

SEEKING TO BE THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS IN THE COMMUNITY

PASTOR'S PIECE

This first weekend in April, we celebrate Easter – the story of God's incredible love shown to mankind in the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. As we read the story of the resurrection, as told in John chapter 20, we find two disciples – Peter and John – running to the tomb to see what has happened. When they get there, we find two very different reactions. Luke tells us that Peter wondered what had happened – he was confused. But John tells us that when he himself got there and saw the empty grave, that he believed. The same scene – but two different reactions!

As I am writing this article, there are two amusing stories in the news this week. One involves a cocktail dress which was posted on the internet and became a sensation because it divided the nation over one simple question: 'what colour was it?' (See <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-03-the-dress-white-gold-blue-black.html>) Some people were in no doubt that it was blue and black; others were equally adamant that it was white and gold! The same dress; the same picture – but two very different beliefs! The



dress was in reality, blue and black – but scientists explained that something about the tints in this particular picture of it was confusing the way people's brains interpreted the signals from the retinal cones.

When we come to the resurrection of Jesus, what do YOU see? What do YOU believe? For some people there is confusion – like Peter, they don't know what to make of it. For others, like John, they see the empty tomb and believe. It all boils down to faith! Do you trust God and believe His Word – or do you, like Thomas, doubt? And the answer to that question will have a fundamental affect as to how you live

ED'S LAST WORD

The church magazine can only be as useful as YOU make it, so please pass on anything you think will be of interest to the fellowship. FINAL COPY DATE for the June/July issue is Sunday 17 May 2015.

**So... See me on Sunday, phone me on 01732 469486
Email me at martinpalmer1@sky.com**

God bless, Martin.

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01732 740634

Sunday Services start at 10.30 am

Grape 7 for 3-10 year olds
Contact Sylvia Crockett 01732 452905
or Alison Saunders 01732 454455

Soul Purpose for 13-18 year olds
Meet Sunday evenings at 6:30 pm
in the Carey Hall
Contact Holly 07816 955561

Rascals for pre-school children & babies
Meet Wednesday's from 10.00-11.30am
Contact Sheila Pearson 01732 454524

CONTACTS:

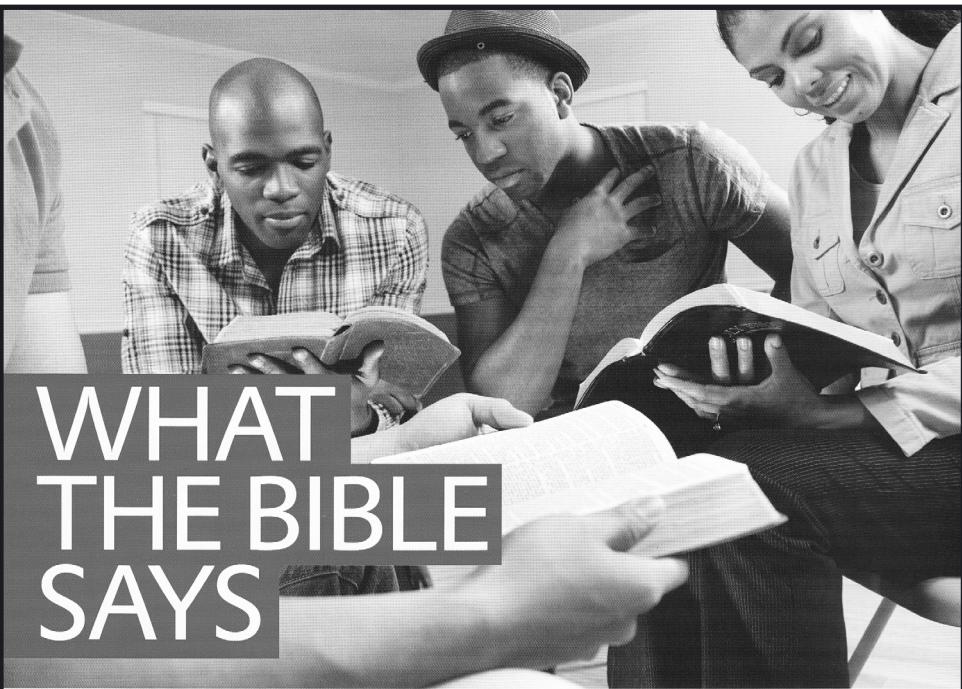
Rev Jim Crockett
Pastor 01732 452905

Fiona Murray
Administrator 01732 360866

Davida Woodman
Secretary 01732 459741

The church office is open Tuesday's & Thursday's 9am - 3.30pm

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WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

The 2015 election Bible notes are available in full on the website – we hope you will find this shorter version helpful.

Vote for God's Sake

The passage: 1 Peter 2:13-17

Peter was sending an important message to the dispersed Jews of the Greco-Roman world when he told them to be 'subject to all human institutions for the Lord's sake' (2:13)

Submitting and living peaceably under those in power is to do so for God Himself!

