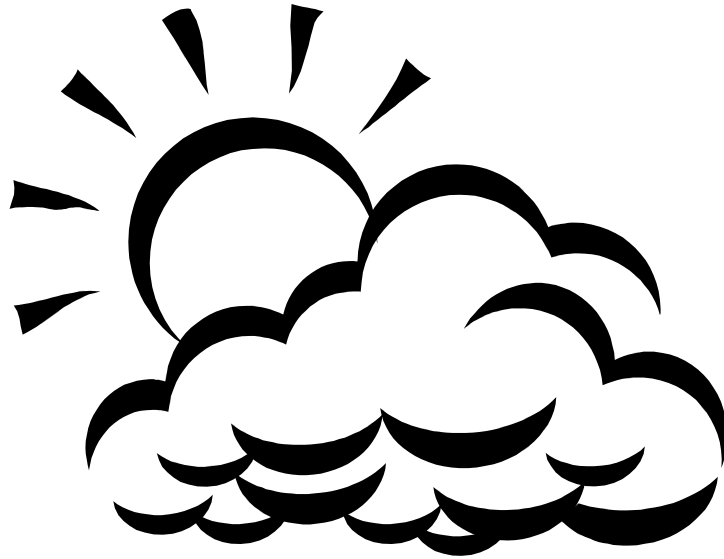


***Parish Magazine of
St Giles' &
St Margaret's, Oxford***



February 2007

Free

**The United Benefice of St Giles and
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The parish magazine aims to provide an opportunity for us to exchange ideas and to share our experience of the Christian life. Publication date is noted below. Please send the editor articles, drawings, book reviews, or parish news. The editor is especially grateful for material which has no particular sell-by date and for copy sent by email attachment.

Recommended length of articles: invited articles max 1,100 words (3 pages); all other contributions max 700 words (2 pages).

Deadline for submissions for next issue:

Wednesday, 21 February, 5pm (for distribution Sunday, 25 Feb).

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The end of January / beginning of February is a pretty dismal and depressing time of year. Over the years, this has been noted by many people living in this country. But this year, what was new for me was that someone from a scientific background had identified January 22nd as *THE* most depressing day of the year. Maybe they are right, maybe they are wrong, but what is fascinating for me is that what started off some years ago as an informal observation is now accepted much more widely and is gathering scientific support.

This is a process that also seems to be happening with another insight that has been around for several years – the idea of Global Warming. It seems strange to write about this as snow lies on the ground, but I think the last few years have seen a major shift of opinion on this subject. For years it was something of a cranky idea...only talked about by the environmental warriors of our society. However, in the last few months, there has been a rapid transition from treating Global warming as fringe issue to an issue of critical importance. Fortunately, there are now very few people who treat it as a fiction – they realise that here we have an issue which needs to be addressed.

This term's lunch-time talks look at the issues behind the changing climate of the world. The first talk spelt out very clearly that changes are happening and they are happening rapidly. The trouble is that the predicted changes will go through some major steps. I am not sure that people yet realise that the events of the melting of the ice-cap on Greenland, the melting of the North Pole, the thawing of the Tundra and the melting of the Antarctic ice-sheet will happen as almost discreet events which will have catastrophic effects. The expected sea level rises will cause devastation to our way of life and the increase in the world's temperature will wipe out countless species. The way this will destabilise society has not been quantified, but I think all the materials are there to paint a very depressing picture for the future. After the first of the lunch-time talks, someone well versed in the issues said to me ...it is very easy to be filled with a sense of despair.

Perhaps several months ago, I would have whole-heartedly agreed with him, but I think a change is beginning to happen. Yes, I was very disappointed with the Government's response to the Stern Report. It struck me that the actions advocated by the Stern Report did not fully engage with the severity of the problem and the Government's response was pathetic. It was also incredibly disappointing to hear people in Government saying that any action to tackle Climate Change should not have a negative impact on our economy! What planet are they on? Don't they realise that any attempt to stabilise the Earth's Climate will have a drastic effect on our economy? How can it fail to do so when eventually we will need to reduce our carbon emissions by close on 90% to try and save the planet? When will people in government and industry wake up to the reality of what we are really facing?

Then the unexpected happened, nine of the major industrial companies in the US recognise that by 2050 we will need to reduce our carbon emissions by 60%. It was January 23rd that the first ray of hope started to peep through the depression and despair! At last some people are beginning to recognise that we have to act radically and do it now if we are going to have a viable future. I have a great belief that human beings will rise to a challenge when they know it is necessary. My hope is that the momentum for change on the subject of Global Warming is now growing sufficiently for actions to be taken. I look forward to the day when countries stop talking about emissions trading and recognise that we have to put a cap on our carbon output into the atmosphere and the cap will shrink progressively from year to year. This can only work when we also agree to it individually....accepting a progressive reduction in our dependence on carbon.

One of the most important Psalms for me over the past few years has been Psalm 84, especially verses 4 and 5. As a society, I think that we are now going through the desolate valley that the Psalmist mentions. The challenge is to find the springs of water that will sustain us through the difficulties ahead and never let despair get the upper hand.

