

The Tragic End

As 2004 drew to a close we were all trying to comprehend the sheer magnitude of the disaster which engulfed the seaboard of the Indian Ocean. The death toll stands at 80,000 and rising. More Norwegians and Swedes were killed than in the 2nd World War, whilst whole communities were swept away by the brute force of the gigantic tidal wave - the result of an enormous earthquake on the seabed.

Natural disasters on whatever scale bring us into the stark realisation of the limits of human power and ingenuity. The force of nature whether it be a tidal wave, a flood, a drought, or a thunderbolt is truly awesome.

It is no wonder that humanity is humbled in the face of such power. In previous centuries the gods of the sea, of the sun, of thunder were feared. Elaborate rituals sought to placate their anger. Yet even in a sophisticated world we are impotent when the natural world contorts in agony.

In the midst of the chaos and the heartache we look for the face

or the place of God. How can the Creator permit such suffering? But the clamour for an answer, though understandable, is mistaken. God doesn't hover over the world like a small boy sitting beside his first train set waiting for a derailment to happen.



The universe is vast and mostly unknown. Within the cosmos we are but a tiny part. The creaks and fault lines are but part of the evolution of the natural world. As humans, we have the power to prepare for the worst.

At this time of unbearable agony the global community is invited to rise to the challenge to rebuild

those lives devastated and decimated by this tragedy. May we be spurred to work together as part of the world-wide family to support, to protect, and to nurture one another at this time of deep sadness.

With my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve". The signature is stylized and includes a small flourish at the end.

Chronicle

Ministry of Healing

*A monthly service on the first Tuesday of the month,
alternating between St James and Sr Francis Churches*

Healing Services:

Tuesday 4th January 7.30 pm

St Francis Church

Tuesday 8th February

7.30 pm St James Church



The ministry of healing is available at St James' Church every Sunday during the 10 o'clock service. Please go to St Luke's Chapel after you have received Communion where members of the Healing Team will be available to listen and to pray in complete confidence.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS: IS DAILY BIBLE READING A MUST?

I have heard it said that the traditional daily 'Quiet Time' with the Bible and prayer is nowhere sanctioned in Scripture, and is really a piece of evangelical legalism. Is it all right to let it go?

The trouble with holding such a view is that – by the time our neglect of daily Bible reading has taken its toll – our sense of self-perception has dulled and we are unaware that our spiritual cutting edge is already blunted. We then start getting into difficulties over Christian truth, doubts and even about the Bible itself. It then becomes unfashionable to take the Bible to Christian meetings. We can reach the point when a meeting is in progress (even a Bible study) – and no Bible is in sight! The sins that we once had vigorously combated now begin

to overcome us – and we still fail to connect our feeble discipleship with our neglect of the Bible. But come back to the Bible on a regular basis again – and within days we shall notice the difference!

No, it is not a legally binding duty; daily Bible reading is rather to be seen as a personal daily delight. "When your words came," said Jeremiah, "I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight." (Jeremiah 15:16) We fall in love with Christ – and we find ourselves wanting to read the Scriptures, because they lead us to him. (John 5:39). Morning or evening? Again, there is no legally binding rule. I've seen people reading the bible on the London underground. Some find that the evening time, before bed, suits them better than the morning. In a young lively family Christian parents may frequently lose their chosen time with God because of disturbed nights.

Again, when illness – or bereavement – strikes, Bible reading and prayer may well fade out for a period.

For most believers, however, the word of the American expositor Henry Ward Beecher surely apply: The first hour of waking is the rudder that guides the whole day.

David the Psalmist knew this. "I rise before dawn," he exclaimed, "and cry for help. I have put my hope in your word." (Psalm 119:147). This sounds like a habit!

Isaiah knew it, too. "The sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught." (Isaiah 50:4).

That sounds like every day! The apostle Peter exhorted his readers to receive God's 'pure spiritual milk' so that by it they might 'grow up' in their salvation. He then goes on to say, "As you come to him, the living Stone..." and the Greek of the text indicates that they were to continue coming, in this way. (1 Peter 2:2-4).

Let daily Bible reading and prayer be like the meeting of lovers for an agreed appointment. As Soren Kierkegaard of Denmark once observed, "A believer is surely a lover; yes, of all lovers the most in love!"

From 'The Top 100 Questions – biblical answers to popular questions' by Richard Bewes (Christian Focus)



Caring for Each Other



One of the things we value about belonging to one of our two churches is being part of a fellowship of Christians. Being a member of St James or St Francis is far more than just being present for Sunday worship. It is also about belonging to a group of like-minded people.

As a member of the congregation we all have much to contribute but also a great deal to receive. Each one of us is a valued part of the fellowship but it is all too easy for us often to feel neglected.

