



Inspirations Beacon of Hope

MOVING FORWARD

As lockdown restrictions are eased, how does this make us feel?

Can we rely on the medical profession, the researchers, the economists, the politicians to dig us out of the huge hole that is the Covid19 pandemic?

Ancient Israel knew times when disaster struck, and all their certainties were blown away. Over the centuries they endured slavery, war, famine, disease and exile. In these times some people turned away from God, but He never turned away from His people. He was with them in their pain and anguish, and drew them back to Himself.

In Jeremiah 29 v. 11, the prophet says, ***'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you; plans to give you hope and a future.'***

While we cannot compare our situation with the first disciples' experience after Jesus' Crucifixion, there are similarities. Like them our norms have been disrupted, life has been turned upside down. They faced arrest, imprisonment and persecution, and were frightened and unsure what the future held for them and their families.

Jesus understood their fear and anxiety for the future, and He understands ours too.

He came to them in their need in the Upper Room ((John 20 v. 19-22), and they were empowered for the next stage of their journey as His followers. He gave them hope for the future, and He inspired and equipped them to continue His ministry.

As God had plans for the exiles in Babylon, who must have been close to despair, and for the disciples after the Crucifixion, so He has plans for us, to give **us** hope and a future in our very different circumstances.

Jesus is with us – not in a physical form, but through the presence and healing power of the Holy Spirit.

In our new situation, we need to invite the Holy Spirit to come, so that the Lord can heal us and strengthen us, and lead us into the new experiences He has for us.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Rom.15 v .13)

R.M. & C.H.M.

Welcome to **Travelling Light's** third **'Inspirations' Newsletter**. This edition includes thoughts about moving forward in the present circumstances and a further personal Beacon reflection. Also how a three year old's observation that God is with us in all circumstances surprised and delighted her mother. On the third page we include some thoughts about Pentecost. We hope you find this edition interesting and encouraging. The next edition will be out in 4 to 6 weeks and if you have a contribution that would be suitable please send it in.

Take care and keep safe. We pray that you will know the Lord's presence in all circumstances. Every blessing, Robin and Carole

If you would like to contact us please use the following:
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Lord, We Need Your Courage

Lord, we need Your courage

To face the future,

To forgive the past,

To live in the present;

We need You, Lord of Love,

To liberate our minds

From the fear of 'what might be',

The regret of 'what might have been';

To liberate our spirits

For the joy of what can be;

To liberate our bodies

To live a love-filled life;

For only You can free us

From the burdens we put on
ourselves,

From the burdens others load on us,

From daily fears and fragility;

Conqueror of death,

Destroyer of fear,

We open our hearts

To Your Love

C.H.M.

Jesus – The Hope of the World; The Beacon of Light in any Darkness

For me, during a particularly difficult period of finding myself having to navigate uncharted waters, Jesus's presence was a beacon of hope and light penetrating the cycle of bewilderment, shock and disappointment that had stumbled unexpectedly across my formerly seemingly tranquil path. As Jesus's searching rays of light were beamed into the shadows of the hiding place I erected around me to escape the battle all around, He quietly assured me of His presence to cope with the ongoing fallout, one day at a time. All the while, as I look back, I reached out to the Hope He extended to me as His Light gradually dispersed the shadows, and, today, having put my hope in Him, I have moved out into the Light He offers and taken hold of His promises to 'be with [us] always to the very end of the age', to 'never leave nor forsake [us]', and I now know that 'peace that passes all understanding'. I am forever grateful to you, my precious Saviour.....

Jesus, I know you will never leave me
You promise always to be there
Let your shining light forever lead me
To the safe waters of your care.

S.W.

Voice in the Wind – Hear My Voice in My Creation

My three-year-old daughter, Melissa, and I set out on a nature walk to gather new material for Sunday-school worship. Melissa had volunteered to be my chief helper in collecting pretty things she might find along the way.

We walked slowly, each of us picking up rocks, leaves and flowers that caught our attention. I commented several times that God had made these things for us to enjoy and that He uses nature to remind us of His presence. "God wants us to know that He is with us and that He cares for us," I said.

Suddenly a breeze swelled and rattled gustily through the trees. I looked at Melissa, intending to explain the sound of the wind before she became afraid. But the words never left my lips.

Melissa was standing still as ice. Her eyes were bright, a look of amazement covered her face. In a voice filled with wonder, she whispered excitedly, "Oh, Mamma, God is talking to us now!"

In a few moments she had grasped a great truth. The splash of rain, the roar of the sea, the song of a bird, the rush of wind – each is a way God says, "I am with you, I care for you."