With love,

Andrew.

This month's edition of the Church Magazine focuses on the **formation of the Bible as a whole**. This follows separate issues on the Old and New Testament.

Invited articles in this issue:

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Reading the Bible

Margaret Hollis

Any-one who has sung "Seaside Mission" choruses in their youth will remember this one:

*Read your Bible, pray every day, pray every day, pray every day,
Read your Bible, pray every day, if you want to grow.*

This is, of course, good advice, but it leaves a lot out. When should you read the Bible, how much should you read at a time, which version should you read, should you read alone or with others, what about commentaries?

Let's begin by asking: *why should we read the Bible at all?* It was written a very long time ago and for people whose ideas and life-styles were very different from ours. Of course, a text does not necessarily become redundant just because it has been around for ages. We can still enjoy the dramas of the ancient Greeks, we can still learn from Roman law-givers and historians. The Bible, however, is in a somewhat

different category. It contains the foundational writings of the faith by which we run our lives today as Christians, and we need to come to terms with it, all of it, both Old and New Testaments. We believe that the Bible is "the word of God"; Paul describes it as "inspired" - a better translation is "God-breathed" (2 Tim.3:16). This means that the writers of Scripture worked with reliance on God. It does not mean that God dictated an infallible document containing decrees which cannot be altered. In its entirety, the Bible contains history, law, poetry, stories and prophecy. It contains the accumulated wisdom and aspirations of both our Jewish and our early Christian forebears. In studying it we keep in touch with our past and we find inspiration and encouragement for our present and future.

How should we read the Bible? The Book of Common Prayer offers the chance to read through the entire work while saying the daily office of Morning and Evening Prayer. At each office a chapter is read from both Testaments, so that in the course of one year the OT is read once and the NT twice. This means that you read the whole lot, including the boring bits in Numbers and Leviticus! Common Worship offers a similar but much reduced lectionary to accompany the daily offices. If we are looking for a scheme of guided reading, we can reach for those published by institutions like the Scripture Union or the Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF), which is based in Oxford. A little booklet offers short Biblical passages followed by comment from a variety of writers, drawn from different Christian traditions. It is, however, always a good idea to read an entire book right through occasionally rather than isolated passages removed from their context. If we wish to study an entire book, we can easily find a commentary to help. There is now a wide range available from Christian bookshops or in Blackwell's theology section. The BRF publishes its own series, and Tom Wright, Bishop of Durham, has by now written a commentary on every book of the NT, I think!

Reading the Bible is not as straightforward as it might appear. Because of the difference in time and culture, much in the Bible is now very obscure to us. The original writers make reference to people, practices

and events which their contemporaries would have understood, but are lost to us. This is why commentaries are helpful, since they fill us in on the background, the culture, the language; what the text might have meant to contemporaries and what it might mean for us today. Some people are unhappy with the "culturally conditioned" approach. They think that it may mean throwing out the baby with the bathwater: if we can discard Paul's pronouncements on women and homosexuals as "culturally conditioned", what else might we not also discard? Clearly this is a minefield, and one which we must move through cautiously as we seek to apply the Bible to our own lives in our own day.

The best way to study the Bible, it seems to me, is in a group with other people. In this way we can share our insights, our doubts and our problems. Many members of the congregation do not see themselves as "groupies", but these very people, if they do not feel threatened by the situation, can often provide quiet wisdom and insight which balance any flights of fancy from the more enthusiastic.

Should you wish to start a Bible study group, it's a good idea to begin with reading a Gospel - Mark is the shortest!

Commentaries abound, and the group may wish to use one, or to come to the text without assistance and see what, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, may emerge in discussion.

As an alternative, a topic could be chosen, and study books will offer topics such as the Way of the Cross for Lent, or Women of the Bible, or Psalms of Praise, etc.



Studying the Bible with a group, is, I have found, a true way of meeting with God and making friends with Christ. We also get to know one another better, which is not otherwise so easy for the modern congregation. We can help each other to grow, and we can experience a "communion of saints" which refreshes us when we come from our absorption in the secular world. Our Christian values are affirmed, our faith is renewed when we meet as the body of Christ, and we are better equipped to cope with the rest of our daily lives.

King James Bible, 1611

David Longrigg

In the fifteenth century there was an increasing demand for books, and Caxton (1422-91) was responsible for the rapid improvement of printing. By 1483 there were nine different German vernacular Bibles in print, but in England the idea of a Bible in English, such as Wycliff's, was considered a heresy. In the first half of the fourteenth century, Latin and French were the languages of church, government and the élite, and it was thought that a book translated into the native English tongue was debasing. But in the second half of the century English became the predominant language with the well-known writings by Chaucer and Langland, and works such as Gawain and the Green Knight. In 1362 English was re-established as the language of the Law Courts and Parliament.

