



'Tis mystery all

On 1st December 2017 I had a heart attack and so missed out on the whole of Advent and Christmas in my first year of Moravian ministry. Lying on the trolley in a hospital corridor awaiting the emergency angioplasty procedure, I reflected on how glad I was to be alive and how grateful I was for the NHS. Perhaps curiously, God felt intimately close and I entrusted myself completely into his hands. Recovery was slow and steady and I was back to work full time just before the Holy Week readings, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and three Easter Sunday morning services.

What happened when Jesus died on the cross is a mystery. As Charles Wesley puts it:

***'Tis mystery all : the Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,***

Let angel minds enquire no more.

***He left his Father's throne above -
So free, so infinite his grace -
Emptied himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me!***

There's an Iona Community Christmas liturgy that shines some light into the mystery:

*Light looked down and saw the darkness.
'I will go there', said light.*

Peace looked down and saw war. 'I will go there', said peace.

Love looked down and saw hatred. 'I will go there', said love.

So he, the Lord of Light, the Prince of Peace, the King of Love, came down and crept in beside us.

This reminds me that God is always

ahead of us and always takes the initiative to come alongside us in the mess, the disunity, the violent chaos in which we find ourselves.

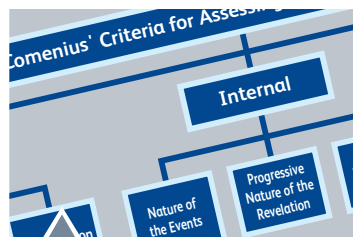
During the Last Supper Jesus took the cup of wine which symbolised his blood shed on the cross and said 'this is my blood of the new covenant'. Jeremiah speaks of God making a new covenant with his people, not like the old covenant that they broke. The foundational stories of God's relationship with the Hebrew people are full of broken covenants. God had made a covenant with Adam and Eve which they broke. God had made a covenant with Noah and his family that got broken. God made a covenant with Abraham and Sarah, and renewed it with Jacob, and this was broken. God made the new covenant with the children of Israel as he led them out of slavery in Egypt, and it wasn't long before that got broken too.

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Betrayal

I listened as a friend told me of the murder of his childhood friend many years ago. They had grown up in an integrated part of Northern Ireland and had 'run about' with a wide circle of friends. This young friend, let's call him Kevin, had wanted to serve his community as a policeman so he joined the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the RUC. He was not part of a political grouping but just someone who wanted to serve. However, because Kevin was catholic he was at even more risk from the IRA than protestant officers. Kevin was killed in his RUC uniform aged just 22. The suspicion from my friend was that Kevin had been betrayed by one of his schoolmates who had 'gone rotten' and passed on his details to others linked to the IRA. If this is correct then it was a very personal betrayal and those who passed on his details were culpable in his murder and just as guilty as the actual killers.

There are many dreadful accounts of what happened in Northern Ireland before, during and after 'The Troubles' and behind so many of these events is a form of betrayal. That may be of individuals, of causes, of communities or of the standards expected by those who served in uniform or in civic and political life. The result was so many victims who died or were injured with families left either caring or grieving and a society where mistrust between communities and individuals is a legacy and forgetting the past is so difficult. Northern Ireland is not unique by any means, betrayal is a universal human trait and sorrow a universal consequence.

Jesus lived and died in a world just like ours despite the passing of so many years. Incarnation, which we celebrated at Christmas was not intended to be nor did it turn out to be an empty gesture.

Betrayal was at the heart of the events of Holy Week and Good Friday. Those who acclaimed Jesus as he entered Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday turned their back on him; the religious authorities who ran the place of worship and who should have stood for all that was good, true and holy turned their values on their heads; the civic authorities who should have stood for law and order colluded with the religious authorities to keep the peace rather than upholding justice; dear friends denied him and ran away and an erstwhile friend betrayed him with a kiss.

Yet betrayal in all its forms did not have the last word in first century Jerusalem. Over two nights of silence and sorrow, God's purposes were working through and on the third day Jesus was raised from the dead. Forgiveness, love and life had triumphed over hatred, collusion, betrayal and death. That is why we celebrate Easter.

So, believing in forgiveness and new life, how shall we live in our society that includes divided families and communities and betrayals from the past and in the present? How can we be beacons of a kingdom where the past does not rule the future and people and their well-being are more important than ideologies? This challenge surrounds us each and every day. What we say and do, how we spend our time and money and the causes we support should be examined in the light of Holy Week and Easter - who are we betraying? Are we trying to partner with God in bringing his love and life to those around us?



Sr Sarah Groves
Editorial Team

PEC/ECP Retreat

From 15th-18th February 2019, the PECs of the European Continental Province and the British Conference came together for a time of retreat and conversation in Hinsley Hall, Leeds.

We all began to arrive on the Friday evening at different times and therefore it was a quiet, sociable evening. By Saturday morning we were all gathered, five members of the ECP PEC and four from the British Province.

The intention from the outset was to create a space for retreat and rest, however like all events where brothers and sisters are given the opportunity to meet together discussions started and kept going from beginning to end. It was a great opportunity to spend time reflecting on the work and ministry across both our provinces, whilst also considering areas of mutual cooperation and how we might approach difficulties that we have in common.

Discussions were had about the ECP's recent statement against the rise of right-wing populism in Europe and also the

implications of Brexit for the Unity, reaffirming our commitment to continue to meet together in love and fellowship.

We discussed opportunities for our brothers and sisters from our respective provinces to meet together, and we are confident that we will see more cooperation soon with youth, women's and men's work. We also considered current issues affecting how our provinces engage with one another as well as the wider region and Unity.

As you can see from this brief insight, it was a busy time! However, we did have time of prayers, meditation and space. We began and ended each evening with devotions. Sr Zoe Taylor led us through a guided meditation on Saturday afternoon as we also visited Fulneck

settlement and museum. On Sunday morning our group split into two and we went to services at Lower Wyke and Baildon and we had a wonderful evening on Sunday when Br John McOwat joined us to lead us through a reflection and bible study.

