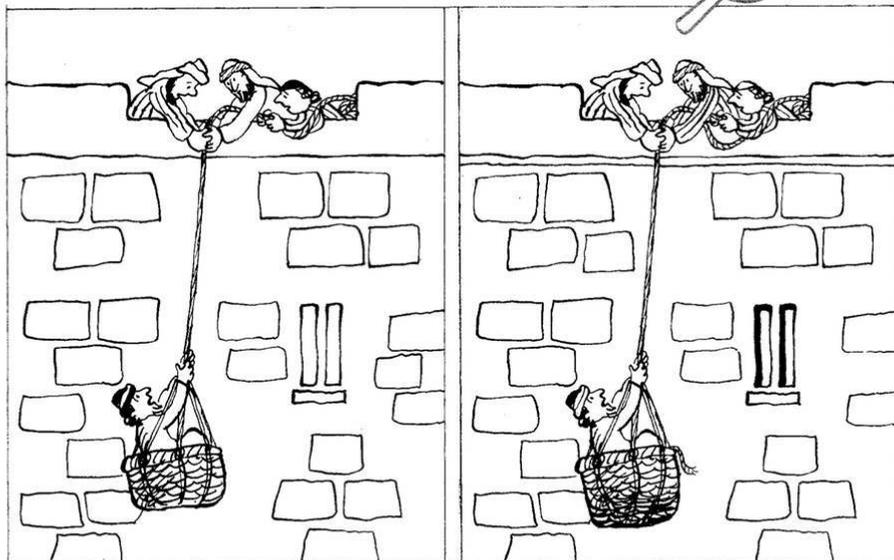


*I wish we could put some of the Christmas spirit in jars and open a jar of it every month. Harlan Miller*



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- Paul's story is told in the book of Acts (chapters 7 – 28) and throughout the New Testament letters  
 - **Occupation:** Trained as a Pharisee, he learned to make tents, he served as a missionary (going out to tell people about Jesus) - **Also at the same time as Paul:** Gamaliel, Stephen, the apostles, Luke, Barnabas, Timothy - **Lesson from his life:** God does not waste our time. He will use our past and our present so we may serve him with our future.



We can read of Paul, having become a Christian, needing to escape from Damascus by being lowered in a basket down the city wall (See Acts 9:19b-30).  
 Can you find 10 differences between these two pictures?





## **CHURCH DIARY**

### **December**

Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent: Morning Service with Communion led by Jonathan
	3 pm	Churches Together Bereavement Service at Highams Park United Reformed Church, Malvern Avenue
	7 pm - 8 pm	'New Songs' Worship
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent: All Age Service: Children's and Young People's Christmas Presentation
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent Morning Service with Communion led by Jonathan
	6 pm	Carols by Candlelight Service led by Jonathan
Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup>	11:30 pm	Christmas Eve Communion Service led by Jonathan
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	All Age Service: Christmas Day Celebration led by Jonathan
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	All Age Service: 'Songs of Praise' led by Jonathan





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### **January 2016**

Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10 am	Morning Service with Communion (with Dedication of the Church & Council Members) led by Jonathan
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 pm	Church Council Meeting at 21 Warboys Crescent
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Morning Service: Church Text for 2016 led by Jonathan
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Morning Service with Communion led by Jonathan
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	All Age Service led by Jonathan
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	Morning Service with Communion led by Jonathan
	11:30 am approx.	Church Members' Meeting

### **February**

Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Morning Service led by Jonathan
	7 pm - 8 pm	'New Songs' Worship
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Morning Service with Communion led by t.b.c

*Refreshments are served after the Morning Service every Sunday*

