

Tuckingmill Baptist Church, Camborne



November 2020

I just realised, last month, that I was about to pass a mentally significant milestone. I say *mentally* significant in that there is nothing *really* significant about something having happened precisely a year or a whole number of years or decades ago ... but it *feels* that way. Think of all the fuss made about “big O” birthdays.

But this milestone was nothing celebratory. Well before dawn on the 21st October 1980, forty years ago, my Dad rang out of the blue to say that my Mum had just died in the middle of the night. Jenny and I had been married only a little over a year. I remember going into the labs in Cambridge to secure an experiment that had been running overnight, so that we could rush to catch the earliest



train possible in order to return to Cornwall.

Forty years later, it being *precisely* forty years earlier makes no practical difference at all. This year also marked the centenary of my Dad’s birth, but that was during the early weeks of Lockdown, and my thoughts were evidently directed elsewhere.

But for many of us, something like this provokes memories. Fortunately, they can be very positive. But they can also be wistful, sad, almost starting to fret over the might-have-beens.

One of Mum’s sisters, now my sole surviving aunt, commented, just after our David was born, three years later, that it was sad that Mum never lived to see her grandchildren.

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I still find it strange to think that our kids grew up - Dad having subsequently remarried - with a Gran on that side of the family that was not Mum to me.

Going through old photograph albums can do the same sort of thing. A whole afternoon, if you're not careful, can just disappear as we re-live, in our imaginations, at least, some of those ancient memories, reacquainting ourselves with our mental images of those no longer with us in person. Has anyone else here subscribed to the Facebook groups for *Nostalgic Redruth* or *Nostalgic Camborne*? Those grainy old black-and-white photographs of people and days gone by can be so absorbing!



Sometimes memories can just leap out at us unexpectedly - spontaneously (where *did* that thought come from?) or prompted by an old photo, or an unusual scent or taste. Think mum's cooking, for example. For me, that would be apple pie with *proper Cornish* cream, or lentils in soup.

But November is the tradi-

tional time in our national calendar when we specifically *choose* to remember. It makes good sense to remember the appalling carnage of war: "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (George Santayana, 1905).

Most of our memories, I guess, just stem from the fact of our being there at the time. I can just about remember the super-cold winter of 1963. I remember the summer of 1976, with its heat-wave, the ridiculous numbers of ladybirds, and working in the ovens in Roddas' creamery. Nobody is going to forget the long-lasting sheer oddness of *this* year and the still-evolving story of Covid-19.

Memories like that are just with us, probably for life. There's nothing we can do about that. But we can *choose* to use some other aspects of our memories. We can decide to lay down and to call up specific memories.

That's what we do with Remembrance Sunday, specifically holding onto not just the memories of specific people, but the stark lessons of war. It may not prevent future wars - unimaginably horrible though those would inevitably be - but it may prevent us from nationally sleep-walking back into those trenches.

But there are things to do with our memories as regards our

faith, too.

There is the getting Scripture into our memories:

*I have stored up your word
in my heart, that I might not
sin against you.*
(Psalm 119:11)

And if *on his law he meditates day and night* (Psalm 1:2) is ever going to happen, a chain-reference Bible will clearly be helpful, but a well-stocked memory has to give a great boost, too.

When things are difficult, we're called upon to ...

*Remember Jesus Christ,
risen from the dead,
the offspring of David, ...*
(2 Timothy 2:8)

... or to ...

*Consider him who
endured from sinners such
hostility against himself, so that
you may not grow weary or
fainthearted.*

(Hebrews 12:3)

That is applying what you already know, taking it from your memories and placing it in active consideration in your thought processes, working through what sorts of things it implies.

And of course we're told that factoring Jesus into every as-

pect of life is going to transform them all.

For those early disciples from a Jewish background, Passover was transformed:

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."
(1 Corinthians 11:25)



Instead of Moses and Egypt defining who they were, those disciples were being called to regard Jesus as the new, pivotal point of their being.

We could see our usually weekly time of "remembrance" as doing something similar: deliberately dragging back our affections from the world outside, choosing instead to worship *the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me* (Galatians 2:20).



And it's appropriate that we should do our *annual* "Remembrance", capital R, in church. Even the greatest human heroism can only be a pale reflection of

Jesus Christ, laying down his life not just for friends and family, for king/queen and country, but even for his enemies (Romans 5:10).

... we will also choose to spend time remembering the risen, ever-living and ever-present "Friend of Sinners".

And so, even amongst the sadness and loss which we may call to mind on Remembrance Sunday, as we may still choose to spend some time remembering "absent friends" ...

Peter Ham



You can contact Peter Ham, TRBC's pastor, by phone on (01209) 212442 or (07818) 078135. You can also e-mail peter.ham@live.co.uk,

Church website:
www.tuckingmillbaptist.org.uk

Zoom meetings - "online church":
maintaining the times we have become used to over the previous months,
but possibly with *some* people able to meet at the chapel
Sundays: 10.30 and 6.30
Thursdays 7.00 ... or possibly back to 7.30?