The retreat was an invaluable time and I believe it was gratefully appreciated by all of us. We hope to be able to meet every 2-3 years and create more opportunities for inter-provincial cooperation along the way!

Sr Roberta Hoey
Chair, PEC



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Review of Youth Work in the British Province

Many of you may know, but I'm sure some of you don't, that there was a panel set up at Synod 2016 to review the youth and children's work in the province. This panel had members from all the provincial committees and were tasked with producing a report for Synod 2018. Although this report is available to anyone, Provincial Youth and Children's Committee (PYCC) felt it would be of interest to the wider church so I hope to present to you here some of the information and the observations they made as well as the task they have set PYCC.

The review panel produced and circulated two questionnaires, one for congregations and one for young people. I, as Provincial Youth and Children's Officer, was also asked what I thought.

One of the primary questions the panel asked was 'What is youth and children's work for?' Perhaps this is a question you can consider as there is no 'right answer'. A range of responses revealed that although the work may not be a priority for all congregations it is considered important. Many congregations were lacking people in the 25-50 age group and the panel wondered if this was because of lack of provision for children and young people. The work that is happening is valued and there are people in the province with the skills and experience to do this work but there is no way of sharing them with the wider church. Although most congregations have a desire to

'do something' they often don't know how. The transition from children's provision to being in church is another area where more work needs to be done. What is it that encourages young people to engage with the church after children's groups? The panel felt that providing opportunities for young people to use their gifts in the congregation would be helpful.

The report was presented, with some statistics, to Synod 2018. Two members of the Review Panel put a proposal to Synod which tasked PYCC to provide materials for congregations to do an audit of their current work, their human and physical resources and opportunities for working in the community, identify areas for development and to resource new work. This was passed at Synod and so is a resolution which now must be implemented by PYCC.

Members of the Provincial Youth and Children's Committee are now working on this. Every meeting will have time allocated to discuss progress and how to move forward on this. The committee soon realised this was not something to be done overnight but will take time to be done well. So please be patient, this issue isn't being shelved but is being worked on systematically.

Sr Joy Raynor
Provincial Youth and Children's Officer



'Tis mystery all

A covenant is a binding agreement within a relationship, both the sign and the means of intimacy. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge in the Garden of Eden, and the Golden Calf at Mount Sinai both symbolise how easily we turn our attention away from God and onto things that we can possess and consume instead. This is idolatry, desiring and worshipping things, instead of God. Taking one's attention away from God leads to turning away from God and that is sin. It involves selfishness and greed leading to injustice and violence, bigotry and hatred. All of this tears God's heart in two, because we were created to love one another and use things. Instead we use one another and love things, so turning our backs on God completely.

What then can God do to restore our relationship with him, with one another and with the whole of creation? God takes the initiative and does six impossible things before breakfast. The creator becomes part of creation; the

one who is Everything becomes small enough to fit inside Mary's womb. God experiences what it's like to be human from the inside. In St Paul's words, God empties himself taking the form of a slave and being found in human form he humbles himself and becomes obedient to the point of death. In this way Love challenges and subverts all the structures of human power and domination.

Even more mysteriously, at the point of death God experiences separation from God, when Jesus cries out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' God penetrates the depths and darkness of the human lot - separation from God - and brings there the presence of the fullness of love. From then on every human experience of absence becomes a Presence, and every human experience of emptiness becomes a Fullness. Just as a grain of wheat, falling into the ground and dying, bears much fruit so in rising from the tomb, Jesus begins God's new creation. The prophets long before had

begun to speak of new heavens and a new earth and this becomes a reality in the midst of human history at Jesus's resurrection.

Amazingly God entrusts and engages us in the process of transformation. As Paul says, 'if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the Ministry of reconciliation ...' This is because the church, in the power of the spirit, continues to embody the loving serving presence of the Creator within creation, in the midst of his gathered disciples, through his Word and through the Eucharist. What a challenge! What a privilege!

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Is the Qur'an Divine Revelation?

A Perspective from John Amos Comenius

Part 2

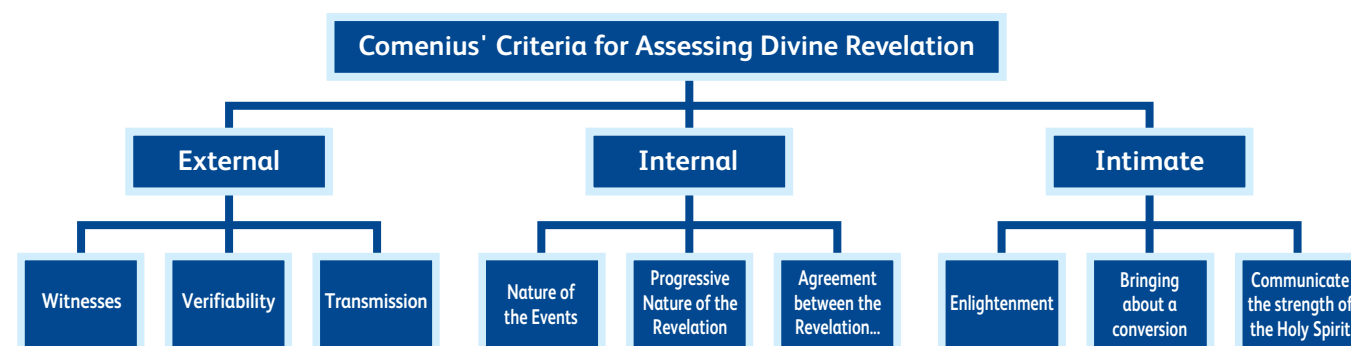
Introduction

In the previous article in this series we concluded by saying it is not enough to say that a claim to revelation, which a religious community makes, is false. We have to say why it is false by using the same criteria that we use to conclude that another claim to revelation is true. In short, the claims to revelation in the Qur'an and in the Bible have to be assessed on the same basis. What basis can we use? This is the question we now seek to answer.