In a snapshot? Peter helpfully gives us his bullet-pointed version:

- ▶ Honour all people
- ▶ Love the brotherhood
- ▶ Fear God
- ▶ Honour the emperor

Or put into modern day categories:

- ▶ Respect everyone in your country whatever their background
- ▶ Especially show practical love to your church family
- ▶ Live well under the authority of God
- ▶ Credit the Prime Minister with your harmonious life in society

We can take our vote seriously for God's sake and in accordance with His will.

Governments - God's servants and ministers

The passage: Romans 13:1-7

Here Paul is more specific than Peter about why the Church should be subject to the governing authorities. God Himself has put them in this place of power. All authority is given by Him so to live a civically responsible life is to acknowledge that God has established this government as His 'servant' (13:4).

Jesus reigns over all governments

The passage: Colossians 1: 16-20; 2:9

Paul presents a high view of Jesus. Everything in creation was made through Him and for Him - Jesus is identified as both the creator of all things and as its end goal.

Christians who are part of government, and/or serving it through voting, acknowledge that Christ is Lord over every political system and greater than any monarch, President or Prime Minister. But Christians also claim that by working with earthly 'principalities and powers' they do so because Christ has put them in place and keeps them in position. Thus, by taking a General Election seriously, we proclaim that Jesus is Lord over all.

the rest of your life.

The rest of the world will tell you that dead men don't live again – that Jesus is no different from Muhammad or Buddha or any other religious figure. But the Bible emphatically claims that Jesus rose from the dead – to prove that He is the Son of God, and to offer us a relationship with Himself through the forgiveness of our sins. So, which do you believe? Look at the facts – use your brains.

The other true story this week involved two American tourists in Wales who had to abandon their rental car after following their satnav straight onto a deserted beach! The Texans had set the GPS device to take them to Caldey Island, off the coast of Pembrokeshire. It failed to tell them they needed to board a car ferry to get there, and instead led them down a

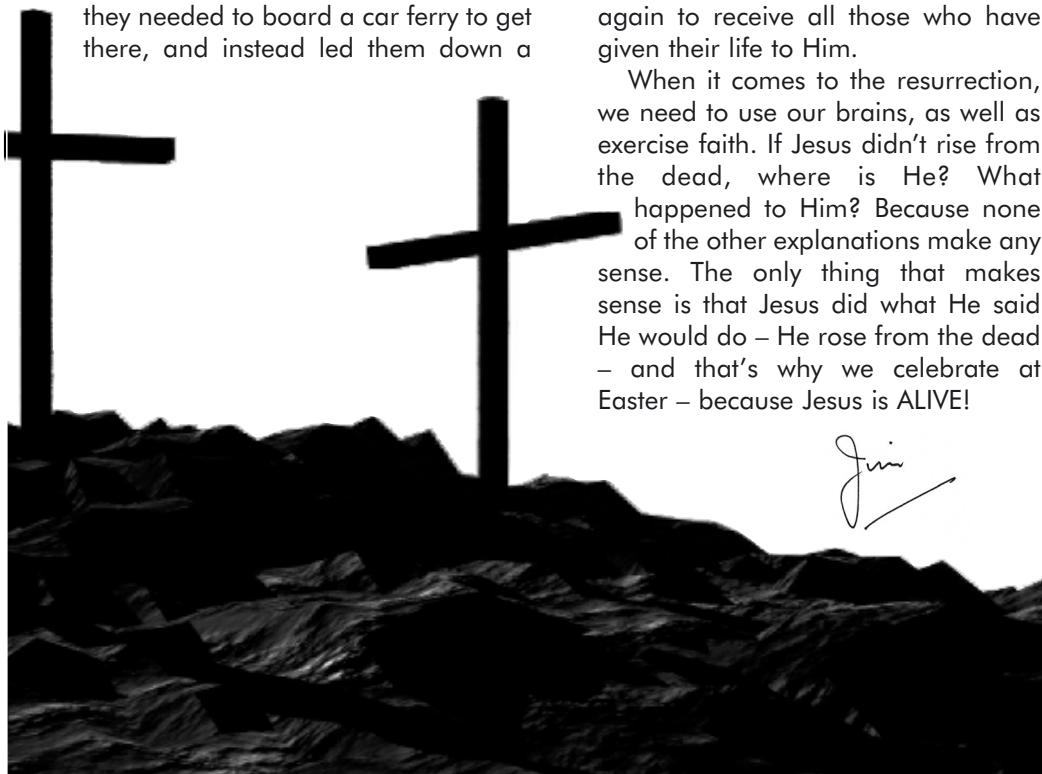
slipway and onto the beach at Tenby. They dutifully followed the instructions until their car got stuck in wet sand!

