

## **December 2015, thoughts from Father Charles:**

### **“The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us”**

These are such familiar words, especially at this time of year. They are drawn from the Gospel of John which has a different approach to the other Gospels. Whilst it is true that all four Gospel accounts have significant commonality, nevertheless each provides unique portraits of the person of Jesus.

John places the incarnation at the centre of his theology. He starts, not with an event fixed in time, like a birth, but with an event which is outside the normal parameters of time. We hear about Jesus, not as an infant, but as the Word that was pre-existent and was present before creation. This builds a particular message we are made to hold in mind as we read the Gospel and as we live out our faith. This message is that the incarnation is of fundamental importance, because Jesus does not simply speak God’s words and do God’s works, but that he is God’s Word and he is God’s Works in this world.

Jesus was and is the principal form of making God known to the world.

### **Incarnational Theology**

In the Nicene Creed we acknowledge that *‘for us and for our salvation...he became truly human’*. It is the same Jesus of Nazareth, who walked the dusty roads of Galilee, taught at the Synagogue in Capernaum, cleansed the Temple in the city of Jerusalem, wept at the tomb of Lazarus, celebrated the Last Supper with his friends and died on the Cross for our sins; it is the same Jesus of Nazareth who is also God. God did not stop being God in order to become human; rather he took upon himself human nature. As Charles Wesley puts it:

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
hail the incarnate Deity  
Pleased as man with man to dwell  
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

There are two aspects of this. Not only did God, by becoming truly human, reveal his life-transforming nature to us but He also made it possible for us to have a direct interaction with Him. This interaction, this relationship, is a continuing relationship.

### **The Consequent Implications**

Our incarnational perspective puts emphasis on the humanity of Christ and on our relationship with God. One could say that the ‘friendship’ between God and man is completed when we, through grace, participate in the death and resurrection of Christ. This takes our faith away from being a matter of philosophical conversation to a place of practical action.

Within the Church of England this has been reinforced by the teaching (and translations of the writings of the Fathers of the Church) of some of the key figures in the Oxford Movement. Pusey, Newman, Keble and others, translated patristic writings that gave insight into the mind of the early Church. Two of the implications that arise from this pattern of activity and thought have been the recovery of a richer, sacramental structure of

worship; and also greater awareness of the early Church's way of life, discipline and thinking.

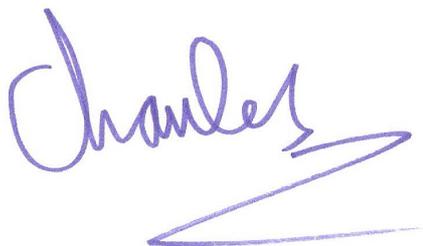
Here is the implication. Since God became human for our salvation, and every person still retains the image of God within, then it is essential for the Church to serve and minister to humankind.

### **The World Around Us**

So, this Christmas, as we celebrate and welcome the 'Word made Flesh', and reflect on what this means for us – individually and collectively – we also have an opportunity to reconsider some of the issues that we see in the world around us. They could be national, such as the plight of the homeless (evidenced by those who seek refuge at All Saints), the growing climate of mistrust and fear between the faiths, or the impact of fiscal austerity measures on those with low income; or indeed international, such as the question of using violence to bring peace in Syria, the plight of refugees – to whom hearts of some have become hardened – or the accepted unacceptable behaviour of the ruling monarchy in Saudi Arabia.

The scale of these sorts of issues makes it impossible for us to directly respond with any real impact. But they are topics on which we should have views, which we should be willing to voice, based upon our belief in God incarnate, who died for our salvation. This should be a subject that we consider and discuss at home, and with friends and colleagues; perhaps it should be one of the serious ingredients that we add to our Christmas recipe.

With Every Blessing the Christmas

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

**Dr Peter Wentworth Thompson MBE**

**23<sup>rd</sup> August 1925 ~ 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

We have all known Peter in some capacity; some of us for many years, some of us only in recent times, and some possibly only by word of mouth. Following his death, in the last week of November, his family hopes that this short profile will provide us with a little insight into Peter's life; for them, of course, he is and was a much loved father.

"Peter was born in Hammersmith, London. His childhood years were spent at the vicarage in Walberswick, Suffolk, where his father was the vicar of Blythburgh and Walberswick. At the

age of seven he became a boarder at Kings School Ely which he attended for eleven years - ending his days there as Head Boy.

