

Church Newsround January 2009

BISHOP'S LETTER

Give Darwin his due – but give God the glory

Scientists, historians and theologians are gearing themselves up for Darwin Mania.

In 2009 it is 200 years since Darwin's birth and 150 years since the publication of *On the Origin of Species*, the work that introduced his theory of evolution. How are we to deal with Darwin?

With but a few notable exceptions, the early response of Christians to Darwin's theories was to repudiate them. When it came to explaining the origins of the natural world with all its diversity of life forms, including *homo sapiens*, Darwin appeared to be in irreconcilable conflict with the Bible and traditional Christian teaching.

On the other hand, there have always been those Christians who have wanted to pursue a more positive path by embracing evolution and its explanatory power. They see it as confirming rather than contradicting the glory of God in creation and, incidentally, they see it as a stepping stone towards a more subtle and sophisticated understanding of how the Bible works as the Word of God. For these Christians, the Bible is not a scientific text book but a much more poetically profound account of the meaning rather than the mechanics of the created order evolving over time.

So the battle lines were drawn, but as we mark this bi-centenary perhaps we need to move on to a far less polemical and adversarial engagement with Darwin and his findings. Here is an opportunity to seriously re-negotiate our relationship with the environment, and our responsibility for its well-being now and in the future.

Whatever we believe about the origins of the Universe, we cannot but agree with the hymn writer Henry Lyte that "change and decay in all around we see". This resonates with what Darwin observed and sought to explain, but Darwin offers no prescription for how nature should be and will be within the overall providence of God.

This is where the good news of redemption and renewal kicks in. Through the death and resurrection of Christ change and decay are transcended by the promise of life and life in all its fullness. As creative creatures, we can be co-creators with God – and when we take seriously our responsibilities towards the environment we are called to defend and not destroy, then we can become co-redeemers with Christ.

During 2009 it will be important to re-engage with Darwin and his extraordinary achievements. But it will be even more important to re-engage with God and what has been achieved for us in Christ "Who reconciled all things to Himself, making peace through the shedding of His blood on the Cross – all things, whether on earth or in heaven" (Colossians 1 verse 20).

+ John Lincoln

From the Rev Alan Greenhough

A Happy New Year to all our readers. I was invited to write something for Christmas, but the retirement bug seems to have got at my initiative. How did I ever find time for work when there are so many things to be done? - I haven't even read the paper yet.

I often wonder how young people manage to be bored, life is so exciting and full of things to do. Perhaps it is a symptom of our age, we have so much 'leisure' to expect. Of the many catalogues that fall through the letter box so many of them are offering things allied to this wonderful concept of leisure. Leisure clothing, holiday trips, electronic games, theme parks - even leisure centres, not to mention the dreaded gym!

We are given the idea that if we are not dashing about doing things that other people have organized for us (for a mere financial consideration), then we are not getting enough out of life.

Who, exactly, decided that the whole point of life is getting all you can out of it? Whatever happened to the other side of the bargain - putting something into life, especially for the benefit of others? Adverts sometimes get to me, but in a perverse sort of way - I want to know why the 'models' are grinning like Cheshire cats just because they have changed the colour of their hair, or eaten some particular cereal bar. As for being 'worth it' - well, you are worth so much more than what cosmetics can do for you. God loves you as a person, a child of his, not what you wear or smell of.

It seems so obvious to me that the people in this world who have found happiness are usually those who give a lot of themselves.

I can think of two ways of putting something into life and this world; the first is negative. The way of fouling everything up - if we all throw one crisp packet or one sweet paper on the street, it will rapidly become knee deep in litter; if we all cut one another up on the roads the result will be bad tempers at best and carnage at worst. I count bad language as ear pollution which not everyone wants to hear all the time, along with shouted conversations across the heads of others and loud music. I really am showing my age. I like to visualise us all as having a chimney on top of our heads and every time we say or do something bad a puff of black smoke issues forth - no wonder the world gets so gloomy!

Now to be positive about what we can put into life, the old fashioned words like 'please' and 'thank-you' certainly have a place, as do words of appreciation - make someone's day by approving something they have done, even if it is only making a cup of tea. If you really want to put something useful into this world, remember the old adage - "Smile, Jesus loves you", because he does. And if you see somebody without a smile, give them one of yours! Never mind looking for what makes you happy, make someone else happy and the rest will follow.