They had all the correct instructions – but they didn't use their brains – and they got stuck!

When it comes to the resurrection and knowing and trusting God, we have all the instructions we need in God's Word, the Bible – that's our spiritual satnav. God has told us how to 'find Him' – how to come into His family and know Him. The trouble is that many people get as far as 'the beach' but they don't take the ferry to get to the destination. That 'ferry' is Jesus Christ. He is the only One who can lead us to the Father. And he can do that because he rose from the dead and is one day coming back again to receive all those who have given their life to Him.

When it comes to the resurrection, we need to use our brains, as well as exercise faith. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, where is He? What happened to Him? Because none of the other explanations make any sense. The only thing that makes sense is that Jesus did what He said He would do – He rose from the dead – and that's why we celebrate at Easter – because Jesus is ALIVE!

Jim



Seniors Texting Codes (blame Clive for these!)

BYOT - Bring Your Own Teeth
CUATSC - See you at the Senior Center
DWI - Driving While Incontinent
GGPBL - Gotta Go, Pacemaker Battery Low
HGBM - Had Good Bowel Movement
LMDO - Laughing My Dentures Out
WAITT - Who Am I Talking To?
GGLKI - Gotta Go, Laxative Kicking in

TOT - Texting on Toilet
LOL - Living on Lipitor
GHBA - Got Heart burn Again
ATD - At the Doctors
BFF - Best Friends Funeral
BTW - Bring the Wheelchair
OMSG - Oh My! Sorry, Gas
FWIW - Forgot Where I Was
CBM - Covered by Medicare

'I can do everything through Him who gives me strength' Philippians 4:13

Harvey MacKay tells the story of a professor who stood before his class of 30 final year molecular biology students. Before passing out the final exam paper he said, 'I have been privileged to be your instructor this term, and I know how hard you have worked to prepare for this test. I also know most of you are off to medical school or post graduate study next autumn. I am well aware of how much pressure you are under to keep your grade point averages up. Because I am confident that you know this material, I am prepared to offer an automatic B to anyone who opts to skip taking the final exam.'

The relief was audible. A number of students jumped up from their desks, thanking the professor for the lifeline he had thrown them. Any other takers?' he asked. 'This is your last opportunity.' One more student decided to go.

The instructor then handed out the final exam, which consisted of two sentences. It read: 'Congratulations, you have just received an A in this class. Keep believing in yourself', It was a just reward for the students who had worked hard and believed in themselves.

The Apostle Paul experienced more headaches and heartaches in a month than most of us will see in a lifetime. Yet he wrote, 'I can do everything through him who gives me strength'.

Come on, start believing in yourself, in the Christ who lives within you, in the gifts He's placed at your disposal, and the destiny to which He's called you. Refuse to settle for a B when God has promised and called you to an A.

Devotional supplied by Felicity

LIFE

As Christians, we believe that every life deserves protection from conception to its natural end. So CARE engages with public policy issues concerning the sanctity of human life.

There are currently three direct threats in this whole area which may come to the fore following the Election.



Assisted suicide

The House of Commons will be probably be required to vote on assisted suicide. We must ensure that MPs understand that we do not want this - there are better ways of alleviating fear of dying.

Abortion

MPs may also debate issues relating to abortion. There has been considerable parliamentary discussion about independent counselling provision for women considering abortion, the legal grounds for abortion on the grounds of disability - currently allowed up until birth - and on the grounds of gender.

There may be further debates on embryos during the next Parliament.

JUSTICE

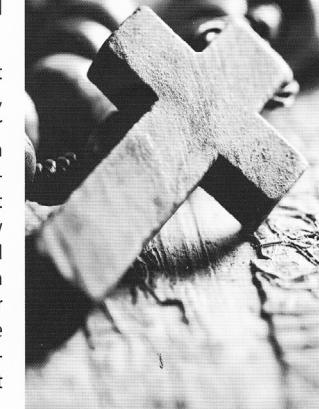


Trafficking and prostitution

Progress has been made in the field of human trafficking legislation, but more is needed to ensure victims receive vital support and recovery help. We also need to address the demand for paid sex, which drives trafficking for sexual exploitation.

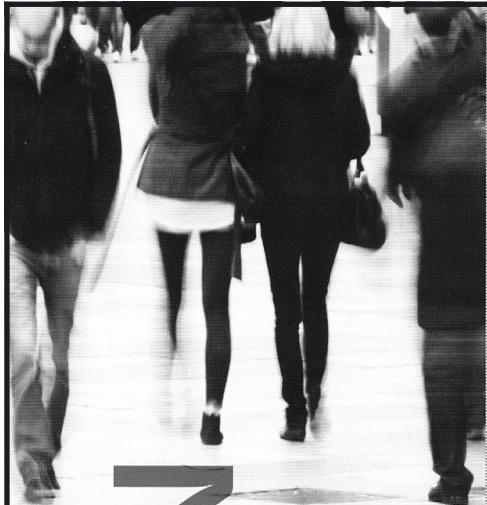


Prostitution affects some of the most vulnerable people in our society, whether they have been trafficked or not. Some say they are in prostitution by choice but the majority are vulnerable, and at risk of exploitation. Last year, resolutions in Europe and new laws in Canada and Northern Ireland all promoted an approach focusing on those who exploit others by paying for sex. CARE would like the whole of the UK to adopt this, and to provide programmes to help those wanting to exit prostitution.