In 1943 Peter went up to Gonville & Caius College Cambridge and graduated with a degree in medical science, going on to complete his medical studies at St George's Hospital, Hyde Park, London. It was at St George's that Peter met his future wife Brenda, she was nursing at that time, and then became the mother of his three daughters Mary, Elizabeth and Catharine.

Early in his medical training he decided to pursue a career in anaesthetics which was very much a new and developing field of medicine. Peter was appointed as Consultant Anaesthetist in Cardiff in June 1957. He was passionate about pain free medical treatment and safety but also about his beloved NHS. In the 1960's he was appointed as visiting Professor of Anaesthetics in Lucknow, India establishing a successful department. He also became an external examiner for the Royal College of Surgeons and the author of numerous publications.

For Peter the two highlights of his career were holding the office of Vice-Dean of the Royal College of Anaesthetists and receiving an MBE (in 1988) for his services to improving standards in anaesthesia.

Outside medicine he derived great pleasure from his love of literature, music and his steadfast faith in God and belief in Eternal Life. For many years he was a Lay reader in the Diocese of Llandaff, Cardiff.

His faith never diminished, and in recent years some of his most comforting hours were spent at All Saints Clifton where he found true friends and peace."



Our 2015 Christmas Charity is the Barnabas Fund which supports persecuted Christians wherever they may be. The situation is particularly bleak in the Middle East, in Cameroon, in Uzbekistan, in Pakistan and even, disturbingly, in this country.

Details of the work of the Fund can be seen at <https://barnabasfund.org>

## **CHRISTINGLE ASSEMBLING PARTY**

Please come and help us assemble Christingles for our Family Service on 13 December

**When: Saturday 12 December at 10.30am**

**Where: In the atrium**

**Tea, Coffee, Juice and CAKE will be available to spur us on!**

**These have always been fun occasions, so see you there.**

Further details: Liz Badman

### **IN THIS MONTH...DECEMBER 1939**

#### **IN MEMORIAM: CLEMENT ORD**

This month we have to record the passing of yet another former churchwarden of All Saints', and the breaking of another link with the days when the great traditions handed down to us to preserve, were being embodied and consolidated. But whereas Mr Meyrick Heath, in spite of all his work for our church and his charming personality, is from force of circumstances little more than a name to many of us, there can be few indeed in our congregation who did not know and love Clement Ord.

He came from a Quaker stock on both his father's and mother's sides; his paternal grandfather founded the friends' School at Yealand Conyers in North Lancashire (where on one occasion he received a prize from the hands of Joseph Storrs Fry, the head of the famous firm in that city in which he was later to spend so many years), and later in Hitchin, where he became head boy.

At King's College Cambridge, he graduated with second class honours in History, and would certainly have been in the first class if he had not given up valuable time just before the

examination to nurse a sick brother in London. During his last year at Cambridge he found it necessary to study German, and stayed at his future father-in-law's school on the Reichenberg with this object. After taking his degree he settled in Germany, married, studied at Heidelberg University, and did not return to England till 1891, when at the age of 33 he planned to start his life's work as a journalist in London. Asthma, however, prevented this, and in 1892 he accepted a post at Clifton College, but was almost immediately appointed to the staff of University College, Bristol, as Lecturer in History and Literature. His successes with students were outstanding, and should have been better rewarded when the College became a University. He, however, was undisturbed, and accepted a post as head of the German Department, which he held till his resignation in 1925.

His association with All Saints' dates almost from the time of his arrival in Clifton. Brought up in the Society of Friends, he was attracted by the spiritual side of religion, and this he found at the shrine where he continued to worship for 47 years. Dean Randall had a remarkable influence upon him, and when he had "found" All Saints', he and his Lutheran wife never left it.

In 1901 the Choir School had become a serious problem to the Church, and Clement Ord decided to purchase what were then the School buildings, and make them his home. His historical mind recalled that just a thousand years previously Alfred was supposed to have burnt the cakes at Athelney, and so 9a, All Saints' Road, received its name.

On the death of Mr Glennie Smith not long afterwards he became people's churchwarden, and held that office for many years, his co-warden for some time being Mr Meyrick W. Heath. The present generation, however, knows him better as Editor of the Magazine. He undertook this duty in 1901, and only resigned in 1937, when age and failing health made it impossible for him to continue. What he spent on the Magazine, which was produced at a loss, and during the war years at a very heavy loss indeed, one can only guess. He met all liabilities out of his own pocket, and never showed a debit balance. He was proud of the distinctive character of our Magazine, which, since 1889, has aimed at providing, besides the Vicar's notes, and information on parish matters, something, not necessarily ecclesiastical, to interest its readers, without descending to mass-produced matter. Appreciations of the unusual quality of the Magazine have come from most unexpected quarters. It was a source of great regret to Mr Ord that financial considerations made it necessary to reduce the number of pages available for these general articles.