It is for this reason that the Church Committees in both churches are setting up a *Pastoral Care Network*.

Both congregations have arranged in small units of about ten people under the watchful eye of a member of the congregation. The idea is that if someone "goes missing" or is in need, this will not go unnoticed.

Our Archbishop remarked how people drift away from the Church because they feel no-one really cares. We hope that our network will go some way to ensuring that we are more aware of each other.

Coming Soon.....

The 2005 Lent Course **BETTER together**

- Family Relationships
- Church Relationships
- Relating to Strangers
- Broken Relationships
- Our Relationship with God



featuring

The Abbot of Ampleforth, Nicky Gumbell,
John Bell, Jane Williams, Dr David Hope

Gathered to Give

*Kings almost as shepherds
And shepherds alike to kings,
but each the human heart
of themselves brings.*

*For want of anything better,
Gold is placed in the straw.
At a loss for anything other,
reverence and awe.*

*King glances at shepherd
across the gilded cap;
Crowns versus Crooks; but kindred:
the Lord in the lap.*

*All dung and dusted
and tangy at the tryst,
weary with wonderment;
stars mingled in a mist;*

*whoever, whatever,
in however many guises:
men came bearing gifts
and took away prizes.*

*Robert Shreeve
December 2004*



Rosanne interviews Betty Pawson

As many of my readers know I've been interviewing folk for *The Chronicle* for quite a few years now and my interviewees and I get on to an amazing range of subjects during our chats but this month I encountered a topic not yet touched upon – namely knicker elastic! Yes, Betty and I swapped notes on the problems we had been forced to surmount when, as schoolgirls during World War II it was a case of elastic round the waist or elastic round the knees of our bloomers. Naturally the waist won but it wasn't easy to cope with the flapping material under our gymslips!

Betty has vivid childhood memories especially of the war years, when it would seem she "grew up" at an early age or perhaps I should say she became an independent young person. Although she was born in Cardiff, on the death of her merchant seaman father when she was only three, she and her mother moved to relatives in Southampton. More through necessity than for any other reason they shared a house with an aunt. Betty really didn't like this but she did love school, especially her first infant teacher, whom she remembers with affection.

At eight years of age she was sent to board at the Royal Masonic School for Girls, an establishment founded exclusively for the education

of fatherless Freemasons' daughters. The junior department was in Weybridge. The first term Betty describes as 'awful'. She missed her mother, especially in the dormitory (which she shared with six other little girls), after lights out.

However things improved and by the time she had moved to the senior school in Rickmansworth at ten she was fine. The grounds were extensive and the school boasted a large swimming pool. The Headmistress was an imposing lady and discipline was strict. One day Betty was sent to the Head's study and she quaked in her shoes because she really couldn't think what trouble she was in. Not reprimand but an accolade was heading her way.

The 150th anniversary of the school was about to be celebrated and the Princess Royal (Princess Mary) and her husband, the Earl of Harewood, would be gracing the occasion. Three students would be representing the whole school. A senior girl in present-day uniform and two younger ones dressed as the first pupils, in costumes of the early 19th century. Betty was bestowed with the honour of appearing before royalty in a pretty, long, navy blue dress with a fischu and pinafore in soft white voile and the sweetest bonnet she'd ever seen. She was in heaven.

School chapel was an important part of the weekly routine. Every Sunday the girls attended early morning service, also evensong and had to round off the day by learning the collect from the Book of Common Prayer. By the time she was twelve, World War 2 had begun and she remembers with dread the cold, uncomfortable underground air-raid shelters provided for the girls. The holidays were something of a challenge too as she travelled by rail and wartime trains were often bleak, cold and grubby. In summer 1940 she journeyed alone to visit relatives in Liverpool. Usually Southampton was her holiday destination- that was until the docks were blitzed. Her mother decided to return to Cardiff only to find that the bombers were attacking that city too. It was decided that Wales was the best option as they had friends in Llandaff, so she and her Mum went back to Southampton to pack up their possessions. It was during this particular holiday that 14-year-old Betty experienced her first romance. Brian was 18, the son of a family friend, and for a few short weeks the teenagers walked the Hampshire woods and fields together. There have been other male friends but never quite the right one.

After the war her mother worked in a department store

in Winchester and shared a house there with two other ladies. Holidays there were very pleasant and Betty came to love that beautiful city and its cathedral. She sat her School Certificate exams and had thought of a career in radiography. Instead she did a secretarial course at college in London. Still only 16 she got to know London, its tube system, its streets and parks as it emerged from its wartime ordeals. Her first post was at Holy Trinity Church Brompton, where she was secretary to the vicar, The Revd Brian Green. His ministry was so charismatic that when she found lodgings in New Maldon she found church there such a letdown that she allowed her churchgoing "to slip".

