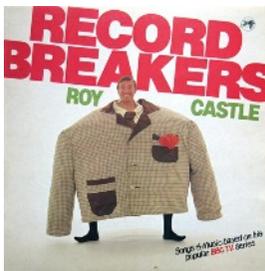


Tuckingmill Baptist Church, Camborne



July 2020

Dedication ...
woahh ... The words
and voice of Roy Castle
singing that song from
the long-distant TV pro-
gramme *Record Breakers*
still comes back to
me as I write the word.
But I still have a
love/hate relationship
with the word, in the
context of what we sometimes do in
church and babies.



on a knee staring at the
camera. Are we now
going to see him “dedi-
cated”?

So this Sunday, is it a “dedi-
cation service” or not? Perhaps
Yes ... but not in the sense we
might normally think.

So we have Jon and Kitty’s
Jowan, whom we’ve seen and oc-
casionally heard on our screens
over these last few months. Much
easier to mute than most babies
I’ve come across, I have to note!
We’ve seen him awake, asleep, on
the floor on a play mat, or bounced

Before I answer
No to that, let me at
least say that the inten-
tion, if that were the
case, can still be very
positive. You go back
into the Old Testament and possi-
bly remember the example of Han-
nah giving her son Samuel to the
LORD. Isn’t it just the same? Isn’t
that an example for us to follow?
Isn’t it *good* to publicly admit that
Jowan is a gift from God, and to
express our thanks to God?

Well, on that last point, at
least, yes it is. But that’s giving
thanks to God, not giving *him* to
God. We just need to get our
heads properly around this ... and
then enjoy the celebration.

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And to do that, let me point you at a question which quickly gets to the heart of why we go under the name *Baptists*.

So then, who can “give somebody to God”? I think I’d argue simply from common sense, as well as Bible teaching, that the only person who can give *you* to God is you yourself.

In societies and faith situations where it is reckoned that your belonging to some “god” is determined by the place of your birth or your parentage, the thinking is different. I don’t think that involves faith, in the fullest sense of the word. If a person from such a background were asked about their “faith”, they would give the name of that country’s or that family’s traditional “faith”. But they wouldn’t necessarily personally believe the official tenets of that “faith”. It’s just the way things are. Because I come from X, then I’m a Y. Don’t have to know any more than that.

But faith in Jesus Christ is different. And conversion therefore makes sense. Whereas we *used* to think one way about Jesus, the world, the meaning of life, and all of that, we *now* conclude that something different is the case. Even though we might find *some* of the specifics of that new “faith” a bit tricky, we do actually believe those

key facts: that Jesus actually is “the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31). And you do not simply mentally concede this to be true; you personally commit yourself to following and obeying him. So he becomes both your Saviour and your Lord.

But note the phrase I used: “you personally commit yourself”. Nobody else can do this for you. It is not simply an accident of your birth. It is *your personal* choice and commitment.

So, given a baby, who can give them to God? The answer is the same. *Only that baby* ... though manifestly not now, when they do not yet have the ability to understand and make a choice like that (or anything much else).



In some setups, the legal fiction of “godparents” is invoked. It is supposed that the baby, at a christening (they *use* the word baptism, but I’m arguing it’s not the same thing), promises “by their godparents” to turn to Christ. Sorry, but this just has to be total nonsense.

Again, it just takes a common-sense argument, to my mind. I do not hold myself obliged to fulfil promises made “on my behalf” by someone else - Jenny being an

exception. Unless I've authorised someone else to speak on my behalf (which a baby clearly can't), it just doesn't work. If I just say that you will give £10,000 to the Cornwall Air Ambulance, would you feel that you are now obliged to do so - even if you could?

Actually, every human being is already under the highest possible obligation to turn to God (*[God] commands all people everywhere to repent, Acts 17:30*). Whether someone else "promises" (or doesn't) that you will repent in due time doesn't increase (or lessen) that absolute obligation. So what is the point, what is the sense, even, of the "promises" of a godparent at a christening?

Thinking about it carefully, though, don't precisely the same arguments that I have levelled against "child baptism" here apply if we think in terms of "dedicating" a child to God? It can be, if we're not careful, just a dry christening!

So what *are* we doing this Sunday? Can we even call it "a dedication"? I think we still can ... but only if we flip things entirely on their heads.

The only person who *cannot* dedicate themselves to anything is the baby being "dedicated". They

are just too young. They do not have the necessary mental apparatus. I want to suggest to you that it is the *other* people present who are doing the dedication - and of *themselves*, not of the baby.



Anyone who is a parent knows that it's a difficult job. (Jenny and I are currently watching the series *Outnumbered* on BBC's iPlayer ... just in case we needed a reminder!) It takes (thank you, Roy Castle!) ... dedication.

