

THE NEW MAGAZINE OF METHODIST EVANGELICALS TOGETHER

RE:VIVE

Holiness

WINTER 2025

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EDITORIAL

We welcome Chris Briggs as the new Chair of MET:Revive – see pages 3 & 4.

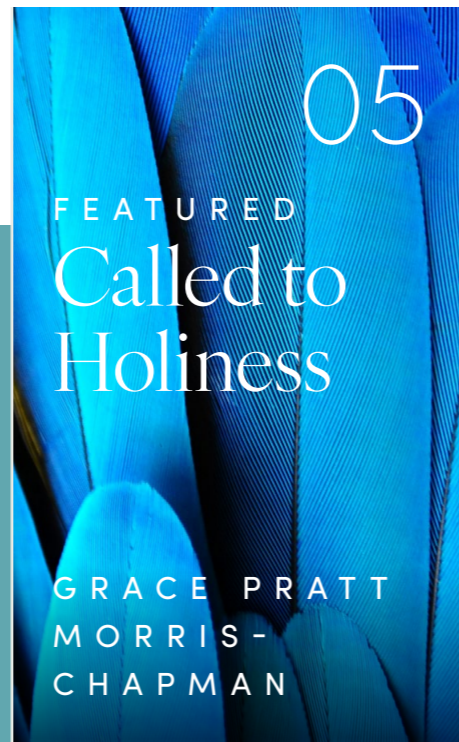
The theme for this winter edition is Holiness. We have a number of contributors who share various insights with us.

Grace Pratt Morris-Chapman challenges us think again about God's call to holiness. Paul Smith takes another look at Christian Holiness; Natalie Williams considers

how the cross transforms our view of God's holiness and Mark Ellis reviews holiness within the history of the Keswick movement. Our Bible Study is compiled by Ben Pugh who explores The Holy One of Israel as he takes a walk through the book of Isaiah.

Ashley Cooper reflects on the theme of 'Holiness Calling' for the Cliff College Festival this year.

The spring edition of the magazine will be due out in mid-May along with the AGM Report.



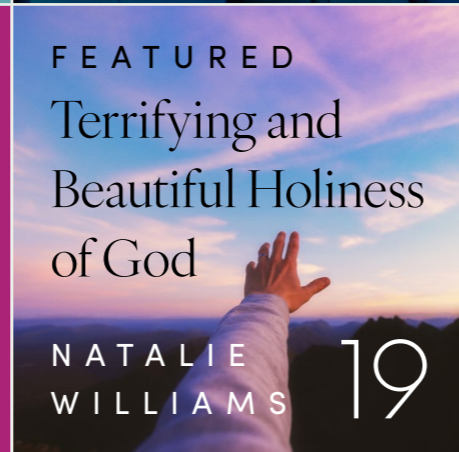
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MET: REVIVE NEWS

CHAIR CHANGEOVER!

We said farewell to Rev Dr David Hull as Chair of MET:Revive on Sunday 17 November 2024 at the Revive Gathering in Northampton. David has served as MET Chair for 12 years; serving faithfully and well with much endurance, patience and stamina during which he has navigated us through some choppy and challenging waters. We are immensely grateful to him.

We welcomed Rev Chris Briggs as the new Chair of MET:Revive on Sunday 17 November 2024 with his induction at the Revive Gathering. Chris brings a wealth of experience as a Supernumerary Methodist minister, currently serving part time as minister of Littleover and St Martin's Methodist Churches in Derby. We pray God's blessing on him as he embarks on this new role.



THE NEW CHAIR WRITES

...



Finish then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be

Thank you so much to David Hull for his immense commitment to evangelicals in the Methodist Church for many years, not least through the role of Chair. This has taken great energy, stamina and commitment. We are so grateful for that. I believe God has blessed us through David's desire to emphasise the important voice that evangelicals have in the Church today around the world and with the recent emphasis on prayer for revival.

I am honoured and humbled to be serving as Chair of MET:Revive. I should appreciate your prayers as I seek to learn how to fulfil this role and honour God in the way that I serve. Please pray that I may be open to God's Holy Spirit as I enter this season.

Our theme for this edition of the magazine is 'Holiness' and you will find articles that I pray will help to explore this important aspect of Christian life.

I am convinced that holiness is a vital aspect of Christian discipleship which may sometimes get overlooked. I am sure this is not intentional. It can happen though when we concentrate so hard on calling all to follow Jesus as Lord and Saviour in the welcoming way that befits those with an Arminian background that we forget that God wants to continue to grow the likeness of Christ within us throughout our lives. There is work to be done when we come to Christ. I am not talking about the Protestant work ethic, but instead

the way that God wants to continue his work of formation within us, *'Finish then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be'.*

I have a sign on my office desk which reads 'Work in Progress'. People laugh when they come in and see me doing nothing, so I've fooled no-one! However the words are true in another sense. I am a work in progress. God wants to sanctify me. He wants to enable me to be holy. He wants to do the same with each of us. Romans 6:22-23 reminds me of this, *'But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.'* You may have come across the quote, 'God loves us just the way we are. But he loves us too much to leave us that way' (Adrian Rogers – Preacher, Teacher, Author).

When I think through what it means to come into a relationship with Jesus, I have often found it helpful to remind myself of the discipleship we enter into by reflection on Justification (when we are saved from the consequences of sin), Sanctification (as we are saved from the presence of sin in our lives), and Glorification (when we shall be saved from the presence of sin eternally). Another aid to reflection for me has been the 'four alls' which W. B. Fitzgerald (who helped to found the Wesley Guild) drew up to summarise British Methodists' distinctive Wesleyan aspects of salvation:

- All need to be saved (All have sinned)
- All can be saved (God loves the world and desires everyone to be saved)
- All can know they are saved (experiential faith and assurance)

- All can be saved to the uttermost (Christian perfection, holiness, sanctification).

The importance of holiness is seen in scripture, but it has also been evidenced through the ages when revivals have happened. It seems when revival breaks out the Holy Spirit convicts people of sin. Many are the stories of revival where people have wept in the streets as well as the churches as they have realised that God has work to do in their lives.

I hope we can emphasise once again the importance of God's ongoing work within us so that the world might see an ever-growing likeness of Christ in the lives of his followers and that as they do so others will be drawn to our beautiful Saviour.

With joy we serve a risen Saviour.

CHRIS BRIGGS

Rev Chris Briggs is a Supernumerary Presbyterian in the Methodist Church of Great Britain. His responsibilities have included a seven year role up to August 2024 as Mission Enabler of the Nottingham and Derby Methodist District in addition to serving at Littleover and St Martin's Methodist Churches in Derby where he continues to serve part-time. Chris has served in a variety of places in the Methodist Church including the Luton area and Portland in Dorset. Chris is married to Nicola, also a Presbyterian in the Methodist Church and they have three children and two grandchildren.



Called to Holiness

GRACE PRATT
MORRIS-CHAPMAN

Former Mission Partner, Grace Pratt-Morris Chapman, challenges us to think again about God's sweet and tender call to holiness, responding by renouncing all in full surrender to him.

I am writing to God's church ... to you who have been called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as he did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours (1 Corinthians 1:2)

In these times we have been so enamoured with often well-meaning, yet clearly flawed, teachings which suggest that being in the presence of God or knowing God is always some sort of 'soothing, calming, affirming of all that we are, want and desire' experience. In fact, Scripture makes it clear that God is utterly holy. Encountering the Lord Almighty, the king of the universe shakes the very core of who we are. It lays everything bare, challenging and dismantling our assumptions, ideas and desires. It changes our circumstances, completely disarming us, bringing us to our knees, calling us to repentance, total surrender and humble adoration. We see this clearly in some of the encounters in both the Old and New Testaments (Isaiah 6:1-7, Mark 5:1-20, Luke 19:1-10, John 4:1-42, Acts 9: 1-19).

One of the most incomprehensible aspects of the Christian faith is seeing God, this absolutely, infinitely holy one, drawing near to us and becoming one of us, living among us, loving and serving, suffering and willingly dying for us, rising again – all so that we can become like him. It is inexplicable! Being holy means that his love and grace cannot bear to see humanity destroyed by sin. God's love is holy love, this means that it is not passive or permissive, rather it is the kind of love which cannot accept anything that is not in line with who God is - his holiness. Christ Jesus came into the world, died and rose again so that we can be holy too. This is of great importance because without holiness we cannot be in relationship with God.

Wesleyan Methodism holds firmly to the truth that it is God's desire that all without exception come into relationship with him. It is essential that we understand



that God's holiness is dangerous in the sense that it destroys everything in us that is not of God, in other words: it is transformative. The closer or more intimate our relationship with God is, the more we experience the burning cleansing flame of his holiness. Today, many preachers prefer not to mention this often painful, soul cleansing experience which calls for total surrender and submission to the inner work of the Spirit of God, which is an indispensable, non-negotiable aspect of Christian discipleship, but the fact remains that God's holiness refuses to affirm us as we are (sinful); this is not about rejection or condemnation but, in fact, God's holiness makes the way for us to draw near to him, to truly experience his love, forgiveness and grace, and not just that, we become hosts of his very Presence, his holy Presence, and with his indwelling Presence we begin to grow in his likeness, becoming more and more like him (Christian Perfection/Sanctification).