Subsequently she worked for Shell, first in Teddington and then in Petticoat Lane and next for a firm of solicitors in the City. It was at this point in her life that her mother remarried and came to live in Oxford. Betty came to join her and followed her secretarial career in various posts until she finally worked for twenty-seven years as personal secretary to the manager of the Nat West Bank in Oxford. To her delight she was able to retire early and she now lives in contentment in Cowley with her beautiful cat.

How would you describe yourself as a small child?

Shy, quiet, a book worm.

Have you any unforgettable childhood memories?

My mother went to live in Winchester in autumn 1941. I remember I woke up and it was "going home day". That day she took me for a walk over St Giles Hill down to the Itchen valley, through the water meadows to St Cross. I was with the person I loved most and it was the beginning of the Christmas holidays.

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

Not all the time. I think I found him gradually. I was so thankful for the way my mother died so peacefully that it brought me nearer to God. Patrick Parry-Oakden was very helpful, he was such a wonderful listener. I felt the congregation at St Luke's was drawing me in.

What do you consider the best aspect of modern life?

I think all the medical advances. Illnesses that you heard of years ago have been eradicated.

What disappoints you or makes you angry about life today?

Cyclists on pavements. Also the pity of suspicion amongst people – we don't trust each other any more – we're not so neighbourly.

If you could change something spectacularly what would it be?

If only one could resolve the dreadful situation in Darfur.

How do you spend your leisure time?

I play bridge in Summertown Church Hall, I belong to the local National Trust group, walking with the Oxfordshire Field paths Society, I like to read a good thriller and I help with the Guide Dogs for the Blind.

What makes you laugh?

There's a book about Augustus Carp, who is the sort of churchgoer you'd avoid like the plague. It's by Sir Henry Howard Bashford (who was King George VI's physician). And "How Steeple Sinder by Wanderers Won the FA Cup" is another. It's by J L Carr. It's so improbable- it's wonderful.

Do you have a hero or heroine, past or present?

Apart from my mother who was a real heroine, especially being widowed twice, I think Elizabeth I.

Do you have any plans or ambitions for the future?

I just hope I'll keep reasonably healthy, but if I do get a life-threatening illness I hope I don't go on about it



Ten things God won't ask you when you die

1. God won't ask what kind of car you drove,
He'll ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation.
2. God won't ask the square footage of your house,
He'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.
3. God won't ask about the clothes you had in your closet,
He'll ask how many people you helped to clothe.
4. God won't ask which diet you were on,
He'll ask how many hungry people you helped to feed.
5. God won't ask what your highest salary was,
He'll ask if you compromised your character to obtain it.
6. God won't ask what your job title was,
He'll ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.
7. God won't ask how many friends you had,
He'll ask how many people to whom you were a friend.
8. God won't ask in what neighbourhood you lived,
He'll ask how you treated your neighbours.
9. God won't ask about the colour of your skin,
He'll ask about the content of your character.
10. God won't ask why it took you so long to seek Him, He'll lovingly take you into his Kingdom, not leave you at the gates of Hell.

Good news for chocolate lovers

If you love chocolate, here's an excellent excuse to eat some: recent research has found an ingredient in chocolate that can help stop persistent coughs, and lead to more effective medicines.



The study at Imperial College London found that theobromine, found in cocoa, was nearly a third more effective in stopping persistent coughs than codeine, currently considered the best cough medicine.

The researchers said the discovery could lead to more effective cough treatments. They also found that unlike standard cough treatments, theobromine caused no adverse effects on the cardiovascular or central nervous systems, such as drowsiness.

So just think – next time you have a chocolate bar, you are keeping a cough at bay!

* *Divine Fairtrade chocolate is available in both churches!*

There's Snow on the Fields

There's snow on the fields,
And cold in the cottage,
While I sit in the chimney nook
Supping hot pottage.

My clothes are soft and warm,
Fold upon fold,
But I'm so sorry for the poor
Out in the cold.

- *Christina Rossetti*



The Perfect Church

If you should find
the perfect church
Without one fault or smear,
For goodness sake
Don't join that church
You'd spoil the atmosphere.

If you should find
the perfect church
Where all anxieties cease,
Then pass it by, lest joining it
You spoil the masterpiece.

If you should find
the perfect church
Then don't ever dare
To tread upon such holy
ground
You'd be a misfit there.

But since no perfect
church exists,
Made of perfect men,
Let's cease on looking
for that church,
And love the church we're in.

Of course it's not
the perfect church,
That's simple to discern,
But you and I and all of us
Could cause the tide to turn.