Of his many good works outside All Saints' we have space to mention only a few. He became a Lay Reader in 1895, and was Chairman of the Board. He would go regularly on Sunday evenings to the mission church of S Aidan's, Crew's Hole, to take the service, probably walking most of the way, and he often denied himself the spiritual consolations of All Saints' in the morning to help at some church in the east end of the city. At one time he took a keen interest in the "Doss House" at S Jude's, and had a real affection for the tramps in whose entertainment he was able to assist both bodily and mentally.

All these activities Clement Ord carried out so unobtrusively that even members of his own household knew little of them. His simplicity and kindness of heart disguised a deep knowledge of human life and affairs. In his scheme of life all men were brothers. R.I.P.

*[Clement Ord's son, Boris, was educated at Clifton College and was organist and choirmaster of King's College, Cambridge from 1929 to 1957, except for the war years when he served in the RAF and Harold Darke deputised.]*

Bishop's Message for December 2015

**The light shines in the darkness**

*In his message for this season, Bishop Lee reflects on hope and overcoming hatred.*

I am writing this a week after the killings which have traumatised Paris and sent shockwaves across Europe and around the world. For the past seven days these events and their repercussions have dominated the news. Borders may have been tightened and security heightened but terrorists can take this as a sign of their strength.

2015 has become a year marked by chaos and seeming impotence in places unused to such frailty. To date the nations of Europe have proved unable to solve the migrant crisis, which has now been amplified by the threat of terrorists posing as refugees. The tasks facing political leaders have spiralled in complexity and, understandably, the strains are showing. The year draws to a close with many questions unanswered and problems mounting.

Over my years as an ordained minister, I have been aware of an experienced disjunction between the Church's calendar and the 'everyday' calendar in Advent. But not this year. The traditional Christian themes of Advent, including heaven, hell, death and judgement, do not feel at all remote or cutting across the cultural mood music. This year the Advent themes resonate clearly with so many existential realities. As the start of the New Year in the Christian calendar, Advent heralds a new beginning and gives grounds for a different source of hope in what feels a dangerous and uncertain future.

Travelling in London in the aftermath of the Paris shootings I looked up from the escalator at Tooting Bec underground to see a noticeboard with a 'Thought for the Day' inscribed in felt pen: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." I have no idea how many ascending the escalator that day would have recognised the source of those words, but I am quietly confident they would have lifted the spirits of most. Some may have found them echoing around their psyche through the day, surfacing into conscious thought every now and again, offering hope but also a challenge.

Living in the northern hemisphere, the image of light in the darkness works so well for Advent, complementing the illuminations on our streets. Those words, as you probably know, come from the Gospel of St John, chapter one, verse five. The word translated 'overcome' is sometimes rendered as 'understood' giving further opportunity for echoing around in our psyche. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not mastered it" captures both senses – neither comprehending nor overcoming.

In the painful and raw accounts of the bereaved Parisians, the one which touched me most deeply was that of a husband with a young child whose wife was killed in the Bataclan theatre. In an open letter Antoine Leiris wrote to the terrorists: "If the God for whom you kill so blindly made us in his image, each bullet in my wife's body would have been a wound in his heart. Therefore I will not give you the gift of hating you."

Monsieur Leiris's words do not only reveal the God we meet incarnate – made flesh - in Christ Jesus; they open us to our own true nature. In refusing to hate and speaking of God in this way, Monsieur Leiris has offered a bridge of reconciliation upon which Muslims and Christians may stand together. His example is a powerful and contemporary witness to the truth proclaimed on that noticeboard at Tooting Bec. This Advent may such an example point people to the one who is said, "I am the Light of the World."

+Lee

### **So you can't forgive?**

A final scene. The scene is a Cape Town black township in 1996. A 70-year old woman is testifying before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A corrupt policeman has come with others one night and in front of the woman had shot her son at point-blank range. Two years later the same officer returned to arrest her husband. He didn't come back so she thought he must have been executed. But some time later the policeman returned, and he took the woman to a place where he showed her her husband, still alive. But as her spirits lifted, the policeman doused her husband with petrol, set him on fire and killed him. Archbishop Tutu listens to the poor woman, desperately trying to control his emotions. "What would you like the outcome of this hearing to be?" he asked her. After a long pause, she replies: "Three things. First, I want to be taken to the place where my husband was burned so I can gather up the dust and give his remains a decent burial. Second, my husband and my son were my only family. Therefore I want this police officer to become my son, to come twice a month and spend the day with me, so I can pour out whatever love I still have remaining inside me. Finally I want this officer to know that I offer him forgiveness, because Jesus Christ died to forgive me. Please would someone lead me across the hall so I can embrace him and let him know he is truly forgiven." Completely overwhelmed, the police officer faints.