Alan

PS I love living here, I've been given so many smiles and greetings - keep it up, between us we can make a bit of the world a better place. And make it a happier New Year for everyone.

Parish Registers

Baptisms

Welcome to our church

Charlotte Jane Howesman 30-11-08

Jake David Searby 14-12-08

Funerals

We pray for those departed

Monica Mary Fufalko Died 13-12-08 Burial 22-12-08

Joyce Crombie Died 9-12-08 aged 68 years. Funeral 18-12-08

Muriel Grint Died 14-11-08 Cremation followed by Thanksgiving Service at Blankney on Monday 17th November 2008

St Wilfrid's Church Sale

The Church Sale held in St. Wilfrid's Church hall on Saturday 6th December raised £150 - this will be shared between St. Wilfrid's and Another Chance. Many thanks to everyone who

helped in any way, either manning stalls, serving refreshments or coming and buying from the large range of goods on offer.

Anything which was not sold was donated to St. Barnabas' Hospice, to be put into their shops, for which St. Barnabas' was very grateful. Paula Hill

Where's Ron & Iris ?

Ron & Iris Creasey's new address is 21 Olsen Court, Olsen Rise, Lincoln LN2 4UK.

Muriel Grint 1924 – 2008

Muriel was very much in the thoughts of the flower ladies of Blankney Church when the time came to decorate for Christmas, the first festival without her. Muriel loved flowers and had been part of the team that kept flowers in the church throughout the year, but festivals were special, the only time we all met together and exchanged news. The last time we saw Muriel in good spirits was when we decorated for Harvest Festival. As usual Muriel came with an armful of flowers, and although walking with a stick proceeded to do the urns at the chancel steps. As we dispersed saying, "See you to-morrow " little did we realise that was not to happen. That night Muriel had a fall and was several weeks in hospital and sadly died. The church has lost a devoted member and we a friend.

Muriel was very much a local girl, having been brought up in Metheringham, and shortly after leaving school she worked for Mr. and Mrs. Eric Parker in Scopwick. This was the beginning of a long association with the family and Blankney Estate. During the last war Muriel worked at the Flax Factory, where she met her husband Tommy, a Norfolk lad. They had two children, Janet and Peter, of whom they were proud. On retirement they left The Green Man and came to live at Blankney. Here they created the most wonderful garden and Muriel took up needle work and pressing flowers. Birds were also important to Muriel which she fed all the year round and her nesting boxes were full each season.

When Muriel became a widow she manfully carried on keeping the garden as before. Fortunately she had excellent neighbours and friends also her sister Joyce and husband John who were there when needed and made it possible for her to remain living in Pantile Cottage for the rest of her life. Her popularity was shown by the number of family and friends who attended the thanksgiving service for her life. BS

Dunston Parish News

As we look forward to the beginning of a new year with expectation and hope it is also the time to reflect on what was achieved and is to be celebrated from 2008. St Peters has been blessed in the past year and has much to be proud of.

Essential work on the fabric of the church has been completed and we are now water tight and safe although future work has been identified and will need to be addressed in time.

Over the year we have welcomed many new people into church who have participated in services and events bringing the village and local friends together in fellowship. We have enriched our relationship with the village school and now have regular monthly family services. As we move into the spring we will be working in partnership with the school children to make the Peace Garden.

A highlight of last year must be the scarecrow weekend. Who could have imagined its success in September when the sun shone and we hosted the talent and community spirit of the village for the entire county to see. 82 stunning scarecrows adorned the village and we had so much to be proud of. For those who are interested the 2009 scarecrow dates are 26th/27th September and rumour has it there are some all ready being made!

Our more recent Christmas tree festival was also a joy and the church looked beautiful attracting visitors once again to admire clever themed offerings. These same trees created a magical setting for our carol service and school service.

Thank you to everyone for their hard work not only at these events but also throughout the year. Where would we be without those who lock and unlock St Peters, provide and arrange flowers, do the cleaning, maintain and service the clock, ring the bells, play the organ, and all those other important jobs?