John Wesley's teaching on Christian Perfection speaks of the incomparable richness of a life lived in wholehearted pursuit of holiness; (some of the Christian writers of old speak of this as living with their gaze fixed upon the Lord or living their lives beholding the beauty of the Lord) and point to the outward manifestation of the effect of a Christian's growth in holiness – chiefly seen in the ever-growing love for God and for others. In other words, the natural effect of growing in holiness toward Christian Perfection is that the Christian radiates who God is wherever they are. This has huge implications for the life of the Church as it seeks to fulfil its kingdom purpose. The Church is God's 'set apart ones', a holy people, with a holy assignment. Therefore, the Church cannot be who she is called to be and fulfil her calling without holiness. Those who belong to God are called to holiness and are called to do all that they do in holiness, to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

God's heart holds out to our hearts a sweet and tender call to holiness – a life saturated with his holy Presence, imbued with his love and power. Are we willing and ready to renounce and forsake whatever else this world offers, totally surrendering our whole being, our other affections, dreams and desires, to hold on to him and only him?

GRACE PRATT MORRIS-CHAPMAN

Grace and her husband Daniel Pratt-Morris Chapman are currently living in Northampton where the family has settled after their final appointment as mission partners, and are looking forward in joyful anticipation to what the Lord has for them.



Holiness

Rediscovering our Heritage

PAUL SMITH

*Paul Smith takes another
look at Christian Holiness*

Holiness is not a popular word or concept in the church today. We are more often concerned about growing the congregation, reaching out with the gospel, serving the community, campaigning for social justice. Many people feel that holiness is either something to be avoided, no one likes a 'Holy Joe', or far above the spiritual reach of the ordinary Christian. Yet the conviction which lay at Wesley's heart that the Methodist people had been raised up under God to promote the life of holiness.

At the 1763 Conference, the question was asked, 'What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the preachers called Methodists?' The answer was given, 'To reform the nation and in particular, the Church; to spread Scriptural holiness through the land' (Large Minutes 1862). We can be in no doubt about the significance of the question, and the answer given, as we remember that it was repeated at every Conference for the next twenty-six years.

On 15 September 1789 he wrote to Robert Carr Brackenbury,

'Full sanctification is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly he appeared to have raised us up'

Letters of John Wesley Vol 8. 238

Here we are dealing with something, not on the periphery, but at the core of the gospel as Wesley understood it. He was in no doubt that God's purpose was not simply to count people righteous when they were not, but to make them righteous. To be a Christian involved, for Wesley, not just a change in status, but a change in nature. He was bold enough to believe that everything in the life of the Christian which is contrary to God's will could be dealt with. So how did he arrive at this conclusion?

WESLEY'S SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

There can be no doubt that the devotion and discipline of his childhood in the rectory at Epworth had a profound effect. Under the direction of his mother Susanna, strongly influenced as it was by Puritanism, he accepted the truth of scripture, came to know what a Christian believes, and understood very clearly that a particular life-style is required if we are to fulfil God's requirements.

With this spiritual framework, Charles and John went to Oxford where they were appalled by the excesses so often found in university cities. In the face of this something had to be done to strengthen their faith, so they banded together with others of the same mind for shared devotions and Christian conversation, and to minister to the poor and underprivileged, particularly prisoners. Their fellow students derided them as 'Bible Moths' or 'Methodists' but they chose a title far more indicative of their intentions. They called themselves 'The Holy Club', for the pursuit of holiness was their aim.

At the age of twenty-two, his father pressed John to enter holy orders, which eventually he did, and providentially at this time he read Thomas a Kempis' 'Christian Pattern' and subsequently William Law's 'Christian Perfection' and 'Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life'. They all had a profound effect on John Wesley. He writes, 'By my continued efforts to keep his whole law, inward and outward, to the utmost of my power, I was persuaded that I should be accepted of him ...' (Journal, vol. 1, p. 467). There is little doubt that this

desire to prove himself acceptable to God was a strong contributing factor in his decision to offer himself to serve the colonies. On 14 October 1735 John, together with his brother Charles, and Benjamin Ingham, formerly a member of the Holy Club, all now priests in the Church of England, embarked first for Gravesend to board 'The Simmonds' and then on to Georgia. For both John and Charles, for different reasons, their trip proved to be a disaster. The only redeeming feature was that it brought them into contact with a group of Moravians, also emigrating, a relationship which continued during their stay in Georgia and subsequently back in England. The Wesley brothers were deeply affected by the faith of the Moravians, not least their quiet confidence and faith in the midst of a storm in mid-Atlantic.

It was the Moravians, and particularly Peter Böhler, who introduced John Wesley to a new way of being a Christian. It was Pietism, emphasising the religion of the heart. This in turn led to the Aldersgate Experience of 24 May 1738 of which Wesley says 'I felt my heart strangely warmed and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sin, even mine ...' Now he had the key. Being a Christian is not just about what we believe and how we behave; it is about something which happens in the heart, and crucially, something which God does. This realisation shaped all Wesley's subsequent thinking, not least his teaching on Christian holiness. So, what did he believe and proclaim about holiness, and how can it be ours?

WESLEY'S HOLINESS TEACHING

Holiness is essentially about difference. In the Old Testament we see it clearly. Certain articles were considered holy; so were buildings, a people and a nation. They were different from other similar articles, buildings and people; and the difference lay in the fact that they were dedicated to God. They belonged to him. This view of holiness as difference helps us to understand some of the regulations of the Old

“
Being a Christian is not just about what we believe and how we behave; it is about something which happens in the heart, and crucially, something which God does
 ”

Testament; others may do this or that, but we do not because we are different, belonging to God. So the life of holiness must be lived in contrast to the world's view and culture. Wesley knew that before Aldersgate. The essential change now was that he came to see that this necessary change is brought about by what God does, not by our effort. We are not made holy by what we do but by what God does in us. It is all of grace.

At this point we need to clear a few things which may be obstacles out of the way. The first is Wesley's understanding of sin. He clearly understood and taught that there are some things which fall short of God's perfect will and will not be completely removed this side of heaven; lapses of memory, or inadvertent oversights which may subsequently mean that others are hurt. But Wesley would not call these sins. They are part and parcel of what it means to be human but sin 'properly so called' must involve the will. Sin is the wilful transgression of the known will of God.

We also need to deal with an area for which he was deeply criticised; he called it 'Christian Perfection'. When challenged he simply retorted that this is the word which Jesus used (Matthew 5:48). He defined it as the fulfilment of the Great Commandment. As William Greathouse puts it, it is:

the loving the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength; and the loving our neighbour, every man, as our own souls. Such fulfilment 'implies that no wrong temper, contrary to love, remains in the soul, and that all thoughts, words and actions are governed by pure love.' In the 'Scripture Way of Salvation' he says, 'It is love excluding sin, love filling the heart, taking up every capacity of the soul'.

William Greathouse, 'John Wesley's Theology of Christian Perfection', Ilkeston: Moorley's, p. 4.

It was the teaching of the New Testament that convinced Wesley that such a life ought to be considered normal for every Christian. Further, whilst he accepted that some entered into such a life over a period of time he also argued strongly that one could enter in a moment. We are justified in a moment, so we can be sanctified in a moment. Thus he pointed to a second crisis experience, sometimes called 'the Second Blessing' as the gateway to the life of holiness, New Testament Christianity. Yet this ought to be seen, not as the destination, but the entry point to a life lived in moment-by-moment consecration. Writing to John Mason he urges him to 'press all the believers to expect deliverance from sin every moment' (quoted in WE Sangster. 'The Path to Perfection', p. 86).

THE CHALLENGE FOR TODAY

The Church today, not least the Methodist Church, has many pressing needs; but the most vital is for more godly people; people whose lives have been transformed by love divine, who are consumed by it,

driven by it, sacrifice everything for it and glory in it. Everything about our history says that can happen. They said of Wesley that he took holiness out of the monastery and put it in the market place. It is for every Christian. Let the longing for holiness capture your heart. You might begin by quietly reflecting on some of Charles Wesley's great holiness hymns, preferably in the Methodist Hymn Book if you can still find a copy! What he describes as aspirational is a glorious possibility for us all. God give us a hunger for holiness, and then satisfy our hunger.



REV D PAUL SMITH

Rev Paul Smith is a Supernumerary Minister in the South-West Peninsular Circuit.

PRAYER FOCUS

CHRISTIAN HOLINESS: A desire amongst individuals and churches to seek a new/renewed understanding of Holiness and the transformation that it can bring; for the church to return to its Wesleyan roots of spreading Scriptural Holiness across the land; the wind of the Spirit to fall bringing restoration and a longing to move into a deeper relationship with God. (1 Thessalonians 4:7; Leviticus 20:7).

FOCUS ON THE CHURCH: Children and Young People: Inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit for all youth and children's workers connexionally; the ongoing work of 3-Generate; clear Biblically based teaching; protection from erroneous teaching and false doctrine. (Proverbs 2:1-6; Titus 2:7-9).

Cliff College: Cliff College: Ashley Cooper as he steps down as Principal and for Andrew Stobart as he takes up the role; for continued evangelical teaching for students; continuity for the staff. (Exodus 18:21; Ephesians 4: 11-16).

Prayer Focus is compiled by Roz Addington. If you would like to contact Roz feel free to email: prayer@metrevive.uk

FOCUS ON NATIONAL ISSUES: National Leaders: Integrity and justice, wisdom and strength for the Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer and all members of the Cabinet; a return to God and the move of the Holy Spirit at the centre of government and the formulating of godly policies; the Royal family. (Zechariah 7:8-10; Proverbs 28:2).

The Vulnerable: People struggling to make ends meet - those on low incomes, especially people with young families and the elderly; adequate resources for organisations trying to help - food banks, help with debt especially Christians Against Poverty; those living with disabilities and special needs. (Acts 20:35; Proverbs 31:8-9).