ELECTION ISSUES

engage15



Our Engage15 website features in-depth briefings - leading up to Polling Day and beyond. Here are some useful pointers grouped under three key areas.

FAMILY



CARE continues to promote and support the family - an integral part of society - and protect the most vulnerable.

Online safety

CARE has worked closely with Baroness Howe, who raised the issue of online safety for children both through her Private Member's Bill and amendments to the Consumer Rights Bill. This asks that unless internet users explicitly opt-in to receive adult content, they should have automatic filters set on devices accessing the internet.

Online Gambling

CARE recommends a 'one-stop shop' allowing gamblers to self-exclude with the Gambling Commission. If adopted, no UK licensed online provider will be able to provide gambling services to the individual throughout their period of exclusion.

We have also advocated that financial providers protect the most vulnerable by blocking payments between UK gamblers and international gambling providers. We are pleased that the Gambling Commission are consulting on both of these recommendations.

Marriage and education

We are encouraged by the Prime Minister's announcement to recognise marriage in the tax system, allowing a non-working spouse to transfer 10 per cent of their tax allowance to their working spouse, but these measures could go further!

David Cameron's commitment to increase relationship support through marriage preparation and counselling interventions is also welcome. Protecting the family also requires protection from inappropriate state interference, particularly in the area of school sex education.



MISSIONARY UPDATE

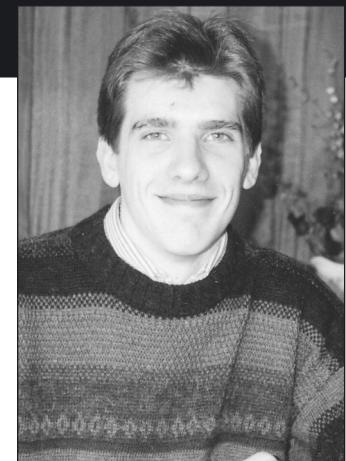
GIFTS FOR LIFE

At Barbara Bates' Thanksgiving Service £300 was given in her memory and sent to The Leprosy Mission. It is being allocated to Gifts for Life. £220 will purchase two donkeys and carts for farmers affected by leprosy so that they can take their goods to market, or hire them out to fellow sufferers and earn money for their families. £80 will be spent on two job training schemes so that young girls suffering from leprosy can learn a skill to earn a living.

There is a picture of a donkey and cart in Niger on the Mission Board. A big thank you to all who contributed.

Sofia, Bulgaria After 12 years of hard work and fund raising, the Social, Medical and Training Centre has been completed and will be officially opened on Sunday 20 September. Between now and then some of the departments need furnishing. We are sending a gift to buy two chairs! Tedi and Didi are so grateful to all who have helped over the years.

Alaric Dunsmore-Rouse
Alaric is home on leave. Pray for him as he takes meetings and also tries to spend time with his family. He will be preaching at our morning service on Sunday 24 May. Later in the year he will be speaking at the OMF Prayer Meeting on 9 July.



Elizabeth will be home for three months, arriving on 6 June and staying with Jenny and Richard. She will be preaching on Sunday 28 June. Pray for her as she prepares to leave her two translators and then as she prepares for updating people about her work.

Colin King from Release reports on the launch of the

Religious Liberty Commission

Anyone who saw in February a picture from Libya of 21 men in orange uniforms kneeling down, awaiting execution, each with a man in black behind him, will not quickly forget that sight. These were not so-called Islamic State (IS) hostages; they were Coptic Christians, soon to be beheaded simply for being Christians in Libya where IS did not want them.

It's become commonplace for the persecution of Christians to make the national news in recent times, as politicians, royalty, and others make their views known. But today's events are not new. They are a continuation of the repression and brutality that has always been the lot of those who profess their Christian faith. But previously the voice of ministries such as Release International was not loud enough to be heard widely, or was written off as extreme. What's changed is that some of the high profile perpetrators of persecution now have violent and political aims that threaten whole nations. And we see our own young citizens being radicalised. All of a sudden people are interested, because of the threat to their own security.

