

A monthly bulletin of all that is accomplished by and within our church's community

Keith's Comments

There are a lot of problems in the world – one of our Sunday intercessors recently started the intercessions by stating that we seemed to have a very long “shopping list” for God!

And sometimes we want to do something more than pray, but don't know what to do or feel that the problems are just too difficult, so we don't even know where to start.

Well, starting with prayer is a very good place to start – bringing what's in our heart and on our mind to God, and asking Him to guide us in what we do, can relieve us of stress, share a burden with countless others who are praying in the same way, align our action with God's will, and lead us to give thanks for the good things that surround us.

So I take this opportunity to ask you to pray about two particular things that concern us all.

Firstly there's the situation in London that resulted in the recent riots. Some of the cause lies in gang culture, misplaced values, or senseless anarchy. We can pray for repentance among those who lead “lost lives” like these, and pray that parents, family, teachers, youth workers, police may all be God's agents (God's angels) and help them turn away from such lives. Some of the cause lies in the economic situation – and elsewhere in this edition I review a book (“Crisis and Recovery”) that focuses on the economic aspects of the crisis. There are many in London, the UK and throughout the world who are suffering from economic turbulence – and some in our own congregation. Please pray for them, and for policy makers and leaders to create conditions of sustainability.

Secondly, here at St Peter's we have our own financial difficulty as our forecast income next year falls short of what's needed to meet the average cost of a parish (based on one paid priest and one clergy house). The PCC has formed a stewardship team to review this situation. Please pray for the PCC and the stewardship team (Allison McAllister, Rosamund Rowe, Susan Brewin, Wendy Quill and myself).

And please pray for yourselves – please pray about your approach to spending, sharing and giving. Our stewardship needs to be preceded by prayer and supported by prayer – that way our decisions and actions stand a better chance of aligning with God's will.

Yours in prayer

Keith Stephenson

Financial Update

2011	July	Year to Date
Income	£10,071	£79,702
Expenditure	£ 9,054	£82,001
Surplus / Deficit	+ £1,017	- £2,099

A surplus of £1,017 in July reduced the cumulative deficit after seven months to £2,099. On the recommendation of the Diocesan advisers we will switch our gas and electricity suppliers to 'Utilities Warehouse' which should provide a considerable saving to our energy bills.

Rosamund Rowe

The Charter for Compassion

You may have read the article that appeared in The Parish Chest recently about The Charter for Compassion. Since then Alison has asked if I could help out during the interregnum by chairing the Mission Committee of the PCC. I was happy to agree.

You may not know this but we have a Mission Action Plan, which began in January 2009. Since I joined the PCC and became a member of the Mission Committee we have largely confined our meetings to deciding on charitable giving and organising and helping to run the mission parties. This was largely because the current plan has more or less been completed. The option now is to do very little and await a new incumbent to lead us into a new plan or to do something that can be ongoing and fit into a new plan, which can be agreed by a new incumbent. I took this to the PCC and they were very clear that they wanted to do something.

The “something” I suggested to them is to develop compassion in our own church by using the ideas of Karen Armstrong and the resources available from the Charter for Compassion. What might this involve? Well I have looked at the Charter for Compassion website and got some ideas:

- We could start a reading group. This would meet over the course of 6 months or a year and would read Karen Armstrong's book. Meetings would be devoted to reading each step of the “12 steps to a More Compassionate Life”, discussing them, using a resource provided on the website, and making our thoughts available to others via the web site;
- The charter asks individuals and community

groups to make a commitment. This can be something very simple, such as saying something kind to someone you don't particularly get on with or a commitment involving more time, such as, doing an extra good deed for someone in need each month. I would be particularly interested in developing a joint commitment that St Peter's could sign up to;

- Karen Armstrong says that the idea of leading a more compassionate life is to "Do unto others as you would have them do to you". As many of you will know this is also known as The Golden Rule. There will be an international Golden Rule day early in April, 2012. It would be good to mark this in some way.

I am sure there are lots of other ways we could take steps to a more compassionate life. I will be hosting a meeting of the Mission committee on the 12th of October, here at 16, Dorset Road, W5 4HU. There are two others on the committee, Mike Tiley and Alison McAllister. Two other members of the PCC have agreed to join us. I would be very happy for anyone who is interested to come along. The meeting will start at 8pm and we could agree to finish by 9.30. Please let me know if you would like to come, so that I can provide teas, coffees and cake!

If you are interested but unable to make that date please let me know and I will make sure you get minutes of the meeting. Also if you have time, before the meeting to have a look at the website, please let me know any ideas you may have - wendy@pcawley1.plus.com; 020 8567 6529

Wendy Quill

In Days of Yore

My paternal grandfather, the Revd. St.B.S.Sladen, was a great fund of anecdotes. After going to Oriel College, Oxford, he was ordained in about 1885 and became a curate in East Anglia. He referred to his lodging there as "the Curatage". When he was away for any reason his landlady would write to him always, rather charmingly, ending each letter with the valediction, "May the good Lord preserve you from Mrs. ..."

In those days my grandfather wore a large knotted white necktie not the modern clerical collar and throughout his life had a moustache now very rarely seen amongst today's clergy.

He recalled a particular Harvest Festival service when, as was then usual in rural parishes, the church was decorated with big stooks of corn. During the service a little mouse came out of one of the stooks to listen to the organ each time it was played, but retired during the prayers and sermon! At this service a small boy was heard to exclaim in a loud voice "Mum, mum when are they going to pass the "nannies" (bananas) round?"

My grandfather became Rector of St. Margaret Pattens in the City of London for many years and died in 1940.