FOCUS ON WORLD ISSUES: Russian/Ukraine War: De-escalation of the conflict; concern over the increase of Russian espionage/sabotage across Europe, and the involvement of North Korea and China; for God to act towards Putin; Russian people to see through the lies perpetrated; resilience for the Ukrainian people and the resources needed to combat Putin's advances. (Psalm 33:13-16 & 18-22; Romans 1:18).



Portrait of a Methodist

BY JOHN WESLEY

A Methodist is one who has the love of God shed abroad in their heart by the Holy Spirit given unto them.

One who loves the Lord God with all their heart and soul and mind and strength.

One who rejoices evermore, prays without ceasing, and in everything gives thanks.

One whose heart is full of love to all humankind and is purified from envy, wrath, malice, and every unkind affection.

Their one desire and the one design in life is not to do their own will, but the will of him who sent him.

They keep all God's commandments from the least to the greatest.

They follow not the customs of the world, for vice does not lose its nature through becoming fashionable.

They fare not sumptuously every day.

They cannot lay up treasures upon earth, nor can they adorn themselves with gold and costly apparel.

They cannot join in any diversion that has the least tendency to vice.

They cannot speak evil of his neighbour any more than he can lie.

They cannot utter unkind or evil words.

They do good unto all people, unto neighbours, strangers, friends and enemies.

These are the principles and practices of our sect.

These are the marks of a true Methodist.

By these alone do Methodists desire to be distinguished from all others.

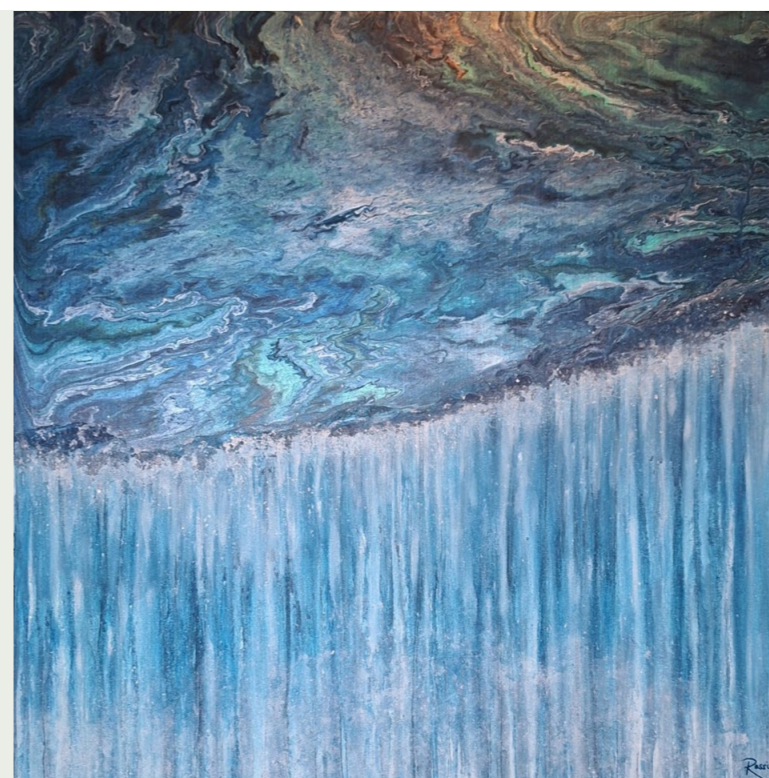


Rossie
HENDERSON-BEGG



The ocean is peaceful and serene and full of wonder, it is also powerful and dangerous and mysterious. Either way the ocean is beautiful, infinite, and an integral part of the way the world works together.

This piece shows a powerful wave, movement and vibrancy and life. The splash and curve of the wave, I can almost hear it as I look at this painting. The ocean's movements are powerful, they change the landscape. Just like us when we move powerfully, we can change our whole world.



Sometimes I really don't like the phrase 'good enough'. Sometimes this says to me, when talking about someone else or myself, that you just about scrape a pass - not great but good enough, you'll do.

But that's not true. You are MORE THAN ENOUGH. More than good enough, exceptional, deep, wonderful, stunning, strong, unique, breathtaking and beautiful.

This piece, 'More Than Enough', is 1m² then framed. I used acrylic pouring techniques, silicone oil, and sand to create the texture of the roaring waterfall.

TIMOTHY DUDLEY-SMITH OBE

26 DECEMBER 1926
- 12 AUGUST 2024



Brian Hoare pays tribute to the great hymn-writer

It is perhaps odd that the hymns of someone who once confessed 'I can't read music and I'm totally unmusical' should today be sung all over the Christian world and in many different languages. What Timothy Dudley-Smith did have in abundance, however, was a keen sense of poetry, a strong understanding of metre and rhythm and a deep knowledge of scripture, all of which combined to make him one of the greatest hymn writers of the twentieth century. Indeed, he has been described as one of the sparks that ignited the late-20th-century 'hymn explosion'.

Timothy Dudley-Smith was born in Manchester, educated at Tonbridge public school and trained for the ministry at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. Ordained in 1950, he served his curacy in Kent before spending seven years at the Cambridge University Mission in south-east London, from where he took many groups of boys to hear Billy Graham at Harringey. This was followed by service at the Evangelical Alliance where he edited the Crusade magazine and then with the Church Pastoral Aid Society, before becoming Archdeacon of Norwich and, for the final ten years of his active ministry, Bishop of Thetford. In retirement his hymn writing continued unabated, and he was awarded an OBE in 2003 for his services to hymnody.

The first hymn Bishop Timothy wrote in 1962 is arguably his best-known: 'Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord' which he was inspired to write when reading the Magnificat (Luke 1:46ff) in the then recently published

New English Bible. The Poet Laureate John Betjeman described it as 'one of the few modern hymns that will truly last'. The fact that it now appears in no less than two hundred and twenty hymnbooks across the world is testimony to that assertion. Since then a total of more than four hundred hymn texts have flowed from his pen - for he still wrote by hand or at best on a typewriter and never ventured into the world of computers.

Timothy was often asked to write a new hymn for some special place or event, as notably for the centenary of Scripture Union in 1967 for which he wrote 'Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided' - a hymn helped to become widely popular by the tune by Timothy's friend and fellow bishop, Michael Baughen. Such commissions can be so specific that they can't then be used more widely, but he had the knack of writing words which, whilst applicable to the occasion, were always equally usable more widely.

For me it was a privilege to have known Timothy personally, to meet him on a number of different occasions and to contribute tunes to four of his hymns. Along with countless others, I rejoice that he remained a firmly committed evangelical to the end and thank God for the way his hymns have enriched the worship life of the worldwide church for so many people.

REV. BRIAN HOARE

Rev. Brian Hoare is a Supernumerary Methodist Minister. He was a New Testament tutor at Cliff College Secretary for Evangelism in the Connexional Team and President of the Methodist Conference (1995-96).



Tell Out, My Soul, The Greatness Of The Lord

TIMOTHY DUDLEY-SMITH (1926-2024)

*Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.*

*Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age to same;
his holy Name - the Lord, the Mighty One.*

*Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.*

*Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!*



Bible Study

The Holy One of Israel: A walk through the book of Isaiah

BEN PUGH

Many Isaiahs or one? Answering the age-old question.

The trend in biblical studies has been away from chopping up certain books of the Bible into different bits that came from different authors at different times. Thankfully, the study of Isaiah has been part of that trend. There is consensus that Isaiah is what it is in its present form and needs to be appreciated as such. Earlier generations of scholars divided Isaiah into 'Isaiah' (Isaiah 1 – 39), 'Deutero-Isaiah' (Isaiah 40 – 55) and 'Trito-Isaiah' (Isaiah 56 – 66). The main thing that triggered the division was the fact that Isaiah 40 onwards speaks about the experience of the Jews after exile and even goes so far as to predict by name the monarch who would be instrumental in allowing the Jews to return to their homeland: 'Cyrus' in Isaiah 45. Most scholars were unwilling to accept that a prophet

living hundreds of years before these events could have foretold these things in such detail. It was concluded that someone else added this section. Arguments about differences in style then helped reinforce this division and bring about the hiving off chapters 56–66 as a further division.

More recently, scholars have begun to see how, even if we do accept more than one point of origin, or the editorial input of lots of different people over the centuries, the book as a whole is profoundly coherent. The overall argument only makes sense when read as a unity. And when appreciated as a whole, we can better see the unique place that the book of Isaiah has in the canon. It is especially valuable for theology. Scholars of Isaiah ooze with high praises for the rich expansive

theology of the book: 'Isaiah displays the character of God with a depth and a breadth that surpasses almost any other biblical book,' says Asbury Seminary's John Oswalt, 'Isaiah sums up biblical theology in a better way than does any other single book of the Bible' (J. Oswalt, *Isaiah: Theology of*, in Van Gemeren (ed), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* Vol. 4, Paternoster, 1997, pp. 725, 732).

In line with the new taste for the unity of the book, instead of naming the natural threefold divisions of the book as though these were three different works, I will keep those divisions but use them as thematic divisions, as follows...

THE BOOK OF THE KING (1-39)

In many ways, the account of Isaiah's meeting with God in chapter 6 is the whole book of Isaiah in microcosm.

'In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up ...' (Isaiah 6:1).

Judah's king, Uzziah, had been living in ignominious isolation for years, and with fading health. Now he had died. Isaiah feared that this was symbolic of Israel's fate: the decline and death of a nation as the ambitious Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria threatens from the North. Into the doom and gloom shines forth the true King of Israel, filling the temple with his robe and the earth with his glory. 'Holy, holy, holy!' cry the seraphs surrounding the throne, 'the whole earth is full of his glory!' (6:3).