Luther's teaching, and the Reformation movement, did not take place in the ivory towers of academic and monastic buildings. He spoke and wrote to the German people in their own language. He and Erasmus wanted a vernacular translation of the Bible, and the latter was particularly scathing about the inaccuracy of the Latin Vulgate translation from the Greek. In September 1522 Luther published a German translation of the New Testament direct from the Greek. Tyndale (1494-1536) realised he could only print the Bible in English

outside England, but he was betrayed in 1535 and it was Coverdale who was responsible for the first complete English Bible.

This was given royal approval in April 1539, and this Great Bible, a blend of Tyndale and Coverdale, had on the Title page a united nation under one monarch. In 1560 the Geneva Bible was published, with the addition of the Apocrypha and comments on the text and was divided into chapters and verses. This Bible was popular with the people but frowned upon by the English authorities, partly because of the notes and the fact that Geneva was a republic, and this version was not promoted by James I. At the accession of James I in 1603, the Puritans, to begin with, welcomed the king. But James disliked Presbyterians. He believed in royal authority – ‘No bishops, no King’ –and did not approve of the Geneva Bible challenging the Divine Right of Kings. He wanted his own Bible.

There were only four Puritans in James’s first Privy Council of nineteen, and Archbishop Bancroft’s translation rules of the new Bible made it clear that previous English translations of the Bible, or parts of it, were to be given full weight. The Bible was divided into six sections and six companies of translators: two at Westminster, two at Oxford, two at Cambridge, with nine in each company. The work was slow, starting in 1604 and finally finished by 1610. Draft translations were read out loud and others in the group were free to suggest alternatives. The final text delivered to the printers has not survived.

There is no documentary evidence that the 1611 Bible received written authority from Bishops, Privy Council or the King. On the Title page, the title itself is surrounded by a decorative frame and the four figures of the evangelists, each holding a pen, are placed in the corners of the frame; alongside the title itself stand the figures of Moses and Aaron, six figure in all representing the Old and New Covenants. Jesus Christ is depicted within an oval frame using the image of a lamb and flag. At the bottom of the frame, another oval panel shows a pelican feeding her

young, an image of Christian iconography depicting Christ's work of salvation. The upper panel depicts the Trinity, while God the Father is represented by the Hebrew YHWH.

But this new Bible was more than just a bible: an Almanack for 39 years setting out religious festivals, a lectionary, 34 pages of biblical genealogies and a map of Canaan were also inserted making the King James's Bible a very large, heavy book more suitable for readings in churches on lecterns than in the privacy of a home.



It was popular and much praised, and the first reprinting was in 1613. But there were errors in the earlier editions, in part because proof reading was expensive and time consuming; the text was read out loud to a compositor, but some errors took place because of the problems of homophones. As late as 1631, Exodus 20:14 was translated as 'Thou shalt commit adultery'!! The first edition of the King James Bible to be published by Oxford University Press appeared in 1675. This Bible was for centuries considered to be a very significant part of the linguistic, as well as spiritual, heritage of English speaking people throughout the world.

Biblical Translations since 1611

*"Nothing is improved by translation, unless it be a bishop."
attributed to Dean Swift.*

John Davies

Elsewhere in this copy of the magazine is the article by David Longrigg on the development of the King James Bible, (AV) which appeared in 1611. As he says, the original manuscript was lost. This had been sold to the King's Printer, Robert Barker for £3,500 together with the copyright, and was printed by him. As David says it was a very cumbersome volume, and interestingly Barker continued producing copies of the Geneva Bible, in a somewhat smaller volume. My own copy was published in 1615. Gradually the AV became the most popular Bible and was more or less the one Bible in English for the next two and a half centuries plus.

By the second half of the 19th Century, a great deal more study had been made of early manuscripts and biblical scholarship. In addition some words had become archaic and were not in common use. For instance, not so many people would realise that 'leasing' means telling lies. On the one hand very much earlier manuscripts of the old Greek New Testament had materialised, also considerably older Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament. The New Testament had been written in Greek. This of course was already very much of a translation, since Jesus almost certainly would have spoken in Aramaic. The Greek was not identical with Classical Greek nor with modern Greek. Many considered that it was a special form of Greek developed for a biblical language. By 1880 the archaeologists had discovered many papyrus fragments from the 1st Century AD mainly from Alexandria. These were written in exactly the same form of Greek, referred to as *koine*. These documents were accounts, letters and other secular writings. In other words, *koine* was the Greek spoken by the Eastern Mediterranean at that time. This considerably increased our understanding of the meaning of certain words, quite apart from nullifying any belief in any special 'Biblical language'. A new translation appeared in the 1880s: "The Revised Bible" (RV). This was a scholarly work, with the language very much of the King James Bible

but with a number of inaccuracies removed. The RV never really caught on with the general reader, though it was used as the standard text for theology courses in Oxford up to the 1980s. The American version of the RV was the "American Standard Version" that came out in 1901 and this was revised to come out as the "Revised Standard version" (RSV) in 1952. This has become the most widely used study text ever since. A final revision, the "New RSV" (NRSV) came out in 1990 which departs more from the AV by the use of more 'inclusive' language and certain modernizations such as 'you' for 'thou'. The NRSV is probably the most common translation heard in churches and is the version in the "New Common Lectionary". The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) that came out in 1662 adopted the AV for the Epistles and Gospels, but retained Coverdale's original Psalms.