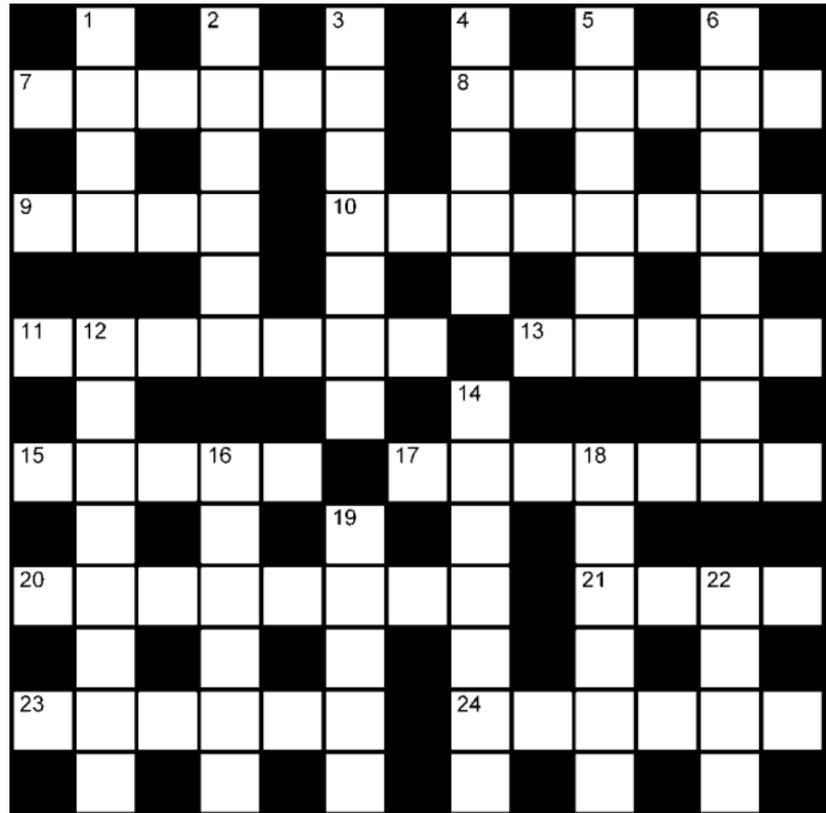
What fools we are
to flee the past
In that unfruitful search
To find, as last,
where problems loom
God proudly builds
His church.

(from *The Vinger*)

December's Solution

V	R	P	U	D	D						
C	O	L	O	U	R	S	H	E	K	E	L
Y	M	E	U	D	S						
P	A	G	E	P	H	A	R	I	S	E	E
G	A	L	C	R							
C	E	N	T	U	R	Y	E	A	R	T	H
T	A	B	O	R	S	E	V	E	N	T	Y
R	U	B	B	R							
C	A	E	S	A	R	E	A	P	R	A	Y
B	A	O	N	A	V						
W	I	N	N	O	W	O	L	I	V	E	S
A	D	N	N	R	L						

January's Crossword



Across

- 7 Any group of human beings (6)
- 8 The abode of God (6)
- 9 Aspect (4)
- 10 Circular flower arrangements (8)
- 11 Give to, in marriage (7)
- 13 Adversary (5)
- 15 Wide (5)
- 17 Dried grapes (7)
- 20 An agreement between God and His people (8)
- 21 Mixture of ground animal feeds (4)
- 23 Roman procurator at the time of Jesus' trial (6)
- 24 Unit of money in Israel (6)

Down

- 1 Where Samson slayed a thousand Philistines with a jawbone (4)

2 Come into view (6)

- 3 Used to balance or assign relative value (7)
- 4 A combination of three or more notes that blend harmoniously (5)
- 5 The fourth son of Ham (6)
- 6 A keeper of cattle (8)
- 12 Formerly called Abyssinia (8)
- 14 An act, experience, or ordeal by which one is purified, sanctified, initiated, or named (7)
- 16 Roman Emperor (6)
- 18 Prophet and judge who anointed Saul (6)
- 19 One of the two over-twenties to survive the Wilderness (5)
- 22 Oracle (4)

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist (<i>exc 2nd Sunday</i>) All Age Eucharist (<i>2nd Sunday</i>)
1.00 pm	Cowley Asian Christian Fellowship

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am	Parish Eucharist <i>[Family Eucharist - 2nd Sunday of the month]</i>
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Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Group – <i>St Francis</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Service – <i>St Francis</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	12.00 pm	St James Prayer Group – <i>13 Clive Road</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	9.30 am	Eucharist - followed by coffee – <i>St James</i>
	11.00 am	St Francis Prayer Group
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist - <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Friday Club – <i>alt Fridays at St Francis</i>
Saturday	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast - <i>St Francis</i>

Arrangements for Baptisms, Banns of Marriage, Weddings, Confessions and Home Communion can be made with any of the clergy.

Day Off

Stephen has Friday off, Except in emergency, please try and respect this day of rest. Lorne can be contacted in the evenings and at weekends.

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