The holiness of God discovers Isaiah's true moral condition. He is rendered speechless. With a prominent position within the Jerusalem establishment and ready access to royalty, Isaiah was a respected figure, but when God himself appeared he knew a part of him would not survive the encounter. Yet, at the Lord's bidding, a seraph takes a live coal and touches Isaiah's lips. Instantly, all is well within his troubled heart. Atonement has been made, arranged by God himself.

With a clean heart, Isaiah is now close enough to the throne to overhear the divine counsel: 'Whom shall we send, and who will go for us?' (6:8) Meeting God has given him fresh hope for the nation. Even though God must warn him that most of the people will not accept his message (6:9-10), yet he now has a strong sense of purpose, a mission: 'Here am I, send me' (6:8).

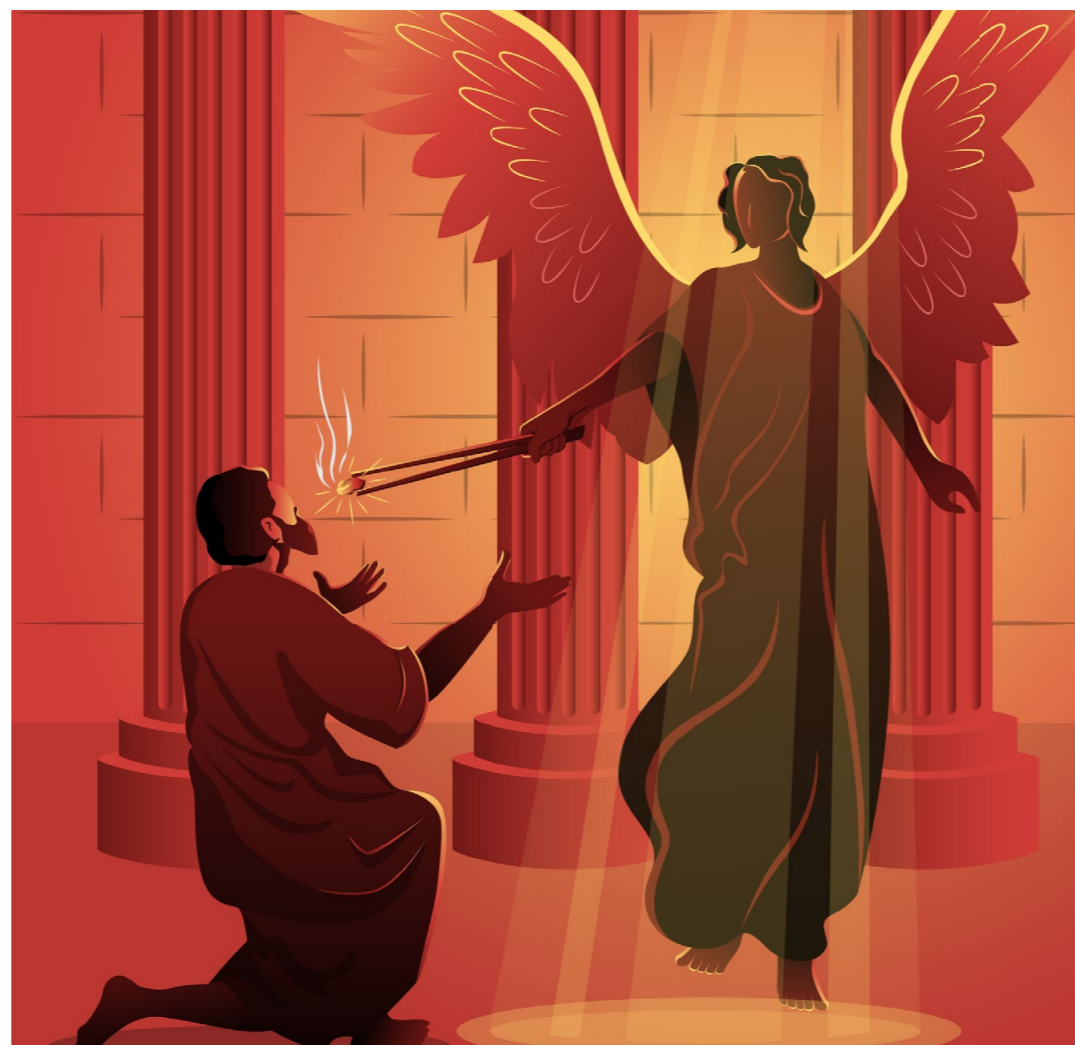
There are three stages here. First, there is an encounter with the King, high and lifted up, the Holy One of Israel bringing a new awareness of sin. Secondly, atonement and healing are provided. Thirdly,

participation in God's worldwide mission is invited. We will continue to pick up themes from this first section as we go along but now let's take stage two: atonement, and then stage three: mission, and have a go at using these as templates for the second and third big thematic divisions of Isaiah.

THE BOOK OF THE SERVANT (40-55)

'And he was numbered with the transgressors. . .' (Isaiah 53:12).

Isaiah seems to have seen that much can be said about the attributes of the Holy One when we ponder where he lives, where he dwells, with whom he is numbered. It is already clear that he is high and lifted up. Throughout chapters 1-39, the transcendence of God and the sinfulness of his people and of the nations that surround them has been made painfully clear. There has been a 'prophetic lawsuit' going on here and there and extending into the early chapters of this section. There have been charges (3:13-15), a case for the defence (41:21; 43:26), witnesses (43:9), deliberations (1:18), sentencing (41:1). But now a new mood is emerging. We are now entering a world of restoration and renewal. God is doing a new thing (43:19). But we glimpse the devastating cost to the High and Lofty One as he seeks to bring this about. Along comes the Servant sent by God. He is despised and rejected. He is unexceptional to look at. He is brutalised, bullied, mocked and abused (52:13-53:9). Finally, he finds himself numbered with the transgressors and making intercession for them (53:12). Because of his work, the barren women can rejoice in her descendants, shame is removed and with tender mercies the Lord promises that judgment will never





‘So Lord, I give myself to help the reaping, to gather precious souls unto You.’

again come near his people. Their peace will last forever (54:1-10). How? Because ‘their righteousness is from me’ (54:17). It becomes clear that the Servant is the arm of the Lord himself by which he himself would accomplish salvation for a powerless people (59:16; 63:5).

THE BOOK OF THE KINGDOM (56-66)

The condescension of the Holy One will continue to be our theme here, and my anchor verse is Isaiah 57:15: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place with him who has a contrite and humble spirit.’

It is in this last big section of Isaiah that God’s desire to reach all the nations of the world becomes clear (56:1-8; 60:3; 65:1; 66:18-19). There is a breadth of vision here about the worldwide mission of God that is astonishing. Isaiah is foreseeing things that are not to become a full reality until the outpouring of the Spirit on the household of Cornelius and the beginning of the mission to the Gentiles (Acts 10).

We recall the first time we met the mission theme in Isaiah 6:8. Isaiah said, ‘Here am I, send me.’

It reminds me of that old Chris Bowater song, *Here I am, Wholly Available*: ‘The fields are white unto harvest, but oh, the labourers are so few.’ With stirring emotions, we’d sing, ‘So Lord, I give myself to help the reaping, to gather precious souls unto You.’ As evangelicals, our concept of mission has broadened since those days, but Isaiah reminds us that God’s heart is still for the simple in-gathering of lost people. His desire is still to ‘gather to him [to Israel] others besides those who are gathered to him’ (56:8), so that the ‘sons of the foreigner’ are brought to his holy mountain (56:6). (Some versions omit ‘sons’ thus following the Greek Septuagint rather than the Hebrew written Scriptures TNKH, which includes ‘sons’ meaning future generations.)

The goal of God is that people of every tribe and tongue would be his people and that he would be their God and dwell among them (Revelation 21:3), but it will be the humble that are the targets of God’s affection. It is their hearts that will be the place of his dwelling. His good news message is for the righteous poor (61:1), and his oil of joy, is reserved for those who

have been mourning for sin and despairing of themselves (61:3). God looks for the contrite ones who will tremble at his word (66:2) and, yet more remarkably, chooses to live with them in their homes whilst bringing them up to the heights of his throne.

CONCLUSION

The love of God is always surprising. A footballer might wear an armband saying, ‘Jesus loves you,’ but it is in this long and complex book of Isaiah that I find I have suddenly met the true nature and true extent of God’s love. It is Isaiah who shows us that the attributes of God are revealed in where he dwells: he lives high and lifted up in the temple as its foundations tremble, he lives with the transgressors beaten and forsaken, and he lives with the humble binding up their wounds. This is our God.

FURTHER READING

- Williamson, Hugh, *Variations on a Theme*, Paternoster, 2006.
- Motyer, Alec, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, IVP, 1993.