**Matthew 6:14 (RSV)** For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you;

*Sent in by Jill Masefield*

### **Bringing in the Bacon**

Retired priest, John Ware, recounts how a link visit in 1985 was the start of a 30 year friendship with a final twist in the tail.

**"All real existence is meeting"....so wrote Martin Buber the famous Jewish thinker. He had a point. We can hear about people. We can read about people. We can see pictures or hear recordings of people, but it is only when we meet them that they really begin to come alive to us. So it was for me when in 1985 I met Canon Simon Kahiriita from Bunyato-Kitara diocese in Uganda.**

Simon was the leader of a small party of visitors to Bristol Diocese in 1985. At that time I was Vicar of Kingswood and Rural Dean of Bitton deanery and Kingswood parish was asked to host them for a while. For me this was the beginning of a relationship with Canon Simon and his family which continues to this day. Although I have never been to Uganda we have kept in touch first by letter and in more recent times by email. We have shared news about each other's families and work and supported each other by prayer and in whatever other ways we could. In that time we have learnt about the development of our families and of our changing spheres of work. Latterly we have each moved into retirement mode and taken on the roles of grand fatherhood and, as we approach 80, of the grey headed (See Psalm 71)

In 2011 Simon was sponsored by a relative to visit the UK. It was not an official church visit but it had the blessing of his bishop. At that time I was in the middle of the five years during which I was Bishop's Officer for retired clergy and Church Workers in the Archdeaconry of Bristol. This was very fortuitous because one of the areas of concern that Simon wished to explore was how the Church of England cares for its retired clergy and their spouses. Simon was to come for a month during which he wanted to spend a week each with contacts in Winchester and Chester diocese and the rest of the time with us in Bristol diocese. He asked me to set this all this up and I agreed to set about doing it. It was all fairly straightforward except for last minute difficulties with the British Border Agency Office who at first refused him a Visa.

During His fortnight in Bristol I took Simon to meet Holy Trinity Kingswood parish again and there were many there who remembered his visit 26years earlier. He also preached and answered questions at the Parish Mass at Holy Trinity Horfield in which I had made my home upon retirement. He also attended things in the diocese during which he met bishop Mike and I also arranged for him to stay in Trinity College for three days.

Throughout this time we had many discussions and especially about the care of retired clergy. I introduced him to the idea of a Retired Clergy Association. He did not realise how much is done by the Church of England for its retired clergy and what he learnt has inspired him to start a Retired Clergy Association in his own Diocese. As yet , however, the Church in Uganda has no pension scheme for its clergy though I understand that that some dioceses there are beginning to move in that direction. As we discussed we began to wonder what could be done to alleviate some of the problems that retired clergy have in Uganda. Apparently most clergy there have some land to cultivate and it was this fact that led us to the idea that if each person could be provided with a pig upon retirement this would give them not only an interest but also a means of food and by breeding from the pigs a means of income. Also if a condition of having a pig was that each person should use some its first litters to provide pigs for other clergy as they retired the whole scheme would be self-perpetuating once it was established. My job would be to find UK funding to get the Pig Scheme established.

Simon returned to Uganda and early in 2013 his Diocesan Retired Clergy Association was formally set up and had its first meeting. While he was doing this in Uganda I decided to appeal to my fellow retired clergy and their spouses in the Bristol Archdeaconry. The

response was tremendous and in no time at all I was able to send over £2000 to Simon. I heard from him last month that he has now provided most of the retired clergy on his list with a pig. This must have been a lot of work for him as he has only a motorbike to travel across his whole diocese. We could still do, however, with a bit more money for all the present group of retired clergy to have their pig. Even so if that does not appear there are enough people now with pigs for them to breed offspring for those who do not yet have one.

I hope that this little account of how the Bristol-Uganda Link can make a difference will encourage others and help us all to enjoy the feast of God's Kingdom ..... even if it is bacon!

**Do look at the Bristol Diocese Website for more news about our Link with Uganda**