	10.30 a.m.	6.30 p.m. (cafe church)
8 th November	Remembrance: "Yesterday"	Video
15 th November	Matthew 19:1-12	following on from a.m.
22 nd November	Matthew 19:13-20	following on from a.m.
29 th November	Matthew 20:1-16	following on from a.m.
6 th December	Phil Willetts	Video

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Can I just start this section of the magazine, which is normally some articles I have come across that I think you might find interesting and worthwhile, with a simple plug for the recording made of October's West Cornwall Christian *Rendezvous* meeting?

Marc Baker (from Kea Parish Church at Truro) led a rather unusual meeting, from the *Rendezvous* point of view. Instead of simply preaching from a Bible passage, Marc spoke on the theme of *Gospel Courage and Gospel Risk*. He started off with a very clear exposition of Revelation 7 - which would actually be a very decent (though short) sermon in its own right.

And - quite rightly too, this is precisely how to do "topical" sermons! - that passage led into thinking through just why it might be that we can be so reluctant to share the Gospel - and yet how unnecessary this reluctance is, in the light of the passage we had read.

So it's really challenging but also very encouraging stuff. Marc's talk then led on to quite a substantial time of discussion (possibly unheard of with *Rendezvous*!). The talk, but not the discussion, was recorded using Zoom, and is available on the *Rendezvous* Facebook page, together with some notes and questions to fuel your own thoughts and discussions:

www.facebook.com/WestCornwallChristianRendezvous

www.tuckingmillbaptist.org.uk

John Stott on church decisions

from *Authentic Christianity*

If a local church desires to be a sign of the kingdom, and give evidence that Christ rules, this will be reflected also in the mundane matter of the decision-making process it employs. Each local church ought to be able to say (not in feigned piety but in humble reality) 'it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us'.

How then does the King guide his people? I mention as necessary conditions only prayer and patience. But often it is nothing but a formal and only partly sincere recognition that we desire to discover the will of God. What about a period of prayer instead? Can a Christian committee discuss together if it has not learned to pray together? Do we ever stop a committee in midstream, when it has reached an impasse, in order to pray again for light and wisdom?

Secondly, patience. A truly Christian group will determine never to trample on minority opinions. To foreclose a debate by taking a snap vote and to decide issues by a bare majority, while minds are still confused and consciences troubled, is a worldly way to conduct the business of the church. It expresses a distrust in God and a disrespect for the dissidents.

Do we not believe in the Holy Spirit of unity? Then we must wait patiently, listen to each other, and strive to understand each other's concerns and scruples, until the Spirit brings us to a common mind.



The local church is both a theocracy (not in the special sense that Israel was but in the general sense of submitting to God as King)

and a brotherhood. Every attempt to crush disagreement of fellow believers violates these truths and is therefore incompatible with the nature of the church. It is not to use power like the world and to forget 'the meekness and the gentleness of Christ' (2 Corinthians 10:1).

God's Mission: Your Adoption

by Max Lucado

When we come to Christ, God not only forgives us, he also adopts us. Through a dramatic series of events, we go from condemned orphans with no hope to adopted children with no fear. Here is how it happens. You come before the judgment seat of God full of rebellion and mistakes. Because of his justice he cannot dismiss your sin, but because of his love he cannot dismiss you. So in an act that stunned the heavens, he punished himself on the cross for your sins. God's justice and love are equally honored. And you, God's creation, are forgiven. But the story doesn't end with God's forgiveness.

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God. (Romans 8:15–16 (NASB))

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4–5 (NASB))

It would be enough if God just cleansed your name, but he does more. He gives you his name. It would be enough if God just set you free, but he does more. He takes you home. He takes you home to the Great House of God.



Adoptive parents understand this more than anyone. I certainly don't mean to offend any biological parents – I'm one myself. We biological parents know well the earnest longing to have a child. But in many cases our cribs were filled easily. We decided to have a child and a child came. In fact, sometimes the child came with no

decision. I've heard of unplanned pregnancies, but I've never heard of an unplanned adoption.

That's why adoptive parents understand God's passion to adopt us. They know what it means to feel an empty space inside. They know what it means to hunt, to set out on a mission, and take responsibility for a child with a spotted past and a dubious future. If anybody understands God's ardor for his children, it's someone who has rescued an orphan from despair, for that is what God has done for us. God has adopted you.

God sought you, found you, signed the papers, and took you home.

What will heaven be like?

from C S Lewis' *The Weight of Glory*

“We know not what we shall be”; but we may be sure we shall be more, not less, than we were on earth.

Our natural experiences (sensory, emotional, imaginative) are only like the drawing, like pencilled lines on flat paper. If they vanish in the risen life, they will vanish only as pencil lines vanish from the real landscape, not as a candle flame that is put out but as a candle flame which becomes invisible because someone has pulled up the blind, thrown open the shutters, and let in the blaze of the risen sun.



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