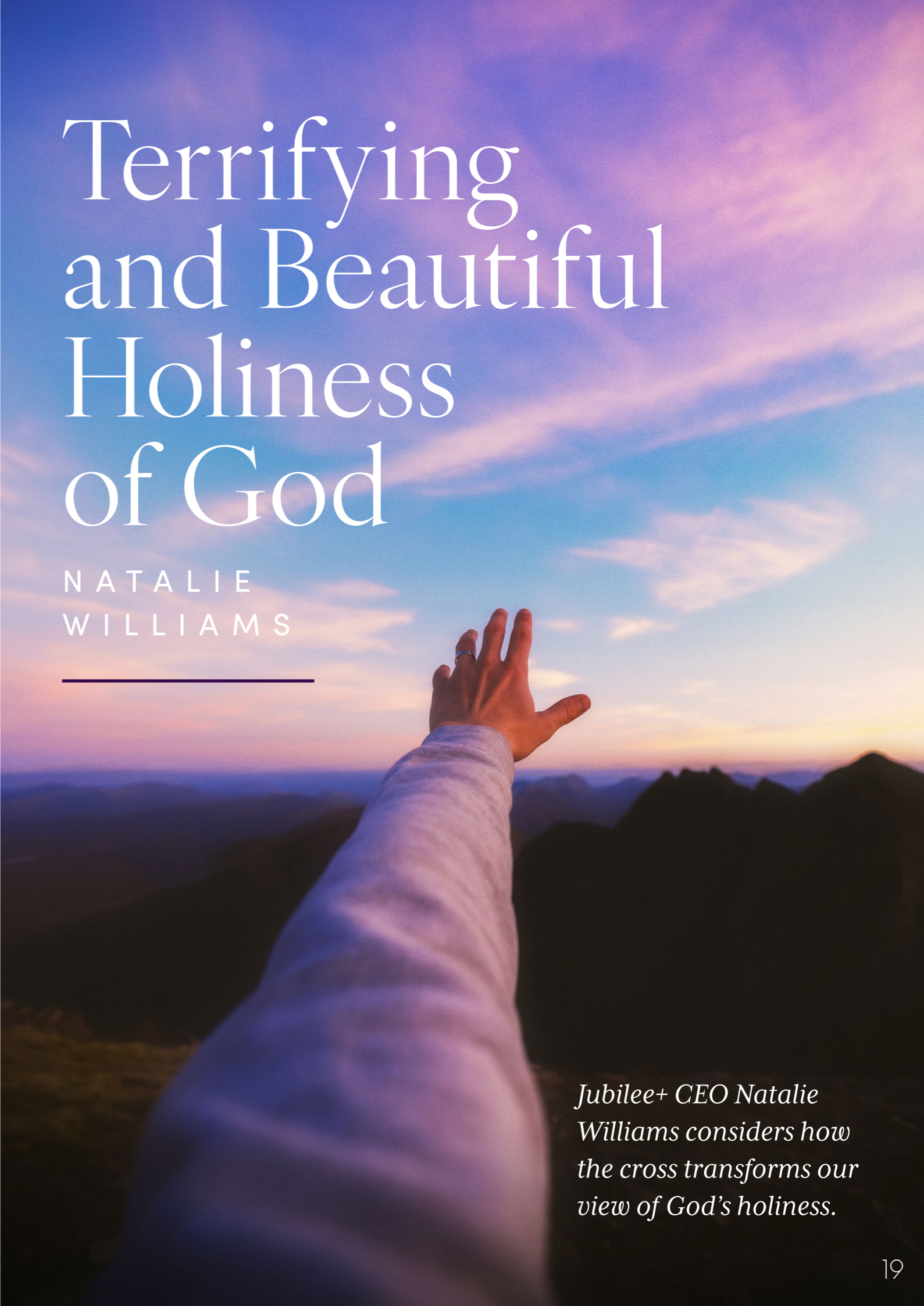
DR BEN PUGH

Dr Ben Pugh was not raised as a Christian and soon developed a hunger for spiritual realities. This hunger was satisfied when he met Christ while studying at art college. He became fascinated by the Bible and developed an interest in the formal study of theology. He has been Lecturer in Theology at Cliff College since 2012. With his family, he is an active member of the Eagles’ Nest Church, Nottingham.



Terrifying and Beautiful Holiness of God

NATALIE WILLIAMS



Jubilee+ CEO Natalie Williams considers how the cross transforms our view of God’s holiness.

It is easy to hone in on the characteristics of God that we like best. I am known for writing and speaking about the mercy of God – I consider that to be my life's message. But there is a risk in being so enamoured with one specific attribute of God: it can have the unintended consequence that we develop a lop-sided view of him.

To know and understand God, as Jeremiah 9:24 assures us we can, we need to see him as he truly is, rather than making him in our image. This means we mustn't separate the attributes of God. It is wonderful for me to celebrate his mercy, but I need to recognise that God is who he is not just because he is merciful, but because he is merciful and holy and wise and powerful and omniscient and sovereign ... and so on.

In fact, it is only in view of God's mercy than we develop the desire to present ourselves to him as holy (Romans 12:1), and it is only in view of God's holiness that we can truly understand how mind-blowing his mercy is towards us.

But in my early years as a Christian, I did not really like thinking about the holiness of God. My knee-jerk reaction to it, before I could help myself, was negative. I thought of it as demanding (I must behave a certain way to live up to a standard that is too high for me) and prohibitive (I must not behave in certain ways that are unworthy of a follower of Jesus).

I recognise that those thoughts come from a desire to decide for myself what is right and wrong, what is good and evil. Left to my own devices, I wish I got to choose. Our society tells me it is my right to make up my own mind.

In line with this thinking, I used to imagine that when I see Jesus face-to-face, I will reel off a list of questions for him. 'Why did x happen?' 'Why did you say y is not okay?' 'Why did you tell me to do z?'

But whenever we read in the Bible about people encountering God up close, their responses are quite different to what I imagined mine might be.

A FEARFUL VISION

In Isaiah 6:1-5, we find that even the seraphim cover their faces as they cry 'holy, holy, holy is the Lord' and Isaiah's own response is not, 'Let me ask you about a few things...' but rather, 'Woe is me!'

Isaiah found the vision of God terrifying, because when we see God in his holiness, all our sins are exposed for the evil they really are. In that fearful moment, Isaiah did not offer excuses. There was no defence. He didn't

present any mitigating circumstances: 'If you knew my background ...' 'My motives were good ...' There was no 'but it was only a little lust, a little white lie, a little pride, a little envy ...'

When Isaiah saw God clearly, in all his holiness, Isaiah also saw himself clearly, in all his crimson sinfulness.

Hundreds of years later, demons were quicker than the religious people to recognise who Jesus was, crying out: 'I know who you are – the Holy One of God' (Mark 1:24).

Some of the disciples grasped something of the holiness of Jesus too. For example, when Simon Peter realised that Jesus was the Messiah, his response was to fall down in recognition of his sinfulness (Luke 5:8).

Even John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who had walked closely with him for three years, fell down as though dead at the sight of Jesus in all his resplendent holiness (Revelation 1:12-18).

HOLINESS HIGHLIGHTS SIN

The holiness of God is terrifying because it shows us how pure he is, and how sinful we are. When people in the Bible see God's holiness, it isn't questions or comments or suggestions that tumble out of their mouths. It isn't even praise. It's confession. As Jackie Hill Perry writes in her book *Holier Than Thou*: 'Holiness makes honesty an obligation.'

The more we realise how holy God is, the more aware we become of our sinfulness. There is a strange paradox here – for those of us who have been following Jesus for a long time, we will know that we are becoming more holy (I no longer swear or steal, for example), but we are also becoming more aware of our sinfulness.

The closer I get to the light of God's holiness, the more I see how grubby I am. He is pure, spotless, righteous in all his ways. And my sin is offensive to him.

As a society, we are so familiar with the patience of God (whether we realise it or not) that we are more shocked by his judgment than by his forbearance.

The right response to the holiness of God is to fall down in fear, cry out, and try to cover ourselves. Yet, wonderfully, Jesus has made a way for us to find God's holiness beautiful. For those who have put their faith in Christ and made him Lord, we no longer need to cower and take cover, but can now revel and rejoice in the beauty of his holiness.

This is only possible because of the cross, of course. God is perfectly just, so he cannot just ignore our sin.

In fact, he cannot even look at it (Habakkuk 1:13). Just as darkness cannot co-exist with light, so God's holiness cannot co-exist with our sin.

HOLINESS BECOMES BEAUTIFUL

The only way we can find God's holiness beautiful is to be holy ourselves – to be as morally pure, spotless and untainted as he is. But we cannot do it. Only one human being has ever lived a perfectly holy life: Jesus. He is the only one who could say, truthfully: 'I always do what pleases him' (John 8:29).

Always. Jesus lived a completely holy life – he never sinned, he never lied, he never had a mixed motive, he never did anything wrong, neither deliberately nor accidentally. Yet he became sin for us, so that we might become the very righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is extraordinary!

The holiness of God becomes beautiful to sinners because of the cross of Christ, where he paid for our sins. For those who trust in his salvation, we can confidently approach the throne that made Isaiah cower in fear (Hebrews 4:16). Our sin has been laid on Jesus, and because of that we are forgiven and cleansed. He has removed our sin as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12).

God's hatred of sin did not stop him loving us. His love for us caused him to devise a plan to save us from our sins (2 Samuel 14:14). God is so holy that he cannot clear the guilty. Sin matters. But because Jesus died in our place and paid the price for our sins, we can be transformed by the holiness of God rather than destroyed by it. We will still fall down at the feet of Jesus, but secure in the knowledge that he has made us like him – holy.

Once we see God's holiness through the cross, we are free to find it beautiful. And it really is! The holiness of God means he cannot sin. It means his words and his works can be completely trusted because it is impossible for him to sin against us, or to break a promise he has made to us. Sinners cannot be trusted, but God can. He is always true, always faithful, never lies, never changes. He is without fault. God's holiness is wonderful!

IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

We have been reconciled to God the Father through Christ and presented holy in his sight (Colossians 1:22). We will never be treated as our sins deserve, because Jesus already was! As 1 Chronicles 16:29 says, we can now worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness – that is, his holiness, and ours.

How are we to respond? The Bible tells us that we have been made holy and are becoming holy. The only appropriate response is to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1). Growing in holiness is not a passive endeavour. It happens by beholding Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18). As we gaze on his holiness and marvel at how he has dealt with our sin, we find him more and more beautiful, and then it becomes the desire of our hearts to love him, honour him, obey him, and live for him.

And the most wonderful news of all is that we get to be like him.