In the Roman Catholic Church a need was felt for the Bible in English, although the laity were not greatly encouraged to read it. The first translation was for the New Testament in 1552 by Martin and Richard Bristow at the English College in Rheims, and the Old Testament in 1610 done at Douai. Both were translations from the Latin Vulgate. The Douai Bible, as it became known, was revised, with copious notes, by Bishop Challoner about 1749.

In addition to the RSV and NRSV mentioned above, the 20th Century produced a plethora of translations. J. Moffatt, a Scottish minister made a gallant effort to produce the Bible in modern English, his final revision being in 1935. This was quite a success at the time but dated rather quickly. He certainly got away from many typical biblical phrases, and when anyone speaks, their words were placed in inverted commas. You will still find Moffatt in second hand bookshops. In 1941 there appeared the "New Testament in Basic English". Basic English contains 850 words by which anything written can be expressed. For the Bible the number of words was increased to 1000. This was produced for countries where English had become more or less the spoken language but was not the native language. Mgr Ronald Knox produced a new translation from the Vulgate, but made considerable reference to both the Greek and the Hebrew. This was of considerable literary merit and

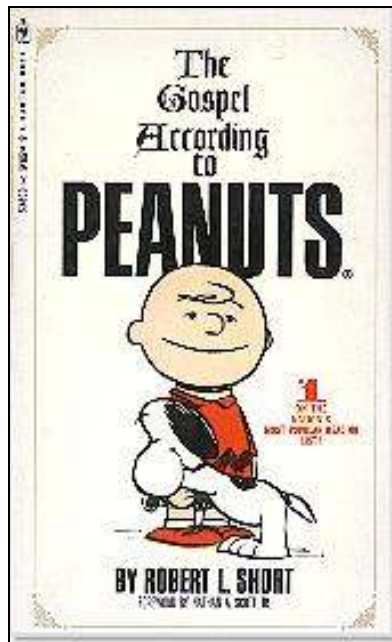
became the most read version among Roman Catholics. Shortly afterwards he produced an excellent little book called "On Englishing the Bible" discussing the problems of translation. In 1947 J.B. Phillips produced his first part of his translation of the New Testament, the Epistles, under the brilliant title "Letters to young Churches". The whole New Testament was published in 1958. This translation was certainly very readable and did a great service at the time, and still is quite often read. However the English is somewhat time bound and as Professor John Barton says class bound. The excellent example Barton gives is from Luke 14.10. From the traditional "Friend, go up higher" you read "My dear fellow, we have a much better seat for you". In 1966 the Roman Catholic Church produced the "Jerusalem Bible" (JB) based largely on the French "*Bible de Jerusalem*". This almost completely replaced the Knox version and has excellent and very extensive notes. The JB was fully revised and came out as "The New Jerusalem Bible" (NJB) in 1985. The NJB was mainly the work of DOM Henry Wansbrough OSB, who gave the Holy Week talks in St Margaret's in 2005.

A completely new translation was produced in 1970 as the "New English Bible" (NEB), written in non biblical language. This was very much welcomed at the time, though some readers did find it rather too academic. It was certainly a scholarly work. More recently a revised edition of this has come out as the "Revised English Bible" (REB). This was a thorough revision and inclusive language was used. Possibly the best selling Bible today in the world is the "New International Version" (NIV) first published in America in 1978 and in Britain in 1979. This was again a scholarly work on the whole though some authorities claim that it does put a gloss over some of the more controversial parts leaving the reader with the idea that this is the only possible interpretation. It reads well in public and one publisher has produced a copy of the lectionary using this translation.

A very successful translation is the "Good News Bible" (GNB) also known as "Today's English Version" (TEV). This has proved to be very popular indeed, in the first six years of this publication of the New

Testament, 35 million copies were sold. It is a free translation and at times tends to paraphrase, (what I believe is now called 'dynamic equivalence'). This again tends to result in a gloss over the controversial texts and can get quite far from the original words. It is however a very useful Bible for private reading and has certainly helped many people.

There have certainly been many more translations of one form or another, in some cases complete paraphrases. I sometimes feel that there is a lot to be said for "The Gospel according to Peanuts" by Robert L. Short. Short looks at the problems of our times, as illustrated from the comic strip by Charles M Schulz, and puts them into a Christian perspective, with the original cartoons. It is hardly a biblical translation but quite a good handbook of Christian faith linked with biblical quotations.



Making the Bible Heard

James Cook

The writer is a student on the Oxford Ministry Course and the voluntary representative of Bible Society for West Berkshire. The Society, founded in 1804 as the British and Foreign Bible Society, supports directly or indirectly 80% of Bible translation work around the world. It is seeking a voluntary representative for Oxford.

Bible Society's motto is "Making the Bible Heard", and that means making it available to people in their own language, at an affordable price and in a format with which they can engage.

There are about 6,500 languages spoken today, and 4,500 have no Bible, not even one of the Bible's sixty-six books. Only 10% of the world's languages have the entire Bible. Some translations are old and need modernising to be understood and valued by the present generation.