And finally many of you will be aware that Charles contract as House for duty priest comes to an end at the beginning of February. It is therefore an appropriate time to thank him for all his support and service over the past three years. We are very conscious that in recent months

Charles has had much to cope with following the sad loss of his wife which we understand cannot have been easy. We know there are new opportunities for Charles and whatever the future holds we wish him success and happiness.

Take care all

Dates for your diary;

Thursday 22nd January 6pm Christingle Service at the Chapel

Thursday 29th January 2.15pm Family service at St Peters

and

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Chapel

we are holding a Beetle Drive Saturday 24th January 4 – 6 pm in Dunston Village Hall

Free family fundo join us

St Peter's School

I am writing this article at the end of a very busy and exciting week. Last weekend, the children decorated a tree as part of the Christmas Tree Weekend. I visited St. Peter's on Sunday and enjoyed looking at all the trees and also the warm welcome I received! Classes 2 and 3 performed their Christmas play, It's A Party, on Tuesday night in front of around 150 people in the village hall with great success. On Friday we held our Christmas Fayre at school and, hopefully, raised lots of money for our new library. On Friday night a group of children took part in the village carol service and sang beautifully.

We are now looking forward to the ladies from the church coming in to make table decorations with all of the children tomorrow. Then in the afternoon we will be holding the school carol service with children playing various instruments and Class 1 performing their Nativity play. We will also be welcoming the Posada figures to the school this week. Finally, on Thursday Classes 2 and 3 will be going to the Drill Hall to enjoy the pantomime Aladdin. Our next monthly service at the church has been provisionally booked for 2.15 on Thursday, January 29th. I look forward to seeing you there.

On behalf of the school, may I take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Graham Boyall Headteacher

WORSHIP IN THE PARISHES FOR JANUARY 2009

4 th January	Epiphany
Dunston St Peter	9.00 am Holy Communion
Metheringham St Wilfrid	8.00 am Holy Communion
	10.30 am United Service with Methodists at Metheringham Methodist Church
11 th January	Baptism of Christ
Blankney St Oswald	9.00 am Holy Communion
Dunston St Peter	9.00 am Morning Worship
Metheringham St Wilfrid	10.30 am Holy Communion with Sunday School /Creche
18 th January	2 nd Sunday after Epiphany
	beginning of week of prayer for Christian Unity
Dunston St Peter	9.00 am Holy Communion
Metheringham St Wilfrid	8.00 am Holy Communion
	10.30 am Morning Worship
25 th January	Conversion of St Paul
Blankney St Oswald	9.00 am Morning Prayer followed by Holy Communion
Metheringham St Wilfrid	10.30 am Holy Communion with Sunday School /Creche
1 st February 2009	Candlemas
Dunston St Peter	9.00 am Holy Communion

Metheringham St Wilfrid

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.30 am United Service with Methodists at St Wilfrid's

There is a Holy Communion Service at 9.00am every Thursday Morning at St Wilfrid's Church in Metheringham

Sacrista Prebend

Sacrista Prebend is a Georgian house in Southwell, supported by The Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham and Southwell Minster, offering facilities for retreats, conferences, quiet days and courses.

The house is set in the heart of Southwell, close to Southwell Minster. Sacrista Prebend is a member of the Quiet Garden movement and there are many places to sit, relax or stroll in its large garden.

The Warden of the house is Canon Neil Russell who is supported by a team of volunteers.

Please speak to him (01636 816833 or 07730 403630) about any aspect of the work or facilities of Sacrista Prebend.

Metheringham WI News

November was a busy month with a successful Tombola at the Fayre & Feast, the Table Top Sale, the trip to the Theatre to see Annie Get your Gun topped off with Ten pin bowling at Washingboro'.

At the November meeting Bea Broadwood introduced us to the world of Dolls' houses and related miniatures. The first Dolls' House was found in Egypt. They became popular in the 16th Century when they were replicas of stately homes. They are still historical recreations of homes of an era – the most famous – Queen Mary's dolls House at Windsor. Nowadays there are many fantasy creations e.g. Harry Potter. There are clubs, shows and magazines giving details of The World of Miniatures.