NATALIE WILLIAMS

Natalie Williams grew up in relative poverty and was wonderfully saved by Jesus at the age of 15. She is now the CEO of Christian charity Jubilee+. Natalie's latest book, 'Tis Mercy All, was published by SPCK in 2024 and the audiobook was released 10 January 2025.



PRAYER FOCUS

JUBILEE+: For the charity's commitment to see churches change the lives of all who live in poverty in communities; for local churches to have compassion and a desire to engage with those living in poverty within their neighbourhoods and be empowered to tackle the issue; for those living in poverty to respond to outreach and find the love of Jesus. (Galatians 6:9; 1 John 3:17-18).

FOCUS ON THE CHURCH: MET: Chris Briggs as he takes up office as Chair; for the Executive and Trustees; for wisdom and discernment on the way forward; David Hull as he prepares to take on the MET:Revive Ambassador Role; ongoing Bible studies and prayer meetings. (Isaiah 41:9-13; Hebrews 10: 22-24).

Methodist Church: The President and Vice President of Conference, Rev Helen Cameron and Mrs Carolyn Godfrey; Secretary of Conference, Rev Dr Jonathan Hustler; all in positions of leadership; for an awareness across the connexion of the shift away from Biblical values, for a desire to halt this and to bring about repentance. (Acts 20: 28; Proverbs 3:1-6).

FOCUS ON NATIONAL ISSUES: Integrity and Accountability: For all institutions and services throughout the nation - both public and private sectors,

media & government; all decisions made for the good of the population and not individual interests. (Proverbs 10:9; 1 Peter 3:10-12).

Hospices and End-of-Life Care: Resources and adequate funding for palliative care, care homes, and hospices (especially where beds have had to be withdrawn owing to lack of funding); nurses, doctors and all who care for the terminally ill, struggling to deliver good quality care owing to the lack of necessary resources. (John 14:1-3; Hebrews 6:10).

FOCUS ON WORLD ISSUES: America: The Trump administration: for godly policies; the effects across the globe of possible decisions taken - particularly in trade and defence; peace and unity across the nation in the different factions. (1 Timothy 2:1-2; Philippians 2:3-8).

Political Instability: the growing political discontent across the planet; in Europe - France, Germany, Britain and across the world; protection of democracy in South Korea; for stability in Syria, that the Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham will hold to its statement of establishing a democracy in the country. (Psalm 37:5-7; Psalm 118:8-9).



CLIFF FESTIVAL

HOLINESS CALLING

2025

Fri 23 - Mon 26 May

As I sit here reflecting, I am keenly aware that I am approaching my final Festival as Principal of Cliff College. Over the years, I have had the privilege of overseeing eight Festivals as Principal and participating in many more before that. Each one has been a unique and transformative moment where people have encountered God in profound ways.

As I considered possible themes for this, my final Festival, one stood out above the rest: 'Holiness Calling.' This theme draws us back to the very foundation of our mission, offers a radical and countercultural challenge for discipleship in today's world, and inspires us to look forward with hope and anticipation for what God wants to accomplish in and through us in the years ahead.

In our Charisms statement, as a College, we find the following statement:

We are a community which seeks a life of prayer, with a particular emphasis on holiness and the Spirit filled life. This reflects our roots in the Wesleyan tradition, and shapes our understanding of our defining characteristic: evangelism and mission. We want our theological training to fuel our prayer and

worship - and our prayer and worship to inspire our theological training. We encourage students to be involved in leading the various community times of worship during their time at the College in order to share the gifts that God has given them, and to be an active part of a local church.

Festival remains a vital part of the life and ministry of Cliff College. Over the years, countless thousands have found faith, been renewed in their faith, heard a call to ministry and mission, and been challenged to embrace a life of holiness.

Jane Cooper's testimony, shared during an interview with John Wesley, beautifully captures this transformative power: 'I saw Jesus altogether lovely,' she said, 'and I knew he was mine in all his offices. And, glory be to him, he now reigns in my heart without a rival.' Jane was one of hundreds who were part of a revival where the holiness Wesley had preached for decades was now being claimed as a lived experience. Holiness was being born out of life-changing encounters with the Lord.

Generations of Christians would soon be inspired by the prospect of such gracious and powerful

encounters with Christ—encounters that resulted in him reigning fully in their hearts. Holiness became a vision of authentic faith, dynamically centred on Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Variations of this vision gave birth to movements like the Salvation Army and the Keswick Convention, and ignited the Welsh Revival. Individuals captured by such a vision included Samuel Chadwick, and a host of other former Principals of Cliff College. For them holiness called! A Spirit-filled life which made their hearts cry, 'all for Christ!' would also mean 'Christ for all.'

At Festival 25, we'll see how Isaiah the prophet encountered the Lord high and lifted up. Isaiah's experience was devastating yet transformative. With his heart cleansed, he found within that encounter a call to go, as his heart said, 'here am I, send me.'

ASHLEY COOPER

Join us at Festival 25 (May 23-26) as we encounter the same God who continues to call us to holiness and mission today. For more information, visit www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/cliff-festival.



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At Cliff Festival
Weekend

Friday 23 – Monday 26 May 2025

SEMINARS: We shall be hosting two seminars over the weekend

- Saturday 24 May: Methodist Holiness through it revival history
- Sunday 25 May: Holiness for a modern age

AGM: The MET:Revive AGM will be on Bank Holiday Monday 26 May 2.30 – 4.00pm (this will be a hybrid event – in person and on Zoom).



Revive
Gathering Weekend

'All4Jesus?'

Fri 14 – Sun 16, Nov 2025

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. Details to follow.

MET:Revive stand at the
Methodist Conference
26 June – 2 July 2025



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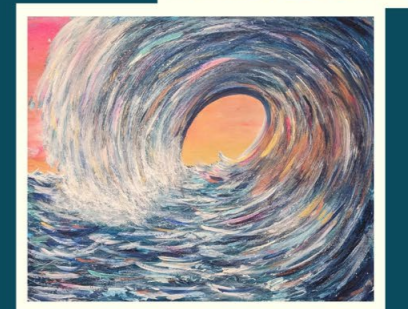


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A call to holiness in the workplace

BY DAVID WALKER

LICC Work Champion, David Walker, challenges us as Christians to give us much focus to our 'To Be' list, especially in the workplace, as we do to our 'To Do' lists.

On 23 November 1654, Blaise Pascal experienced his 'night of fire': a powerful vision of God that transformed his life.

Pascal's legacy in the field of mathematics and physics continues to this day – his pioneering invention of the first mechanical calculator laid the way for the modern computer and his Law of Probability continues to be used by economists to this day.

He spoke about three orders of greatness. The first encompasses beauty and strength: 'physical greatness'. The second covers the greatness of genius: science and art. But above all this is the third kind of greatness: holiness.

In the Old Testament, the holiness of God is seen as a transforming power. It is God's holiness that stops people in their tracks. It changes them and changes those around them. This transforming, powerful holiness of God was

shown ultimately in Jesus, who turned the understanding of holiness on its head. Unlike the Pharisees, Jesus didn't keep away from the places or people who were unclean. He headed straight for them. He chose to spend time with them. It is this holiness of God, in Jesus, to which we are called: to be set apart for God, yet immersed in the world; to live differently for God, yet use our influence to shape the culture around us. This is God's call on your life.

Exploring the multi-layered nature of calling is key to all Christians, especially in the everyday context of work. As we read through the Bible, it becomes clear that God is interested in who we are as much as he is in what we do. We think regularly about our 'to do' list at work – perhaps we should also give more thought to our 'to be' list. How are we growing in the fruit of the Holy Spirit as whole-life disciples? Alongside doing good work, we also need to be asking who is God calling

us to be at work, wherever we work and whatever we do?

The Apostle Paul writes to the church in Thessalonica to encourage them in the face of opposition. You will know the reality of similar opposition as you live out your faith in the workplace. Into this context, Paul urges the church to live in ways that please God, writing in 1 Thessalonians 4:3 'it is God's will that you should be sanctified' ... to be holy ... to be set apart for God, especially at work.

To find out more about how to make a difference wherever you are, check out LICC's Instagram feed for lots of inspiring stories of faith in the workplace ([instagram.com/liccltd/](https://www.instagram.com/liccltd/)).

REV DAVID WALKER

The Rev David Walker is Work Champion for the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC): licc.org.uk.

Keswick and Holiness: Then and Now

MARK ELLIS

Looking back on the history of the Keswick movement, and ahead to our future hope, Mark Ellis reflects on the yearning to live lives of attractive holiness and Christlikeness here and now.

Thomas Dundas Harford-Battersby was troubled. Deeply anxious. And had been for years. Not just because, 150 years ago, people had elaborate names. But because he knew he was failing.

Harford-Battersby had been a vicar for 25 years. Now in his early-50s, he still struggled with sin and felt keenly God's call to, 'Be holy as I am holy'. The mismatch between his own life and Christ's call, cut him to the heart. He passionately wanted to be godly and obey God's word, but couldn't seem to make progress. As a result, he struggled with low moods – possibly depression – as he searched for an answer to 'practical holiness' in his own life, and in the life of his people.

To his great relief, he'd heard from some American preachers who proclaimed a 'higher-life view' of sanctification. And it struck a chord. They claimed you could die to the influence and down-drag of sin. And that by decisive act(s)



of wholehearted surrender to God, the Holy Spirit would enable you to withstand the attraction of sin.

Which is what he brought back to his vicarage lawn in Keswick. He put up a tent and printed invitations. Everyone would be welcome, from any church background. And there would be no cost to attend. Earnest believers were to come as they are, united under the banner, 'All one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28). Because Harford-Battersby wanted everyone to have the opportunity to become more like Jesus.