Criteria to Determine Divine Revelation

In developing his approach to finding a basis for assessing claims to revelation made by different religious communities, there were three important movements that Comenius made. The **first** was to outline the criteria for recognising divinely inspired scriptures. The **second** was to show that there must be harmony between the three arenas of revelation and the harmony between sense, reason and faith. The third step was to show harmony within each arena; that is to say, something that is unveiled in revealed scriptures had to be in harmony with what is revealed in the human mind and in the physical. These three steps are at the centre of Comenius' approach assessing claims to divine revelation. Once he gets into describing the criteria he goes into great length and with significant detail because he considered unity in the world and the human community an issue of great import and that no effort should be spared to be fair and respectful. He believed that everyone who claims to have heard from God should be heard.

With strong Trinitarian bent is his orientation, the criteria Comenius developed is a series of three, each with three subdivisions as shown in the diagram below:



He divided the criteria into three sets: the external, the internal and the intimate. The first criteria, the **external**, can be further divided into three sub-types. The first of these is the character of the **witnesses**; those who bear the revelation and committed it to writing as foremost. Evidencing complete trust in the character of those who committed the revelation to writing, Comenius argued that their piety and spiritual discernment

would not allow them to deceive the world with fictitious claims. Their simplicity means they do not even know how to invent revelations. Accordingly, it is clear proof of the divine origin of the revelation when they come from vessels that are normally incapable of producing them, as when God used infants to confound the wise.ⁱ

The second sub-type of the external criteria he termed **verifiability** of the revelation. Appearing to rely on the biblical evidence of Jesus' assertion of power over demons, Comenius believed that miracles verify the credibility of revelation and put them beyond doubt. The third external characteristic relates to the **transmission** of the revelation from one generation to the next. For Comenius, the transmission of the testimony is sealed by martyrs who fearlessly submit to violence or even death at the hands of sinners who reject the word of God. Here Comenius parts company with traditional catholic doctrine, which would have held that the transmission of the revelation was guaranteed by office of the bishop in communion with the See of Rome. No doubt he would have had in mind the martyrdom of Jan Hus, who was burned at the stake during the Council of Constance in 1415.

To match his external criteria, Comenius named a second set of criteria that he called the **internal** characteristics, which he also sub-divided in three types. The first type relates to the **nature of the events** to which the revelations refer. According to Comenius, true revelations refer either to events that precede the existence of the world, events that will come to pass after the end of the world, or events that will happen in this world but in circumstances that we could not possibly predict. With his mind evidently on 1 Cor 1:18, which emphasises the apparent foolishness of the things God uses to confound the wise,

Comenius believed that the less elaborate the revelation the greater the likelihood of its authenticity.

The second aspect of the internal characteristics is the **progressive nature of the revelation** to which the divinely inspired book refers. For Comenius genuine revelation involves a gradual process of ever-increasing enlightenment. The gradual movement in revelation is similar to what obtains in the

development of the human mind "whose light increases with each succeeding age."ⁱⁱ With this version of progressive revelation Comenius was engaging the view that Christians and Muslims of his day held, in which it was argued that later revelation superseded earlier revelation. However, his use of the terminology of gradual increase allows him to avoid the language of one religion superseding another. Of course, this did not mean that Comenius was unconvinced of the truth of Christian revelation. However, he does not proceed as if that truth is self-evident but it had to be demonstrated in the same way that he would expect Muslims to demonstrate the truth of any assertion they would make about the Qur'an.

The idea of gradual increasing light is consistent with the third aspect of the internal criteria, which he termed, **agreement between the revelation in the book in question with previous revelations in the written Word, the natural world and sound reason**. The word of a book that is divine must then be consistent with what is enacted in the other two theatres of God's revelation, namely, the external world and the human mind. Comenius argued that, "although God can make many revelations above the level of reason, he must not do so contrary to reason and risk conflict of truth or the destruction of either side." If God made revelation contrary to reason, then God would risk contradicting himself. God must also show internal consistency whether he is expressing himself through his works in nature, or through reason in the human mind or through dictating his revelation in scripture.

Alongside the external and internal criteria for determining an authentic revelation, Comenius also mentions a third set, which he describes as the **intimate** criteria. This idea of intimacy is meant to refer to the way in which individuals are affected by the revelations. A truly divine book, he argued, must make a three-fold impression on the human mind. The first is that the **enlightenment** and joy it gives must be more than can be derived from other human writings. Secondly, divine books must show themselves capable of **bringing about a conversion** or a supernatural transformation towards full obedience and surrender to the will God. Thirdly, divine books must be able to **communicate the strength of the Holy Spirit**, which is most clearly seen in the example of martyrs who are prepared to give their lives as a witness to revelation. These intimate characteristics are positioned at the centre of contemporary debate about scriptural authority. For Comenius, the authority of a divinely inspired book is intimate in the sense that it makes a personal challenge for commitment rather than a demand for intellectual assent to something that is clear-cut and absolute.

Attitude to the Bible as Revealed Text

In summary then, there are three sets of criteria, the external, the internal and the intimate, which can be used to determine the revelatory character of sacred writings. The significance of these for today is that Comenius recognises the different perspectives from which one had to consider the question of the divine revelation in religious texts. If we take the case of the Qur'an, for example, the temptation in discussion today is to look at the extent to which the Qur'an agrees with the Christian Bible. However, if one were to apply Comenius' approach, it would be insufficient simply to try to use the Bible to correct the Qur'an or vice versa. His approach is to subject both the Bible and the Qur'an to the same test, using the criteria he outlined.

