

Barnoldswick Gospel Mission

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'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'

Isaiah Ch 9 v 6

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PASTORS LETTER

Christmas is for the Elderly

One thing that is said every year about Christmas is that it is for the children. The children feel the excitement of waiting for Christmas morning, the children love the glitz and sparkle of the decorations, the children hear the story with a natural sense of discovery.



However, the Christmas story itself has more old people in it than children. Zechariah and Elizabeth were past the age of having children but God gave them the miraculous gift of a son who would prepare the way for the Messiah. Simeon and Anna were both very old but had been told by God that the Messiah would come in their life time. Simeon's joy of seeing Jesus and knowing that this was the one God had promised is one of the most touching parts of the Christmas story. Christmas is for the elderly as well as the young.

It teaches us God uses and blesses people in every season of life. The Bible has a lot to say about the usefulness of the elderly. It is tempting for those who are older to think they have done their bit and retire from all responsibilities. The Bible sees things very differently. The elderly have great responsibilities in the purposes of God, and this should be recognised by the young and most importantly by the elderly themselves.

Recently in one of our "Journey through the Bible" sessions we read about a time when the prophet Jeremiah was put on trial. Many people wanted him put to death for preaching against Jerusalem. However, older people were able to recount a time in the reign of king Hezekiah when a prophet preached a similar

message. The people repented and disaster was averted. Their counsel was listened to and Jeremiah's life was spared.

Many in our fellowship have been greatly helped by the encouraging and wise counsel of the older generation of the Church. So I would like to urge those of us who are older to take the ministry we have seriously. As a fellowship we all need to play our part. The elderly need to grow into a new season of their lives, developing their prayer lives, taking time to encourage the young, and making sure that the counsel they give is wise.

LADIES GROUP NEWS

Craft Event



The 11th of November saw the Ladies Group Autumn get together at the Mission Hall which Jane had once again kindly organised. For the evening Sue Standley agreed to present a craft event for the “girls”. This was a super opportunity for Sue to share her “do it yourself” ideas for making some very attractive Christmas decorations. Some simple, thoughtful ideas came from toothpaste packaging. The use of pages cut out from glossy magazines was also a very environmentally friendly winner. For those brave enough to have a go we finished off our little creations with silver and gold spray paint. Sue also discovered that many shared a common interest in knitting. This resulted in planning a craft afternoon for sharing each others interests and improving skills. These are happening on Tuesday afternoons. All in all I think everyone who was able to attend agreed this proved once again to be a fun filled evening of warm fellowship, cakes, chocolates and coffee.

Elaine Draper

'In all things God works for the good of those who love Him'

The last 2 months of 2010 and the first few months of 2011 were not the best months of my life.

Lilly gave a bible study recently on Romans 8v28. 'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him'.

On 3rd November Katie left university followed by my brother Anthony dying on 8th December. I was left heartbroken as I was so close to my brother. He was my confidante. The events that followed his death were not good and left me in a state of anxiety, confusion and uncertainty for months. During this time I could have easily had a breakdown, but instead I carried on attending church, home group, tutoring, exercise class, aquatone, craft class and running the Bracewell Ladies Fellowship. I kept to my routines. I had my daily quiet time and prayer time. God never left my side and kept me in His tender loving care.

Over the months things worked out. With the help of officialdom problems became somewhat untangled. Ian and Rachel were able to come up from Devon and with a small group of friends we were able to scatter his ashes near Pendle Hill. We were able to sort through the 'tip' of a bachelor pad to sell the house and so on.

What good came out of all this? Well I was stunned at the large amount of people at Anthony's funeral. I realised just how many friends, family and colleagues loved him and how popular he was. I found out who my true friends were. People at the Mission who rallied round. Paul was able to preach to many non Christians. Carol became my rock during those first few weeks. Texts, little thoughtful gifts to cheer me up, a meal out, a shopping trip and so on, all helped to take me out of myself and focus on something different.