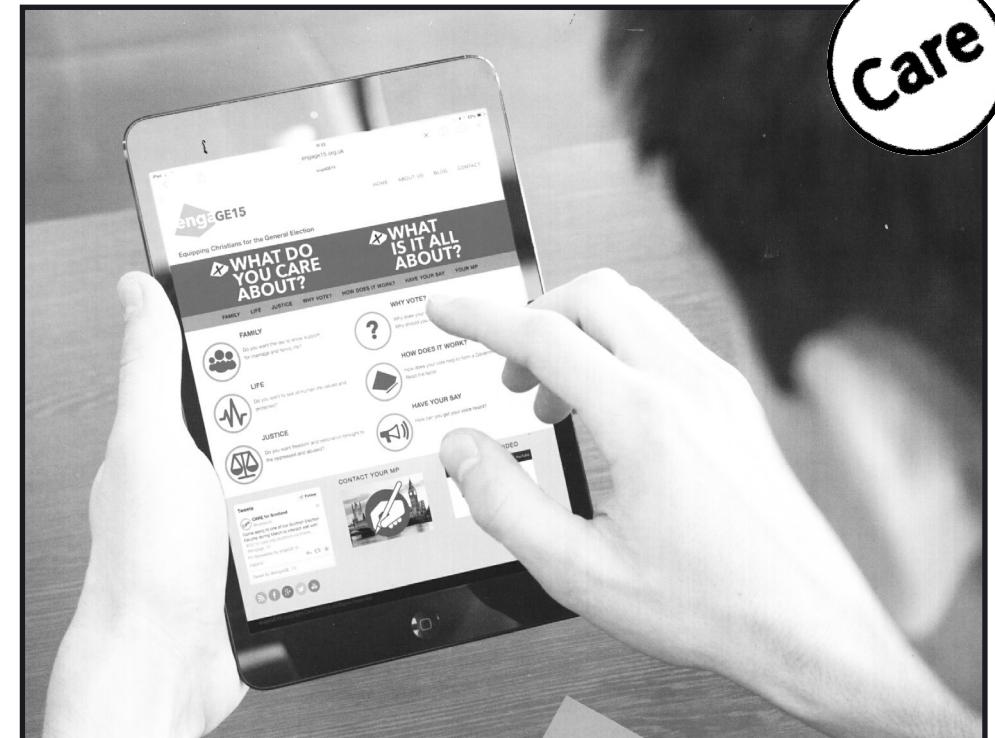
Today a window of opportunity exists to make sure that the truth about the

persecution of Christians is known, and an especially effective way of doing this is through uniting the voices of different ministries currently supporting persecuted individuals and communities. So Release has been at the forefront of establishing the Religious Liberty Commission (RLC) in the UK. This is a Commission of the Evangelical Alliance, and the other three members are currently Release, Open Doors and Christian Solidarity Worldwide.

The RLC is calling on all church leaders to repeatedly urge every Christian in the UK and Ireland to stand alongside their persecuted brothers and sisters through regular prayer and practical action. They are also pressing government and the media to respond responsibly and appropriately.

The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke at the launch of the RLC at Westminster in February and here are some edited extracts from what he said:

"God is present in the midst of the suffering of the persecuted church ... listening to those who are being persecuted is extraordinarily important; talking at them or about them is one



READY TO engageGE15

CARE is thrilled to launch www.engage15.org.uk – our interactive new website created to equip Christians for the General Election.

We've had a history of providing accessible resources over the years, and 2015 is certainly no exception! CARE's Digital Strategy manager Christine Andres takes us on a website tour, starting with two questions key to this year's campaign:

What do you care about?

'We've highlighted a number of CARE issues,' explained Christine, 'and this time we've grouped them under these three areas: Family, Life and Justice.'

'From assisted suicide to human trafficking, you'll be able to explore the issues

you care about, as well as find out just how your MP has voted on some of them, using our useful MP database. We have included a series of questions to ask candidates via email or at a Hustings event.'

What's it all about?

You will find explanations and reflections on why we believe Christians should vote and become politically involved.

'If you're after facts,' Christine added, 'be sure to check out the 'How does it work?' page. There's a whole range of other resources and tools to help you make your

vote count – we have a prayer guide, dynamic video content and a regular Election blog – there's a lot going on.'

CARE wants to encourage churches and communities all across the UK to consider hosting Hustings or 'Question Time' events with the help of our online guides.

A new @engaGE_15 Twitter account will be essential if you want to keep up with a continuous stream of news and content!

Nola Leach summed up, 'whether you're a first time voter or a church leader, we hope the new website will be an invaluable resource as we approach Polling Day.'