David Sladen

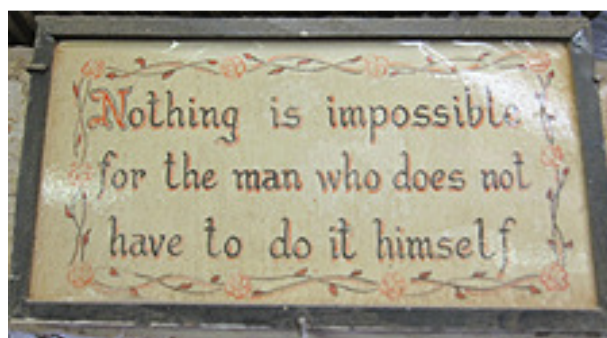
Our noblest churches

John Betjeman, in his original article from 1953, "The fabric of our faith" (see the August "Parish Chest"), preceded his reference to St Peter's and four other churches by citing five older "noblest churches"

"To name only a very few", he writes: St Augustine's, Kilburn, London; St Stephen's, Bournemouth; St Augustine's, Pendlebury; Hoar Cross, Staffordshire; and All Saints', Margaret Street, London.

In the 1980s I sang occasionally at St Augustine's and I've visited the sumptuous All Saints'. Are any readers familiar with the others - or have their own favourites.....?

Don Kennedy



Book Review

"Crisis & Recovery - Ethics, Economics & Justice" edited by Rowan Williams & Larry Elliot (economics editor of *The Guardian*) - available in the church library

I attended the launch of this book at the British Library last autumn, but have only just read it. Perhaps this reflects the economic mood - we may all have thought that the economy had returned to "business as usual" and that crisis was behind us, but recent events show that it's come back or never really went away. And recent events show that there's more than a financial or economic crisis.

Rowan Williams' Foreword puts it thus, "*much of this book is about reclaiming economics for the humanities. But that is really to say that we are faced with a considerable challenge about what we think of that very idea of 'the humanities'. We have learned to tolerate forms of thinking that, because they are essentially reductive, tempt us to think that the "real world" is the one of conflict and profit - and that the social imagination, the cultivation of relationship, the*

transformation of an environment into an intelligible and beautiful form is so much blather".

This book is at one level a modest collection of reflections on the disasters and follies of very recent times; but it is in another way an unashamedly immodest and ambitious plea for a renewal of political and social vision, a renewal of civic energy and creativity, in our own country and worldwide. We hope it will prompt others to ask how that necessary renewal can be advanced.

The book grapples with problems where economics and ethics intersect. Two obvious examples are how governments can borrow to stimulate the economy without the debt incurred being a burdensome liability on the next generation; and how "benefits" can prevent destitution without encouraging dependency. These are not new issues – Zac Goldsmith quotes Edmund Burke (who was reflecting on the revolution in France), *"Society is a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are yet to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society"*.

As Christians we are called to wish for a better world, and to work towards it. This book makes us think about what change is best to wish for and work for. The thinking is not easy – we do not all have the intellectual capacity of Rowan Williams or the economic training of Larry Elliott. But we can try to engage with some of the ideas presented in this collection. How do we compare Phillip Blond's analysis, *"the corrosion of virtue through the dominance of liberalism expressed as libertarianism is the deepest malaise of recent British culture, politics and economics"*, to Adam Lent's analysis, *"ironically our emphasis on individualism has stifled individuality through increased pressure at work and a commercially driven culture that urges self-validation through material accumulation"?*

All contributions are worth reading, although I was losing patience with John Reynolds whose essay on Investment Banking is entitled "The Inevitable Triumph of Incentives over Ethics" and started *"Investment banking is a necessity in the modern economy"*. And Mr Reynolds shares this impatience when he states that he has *"seen in general less interest from senior management in preventing abuse per se in investment banks than I am comfortable with"*. Mr Reynolds chairs the Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group.

A similar theme comes in Andrew Whittaker's essay, "Culture and the Crisis". He writes that *"ethics is relegated to the personal sphere or to a purely nominal allegiance to a set of corporate values"*. I was reminded of "tick box training" in which the boxes are so big and the ticks so small that you'd be very unlucky (not just incompetent) not to get sufficient ticks in sufficient boxes!

Mr Whittaker was General Counsel to the Financial Services Authority, soon to be restructured. I hope he finds another prominent role, as I have great sympathy with his words, *"While the causes of the financial crisis were largely economic and structural, a good case can be made for the role of cultural issues. ... The challenge ... as we rebuild the world's financial and regulatory systems, is to recognise the importance of people issues, alongside economic and structural ones, and to ask how better we can identify risks inherent in cultures"*.

A final quote, to give a flavour of the book, comes from Will Hutton – *"Ethics and justice are the indispensable values to underpin successful capitalism. They were neglected and the crisis broke over our heads. Managing our way out will require that they are once again respected"*.

And who better to talk about ethics and justice than religious people? As Christians we must ensure that ethics and justice and not neglected simply because we are silent.

Keith Stephenson

From the Parish Registers

Baptisms:

3 rd July	Milo Alexander John Swan
7 th August	Abigail Hope Riley
28 th August	Ryan Thomas Tierney Samuel Alexander Tierney

Marriage:

13 th August	Karen Rose & Richard de Sa
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Year's Mind



Please remember in your prayers the following people whose year's mind falls at this time:

Michael Cowdrey	2 September 1959
Nora Ensor	2 September 1975
Gordon Bryant	8 September 2001
Mavis Emery	14 September 1967
Lina Rogers	15 September 1963
Rita Tyrie	15 September 1965
Edmund Tufty	16 September 1968
David Bowland	17 September 1975
Ken Daley	18 September 2009
Patricia Matthews	20 September 2006
Edith Smith	27 September 1968
Naziha Khouzam	28 September 2006
Margaret Williams	28 September 2010