Comenius' criteria are complex and in some way confusing but he challenges the modern reader to be sophisticated and comprehensive in our assessment of the Qur'an, the Book of Mormon or any other book claiming a revealed status. It is not enough simply to dismiss them without reading them and without subjecting them to the same test to which we subject the Bible. Comenius also challenges people claiming to be Christians today to check their attitude to the reading of the Bible. Do we find, as the internal characteristics suggest, it brings enlightenment, leads to conversion and communicates the strength of the Holy Spirit? The difficulty of course is that many Christians do not read the Bible and do not know why we treat the Bible as revealed. Many read the Bible as much as they read the Qur'an, which is not at all. We cannot experience the revelatory character to the bible if we do not read it and any dismissal of another book without reading it is irresponsible and unwise. It might be helpful that we know the Bible and experience its revelatory character before we begin to dismiss other books claiming to be divinely revealed. The future shape of the Christian community will turn significantly on the attitude to the Bible as revealed text and what we see at the moment does give some cause for concern.

Br Livingstone Thompson
Minister of University Road and Kilwarlin
Congregations and PEC



ⁱ Panaugia, VII, 12. Muslims believe that the authenticity of the claims of Muhammad's Prophethood is indicated by the fact that he was ummi, which means illiterate (Surah 7:157). This condition of ummi meant that the Prophet was a clean vessel for receiving the revelation of the Qur'an. The coincidence of these ideas suggests that Comenius was aware of and sympathetic to this Islamic claim.

ⁱⁱ Ibid., VII, 16. Comenius is alluding here to the view that the revelations of the New Testament are developments and expansions of the revelations given in the Old. His conception of the developing capacity of the human mind was similar to the view held that the Renaissance and the Enlightenment represented an emergence from the darker ages. Here Comenius is using evolutionary language before the notion of evolution came into philosophical discourse.

The Temple of Creation

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
The world and those who dwell therein, Psalm 24.1

The Bible has a beautiful and sophisticated account of the Creation and the role of human beings, but this is not set out in a single text. Both in the Biblical stories of Creation and in the design of the Jerusalem temple, there is a single vision of the relationship between time and eternity; between God and Creation; and between the visible world and the invisible world of God and the angels. To understand what the Bible says about the Creation, we too must glimpse the vision that informed the worship of the Temple, the poetry of the Hebrew prophets, the sayings of the sages and the images of the storytellers. All express and honour the same truth about the Creation. Since the New Testament shares this view of the Creation, it is the basis of Christian belief about the environment.

The temple in Jerusalem represented the Creation. The Genesis story of the six days of Creation also described the ceremonial building of the temple, which was in two parts, divided by the great curtain. The tabernacle built by Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai was the model for the later temple, and the clearest picture in the Bible of how the place of worship represented the creation can be seen by comparing Genesis 1 and Exodus 40.16-33. This section of Exodus divides into sections that correspond to the six days of creation. The end of each section is marked by 'as the Lord commanded Moses', verses 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29.

All the parts of the tabernacle and its furnishings were prepared beforehand, and Moses began to assemble them on the first day of the first month, Exodus 40.17. This means that as they assembled the tabernacle, they were re-living the miracle of creation which was celebrated at every New Year. Moses first assembled the frames and coverings of the tabernacle, which corresponded to God separating light and darkness, and thus creating 'Day One'. It was not called the 'first day' despite what most translations say. There was a special reason for it being 'Day One', as we shall see in the fourth of these articles.

On the second day, God created the 'firmament' to separate what was above from what was below, and Moses erected the great curtain, later called the veil of the temple, which separated the holy of holies from the rest of the holy place. He set the ark behind the curtain. On the third day God gathered the waters together, created dry land and caused trees and plants to grow. Moses placed the golden table on the north side of the tabernacle for the offerings derived from trees and plants: bread, wine and incense. On the fourth day God made the sun, moon and stars, and Moses set the seven-branched lamp on the north

side of the tabernacle. The lamp stand was a golden almond tree, Exodus 25.31-37 whose shining lamps were the lights of heaven. It represented the tree of life, as we shall see in the seventh of these articles.

Then there is a disruption in the pattern. The incense altar within the temple was added later to the old story of the tabernacle and this disrupted the ancient pattern of tabernacle and creation. On the fifth day of creation God made the living things of the air and the sea, birds and the fishes, and this corresponded to Moses' sixth action: setting up altar of sacrifice where birds and animals [but not fish] were offered. On the sixth day, God created human beings, and this corresponded to Moses seventh and final action: purifying Aaron and his family to be high priests and serve in the tabernacle.

The stories of creation and building a place of worship are full of symbolism about our place in the world and how we should care for it. The outer area of the holy place represented the visible material world and the inner part was the holy of holies, the invisible world of the Glory of God and the angels. The curtain represented matter concealing the Glory of God from human eyes, but the holy of holies in the heart of the temple showed that God was at the heart of Creation. All temple worship concerned the relationship of the Creation to God - praise, thanksgiving, asking for forgiveness - and the whole of the visible world was seen as the temple of God where human beings were the priests. After six days, God rested on the seventh, the Sabbath, showing that when the Creation was complete and 'very good', nothing more was made. The goal of Creation was not more and more, but sufficiency, completion and rest.

How very different from our current world view, where human beings are so often seen as only animals. God created human beings to be the divine image in the creation, Genesis 1.27, to care as God cares. Our role is not to consume more and more, but to look at everything, work with the Creator to see that it is good, and then rest, Genesis 1.31 and Genesis 2.3.

***O Lord of heaven and earth and sea,
To thee all praise and glory be;
How shall we show our love to thee,
Who givest all?***

Hymn 470

Dr Margaret Barker
Methodist Preacher and Theologian



Church of England General Synod February Sessions, 2019

From Wednesday 20th to Saturday 23rd February, I represented the Moravian Church at the General Synod of the Church of England at Church of England Church House in London.