That desire has, for 150 years, been the heartbeat of the Keswick Convention.

And although the theology today has returned to a more 'classic view' of holiness, that passion has never dimmed. We also still have a tent, though it holds 3000. But everything is still free to attend. We still unite everyone under the banner of being, 'All one in Christ Jesus'.

What has changed is that we've returned to a biblical view of holiness.

In the early days, the 'higher-life view' was attractive. Everyone who loves Jesus knows the painful reality of ongoing sin; that they do not do what they truly want to do; that they fall short of God's glory.

What many preachers were offering 150 years ago was a decisive experience that could jump-start your sanctification. If you, 'Let go and let God', then in total surrender to him you would be lifted to a higher level of Christian

living. You would no longer feel the influence and drag and inclination to sin.

This teaching was never the official line at Keswick, nor did it originate with Keswick. Not everyone agreed, nor was it the only approach taught. But popularly, it was sometimes called the 'Keswick view'.

Everything changed in the 1960s. And the catalyst for that change was a young John Stott.

Stott had been invited to preach on Romans 6. Those who held the 'higher-life view' thought it taught that union to Christ through the cross could lead believers to new levels of victory over sin. And that this was for life now, not merely in the new creation. That the 'old self' being crucified means we don't need to be responsive to sin. We can stop feeling its allure.

Though even this is a sweeping oversimplification of decades of theology and teaching that varied in application.

Stott blew the doors off with a much more careful exegesis. Because if both we and Christ have died to sin (v. 10), it can't mean that! Not least because if we no longer feel the influence of sin, why would Paul go on to say in v. 12 to, 'not let sin reign... [or] obey it's evil desires.' And that can't apply also to Christ.

Stott had also seen too many tender-hearted Christians who felt they had surrendered their lives to Christ the previous year ... only to find sadly it hadn't really worked. Because they still sinned.

The biblical truth is that every Christian will continue to struggle with sin, all through their life. That one day, in God's glorious presence, that fight will be over. But becoming like God's Son is gradual. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and by God's grace, it is possible to die to sin every day. But ultimate victory is not ours, yet. Yes, the penalty of sin has been paid and the power of sin has been broken, but for this life, the presence of sin continues.

The gospel is true and God is good! It is possible to please our Father by living all of life in his presence in union with Christ. And so, day by day, to push back this fallen wilderness world, even by an inch. Because holiness is an inside-out thing. But it's not just a private thing. It overflows practically as we yearn to bring everything in under the Lordship of Christ.

All this anticipates what will be beautifully true in the new creation, when Christ returns. Which is why we passionately yearn to live lives of attractive holiness and Christlikeness now. For his glory. And our joy.

To this day, the Keswick Convention's priorities remain: Hearing God's Word, Becoming Like God's Son, Serving God's Mission.

REV. MARK ELLIS

Rev. Mark Ellis has been a pastor, worked in cross-cultural mission in Asia, and led teams in student ministry. He is the Chief Executive of Keswick Ministries, responsible with his team for hosting the annual Keswick Convention.



PRAYER FOCUS

Personal response to holiness: For ourselves, searching and spending time with God and offering ourselves as living a sacrifice to God, seeking to grow in holiness; opening ourselves up completely to God, recognising afresh our own sinfulness through the sacrificial love of Christ on the cross. (1 Peter 1:14-16; Isaiah 35:8)

The Work of Keswick Convention: Giving thanks for the vision pioneered so long ago and its ongoing work in today's society; the priority of hearing God's word, becoming like God's Son and serving God's Mission; for God's power to break through into individual lives, bringing transformation and hope to the lives of many. (1 Chronicles 16:23-25; Matthew 28:19-20).

FOCUS ON THE CHURCH: Revival: for the wind of the Holy Spirit to sweep through the church bringing transformation and vibrancy to local churches throughout the land; for the acceptance of, and a longing to experience God's power operating in all aspects of church life, drawing many new believers into God's kingdom. (Acts 3:19-20; Psalm 85:4-7).

FOCUS ON NATIONAL ISSUES: Education: The upholding of the Cass Report and for it to become enshrined in law; protection for our children and young people against harmful ideologies; wholesome curriculum content in all schools; the Education

Secretary Bridget Phillipson; people and organisations who present biblical teaching in schools; colleges and universities struggling with finances. (Mark 9:42; Colossians 2:8).

Christians in the Workplace: Particularly those working in politics, the media and education; for strength and resilience and protection against discrimination; for their integrity to shine out; for the right words to challenge harmful practices and policies. (Isaiah 43:1-3a; Luke 21:14-15).

FOCUS ON WORLD ISSUES Planet in Crisis: Changing weather patterns across the globe; areas affected by extremes of weather – soaring temperatures & flooding; resources to combat the underlying causes; new strains of crops to stand extremes of weather; farmers coping with these extremes of weather. Cry to the Lord for mercy. (2 Chronicles 7:13-14; Revelation 4:11).

Persecuted Christians: Oppressive regimes; justice and fair treatment for detainees and their families; protection for churches; for persecutors to see the love of Christ in the persecuted; organisations working to bring to public notice the plight of the persecuted across the globe – e.g. Barnabas Aid, Open Doors and Release International, amongst others. (James 1:12; Philippians 1:27-30).





ZAC | ROGER JONES

Roger Jones shares the vision behind his new musical

I'd been thinking of a Zacchaeus musical for some time, and particularly drawn to Jesus' comments at the end of the story: 'For the son of man came to seek and save the lost' (Luke 19:10). I set these words as a chorus to "Amazing Grace" in my *Songs of Easter* collection, and it's this song that concludes the musical.

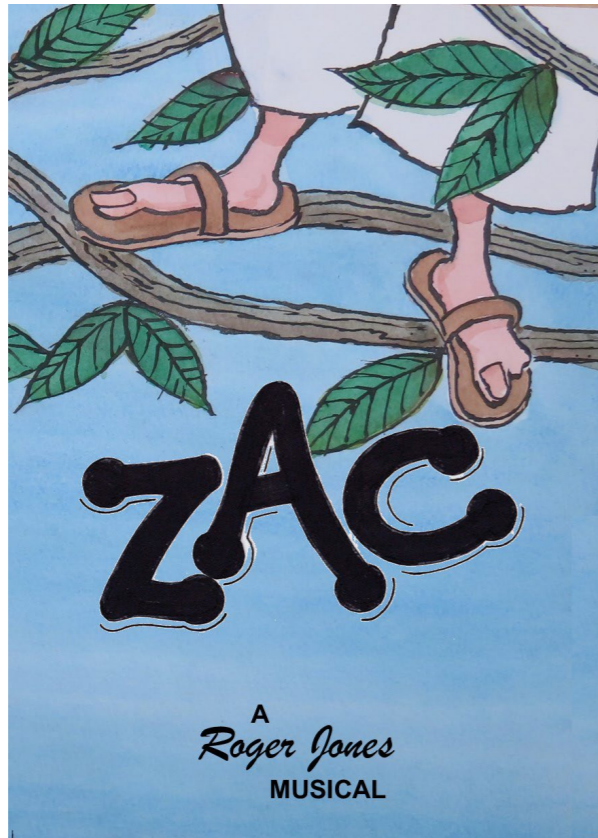
The Zacchaeus story, unique to Luke's Gospel, has many ingredients of the Christian message. Here's an outcast of society, rejected not by poverty or sickness but by his occupation. He goes out of his way and climbs up a tree to find out more about Jesus. Jesus encounters

him, addresses him by name and calls him down from the tree. Luke is silent about what happened when Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house, but we see a result of repentance and restitution, way beyond expectations and calculations - a rather unexpected tax rebate?

I've attempted to create a musical for all ages and abilities. Although there are parts for SATB (four part harmony), they can easily be sung by a two-part choir, with freedom to allocate soloists, and of course you do need someone to sing the part of Zacchaeus. Jesus' words can be sung by the choir. I've used two storytellers: Matthew the former tax collector now disciple of Jesus, obviously with inside knowledge of how the Roman tax system worked, and Rachel a resident of Jericho and relation of Zacchaeus.

A musical can have great outreach and 'inreach' benefits. We know of many who came to watch or even

join in a production, regular church goers or not, who later came to faith in Jesus. The benefit for a church community may be immense, in fellowship, team building and discovery of gifts, creative and practical.



Jesus' final words are a wonderful summary of the gospel message (Luke 19:9-10):

Salvation has come to this house - the presence of the Saviour, whose Spirit brings healing and new life to all who will come down the tree of resistance and independence, to welcome his presence.

This man also is a son of Abraham - inclusion where there had been rejection and scorn. Tax collectors, alongside shepherds and tanners, were most unpopular in the Jewish Society of Jesus day.

What got Zacchaeus up the tree? Most likely it was the news of what Jesus had been doing and saying. See Jesus' journey to Jericho (Luke 18:35-43). This is a big lesson for the church. We must demonstrate the teaching and presence of Jesus if the world is to be attracted to him, a sure need for the fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit. My prayer is that in using this musical we begin to be more like the church of power and love that the world needs!

ROGER JONES

Roger and his wife Mary have been in full-time Christian music ministry since 1984 and together with a small team, run Christian Music Ministries. Formerly a music teacher in inner-city Birmingham, Roger is well-known throughout the UK and abroad for his Christian musicals and has written 25 to date. Roger's latest musical 'ZAC' premiered at Bromsgrove Baptist Church, Worcestershire, in September this year.