The Christmas Social was held in the Village Hall on the 17th December. There was ample food with all members taking a plate of Christmas Fayre. Each member took home a small gift from Santa's sack.

There were good wishes all round for a pleasant Christmas and New Year.

Next Meeting : The Christmas Dinner at Blankney Golf Club. On January 21st.

JS

Royal Mail receives Church of England's stamp of approval

The Church of England warmly welcomed the Royal Mail's decision last year to issue Christmas stamps with a Christian theme in parallel to their 'Pantomime' series. The Royal Mail printed tens of millions of both sets of stamps.

Canon Dr Christina Baxter, Principal of St John's College, Nottingham, and sponsor of the 2004 General Synod motion about Christian Christmas stamps, said: "I am delighted that the Royal Mail produced Christmas stamps which recognise that people celebrate Christmas as the birth of Jesus. I welcome stamps that carry images that are explicitly Christian, and hope that the Post Office will continue to produce Christian stamps each Christmas."

This was the first time that both religious and secular stamps were available to consumers simultaneously.

'Village Church for Village Life' Competition

Following a successful campaign in 2008, Country Life magazine has launched the Village Church for Village Life Award 2009, with a £10,000 prize for the winning church.

The award seeks to discover the finest example of a historic, rural parish church that has successfully engaged the wider community to create a focus for village life in the 21st century.

This year, the award is being expanded to include projects that make use of 'God's own acre' (the churchyard), and to recognise those that have attempted to make their churches

environmentally sustainable. More information and an entry form, together with details of last year's award, from www.countrylife.co.uk/villagechurch.

6 January - Epiphany

On 6 January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were they called kings - by a church father, Tertullian. Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the eighth century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

Angela Merici (1474 – 1540)

2009 is the International Year of the Child, and Angela is a good saint to remember as the year gets underway. Not only did she herself survive a harsh childhood, but she went on to dedicate her own life to helping children in need.

Angela was born near Lake Garda, in Desenzano, where she was orphaned as a young child. The 1480s were hardly an easy time for orphaned girls, but somehow Angela survived to grow into her teens, when she became a Franciscan tertiary. However miserable her own childhood, Angela chose to let it work for good in her life: she decided to devote her own life to the education of poor girls. Girls! This was a time when most of the men were illiterate! But Angela was an audacious woman, and she had only just begun. She and some close companions set to work in the name of Christ, seeking out the poor families in their community. Angela taught the young girls all that she could, and prayed with them, assuring them that even they were precious in the eyes of their Creator.

All of which left the Roman Catholic Church badly baffled. What should they do with religious sisters who had taken no vows, still wore their lay clothes, and who, instead of walling themselves up in some nunnery to lead an enclosed life, spent their days in a decidedly mobile, highly visible fashion – out and about in community support?

It wasn't until 1565, some 25 years AFTER Angela's death, that the Church decided it approved of such work. By then the Ursuline nuns, as they were by then called, were going from strength to strength. They still flourish today, with some 2400 Ursuline Sisters in 27 provinces on six continents, and have been well described as 'the oldest and most considerable teaching order of women in the RC Church.'

It took nearly 300 years, but in 1807 the Roman Catholic Church decided that Angela, unveiled, unenclosed and unsupervised as she had been, had been a saint after all – and 'made' her one.

Give Blood

The National Blood Service are always in need of donors. Could you donate some blood? If so, contact National Blood Service 0845 7711 711.

Easy ways to save some money

The old ways really do work well.....

- Turn off lights in empty rooms around the house
- Don't leave any appliances on standby
- Use only as much water as you need when you boil the kettle
- Don't heat an empty house, or rarely used rooms (unless it is freezing outside)
- Turn your heating down by at least one degree
- Use energy saving light bulbs
- Remove your mobile phone charger as soon as the battery is full.

Signs and Symbols: our hands

In recent months we've considered the vessels used to hold the bread and wine at Holy Communion. There is one 'final' vessel – ourselves.

One of the privileges of anyone distributing the bread and the wine at services is the face-to-face contact with those receiving. It is a moment of unique tenderness, emotion and vulnerability between the giver and the receiver.

