



TREASURY

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An Advent Message



by Revd Brian Reardon
(Moderator Association
in the East)

The Church's Year begins with the Season of Advent. As we journey towards the nativity of our Lord this is a time of preparation when we get ready for the solemn commemoration of the Incarnation, and celebrate Jesus rebirth into our own hearts too. Advent is a time when we prepare for the Second Coming, a time when we look to the future when Jesus shall return and reign throughout the world.

I've wondered often what that means in reality. Will it be a time of panic for many and a time of peace and hope for Christians? And how will this reflect upon people of other faiths and beliefs?

The prophet Isaiah expected a time when 'Nation would not lift up sword against nation,' nor 'shall they learn war anymore' (Isaiah 2: 4)

What hope is there for the world now? Is there still time for the prophecies of Isaiah to

become a reality when no sword shall be lifted up – no more the production of battle plans?

The message of Advent is one of Hope, Judgement, and the Coming of God.

On and on through the Old Testament from start to finish, reappearing steadily through all its poetry and prophecy, beating out like the deep recurring theme of a great symphony, there is this one great idea that God bares His mighty arm for redemption. Couched in these lovely words of Isaiah 2 is the theme of hope. It is the hope of the promise of forgiveness, a deepening hopeful expectation that reaches its climax in the coming of God's Son who came to teach those without knowledge. He came in the hope that He would come to lift the fallen, illuminate the hopeless and deliver us through our love of God and of each other. This is the only way that world peace can be achieved. That hope for our fallen world still continues.

As we struggle to come to terms with climate change, Brexit with its concerns, the crippling poverty facing millions who struggle each day just to survive, what comfort can we all receive from this vision of utopia that Isaiah sees as the world's hope?

World peace, peace on earth is the concept of an ideal state

of happiness, freedom and peace within and among all people and nations on the Planet Earth. This ideal of world non-violence is one motivation for people and nations to willingly cooperate, either voluntarily, or by virtue of systems of governance to resolve conflicts by love and peace. Different cultures, religions, philosophies and organisations have varying concepts on how such a state of affairs would come about.

There are differing ways that religious and secular organisations have endeavoured to achieve world peace, through addressing human rights, technology, education, engineering, medicine and diplomacy - all have been used as means to end to all forms of conflict. Since 1945, the United Nations and the five permanent members of its Security Council have operated under the aim to resolve unrest without war or declarations of war. Nonetheless, nations have entered numerous military conflicts.

All major religions express the hope that peace might be established in the world. As Christians we believe that peace can only come by the Word and the love of God, which is perfectly revealed and demonstrated in the life of Christ.



'Fear not Mary' - a stained glass window at St James Parish Church, Avebury

Jesus promised his disciples, 'Peace I leave you...' (John 14). Many Christians believe that world peace will only be achieved in the final inauguration of the 'new earth' that is promised in Revelation 21.

As we celebrate Advent with its prophecies, can we envisage a time when our swords will become ploughshares and there shall be a new calm among the nations of the world? Let us pray that we can go forward with one voice - the voice of love. It is in Christ's Name that we proclaim this hope - always!

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

WESTERN GWENT

A meeting held at Siloh, Gelligroes celebrated a 'Name Change'. We will now be known as WESTERN GWENT MISSION PARTNERSHIP and now, hopefully, will extend our remit to encompass two new areas - Caerphilly and Risca. We hope, and pray, that, with help from Wayne Adams, Moses Tutesigensi and Nicola

Roylance together with a great deal of resource sharing we will achieve our goal of making meaningful inroads into Christian mission and outreach in our area (and hopefully, further afield). Please pray for us!

GARDEN VILLAGE, WREXHAM

Revd Jonathan Hodgins was



Garden Village

one of the Visitors appointed to conduct the annual Visitation to the church on 20th November. The congregation of just under fifty members is led by Revd David Jones aided by a strong group of elders and officers. Due to declining attendance a decision has been taken recently to discontinue the evening service. Nonetheless a goodly congregation gather on a Sunday morning in the well maintained chapel that amongst the memorials on the walls commemorates three members who fell in WW2, the oldest of whom F/Sgt Norman Elsdon was twenty-five. A second, Gunner Alun Davies was twenty-three years old when he

was killed, and the youngest Fusilier Kenrick Higginson was just nineteen. It is in his memory that the Higginson Trust was established by his mother to help those studying for the ministry within the Association in the East.

A mosaic on an outside wall recalls the centenary of the chapel in 2013, whilst another inside the porch that celebrates the dedication of the extension to Bethel by the Moderator of the Association in the East, Revd J E Wynne Davies (Aberystwyth) on 9th December 1989. A wide variety of church and community activities are held in the church hall each week.



Western Gwent

A Gideon New Testament started my journey

by Sian Edwards
Coleg y Bala

It was in the business of Christmas time that I had the privilege of meeting up with the Gideons team for the area which I live. It was wonderful to meet them as it was due to the faithfulness of people in the Gideons that I am where I am now. I'm married to Owain, a part-time GP, and together we run Coleg y Bala, a Christian Children's and Youth Centre in Bala.

I'm a mother to three children, my niece also lives with us and we are foster parents to a young man who has just started university. Life is busy but it's a life that God has called us to as a family.

Going back to my first year in



Owain and Sian Edwards

secondary school, it was during an assembly we were presented with a Gideon New Testament. Things began to change for me. Before going to bed I

would read my New Testament and pray. I found the index and the specific places to read very helpful. The text for "anxious or worried", 1 Peter 5: 7, became a

firm favourite especially around exam time! This was my first proper introduction to reading the Bible for myself. It was the first time that God spoke to me, although it would be a while before I understood this totally.

I was nineteen years old before I fully gave my life to the Lord, but it was that Gideon Bible encounter that started my journey with Jesus. It has been an exciting journey with many ups and downs, but throughout it all I can testify to God's goodness and faithfulness towards me and us as a family. I was delighted last September when our youngest daughter returned from school with a Gideon Bible in her bag. I prayed that God would use it in such a powerful way in her life and that one day maybe you will read her story too!

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