In this report I will outline a number of discussions that took place and proposals that were passed that will hopefully be of interest to those who read this report.

There was a paper presented, entitled, 'Evangelism and Discipleship: Perspective from the Wider Anglican Communion.' A proposal was passed to encourage every worshipping community within the Church of England to make evangelism a planned priority for the coming year. The proposal also affirmed the importance of prayer and called for every parish to be involved in 'Thy Kingdom Come'. It also encouraged dioceses to envision, equip and enable lay and ordained people to be more confident in sharing the Gospel.

A proposal was passed noting the historic marginalisation of social housing estates, and commended the vision of the Estates Evangelism Task Group to see a serving, loving and worshipping community on every significant social housing estate in the country. The proposal urged every diocese to include ministry and mission on estates into its mission strategy. It also gave thanks for the Christian leadership offered by people from these estate communities and urged the church to make sure the voices of people from these estates, and other marginalised communities, were heard and heeded in the life of the Church of England.

A proposal was carried calling for the church's leadership, at various levels, to speak out publicly against racism and hate crimes directed at Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people and communities. It urged the media to stop denigrating and victimising these people, and requested every diocese to appoint a chaplain to these communities.

There was a presentation on ministry amongst children and young people, and a proposal was carried encouraging youth evangelism. In this proposal the

importance of youth evangelism was affirmed. It commended the work of the Diocesan Youth Officers and the staff of the national church institutions, encouraged dioceses to create more youth ministry posts, and encouraged diocese and parishes to think of fresh ways to reach young people with the Gospel and to nurture them as Christian disciples.

Various legislative business was discussed and passed, including a Code of Practice on Co-operation by the Church of England with Other Churches. The code gives guidelines for the new Church of England ecumenical legislation. The legislation allows for greater flexibility and new opportunities for mission when working with other Christian churches, particularly at the local level, and particularly with those churches that do not have a national presence.

A proposal was passed calling on the Archbishop's Council to form a Church of England led Homelessness Taskforce to produce plans at the national, diocesan and parish levels, and to use the church's resources to provide shelter and support services for homeless people. Wherever possible, this should be done in partnership with local authorities, homeless charities, voluntary organisations, faith groups and social enterprises.

There was also a presentation and discussion on human sexuality and 'Living in Love and Faith'. 'Living in Love and Faith' is a process of discernment that the Church of England has embarked upon concerning gender, identity, relationships, marriage and sexuality. This process began in 2017 and will hopefully be completed in 2020, when teaching and learning resources will be available.

A proposal was passed concerning the environment and climate change. It called on every diocese to have an environmental programme. The proposal also called for a framework to be prepared and submitted to the Archbishop's Council to accelerate the positive steps

already being taken by the Church of England to reduce its CO2 emissions in cathedrals, churches and church halls by 80% by 2050. Dioceses were encouraged to share best practice with one another.

A proposal was also carried on the subject of Advertising and Gambling. Synod noted the huge increase in gambling advertising and significant levels of gambling by children. The proposal called on the government to reduce the quantity and pervasiveness of gambling advertising and introduce a mandatory levy on gambling firms to fund independently commissioned research, education and treatment programs. It also encouraged churches to be open places for people who have problems with gambling to seek support, and asked churches to support initiatives which educate children and young people about the risks related to gambling.

Finally, bearing in mind the divisions that presently exist in this country, a proposal was passed calling upon every diocese and parish regularly to hold in prayer their local MPs, politicians, members of the government and civil servants, seeking God's strength and wisdom for the responsibilities they bear. The proposal also called on the synod to reaffirm the Christian commitment to putting the voices of the poor and marginalised at the heart of the nation's concerns, and called upon the nation's leaders, drawing on Christian hope and reconciliation, to work together for that common good at this time of division.

During the course of the synod there was a Service of Holy Communion, a Bible study on 1 Peter 1:1-21 and Evening Worship. During the breaks between sessions, over a cup of coffee or a meal, I also had opportunities to share in fellowship with my ecumenical colleagues and other members of the synod.

Br Philip Cooper
National Ecumenical Officer



Dementia Warriors Café at Dukinfield

It is now 18 months since we at Dukinfield started this venture which was the brainchild of Sr Dorothy Evans. She had the idea after helping to care for Julie, her niece, who had early-onset dementia. She saw how Julie's husband struggled to cope and when Julie died, Dorothy realised there must be many other people who were facing a similar struggle and so the seed of the Dementia Warriors Café took root. As she was determined that this venture would not be a drain on the church resources, she started by raising money with the help of the Astley Sports Village, a neighbour of the church. The Sports Village helped with sponsored bike rides, raffles and special events. She used the money raised to buy table games, craft items, mugs, plates, coffee, tea, biscuits and our very own karaoke machine.

The rationale behind the venture was to provide a welcoming space where people living with dementia and the people who care for them could come along to church for two hours on a Monday afternoon and enjoy a thoroughly relaxing time in a warm, friendly and safe environment.

The sessions start with a welcoming cup of tea or coffee, jokes and a singalong session with words typed out in song books, led by Keith Chadderton, whose wife Marilyn acts as treasurer for the group. Husband and wife team, Joan and Michael Sullivan and Jackie Marsland help in the kitchen brewing up, washing up and tidying up. Dorothy's husband Bill helps wherever he is needed and Kate Barber is Dorothy's co-organiser and 'right-hand man'!

Songs from yesteryear are particularly enjoyed. The Manchester Rambler which tells the story of the mass trespass in the Peak District in the 1930s is a favourite as is The Old Bazaar in Cairo. After the opening songs, there are usually craft sessions and these have included Christmas table decorations, Valentine's day gifts, bulb planting, colouring, chair-based exercises, corn dolly making, the list goes on and on. The craft sessions are very popular but if anyone wants to just sit and be quiet, then that is fine too. Guests have come along to entertain us: soloists, duos, trios and choirs have sung for us. A ukulele group have provided an excellent afternoon's entertainment and

hand-bell ringers have let us try to get tunes out that are recognisable. We have held Christingle services and Christmas dinners in the two Christmases since we started. Father Christmas was invited and he made sure none of us went home empty handed.