My relatives who live at a distance got in touch. I now email Australia to my Christian aunt and uncle. I had a super week in

Poole with a cousin whom I had lost contact with. Then Karen, a lady who met Anthony on an overland trip to Katmandu and Nepal came over from New Zealand to stay. Another valued friendship. I got to hear of the many adventures they had after the official trip finished and they 'roughed' it round India for 2 months!

Lastly Anthony's two best friends drew close to me. Dave and Shirley. Dave has MS and comes for a brew and natter every 2 weeks, in place of his weekly visits to my brother.

Out of the sadness good did come to me in all disguises. The Lord did see me through the darkness out into the sunshine. Katie also got her act together, got a job, a new degree course at Craven College and her life back on track.



BOOK REVIEW



Christianity & Liberalism J Gresham Machen

Christianity & Liberalism by J Gresham Machen was first published in 1923 and it addresses the issue of Liberalism from a theological perspective. As you might expect, it is a serious book, and as such requires some effort to read. Nevertheless, it is far from being too archaic and dry.

Machen writes, “Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religious belief, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology.” His book presents aspects of the Liberalism of his time and explains how these differ from historic Christianity. Is it relevant today? Yes indeed! The Liberalism of Machen's day has not gone away; the label is perhaps not one that is often applied today but the ideas and attitudes persist.

We are often encouraged today to get along with and co-operate with diverse “Christian” groups; differences and splits between “Christian” groups are lamented. However, there are many who bear the label “Christian”, who talk of God's grace and salvation, but who know nothing of the true grace of God revealed to us in the Bible, the foundation of true historic Christianity. Although we might share the same vocabulary, we have very little in common with those who preach a different gospel, and Machen explains very well why this has to be so.

I was surprised that Machen regards Roman Catholicism as Christian, concluding that “The Church of Rome may represent a perversion of the Christian religion; but naturalistic liberalism is not Christianity at all.” Machen explains that this is because of the Church of Rome's “maintenance of the authority of Holy Scripture and with its acceptance of the great early creeds.” For me this is problematic: for the Roman Catholic Church, the authority of

Scripture is subservient to the authority of the church and its gospel is a gospel of works.

Nevertheless it is an excellent book and well worth reading. The edition I read was in paperback with a foreword by Carl R Truman but the original work is freely available as a downloadable pdf from <http://www.extremetheology.com/files/MachenLiberalism.pdf>



COLOURING COMPETITION

Entries for the Christmas competition should be given to Paul Standley



Free-Coloring-Pages.com

Name:

Age:

BUILDING UPDATE

Renovation work to the building is continuing to progress well.

Downstairs

- The kitchen has been fitted
- The office is nearing completion
- Floor tiling to the ground floor has been completed
- The suspended ceiling to the ground floor has been fitted

Upstairs

- Plaster boarding of the main hall continues
- Plastering of the staircase has been completed

In addition a planning application for the works on the rear doors on the first floor has been submitted and we await a decision from the planning department.

Many thanks to all those who attended the working party on December 3rd to further progress the renovation works on the building.

Please pray that the planning consent will be granted promptly so that work can continue to progress upstairs. Please pray for safety for all those working on the building during the winter months.

David Brown



WHAT'S ON

Sunday	10:30	Family Worship & Sunday School (at the Civic Hall).
	6:00	Evening Praise.
	7:30	Young People's Fellowship. Discussion topics, Bible Studies, prayer times, games and social evenings (academic years 7 to 13).
Monday	10:30	Home Group. Come along for Bible Study, prayer & fellowship. (Varying venues as announced, or ask for details.)
Wednesday	7:45	Home Group.
Thursday	7:45	Home Group.
Friday	7:30-9:30	kn3kt. The Youth Club for Year 7 onwards, providing a mix of games, activities and friendship in a relaxed atmosphere.

CONTACTS

Pastor	Rev. Paul Standley	01282 814705
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