St. Teresa's Prayer

*Let nothing disturb thee,
Nothing affright thee;
All things are passing,
God never changeth!
Patient endurance
attaineth to all things;
Who God possesseth
In nothing is wanting;
Alone God sufficeth*

Travelling Light Past - Present - Future

These strange times have stopped us all in our tracks, and made us review where we are in our everyday lives, and in so many things that we have taken for granted.

As a retreat ministry meeting in churches, we have not been able to hold any retreats over the last few months, and don't know at the moment when we will be able to do so.

However, God is not locked down! This is Travelling Light's third 'Newsletter' and we hope that they are, and will continue to be, a blessing to you.

We are looking at the possibility of retreats in the Autumn / Winter or next Spring, but this will obviously depend on the situation at the time. The same applies to the possibility of a Residential Retreat sometime next year. In the meantime, we are looking at the possibility of running small on-line retreats via Skype. We are also working on two new booklets which we hope will be available later this year.

Travelling Light has evolved from small retreats in our home twelve years ago, through moving home, and expanding out into larger venues in the Community. The retreats and the Team have changed over the years, and as God has guided us in the past, so we believe He will guide us into the future.

We might be unclear what the future holds, but we know that Travelling Light is in God's hands, as is each one of us, and He will guide and equip us for whatever He wants us to do.

Prayer Requests

If you have a prayer request for yourself, family member or friend, please send it to us and we will share it with our Team for prayer. If it is confidential please let us know.

My parents regularly took me to church – once a year! It was at Spring Bank Week when we went on holiday. Do you remember, before Spring Bank Holiday was established, the May week always coincided with Whitsun? My architect Dad, who loved old church buildings, always enjoyed his annual Whit Sunday visit.

So, my first 13 years' experience of church was always on Whit Sunday, Pentecost. You'd think therefore that I'd have heard all about Acts 2, the birth of the church, the power of the Spirit, speaking in tongues, signs and wonders, and so. But frankly, I have no such remembrance. All I can recollect was the usual Anglican liturgy, a sermon that generally missed me, singing old hymns, and the collection plate coming 'round! Did I miss something, or was the reference to the Holy Spirit experiences of the early church simply not there? I suspect the latter.

After becoming a Christian, in England's World cup winning year of 1966, my excitement at discovering the life and joy of reading about the early church in action provoked inevitable questions. I'd compare Acts of the Apostles with a look at the Church as I knew it, UK mainline denominations, where I often played the organ. Why the difference? Where was Pentecost? When, where and how does it happen? Or does God just not do that sort of thing today? My experience of the integrity of the Bible ruled out that option.

My search led to me consulting the clergy of Birmingham Cathedral. As a student at the Birmingham Conservatoire this was our local church. The Succentor, Rev Tom Walker, himself an Oxford Music Graduate, prayed with me, even speaking in tongues as he laid his hands on my head. Initially nothing happened, a great let-down I felt, but within days I discovered I could speak in tongues, with no hype, emotion, just in cold-blood, and, in-keeping with our present Archbishop Justin Welby, over 50 years later, I try to use this prayer-gift every day. Well, if God's given you a present, it would be foolish not to use it wouldn't it? And it's particularly useful when you don't know what to pray, or don't even feel too spiritual at the time. That's a common experience for me!

There's much more to Pentecost than speaking in tongues, although it was the start for the church. It stimulated a great sermon from St Peter, and an even greater response - just look at Acts 2:41. But Jesus never spoke in tongues, and if your prayer life's like his you really don't need it. Mine isn't! I often find praying in tongues leads on to other gifts, prophecies, pictures, certainly a greater fluency in prayer and more awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence.

If you want tongues to help you pray and function better as a follower of Jesus, then why not ask him? He won't give you something bad, trust him. (See Luke 11: 11-13) Try going into a room on your own – the smallest room in the house usually has the best acoustics – and ask, then praise him, then keep praying, make “a joyful noise to the Lord” and see what happens. He may surprise you! Incidentally, the promise of the Spirit is to sons and daughters, men and women, and that “your young men shall see visions and your old men will dream dreams.” I now realise why this is – the older you get the more time you spend sleeping, so it might as well be time well spent!

Pentecost fulfils all that's gone before: the promise of the Old Testament prophets of a new covenant that will work from the inside-out (see Jeremiah 31:33-34), the fulfilment of the Emmanuel message of Christmas (“God with us”), the result of the “God so loved that he gave” work on the cross, and the release of the resurrected Jesus amongst us all. That's what the church is all about. He said he would never leave us, and so we have the presence of his Spirit now. As always, Jesus is the reason for the season!

Happy Birthday Church – and many happy returns!