Only 3% of languages have the Bible in audio form, despite the fact that a billion people around the world cannot read. A similar number of people earn no more than 60p a day and cannot afford a Bible. Just as there is a need, worldwide, to make poverty history, so there is a need to make Bible poverty history.

Bible Society operates in partnership with about 140 local societies in different countries, financing Bible translation, printing and distribution. Only about 20 of those societies raise enough money to finance their own work. Most rely on grants from societies in relatively wealthy countries, such as ours, to support them.

Overseas, the task is usually to put the Bible into people's hands. In England and Wales, the problem is generally not lack of affordable Bibles in modern language, but inability to understand and engage with the Bible. In so-called developed societies such as ours, the task is not simply to put the Bible into people's hands, but to put it into their hearts.

Bible Society sponsors Bible publicity campaigns in our cities, it provides teaching materials for schools, it sponsors the creative use of the Bible in the arts, and it promotes knowledge of Biblical principles in the media and public life. Its latest nationwide campaign to make Bible poverty history has the title “It’s 8:32”, a reference to John 8:32, ‘... the truth will set you free’.

We all need to be encountering the Bible for ourselves, individually and in groups. Engagement with the Bible changes and shapes our attitudes, values, choices and priorities. Using some of the many resources and opportunities available from Bible Society, we can help make Bible poverty history.

Bible Society’s resources include:

Newswatch: Subscribe to a free service that sends you a weekly e-mail of news items from the secular press, radio and television where there may be a particular Biblical perspective to consider. Sign up at <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk>.

Reel Issues: Internet-based discussion material based upon popular films, for use in small groups. Subscribe at <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk>.

Faith Comes by Hearing: A programme using tapes or CDs, through which a whole congregation can grow in faith and Bible knowledge by listening to the Bible daily over a period of weeks.

Bible a Month: The only book club where the member does not receive the book! Either as an individual, or as a member of a small group, subscribe a minimum of £4 per month – the price of a lunchtime snack – to buy a Bible for someone elsewhere in the world who would otherwise not have one. Members receive information on the countries where the Bibles are distributed, so that may support their giving with well-informed prayer.

Prayer Bulletin: Bible Society's quarterly Prayer Bulletin provides pictures and information from around the world to help supporters in praying that the Bible may gain a hearing in many difficult and challenging situations.

Word in Action: This colourful magazine, sent three times a year to all Bible Society supporters, contains many exciting stories of how lives are being changed for the better as the Bible is translated and distributed in various countries. One such story, 'Message to Miskitu', appears below.

The Bible in Transmission: Likewise published three times a year and provided free of charge, The Bible in Transmission is widely distributed among church leaders, theological students and anyone else who seeks an in-depth engagement with current issues from a Biblical perspective. Each edition covers a separate topic and contains learned articles from a wide range of specialists. Recent themes have been *Well-Being, Sustainable Development, Confronting the Realities of Work, Faith and Violence, and Alternative Spiritualities*. Back numbers are sometimes available.

Multi-Media Bible Resources: Bible Society not only provides Bibles printed in other languages, it also provides Bibles and a variety of biblical materials in audio, video tape, CD and DVD formats. These are often ideal for use in schools and in small groups. They include series of video tapes, 'The Bible in Animation' and DVDs in the Nooma© range of short films about God in our lives. Buy them on <http://www.bibleresources.org.uk>.

'Message to Miskitu'

The Miskitu Christians of Nicaragua have to preach Scripture from memory. So it's no surprise that they scrambled to secure free handouts of Luke's Gospel and New Reader portions in their ancient indigenous language. Thousands of copies were given to those who attended a screening of the *Jesus* film. For around 500 people it was a life-changing experience. They wanted to become Christians and local church leaders

have committed to support them. Young drug dealers talked to staff of the Bible Society in Nicaragua about giving up their lives of crime to find legitimate jobs.

Eleven different Miskitu groups saw the film, which was shown under the stars with a generator humming in the background. For the Miskitu people of Nicaragua, it might be the only film they will ever see. Hundreds turned up to watch and listen. Bystanders said they seemed very excited to hear Jesus speaking their own language.

The film showings were backed up with interviews on the local radio stations. Hundreds more begged for copies of the Miskitu Scriptures. But very few are available due to the lack of funds for printing more. Pastors told Bible Society staff they are forced to preach Scripture from memory. 'These Miskitu Bibles are like the spring God gave the Israelites in the desert,' said Pastor Jose Luis Diaz. 'This is the only literature we have in Miskitu.'



If you would like to share in Bible Society's work of *Making the Bible Heard* by becoming volunteer representative or a regular supporter, please call 01793 418100. Free materials may be ordered on 01793 418384. Further information is available on www.biblesociety.org.uk.

Paying our way at St Margaret's

Edmund Weiner

Which of the following statements is true?