After the weekly craft session, we take part in quizzes, bingo, ludo and upstairs, there is darts, table tennis and carpet bowls for the more energetic. We have visited two local pantomimes, been entertained by clog dancers and have had trips to the theatre and local restaurants/pubs.

We limit the group to 16 people at any one time so that the experience is not overwhelming and we have time to get to know everyone. We all wear name badges to help with conversation and we receive supplies of refreshments from the local Co-Op who have adopted us as one of their chosen charities. All help is received on a voluntary basis and there is a small charge of £2 per person for our guests.

A recent fund raising event was the visit of the Arnfield Brass Band who came on a Friday night in February and over £400, which included donations, was raised for our funds.

Although Sr Dorothy is our 'leader' she readily accepts that she would not be able to manage without the faithful band of voluntary helpers who come along week in and week out to give respite, companionship and fun to all who attend. She is also grateful for the help and support of the congregation and especially our minister, Br Peter Gubi. Br

John Wilkinson regularly attends meetings and is on hand for spiritual guidance if needed.

As a separate project, the church was subjected to a major remodel. All the old pews were stripped out, the whole area redecorated and carpeted and chairs provided. This has made the church a far more flexible

and versatile space for many of the different activities that are held during



Dorothy and her helpers

© Sr Sue Selby

the year. The Dementia Warriors Café have certainly benefitted from this new arrangement.

Keith wrote a poem, given below, which describes us to a tee!

*Dementia Warriors are we
We drink lots of coffee and tea
Cake, biscuits and buns
We have lots of fun
And much more, wait and see.*

*Art and crafts and bell ringers too
We have choirs with people who are singers
Ukulele bands, and a bloke that stands
Who thinks he's funny - that's me.*

*We exercise in the sitting position.
We do it with Dorothy's permission.
Bingo, it could be, or maybe a quiz
We will see. In the meantime,
It's coffee and tea.*

*We have snooker for you
And a game of darts too
Table tennis for the able
(Please don't fall off the table
You'll ruin the carpet bowls!)*

*There's Kate, Joan, Bill,
Michael and Marilyn too
They are happy to look after you.
They will walk extra miles
Just to see you smile
Because that's what Warriors do.*

*We meet every Monday,
You know it's a fun day
And as this ditty ends
The best thing about it?
We met as strangers
But now we are all good friends.*

In the photographs that accompany this article, you will see the new church space and the helpers of Dementia Warriors with our leader, Dorothy.

Sr Sue Selby
Dukinfield

The Power of the Word(s)

Jesus said in Revelation 21:4. 'See, I am making all things new.' The word 'new' occurs over thirty-seven times in the New Testament. Plainly, we are enjoined to do things differently, not just sadly re-tread the old. Manifestly, our vocabulary has to change to express our current call as Christians.

The core of our message in our destructive 21st century is, 'Praise the Creator-God: protect God's creation.' We call this 'eco-theology', that is, the study and praise of God as if all creation mattered. 50% of all the animals made by God have died out in the last 50 years; the Great Barrier Reef atrophies; forests are felled. We have a new word for what is happening: 'ecocide', the destruction of our home, not of our 'environment' but our 'common home', as Pope Francis calls it.

Natalie Isaacs, the founder of the '1 million Women' movement realises that we see 'looking after the environment as an adjunct activity.' 'The environment' is what is around and outside us. For Christians, this is entirely inadequate. We are ourselves an integral and powerful part of creation. We have a holistic view of the creative spirit of God evolving through all things. We should banish the word 'environment' and use a more all-embracing term such as 'the creation'; George Monbiot suggests 'living planet' or 'natural world'.

We have to reclaim our language and therefore redeem ourselves from the overweening power of exploitation and money. Money has no natural limits; we can always get more. The acquisition of more is destroying the natural gifts God has given us on this planet: its trees, its waters, and its food. The more we get, the more we want. For example, we talk

of 'fish stocks', as if they only exist to be exploited by us; we should always say 'fish populations'. Otherwise, the tragic and disastrous implication is that fish and all the rest of God's creation exist for our benefit alone. Loving our God can hardly include destroying God's creation; loving our neighbour must surely include all our neighbouring animals which God the Creator has made. In the ethereal divine tapestry, if you pull out one thread the whole begins to unravel.

This is not the economy of Jesus; 'economy' means in essence 'the management of the home' not 'the state of the nation's finances'. The earth is our home, not the money market. Indeed, the term 'market' needs to be redeemed. Jesus talks in Matthew 20:3 of men standing to be hired 'in the market', an open place where buying and selling took place and where people could gain employment. But now daily on the BBC we hear 'the market is up' - or down. We are told 'You cannot buck the market.' The market has become infallible. It has become God. That is heresy. An ever growing, apparently infinite, market is suicidal in a finite world. For good reason, infinity is one of the attributes of God.

11,000 years ago, agriculture began in Jericho. Since then the climate has allowed us springtime and harvest with little variation. We have become used to climatic stability. Now we have begun to talk of 'global warming'. People talk of last summer in England as being 'really very pleasant, a welcome change'. It was. But we now need to use the term 'global heating'. From the orderly sequence of the seasons we are creating disorderly chaos by increasing average global temperatures; we are cooking the planet. As Christine Lagarde, Head of the International Monetary Fund forecast,

we will be 'toast'. Eco-theologians are not talking about 'saving the planet', however. The planet will undoubtedly survive, but not with life as we now know it. The term 'saving the planet' shows how anthropocentric, how selfish, humankind is; what we really mean is 'saving ourselves'. And what did Jesus say about saving our lives? In Luke 9:24 we read 'For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it'. This is our great calling: to have life more abundantly by living simply that others may simply live, by rejoicing in enough, not frantically searching for more, by loving what is 'valuable', not what is pricey. The Latin 'valere' means 'to be strong'. In this way we can be strong in Christ.