*Christ, the Lord, is risen today,
Sons of men and angels say,
Raise your joys and triumphs high,
Sing, ye heavens, and earth, reply,*

*Love's redeeming work is done,
Fought the fight, the battle won,
Lo! the Sun's eclipse is over,
Lo! He sets in blood no more,*

*Lives again our glorious king,
Where, O death, is now thy sting?
Once He died our souls to save,
Where thy victory, O grave?*

*Soar we now where Christ hath led,
Following our exalted Head,
Made like Him, like Him we rise,
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies,*

*king of glory, soul of bliss,
Everlasting life is this,
Thee to know, Thy power to prove,
Thus to sing and thus to love,*

*Hymns of praise then let us sing,
Unto Christ, our heavenly king,
Who endured the cross and grave,
Sinners to redeem and save.*

*Jesus Christ is risen today,
Our triumphant holy day,
Who did once upon the cross,
Suffer to redeem our loss.
Alleluia!*

thing, but actually hearing them is something quite different, and it burns itself into one's soul.

Although there's much talk of persecution in this country I think we need to distinguish our situation from the serious oppression in places around the world where the response to the call of Jesus to "follow me" is forbidden.

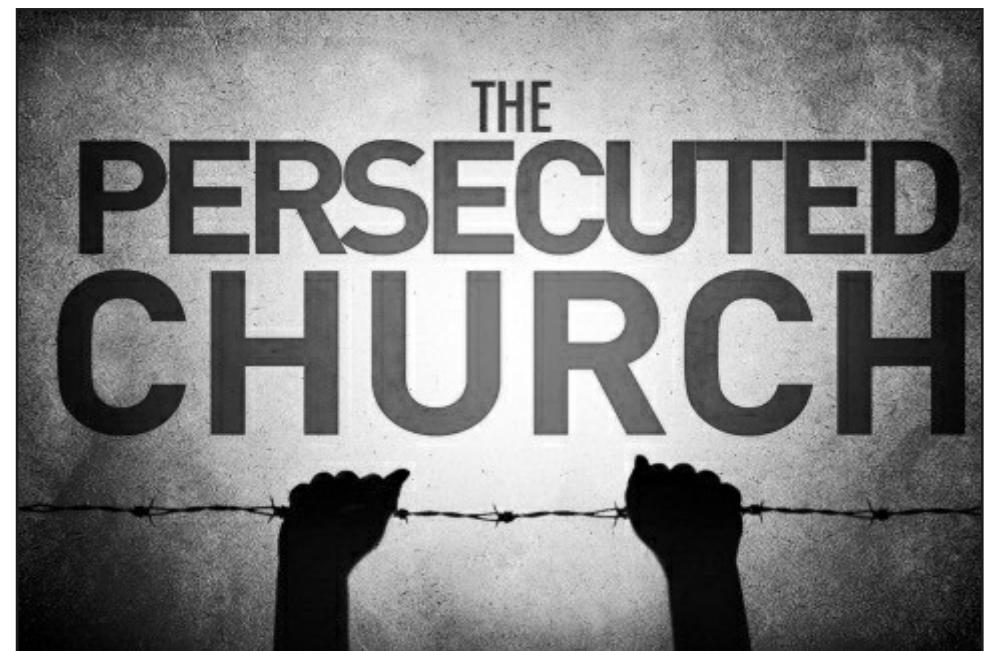
We need to start with generosity and free will, because religious freedom – the choice of how and whether at all we follow God or turn away from God – is something that is given in creation, and in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

For those of us who are Christians, living out that choice as something that we offer freely and around us, as well as something we demand for ourselves, is what distinguishes us from some of the sad and in fact evil history that has characterised the church...

Free choice is essential because that is what Jesus gave those he encountered. Think of the rich young ruler who is offered a choice and goes away saddened (Matthew 19:16-30). Think of the thieves on the cross on either side of Jesus, one of whom turns to him, the other of whom curses him: they have choice (Luke 23:39-43). We are those who have space, who have free will, who have choice – and then bear the consequences...

For these reasons, even more fundamentally than international law, freedom of religion is a fundamental human right – now enshrined in international law – and should be treated as equal, not subordinate, to other human rights.

Because human beings are in the image of God, our religious beliefs are



a core part of what it is to be human. They form us into who we are; they provide foundations for our deepest convictions, and motivations for our sincerest actions.

The trouble with 'freedom of belief' is that it's almost misleading, as it fails fully to convey the total orientation and way of life that some foundational convictions provide. Unlike beliefs of preference, predilections and taste, faith is not an optional extra. I remember years ago, when the present chief justice of the United States was appointed to his post and was about to go through his Senate confirmation hearings. There were a lot of questions about the fact that he is a Roman Catholic. The question was: would that influence his judgement? And I remember a senator who was interviewed and said, "I don't mind him being a Roman Catholic, provided it has no effect on what he does."

Well belief doesn't work that way. It is essential that when we are talking about freedom of religion – and freedom not to follow a religion – that getting God, understanding what this means, the transformation at the deepest level of the human being that goes with faith in God, is something that isn't just like saying, "I prefer the colour green to the colour blue", but it's often treated that way, a mere matter of personal preference. It is at the very depths of what it is to be human...