- The Church of England has big portfolios of property and investments and can afford to run its operations on what they yield.
- Church services are all ultimately funded out of taxes.
- Most of the money given to the church is swallowed up by its bloated bureaucracy.
- If you give money to your parish church the local diocese will spend most of it on trendy projects.
- There's no need to worry about the financing of your parish church—the shortfall will all be picked up by other churches in the diocese.
- The Church is always asking for money but what do the clergy do in return apart from preaching sermons?
- There are lots of people in my church who are better off than me and they'll pay up to keep things running.
- Helping to pay for St Margaret's is for the people who do things there—the choir, the servers, the sidesmen, and so on; I just like coming to the services.

None of them.

The days when the Church of England drew a vast income from its capital are long gone, along with the clergy who had private incomes and collected butterflies. The Church gets no State support. Approximately 50% of the income of St Margaret's (in 2006 about £55,000 a year) goes to fund the parish share. The parish share from all the parishes together accounts for about 73% of the income of the Diocese, the remainder coming from interest from investments, glebe income, and fees from weddings and funerals.

Of the total income of the Diocese, almost four-fifths (80%) is needed to pay for and support the parochial ministry. This (the four-fifths) is made

up of: 55% for the stipends and National Insurance of the clergy of the Diocese, 23% for housing and associated benefits, 15% for clergy pension contributions, 4% for maintenance grants allowed to new clergy being trained, and 3% as the cost of running the glebe (to bring in over £2m of income).

The remaining one-fifth of Diocesan income pays for the expenses of the Bishop and his staff, extensive regular training programmes for both clergy and laity, support and advice to parishes, service to 283 church schools, contributing to the work of the national Church, and some social and outreach work in the three counties of the Diocese; 4% of expenditure covers administration. So the parish share from the churches nearly—but not quite—covers the cost of the parochial ministry of the Diocese.

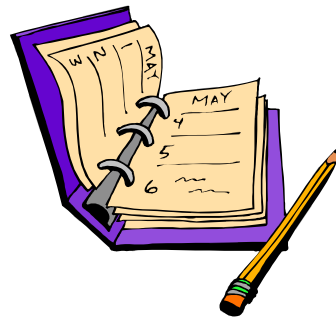
It has been decided that by 2009 each congregation should be essentially self-financing: in other words, though the money will still be directed via the parish share to a central fund, it will have to match the cost of the clergy deployed. (If you went and joined any other denomination, from Baptist to Roman Catholic, you would find they do this already, so you would not have much choice!) No one else will pay for us to have clergy—we can finance them or lose them, it's up to us.

The clergy of St Margaret's are officially 0.75 of a person (one full-time and one half-time priest shared equally with St Giles'). Andrew spends roughly 72 hours per week and Georgie around 30 hours per week serving the Benefice (St Giles' and St Margaret's together): in our parish, that includes planning and conducting the 10 regular services per week and the approximately 20 special services each year, visiting the sick, counselling, working in Phil and Jim School and alongside its governors, writing for the parish magazine, discharging PCC business, planning and leading discussion groups, praying for each of us individually—and, yes, writing the odd sermon. This makes an interesting comparison with the 35-hour week many of us take for granted.

A number of people in St Margaret's are giving very generously and a large number are giving as much as they can. But what about the rest of us? Looking around, seeing the houses we all live in and the holidays we take, it's difficult to believe that we can't afford to pay for our own clergy and secure the reserves of the church into the bargain. And contrary to what one might think, there is no in-crowd at St Margaret's. Many of the people you see handing out hymn books or swinging the thurible or singing in the choir or sitting on the PCC had never done any of these things until, perhaps only a year or two ago, they found themselves getting roped in, probably with trepidation. Between them, our volunteers happily give hundreds of hours of support. Why not get involved in one of these activities—you will be welcomed with open arms—and the resulting feeling of involvement will make it easier to give financially too!

Epiphany Poems 2007

Reprinted below are the poems written by members of the Benefice for the Epiphany Carol Service at St Margaret's on January 7th. Once again, this service proved to be a marvellous way to round off the festivities of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany.



If you haven't been to the Epiphany Carol Service before, please do come in 2008. Hopefully it will be on Sunday 6th January 2008 at 6:00pm in St Margaret's. If you pencil it in your diary now.... How is that for forward planning?

Joseph's Dream: *A poem by Gina Wilson*

Joseph's Dream

was no more than any man's really,
any working man making his way,
and his way was by measuring, sawing,
joining pieces together. Always
a perfect result in his mind's eye,
unblinded by sunlight flickering
with motes, kaleidoscopic.

He could fashion ways into big rooms
or small, furniture to match,
at home with either. Then, when all
was finished, the broom to sweep through.
And his dream was of, one day, someone
to stand in a doorway of his making,
looking in, saying, 'Joseph, well done!'

More and more, it was a wife he dreamed of,
small, without big ideas,
to delight in their day to day things,
warming her side of their bed.
And he found such a woman – rather she
found him, her eyes always turning
towards him; he never knew why.