We should ever hold before us the shining vision of a shimmering globe, vibrant with life all made by God. In our language of salvation we have to redeem the word 'save' from its current common use of paying a little less in a shop to the astounding and inspiring meaning of salvation in Christ. In Luke 10:10 we read 'The Son of Man came to save the lost'. By living Jesus-shaped lives, we do not require to be better off than our parents, to be able to take yet more exotic holidays. We can avoid the emptiness of never having all the 'more' we want. Enough is enough. If we use with joy the words, the inspiration, that Jesus gave us, we live fulfilled, loving all the divine beauty immediately around us. By changing our vocabulary, we can change our lives. The Word becomes part of our very being. In the beginning was the Word. At the end is the Word.

John D Anderson
Member of Baildon Methodist Church



SUMMER CAMP 2019

When: **3-10th August 2019**
Where: **Dovedale House, Ilam**
For: **Young people aged 10-17 with links to the Moravian Church**
Cost: **£340**

More information and booking forms can be obtained from your minister or Joy Raynor at: youth@moravian.org.uk
Information about the venue can be found at www.dovedalehouse.org
Booking before 31st May is recommended as we need to have a minimum number for camp to happen.



L-R: Sr Joyce Morrow Circle Leader, Br David Kernohan (90), Sr Sheila Broadbent Circle Treasurer

© Br Greg Cunningham

University Road

A birthday party with style

When Br David Kernohan was approaching his ninetieth birthday his family informed him he was going to have a party. Over 100 people were invited and Br David had a vision that despite not wanting presents he would end up with new socks, chocolates, ties and the odd bottle. He decided and let everybody know that all he wanted was a birthday card with a £1 coin inside that he could then donate to a charity. Well what a party and what a surprise at the amount he raised. He was delighted to present a cheque to the MWA at University Road for their charities.

Br Mark Kernohan



© Sr Sally Moody

Ockbrook

Sr Marie Rose of the Ockbrook congregation celebrated her 90th birthday with a tea party for family and friends. It was a double celebration, because she also became a great-grandmother a few days before her birthday, which was on 5th March. Many congratulations and lots of love, Marie, from all of us!

Sr Julie Hague

Cliftonville

Cliftonville hosted the Irish District Away Day on 9th February from 10am until 3pm. The visiting speaker in the morning session gave us a great deal of information about the use of websites and Facebook etc. to inform people about the activities in our congregations. Sr Sarah Groves later introduced several interesting videos that reminded us that uncared for exteriors and surroundings of buildings are unlikely to encourage people to cross our doorsteps, and if anyone does venture in, do they feel welcome and want to come again. We pride ourselves in our Moravian fellowship, but do we always make sure visitors, or indeed other members, are included in our conversations? We were further challenged in a series of questionnaires to award points to our congregations that we felt they deserved. Br Livingstone Thompson then summed up the event by asking representatives from the congregations to report verbally. A good day of friends, food and fellowship.

On the 16th February, Cliftonville and Ballinderry members were invited to the new home in Bangor of our minister, Br Jared Stephens and his wife Elaine. Again, a happy time of fellowship when we enjoyed the array of American and Irish goodies that not only Elaine but also Jared baked for us. They have settled happily in their new home and, so that they can be with both congregations each Sunday, the following day Cliftonville service began at 10am, followed by tea or coffee and a short time of conversation before they went to Ballinderry for the service there at 12 o'clock.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday (when he promises to make pancakes), Br Stephens is holding Breakfast Bible Studies at 1am each Wednesday during Lent.

We are saddened by the death in hospital of Sr Margaret Smiley on 18th February, a long-time member of Cliftonville, her funeral took place at the crematorium, followed by a memorial service in the church on Friday the 22nd when our love and sympathy were expressed to her three daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

We were delighted that Br Wilson Fitzgerald was able to join us in church on the 23rd after some months of being confined to his home.

Sr Edna Cooper



Baildon

Slovenian Honey Biscuits (baked by Vivienne Wriglesworth) and red paper carnations (made by our Craft Group and friends) with rosemary for remembrance, at Baildon World Prayer Day Service. The church was awash with fragrance!

Sr Libby Mitchell



© Br David Howarth

Notices

Summer Camp Appeal

Many of you will have fond memories of Summer Camp and the friendships you will have made during the week away from home. For any who didn't make it to Summer Camp, a quick summary is that it is a place where young people come together from across the Province, to be a big Moravian family for one week during the summer break. During that week those who attend experience fellowship via games, Bible study, sharing of food, song and laughter. There are some trips out too!

As a PYCC we have always tried to keep the costs as low as possible so that it can be affordable for all who want to come. Yet, over the last few years, prices for accommodation, food and even the trips out that we keep as low cost as possible have all increased. We are aware that the price for Summer Camp is not as low as we would like it to be. However, as costs for everything cannot be cut further, we have had to begin to think more creatively. We know that all congregations in the Province give generously to the Church and multiple other charities every year. However, we are asking if some of you would consider perhaps doing some creative fundraising over the next year, so that we can reduce the price for Summer Camp 2020? I know there will be some amazing ideas out there and every penny really helps. Another alternative we ask you to consider is whether you would like to give a one off donation or perhaps a monthly donation (no amount is too small) specifically to Summer Camp. If this is something you feel able to do, please send a direct debit or regular bank transfer using the reference Summer Camp to Moravian Union Inc, Sort Code: 40-52-40 and Account Number: 00023436.

Thank you on behalf of PYCC and the young people who will benefit so much from attending Summer Camp.