Awestruck: The Bible's Big Picture

THEMES AND THREADS

On Saturday 16 November, myself and three fellow members of Christchurch in Hitchin journeyed to Northampton. We were to join those who had already begun the Revive Gathering weekend the previous evening. As day visitors we received a wonderful welcome and, with judicious summaries of the previous evening's session woven into session 2, Dr David Hull drew us into the Bible's Big Picture through themes from Handel's 'Messiah'.

What a revelation it was to focus on the scriptures that the librettist Charles Jennens had selected! As one who has sung 'Messiah' many times, having the invitation to come away from those familiar tunes and focus in on the word of God was a deeply spiritual experience. Threaded through with some moving stories of those involved with writing and performing this work, David led us through the journey of Christ's submission to the cross through 'Heartbreak' & 'Healing' to the 'Hallelujah' of now being seated in heavenly places. We experienced that journey from despair to joy once again through the scriptures so carefully chosen and ordered by Jennens nearly 300 years ago ... and now offered with passion and clarity by David.

Reflections ... from the Revive National Gathering Weekend

15 - 17 NOVEMBER

Then more interweaving as Jacqui Parkinson shared her story in the next two sessions. Literal interweaving ... as she spoke about her development as a textile artist and displayed some of her incredible creations that communicate the gospel through the visual arts. Stunning!!!

Jacqui also shared the personal threads of her life growing up, then as the wife of Rev. Dr Rob Frost, and vulnerably enabling us to glimpse the devastating impact of being widowed. Then picking up and offering the broken threads of her life to the Lord, we could see how God had woven them into something more magnificent and impactful than anyone could imagine. Remarried, and through partnering with others, ten years' work of creating huge silk panels communicating God's Big Story is being displayed in cathedrals around the country ... a message that goes beyond words. Like the music that carries the Word of God in 'Messiah' ... Jacqui's glorious creations carry the Word of God directly into the hearts, minds and spirits of those who see and experience them.

And with God ... there is always more!! Jacqui made a comment that the most important things in this life are 'relationships and prayer'. During the day there was space for both of these. For me personally there were intriguing conversations with those I had never met before but were definitely a 'God set up' for making connections in ministry going forward. Then the gift of time and space for the four of us to wait on God, share and intercede for our home church.

All interwoven with heartfelt worship and plentiful food! A day away that will remain with me for a long time. Thank you MET.

Alison Bryan

Coordinator of Healing Ministry, Methodist Central Hall Westminster

'THE GREATEST STORY EVER SUNG' AND 'THE GREATEST STORY EVER SEWN'

Having been a member of MET, previously Headway, for a number of years, I felt drawn to attend, for the first time, the National Gathering at Northampton. The title 'Awestruck – the Bible's Big Picture' was more than lived up to over the weekend and I feel privileged to have been there.

Rev. Dr David Hull helped us to see the Bible's Big Picture as portrayed through the words of Handel's Messiah, compiled by Charles Jennings. For me, the words have, in the past, been overshadowed by the magnificent music, but with David's guidance the Bible texts were illuminated to reveal the story of our Lord's 'Glorious Revelation, Glorious Reign and Glorious Resurrection' – 'The Greatest Story Ever Sung'.

Then came 'the greatest story ever sewn' as we gazed in awe at Jacqui Parkinson's creative work of 'Threads Through the Bible' – biblical scenes portrayed in huge silk panels combining years of work and millions of stitches which tell the story from Creation to Revelation. Brief relevant Bible texts accompany the panels, but the pictures tell the story just like stained glass windows accessible to all. The exhibition tours cathedrals from January 2025; see it and be blessed!

Jacqui's testimony, particularly of bereavement following the death of her husband Rev. Dr Rob Frost, was a story in itself, inspiring us to trust in God when the future is uncertain, to take a step of faith only to find he has gone ahead of us and prepared the way.

David stepped down as Chair of MET and on Sunday morning we welcomed Chair-elect Rev. Chris Briggs, who led a session entitled 'The Almost Gospel and the Almost Christian' and led us in prayers for Revival. There is no space to elaborate but I was struck by his humility and humour: we are in good hands.

Communion on Sunday morning was most moving as we gathered together, the body of Christ. Sharing in the bread and the wine in remembrance of him who died for our salvation was truly a little taste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all mankind. The experience was enriched by the late autumn sun shining through the window and, as it were, bathing us in God's Wondrous Glory. A final blessing was the opportunity to be anointed with oil. The Holy Spirit was present throughout.

Morning prayers were led by Roz Addington, well known to readers of MET's magazine, and for me a chance to

meet in person someone called by God to share in words and pictures what is on his heart; a present day prophet in the form of a gentle unassuming woman!

Last, but not least, the choice of worship songs/hymns by Hilary Balsdon was perfect and enabled us to praise the Lord Jesus with every part of our being.

Margaret Newrick

MET: Revive member from Cumbria

PRAYER AT REVIVE

Prayer was very much an integral part of the Revive Gathering with the emphasis, not surprisingly, on revival. As well as early morning prayers, each of the sessions throughout the weekend included specific times of prayer, in which everyone enthusiastically took part. Some pictures and words of knowledge were received by a few people. One of these pictures was of a large white shining church emanating the glory of God, to which were coming a multitude of people. It was a very encouraging picture of revival which we can hold on to through the difficult times which God has made clear lie ahead.

There was also a dedicated prayer room with seven prayer stations where people could participate in prayer in a more creative way. These included praise and adoration, confession, reflection on Psalm 46, praying for the church and all in leadership, prayer for our country, cities, towns and local communities and prayers for friends and family who don't yet know the love of Christ in their lives. There was also the opportunity to make a nativity card to send to someone to serve as a reminder of the true reason for Christmas. People interacted well with all the aspects of prayer and were appreciative of the whole weekend.

Roz Addington

MET: Revive Prayer Coordinator.

THE REVIVE GATHERING 2025

The this year will be taking place on the weekend of Friday 14th – Sunday 16th November 2025 at: The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. Further details and a booking form will be available in the spring mailing.



Good News Stories

Central Hall Superheroes!

BY JONNY LIBBY

These past few months have been exciting times in the life of Plymouth Methodist Central Hall. We are seeing increasing numbers of people joining our community and the age and ethnic diversity wonderfully growing. The sense of God's presence is real as we seek to navigate the challenges that growth brings.

At the time of writing many of us are recovering from the 'Superhero's party' that we hosted on 31 October. We wanted to provide a safe place on this particular evening for children under the age of 11 along with their families. After quite extensive planning, including lots of invitations to families we already engage with, people showed up. However, our young family's worker was disappointed with only 224 people coming, falling short of her target of 300 (she has high expectations!) It was a wonderful evening as children bounced on

castles, crafts were completed, food and drink enjoyed, and a great explanation of the gospel presented. Wonderful conversations were had with many of our guests and the feedback we received included some really significant observations showing that faith curiosity had been stirred.

Please pray for our church in the city centre of Plymouth as we seek to discover fresh ways to present the gospel with the volume of people we engage with in many contexts every day of the week. We celebrate that the Light still shines in the darkness and he will continue to do so.

JONNY LIBBY,
Lay Pastor, Plymouth
Methodist Central
Hall



“

We celebrate that the Light still shines in the darkness and he will continue to do so.

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Good News Stories

Stepping out in Freshwater – Isle of Wight



BY MIKE HACKLETON

‘From the old I travel to the new, keep me travelling along with you’: Stepping into a Second Decade in Freshwater

20 September 2014, saw the doors of our newly built Freshwater Methodist Church open as we welcomed members, others from the surrounding area and across the Island Circuit as well as the Southampton District. It had been a long and, at times, difficult journey, but God is good, carrying and leading us forward.

A HEARTBEAT IN THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE

There has been a Methodist Church in Freshwater since 1824, but the old Wesley Hall erected in the 1950s needed to be replaced. The congregation was worshipping in Totland, but after a challenging quinquennial report, a wise decision was taken to sell the eroding building and focus on developing the central strategic site in Freshwater.

During our three years of homelessness, we were invited by

our Anglican friends to use their Rectory Chapel, a beautiful late 1800s building adjoining the Parish Hall for our Sunday services. We were so grateful for this sanctuary, full of God’s presence and peace, where we could worship together as a strong fellowship.

Ten years on, we thank God for his guidance, wisdom, encouragement and for the amazing ways he has, and is still, blessing us daily together with the help of all our local ecumenical partners and for the support of the local community. As the Local Lay Pastor for FMC (Freshwater Methodist Church), my role involves pastoral work, recognising, supporting, encouraging and developing the gifts and skills of lay people, while responding to local needs and working wherever possible ecumenically.

FMC is a modern building, used every day, open to all, warm and welcoming. We are a growing, prayerful, Bible based church, passionate about living out and sharing the gospel, working intergenerationally, serving and encouraging people to grow in faith, offering support and standing alongside those who are finding life tough, while always trying to be good stewards of God’s creation.

It is a privilege to host the West Wight Food Bank, pop into the busy Parent and Toddlers’ Groups, Messy Church or Holiday Club sessions, facilitate Blokes, Banter and Bacon Butties, work in the Church Office while being serenaded by the Dementia Friendly Choir or West Winds Band, Ukelele group and Music Playhouse!

It is also a privilege to be part of the Open the Book Team at the three local primary schools and engage in gentle exercises and parachute games with the Holiday at Home for Seniors. I am blessed having a wonderful, dedicated and enthusiastic team of volunteers who give selflessly to the life and mission of FMC.

Travelling on into our second decade, fully relying on God’s guidance, confident in that our Lord will lead us, we are reminded in Isaiah 41:10:

‘Do not be afraid, for I am with you, Do not be dismayed for I am your God, I will strengthen you and help you I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.’

MIKE HACKLETON

Local Lay Pastor of Freshwater Methodist Church, Isle of Wight

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