Then, the Angel dreams struck: hers
and his. On waking, so unlikely,
though, for sure, as weeks passed, a baby
was starting to show. Amen.
So be it. And, if the child wasn't God's
(how could it be?), then let it be, by some miracle,
his own. Joseph worked on,

glad of the needful concentration,
the smell and feel of wood
in his hands, taking shape. – And the Angel dream?
He put it away, preferring his old one:
a wife, a son with his look,
flesh of his flesh. – Or a daughter,
a baby girl. Yes! That would settle it

for ever. He'd make her a cradle
(how gently he'd rock her); and a perfect
ball, an orb; and a wooden donkey
at the end of a string. Playthings ...
Yet, weeks later, the donkey was real
that he led long miles to the dark
night in the stable, a real donkey

he tethered to wait – beside oxen
counting out time with their jaws,
crunch, crunch, like the tread
of resolute feet down the years –
till, at last, the head! He sees it,
wet, crowning, emerging
in starlight; cups his hands to receive

the quick slither, the whole helpless form.
He might drop it! He doesn't! It gleams
in his lap, gives its cry! – And, in that moment,
did Joseph forget? In the joy
of fathering such a human baby,
like anybody's, just what you'd expect,
what you'd pray and give thanks for, your own

perfect child at last, hands and feet,
miracle of ordinariness; with hubbub
and rumpus next door; and shepherds
in the doorway, jostling, calling out:

'Joseph! Joseph! Well done!';
did he forget? In that moment
did his own dream seem to come true?

Ah! But then, strangers arrived,
regal, star-led, bearing sumptuous
subtle gifts for a king ...

Strange what you'd notice at such a vast
moment, what would steady the heart!
For this carpenter, eyes searching out heaven,
it was the stable's framework: its uprights
rooted deep, its transoms branching wide,
master-crafted Cruciform, for carrying
very great weight.

The New Mat: *A poem by Ann Pilling*

I like my mat with its biblical binding
its broad and undyed braid
such as might be worn by shepherds
and its dark smudges
are serviceable, absorbing mud.

I'm glad of it in this dead time
goodnaturedly receiving coldness
so my bare toes can spread.
This mat's like sand. Across such wastes
kings came, following their appointed star.

It's bigger than the old, more like a field, and those dark smudges
are the intensest blue.
In Spring they'll bud and break and the whole thing will become flowers
and I'll gather them and that will be my offering
a posy for the child that is to come.

Mary considers the Wise Men's Gifts: *A poem by Clare Weiner*

The Star was beautiful: imagine,
God set a new jewel in the heavens,
Another window ...
Another sparkling eye looked down,
Another guardian beacon blazed on high...

But, the gifts ... disturbing, over the top,
Not rejected - no - but, *not quite us, you know* ...
The gifts gazed back at me, from their corner,
The gold discomfited amongst our earthen vessels -
The sweet and the bitter scents,
The resin and the herbs,
Incense of worship,
Myrrh of mourning –
Seeping from their intricately carved and decorated boxes ...
Like I say, *too much* ...

I looked again at the Child in my arms – he reached
Towards the costly things, as babies do,
Hands like flowers, open, accepting them.

The golden thurible, being rather too grand for our house,
But the child insistant,
I carefully took coals from the bread oven,
And incense from its box,
And using an earthenware dish,
Clouded the house with smoke ...

It was like a sacrifice, really –

I can't say I warmed to it ...

My other children have been easier to understand ...

Epiphany 2007: *A poem by Ben Simpson*

Besides the Christian Feast, Webster's Dictionary defines 'Epiphany' as:
'...an intuitive grasp of reality through something usually simple and striking'

This poem was written on the occasion of a pilgrimage to Bethlehem by His Eminence Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, The moderator of the Free Churches, David Coffey, and The Armenian patriarch of Great Britain, Bishop Nathan Hovhannisian In Advent 2006.

Four wise men came from the west
To Bethlehem, a city sadly torn apart;
With iron walls and troops oppressed.
They spoke of 'wrongs within the human heart'
I thought epiphany would come earlier this year

But years ago when from the east
Three such men had crossed the sand
They laid their tributes at Christ's feet
But now our troops invade their shattered land
I thought epiphany might never come this year

And what does now the future hold
For me, for him, my Abrahamic brother
What meant the incense, myrrh and gold
Can we not change, and learn to love each other?
I hope epiphany will come at last this year

ST GILES ROOF APPEAL

Our Final Extravaganza!

**** Wine ****

**** Cheese tasting and talk by the Oxford Cheese Company ****

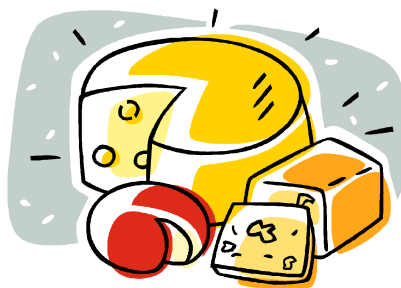
**** A myriad of extraordinary and amazing promises to be **
auctioned including:**

two air tickets to New York
a week in a cottage in the Dordogne
a night for two at the Old Parsonage Hotel with dinner
wine, champagne, travel, food, etc, etc

All in the beautiful surroundings of Keble College.
Put Sunday evening, **18th March, 2007**, in your diary now.