We must be models ourselves; we must speak out in solidarity. Silence is not an option if we are to stay true to our faith. If our religious beliefs are a

core part of our humanity, then treasuring the dignity of each and every human must mean we treasure their right to religious belief – even when we disagree. Religious freedom is a precious freedom, but it is also profoundly delicate and complex. It is not private, but public. It is lived out and expressed publicly...

Well, if we believe in freedom to choose, if we believe in freedom of religion, what's good for one is good for all. We must speak out for others persecuted for their beliefs, whether it be religious or atheistic: taking responsibility for someone else's freedom is as important as protecting my own.

I welcome this coordination of efforts by the Religious Liberty Commission. And I echo its encouragement for religious and political leaders to continue to speak out in unison against all and any violation of freedom of religion.

Finally I am grateful for its support in resourcing us as church leaders with knowledge and encouraging us to engage with and pray for the persecuted church.



HOME GROUPS

Usually meet after the 1st and 3rd Sunday's of the month, but please speak to the leaders below for actual meeting days



BMS Birthday Scheme sends greetings for a very Happy Birthday to:

2 April	Margaret Palmer	28 April	Susan Brown
4 April	Jenny Marchant	28 April	Mrs Chris Faircloth
11 April	Hazel Elliott	4 May	Fern Amy Boyden
14 April	Felicity Boyden		

MAY PRAYER DIARY

"When the Holy Spirit comes...you will be my witnesses"
(Acts 1:8)

Sunday	3	Release International - Colin King
	4	Craft Club 11.30am
	5	Claus & Sara Steinbrecher
	6	- Rachel & David
	7	Anthea Taylor
	8	Monica Wain
	9	Bible Society Sponsored Walk
Sunday	10	Tearfund
	11	Kathy & Shaun Taylor
	12	- Benjamin & Hannah
	13	Luncheon Club 12.30pm
	14	Carole Ward
	15	Ivy Whitelock
	16	Anna-Teresa Whitelock
Sunday	17	London City Mission 180th Anniversary
	18	Betty Williams
	19	Martin & Maggie Williams
	20	Davida & Colin Woodman
	21	Barrie Worsell
	22	Richard & Angie Anstead
	23	- Thomas & Ethan
Sunday	24	Pentecost/OMF
	25	Sally Aylward
	26	Tony & Lizzie Bourne
	27	- Aaliyah & Abigail
	28	Felicity & Alan Boyden
	29	Helen & Alwyn Brice
	30	- Charles & Emma
Sunday	31	The Leprosy Mission
June	1	Elizabeth Broomhall
	2	Andrew & Susan Brown
	3	Mick & Jennifer Brown
	4	Nicky Calvert
	5	Christopher Chattell
	4	David & Jenny Checkley

Please pray daily for our Pastor, his wife and family

APRIL PRAYER DIARY

"He is not here. He has risen!"
(Mark 16:6)

Sunday	5	EASTER Sunday Service
	6	Martin & Margaret Palmer
	7	Margaret Palmer-Douglas
	8	Rascals 10am
	9	Sheila & David Pearson
	10	Jennifer & Tom Pelc
	11	- Nathan, Sam, Sophia & Jacob
Sunday	12	BMS Missionaries in Middle East
	13	Valerie Pitt
	14	Girlfriends 10.30am
	15	James & Heather Penn
	16	- Alice & Reuben
	17	Elaine Potter
	18	Caroline & Roy Radford
Sunday	19	Wycliffe Bible Translators - Elizabeth
	20	Lea Ragsdell
	21	Margaret Rattray
	22	Vine Coffee Shop 10am
	23	June Richards
	24	Margaret Robertson
	25	Trudy Rowland, Chantelle & Natasha
Sunday	26	SMILE! International - Doubledays
	27	Guy & Alison Saunders
	28	Ministry Leaders' Meeting
	29	Jan & Martin Saunders
	30	Jay & Phoenix Shin/Zhang
May	1	- Alexander
	2	Faith & Robin Stanley

Please pray daily for our Pastor, his wife and family

The First EASTER

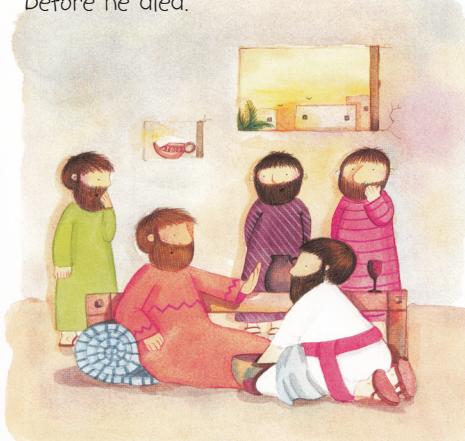
Jesus' last meal

When it was time to eat the Passover supper, Jesus went with his friends to an upstairs room in a house in Jerusalem.