Sr Lol Wood

From Church House

Provincial Diary for April

8-12 2nd South Asia Mission Conference, Nepal (Br Paul Holdsworth & Sr Roberta Hoey)
29-30 PEC meeting

Please note the following:

Sr Hoey will be in South Asia on Unity Business 1st-5th April. Sr Hoey and Br Holdsworth will host the second South Asia Mission Conference in Nepal between 8th-12th April. During this time for matters relating to the following please contact:

Estates and Provincial Matters: Br David Howarth

Finance: Br Livingstone Thompson

Schools: Sr Zoe Taylor

In case of an emergency please contact Church House: 020 8883 3409.

Church House will be closed for Easter from 19th-22nd April.

Congregational Register

Baptisms

3rd February 2019 Shemaiah Tiana Elliot-Ross Hall Green
24th February 2019 Ava Grace Wilkinson Fairfield

Marriages

16th February 2019 Hal Isaac Baldwin and Fairfield
Ibukunoluwa Oluwatoni Jesusanmi

Receptions

4th November 2018 Naa-Adei Kotey Hall Green

Deaths

19th December 2018 Eulalie (Linda) Nanton Harold Road
1st February 2019 Cynthia Edgar Fairfield
9th February 2019 Miriam Jestina Osborne Royton
18th February 2019 Margaret Smiley Cliftonville

3	Isra and Mi'raj - Muslim
14	Palm Sunday
19	Good Friday
	First Day of Passover - Jewish
21	Easter Sunday
22	Easter Monday
23	St George's Day
27	Last day of Passover
28	Orthodox Easter - Orthodox
	International Workers' Memorial Day (http://28april.org/)

Dates to remember!



18th BAILDON MORAVIAN BEER FESTIVAL

20 Real Ales • Real Ciders • Wine & Soft Drinks

FRIDAY
3rd MAY
4-11 pm



ALL WELCOME!

SATURDAY
4th MAY
12 noon-11pm

Moravian Church Hall, off Westgate.

Happy Easter! Easter is one those times when we almost have to suspend our rational thinking and enter the realm of mystery - or faith.

I find it reassuring that we don't have to understand everything in life. Last year, we heard of the death of Professor Stephen Hawking who specialised in theoretical physics. Accolades to him are that he has helped us to understand something of the universe that surrounds us, but actually a lot of his theory is pure supposition and 'fantasy with figures' which is unlikely to ever be proven scientifically, and indeed is likely to be disproved in the future, as almost all scientific theory is. That doesn't mean that it isn't of value. It is but one step on the way to 'knowing'. Indeed, what Hawking has offered us isn't that far away from theological thinking - which is about trying to make sense of God, who we will never be able to ever fully understand - much like the universe. With both the universe and with God, we will only ever 'know', or understand, a very tiny part of all there is to know, and much of it will only ever be theoretical supposition, rather than 'fact'. It is no irony that Hawking's ashes will be interred in Westminster Abbey!

Just like us, the early Christians wrestled with the reality of Easter. Unlike us, they had the hard evidence of the empty tomb and experiences of, and encounters with, the risen Christ to contend with. Yet, even with that evidence, they struggled to recognise him in the moment. Mary thought He was a gardener, and those on the road to Emmaus didn't know Him until he broke the bread. Their confusion was probably greater than ours is at Easter. More faith was required of them because they witnessed the crucifixion, than it is of us. They had to confront the truth of the resurrection as a lived reality. We just have to celebrate it once a year with our Easter Eggs and chocolate

From the Sanctuary

bunnies and then put it to one side in our thinking for another year.

But is that all there is to Easter? As Christians, we live a message of hope. Resurrection is all about hope. Our hope is in a risen Christ who points to the reality of a life after this one. This life is not all there is! In that realisation, our problems with this life assume a different perspective than the immediacy of the 'now' - for we are part of something much greater than the 'now' that we can know. Easter is an attitude for living all of life, every day - not just for Easter day. So, as you tuck into your eggs for Easter, remember that this is not all there is. There is so much more wonder and awe awaiting us - but it will take faith to live that perspective in the 'now' until we are called home and know it in its entire reality with our Heavenly Father.

Br Peter Gubi,
Dukinfield

British Mission Board (BMB) News

Br Paul Holdsworth and Sr Roberta Hoey will host the second South Asia Mission Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal from 8th-12th April 2019. This follows on from the first conference in Delhi, India in February 2018. We look forward to sharing a full report on our return.



© Br Thespel Kundan

Two of our theological students have graduated in March. Br Dimchui

Rongmei and Br Nathaniel Gangmei graduated from New Theological College in Dehradun with Bachelor's in Theology. Br Nathaniel served as Student Council president and came top of his class, winning five prizes. Br Dimchui won first prize in his class for Scriptural Knowledge. The British Mission Board are currently discerning with our brothers, the next step in their ministry.

Over the last six months the BMB have issued several Calls in South Asia. Br Ebenezer Gangmei who had been serving the Delhi Fellowship was Called to the Leh Congregation. Br Gergen has now officially retired. Student Pastor, Br Levi Ruangmei has been called to serve the Delhi Fellowship. Student Pastor, Br Bir Bahadur Rana has been Called to serve Rajpur Congregation with

sacramental cover being provided by Br Thespel Kundan. Student Pastor, Br Jacob Gangmei has been Called to serve the congregations in Assam with sacramental cover being provided by Br Kagauchung Naga (Kabui).

A service of Thanksgiving and Appreciation for the long and continued service of Br Kabui was held on 9th March. Br Kabui, who founded the church in Binnakandi in 1984 has now retired from many of his duties but will continue to faithfully give sacramental cover when required.

The Moravian Church in Western Tanzania will host a Youth Conference from 26th-30th June and a Women's Conference on 3rd-7th July 2019. More details on both events will be reported in the future.

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