At 7:30 p.m., there will be a cheese
tasting followed by a talk given by
the **Oxford Cheese Company**.

At 8.30 p.m. the auction of
promises will be conducted by Ben
Lloyd of Mallams.



Tickets are £10 each including wine, cheese and canapés (£5 returnable with a successful bid). To reserve your ticket contact the church office by phone (01865-311198), post (St Giles Church, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6HT) or email (admin@st-giles-church.org).

***** Make this a Mothering Sunday to remember *****

If you are able to contribute any promises, however small or unusual, we would be very happy to add them to the auction.

St Giles' Church, Woodstock Road, Oxford



Thursday Lunchtime Lectures: Hilary Term 2007

CHANGING THE CLIMATE

- 18th January *Six degrees: life on a hotter planet*
Mark Lynas, New Statesman
- 25th January *Climate change and development*
John Magrath, Oxfam GB
- 1st February *Managing the impacts of climate change*
Dr Chris West, Director: UK Climate Impacts Programme
- 8th February *Why is it so hard for us to engage with climate change? Understanding the psychology of denial*
George Marshall, Climate Outreach Information Network
- 15th February *The church, theology, and climate change*
Rev Dr Andrew Bunch, Vicar of St Giles';
and Dr Paula Clifford, Christian Aid
- 22nd February *Climate change and biodiversity*
Dr Mike Moorcroft, NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- Future dates: 1st March and 8th March

All the talks take place at St Giles' Church, at 12.30 pm

Dates for your Diary ... February 2007

- Thursday, 1st Feb** **St Bridgid, Abbess of Kildare, c.525**
12.30 pm Lunchtime Talk *at St Giles'*
 Managing the impacts of climate change
 Speaker: Dr Chris West
- Friday, 2nd** **Candlemas**
8.00 pm Sung Eucharist *at St Margaret's*
- Saturday, 3rd** **St Anskar, Archbishop of Hamburg, 865**
 Brahms Liebeslieder concert *at St Margaret's*
- Sunday, 4th** **Third Sunday before Lent**
10.30 am Family Service with Baptism *at St Margaret's*
- Thursday, 8th** **St Sigfrid, Bishop, 1045**
12.30 pm Lunchtime Talk *at St Giles'*
 Why is it so hard for us to engage with climate
 change? Understanding the psychology of denial
 Speaker: George Marshall
- Sunday, 11th** **Second Sunday before Lent (Evolution Sunday)**
- Thursday, 15th** **St Sigfrid, Bishop, 1045**
12.30 pm Lunchtime Talk *at St Giles'*
 The church, theology, and climate change
 Speakers: Rev Dr Andrew Bunch and
 Dr Paula Clifford
- Sunday, 18th** **The Sunday next before Lent**
10.30 am Healing Service *at St Margaret's*

- Wednesday, 21st** **ASH WEDNESDAY**
 12.30 pm Eucharist with Ashing *at St Giles'*
 8.00 pm Sung Eucharist with Ashing *at St Margaret's*
- Thursday, 22nd**
 12.30 pm Lunchtime Talk *at St Giles'*
 Climate change and biodiversity
 Speaker: Dr Mike Moorcroft
- Saturday, 24th** 007 "Dress to Kill" Dance *at St Margaret's*
 Institute
- Sunday, 25th** **First Sunday of Lent**
 11.45 am Children's Concert *at St Margaret's*
- Thursday, 1st Mar** **St David, Bishop, Patron of Wales, c.601**
 12.30 pm Lunchtime Talk *at St Giles'*
 Climate change: the final straw for tribal peoples
 Speaker: Gilbert Oteyo
- Sunday, 4th** **Second Sunday of Lent**
- Thursday, 8th** **Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, 1910**
 12.30 pm Lunchtime Talk *at St Giles'*
 How to live a low-carbon life
 Speaker: Chris Goodall

Tiny Tots 2.30 -4.00 pm every Thursday at St Margaret's Church, followed by Toddlers' Service on the first Thursday of each month.

Weekly Services at St Giles' & St Margaret's

Sunday

8:00am	Holy Communion	St Margaret
8:00am	Holy Communion	St Giles
10:30am	Parish Eucharist <i>with Sunday School & Crèche</i>	St Margaret
10:30am	Mattins & Holy Communion	St Giles
6:00pm	Evening Prayer	St Margaret
6:30pm	Evensong	St Giles

Monday

5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Giles
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Tuesday

7:00am	Morning Prayer	St Margaret
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Giles
7:15pm	Eucharist	St Margaret

Wednesday

7:00am	Morning Prayer	St Margaret
12:30pm	Eucharist	St Giles
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Giles

Thursday

7:00am	Morning Prayer	St Margaret
8:00am	Iona Liturgy	St Giles
10:00am	Holy Communion	St Margaret
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Giles

Friday

7:00am	Morning Prayer	St Margaret
1:15pm	Taizé Service	St Giles
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Giles

Saturday

9:00am	Morning Prayer	St Giles
5:30pm	Evening Prayer	St Margaret