There are different ways of receiving the bread and wine, and probably no one way is best... the only important thing is that neither the bread nor the chalice get dropped in confusion between giver and receiver.

Receiving the bread has many combinations. Most people lay one hand over the other and so the bread is placed centrally in the palm of the higher hand. This imitates the cross and Jesus' depth of love for us. It could also be seen as a manger – the baby we hold securely who in turn holds us.

Some people place their hands together side by side with fingers spread upwards like a cup – this always reminds one of a crown that is placed upon Jesus our King: either of thorns or of gold and jewels.

Others lay their hands flat together side by side. Perhaps here the person is laying open their lives to receive their God? Giving him everything, as they receive his all.

There seem to be two main attitudes and postures to receiving the wine; in the first, the chalice is 'too holy' to touch, and so the person keeps their hands away, and the distributor puts it to their lips unguided. The second approach is that one is 'thirsty for God': after the Son of God's coming to earth, his life, death and resurrection, it is right to eagerly embrace him and so take the chalice in both hands.

This month: So how about you? When you come forward to receive communion or a blessing what is in your mind and how is that reflected in your posture?

Sermon

A boy was watching his father, a vicar, write a sermon. "How do you know what to say?" he asked.

"Why, God tells me," replied his father contentedly.

"Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?"

Morning Tea

A vicar in a small country church was looking forward to an important visit from his bishop, which would involve the bishop staying overnight at the vicarage after the service. His young son became very excited, as he had never spoken to a bishop before. The vicar decided that his young son should be allowed to knock the bishop's door in the morning, and bring him in his morning tea. His father gave him instructions: "First, knock on the door of the bishop's room and then say loud and clear: "It's the boy, my Lord, it's time to get up."

The young son was very excited and rehearsed his lines, repeating them over and over.

Finally the bishop came and spent the night. Next morning day came and the young lad went to the door and knocked. He cried loudly: "It's the Lord, my boy, and your time is up!"

Smiles ?

A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband strolling around with a folded newspaper. "What are you doing?" she asked.

"Hunting flies," he muttered.

"Oh! Kill any?"

"Yes, three males and two females," he replied.

Intrigued, the woman asked: 'How can you tell them apart?'

Her husband responded: "Easy. Three were on my tin of beer, and two were on the phone."

How many Charismatics does it take to change a light bulb?

One, since his/her hands are in the air anyway.

How many Baptists does it take to change a light bulb?

The whole congregation needs to vote on it!

How many Anglo-Catholics does it take to change a light bulb?
None. They always use candles instead.

How many conservative Anglicans does it take to change a light bulb?
Three. One to change it and two to storm out in protest if the person changing it is a woman.

How many Brethren does it take to change a light bulb?
Change?????

How many Evangelicals does it take to change a light bulb?
Evangelicals do not change light bulbs. They simply read out the instructions and hope the light bulb will decide to change itself.

How many Atheists does it take to change a light bulb?
You can ask them to change it as often as you like, but they'll still remain in darkness.

Quotes for January

It is better to lose anything than to lose time; we can recover lost money, but time is irrecoverable. - Chrysostom

The probable reason some people get lost in thought is because it is unfamiliar territory to them.

One must live in the way one thinks, or end up thinking the way one has lived.

Too often a man handles life as he does bad weather. He whiles away the time as he waits for it to stop.

Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven.

God promises the Christian heaven after death, not before it.

The trouble with stretching the truth is that people are apt to see through it.

Living without faith is like driving in a fog.

Humility is not thinking meanly of oneself, but rather it means not thinking of oneself at all.

True happiness is not attained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose.

Man drives, but it is God who holds the reins.

When we have nothing left but God, then we become aware that God is enough.

God is pleased with gratitude; he gets so little of it.

If your enemies throw rocks, build a monument.

Kindness is a witness that offends no one.

Live your life in such a way that when your feet hit the floor in the morning, Satan shudders and says, "Oh no....she's/he's awake!!"

Missionaries do Emmanuel labour.

Sometimes, the only thing worse than unanswered prayer is answered prayer.

I support the metric system - every inch of the way!

For every tax problem there is a solution which is straightforward, uncomplicated and wrong.