Jesus took a towel and a bowl of water. Their feet were hot and dusty and needed to be washed before they sat down to eat. But Peter didn't want Jesus to do it for him. Jesus was their friend - not their servant!

So Jesus explained. 'I have shown you how to take care of each other. Follow my example, show love to one another and always be willing to help.'

Then Jesus told his friends that this would be the last time he ate with them before he died.

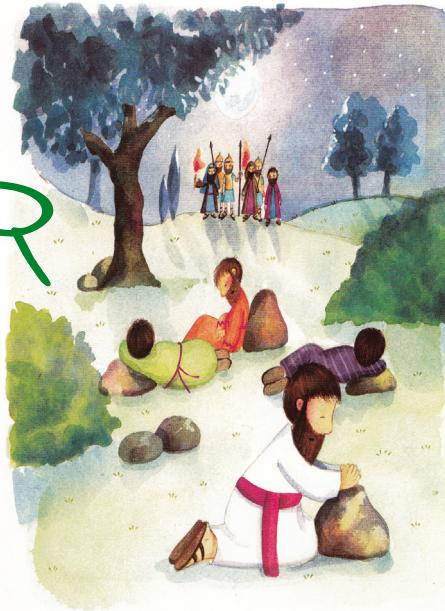


The soldiers in the garden

Judas had eaten the Passover supper with Jesus. But Judas was no longer Jesus' friend. He crept out of the room and went to betray him to his enemies.

Jesus went with the others in the moonlight to an olive grove nearby. Here he took Peter, James and John with him and asked them to watch while he prayed. But each time he returned, they had fallen asleep.

Jesus asked God to help him. He knew that soon he would be left by all his friends to face his enemies alone. Then through the darkness came flaming torches and the clinking of swords. Judas led the soldiers to Jesus and they arrested him. The other eleven friends panicked and ran away, leaving Jesus alone with the soldiers.



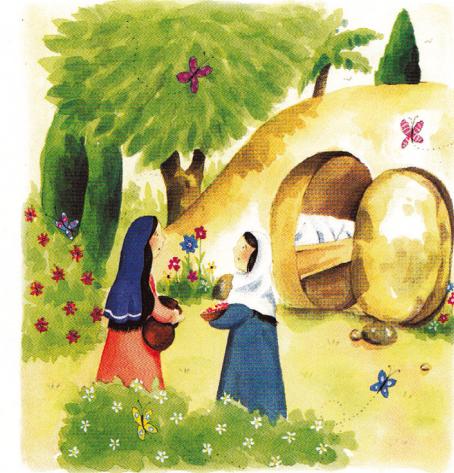
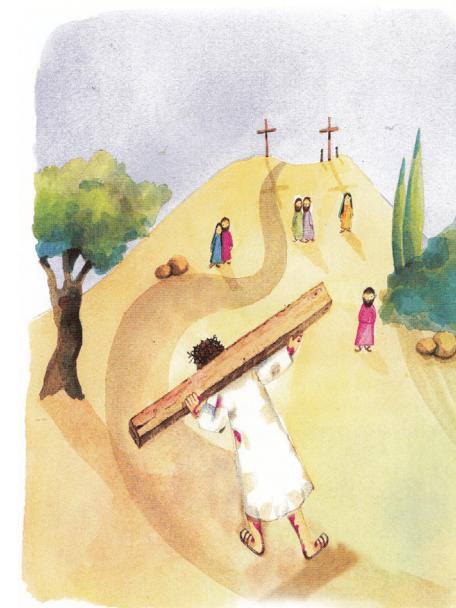
Jesus dies on a cross

That night Peter watched from a distance as Jesus was taken from place to place and his enemies tied to find something to accuse him of doing wrong.

Then next day they made him carry a huge piece of wood to a place outside the city walls, and they crucified him, with two criminals.

John watched and waited with Jesus' mother, Mary, and some of his friends. After many hours the sky turned black, and Jesus cried out 'It is finished!' before he died.

One of Jesus' friends, a man called Joseph, then came and took him from the cross and put his body in the tomb he had bought for himself. A huge heavy stone was rolled across the entrance.



Mary weeps for Jesus

It was Sunday morning. Mary Magdalene and two other women had come with spices to the place where they had buried their friend Jesus.

But what had happened? The huge round scone had been rolled away! The tomb was empty!

Mary ran to get Peter and John. They went to look for themselves and realised what had happened. But they left Mary standing there, weeping.

Then Mary saw two angels. 'Why are you crying?' they asked. 'Someone has taken Jesus away,' she sobbed.

But then she heard someone else say her name. She knew that voice. Mary turned around. It was Jesus! 'Go and tell my friends that I am alive,' said Jesus. 'I have seen Jesus!' she told them joyfully. 'He is alive!'

© Bible Society 'The First Easter' by Sally Ann Wright, illustrated by Honor Ayres