What "dedication" is going on at a "dedication" service? *The parents* are publicly committing themselves to provide that necessary care. But that is not all. They need not stand alone. In a church, that is one application of that word "fellowship" - something *shared*.

Particularly if the parents are likely to be present in that *fellowship* for some time, those people can also dedicate themselves to the monumental task - although at one remove - of contributing to the raising of that child "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Family can, too, of course. Unbelieving family members might not make promises towards "God" (however (mis)understood), but will hopefully still want to promise to be

there (however they are able) for the good of that new youngster.

Even “godparents” - particular friends who undertake to provide particular help and input - yes, I can’t really fault even that idea, which can be done with good, generous, gracious intent.

It’s one of those things about society in general, and the fellowship of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, too. We are typically set in families, by ties of birth

or rebirth, God’s intention being that we should need each other.

That’s something that we as a church dedicated ourselves to at the beginning of the year, with our Church Covenant.

And it’s something that we will be doing - and acting as witnesses of the dedication of others, too - this Sunday morning. Isn’t that really something rather exciting to be part of?



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”:
Still seeking to improve on this, but we’ve now settled on weekly meetings as follows:

Sundays: 10.30 and 6.30
Thursdays 7.00

	10.30 a.m.	6.30 p.m. (cafe church)
12 th July	Matthew 16:1-12	Following on from a.m.
19 th July	Matthew 16:13-23	Following on from a.m.
26 th July	Proverbs 1	Following on from a.m.
2 nd August	Proverbs 3:1-12	Following on from a.m.

Tuckingmill Baptist Church, Camborne



July 2020

And now for something not entirely different ...

One of the less immediately obvious consequences of the Virus and lockdown restrictions will take a while to surface. It is good and hopeful that weddings are now once again permitted to take place (I would imagine that restricting guest numbers to 30 would cause a few family frets, but that might well be offset by the amount of money saved at any reception!); many of these have been postponed until now ... or lots later.

But funerals have typically continued to take place. I have heard of awfully empty crematoria, in the earliest days of lockdown, with not even all of the “close relatives” permitted to attend. When do they get their “closure”, that feeling that they have properly and finally said *Goodbye* in person? And was it really so much better for those few admitted, in the stark, clinical, distanced funeral service itself?

My suspicion is that there might be, when the worst of this is over, a substantial backlog of “meetings in memory of”, those celebrations of the life of the deceased, something that just hasn’t been permitted again yet. It will seem odd, *very* odd, happening months after the actual funeral and cremation or interment. Perhaps alongside scattering of ashes, with cremations. But it might be helpful to give people that “closure” that they want, and arguably still need.

But until then ...

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Until then, we do what the country and government have been doing these last three months: we make do with what we can.

Most of the regulars at Tuckingmill will have known and seen some of the distress that Mike and Sue felt as Mike's mum entered what was clearly going to be the last few weeks and days of her earthly life ... immeasurably, unvisitably distant at the other side of the country. Her funeral was this week, on the 29th of June. Mike contributed via the Internet, rather than being present in person.

But I thought it might also help him and Sue at this time if, although unable to be *there*, he were able to share *with us* some of his memories of Mum.

Peter Ham

NINA DAVIDSON

Most of us in the Church have met my Mother, who was a Christian. Last month she went peacefully to be with her Lord. My Mother was known in life as Sister, Mum, Grandma, Great Granny, Auntie, Cousin and Mother-in-Law, her legacy of love will live on in our hearts for all who knew her. The impact my Mum had on my life is huge and this article is going to be small with so much I need to say, so I will highlight what I think are important to hear.



Mum was born in Oldham Lancashire on the 25 January 1926. In the first few years she had a very unsettled life, living with relatives and friends. Finally she found stability in Rhyl North Wales with Granddad Hay and Nana. Her brother Gerald and sister Maureen were born later and they all lived very happily in Carlisle Avenue. Apparently I met my true Grandmother when I was very young; however I have always considered Nana as my Grandmother as she was also a large and very important part of my early life. Mum was an avid reader in those early years, reading everything in the house, which later resulted in many, many books on her bookshelves.

In the later stages of the Second World War, Mum joined the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service and worked in a casualty clearing station on the south coast at RAF Wroughton and later in Colindale Hospital, near Hendon London where the wounded from the theatres of war were sent.

During her nurse training she met Auntie Jackie who was to become a lifelong friend and sister in law. Their early days were spent together as best friends, enjoying life to the full, which was limited during war time. Auntie Jackie's brother who was a year older than Mum was serving in the Royal Air Force in the Far East campaign. They became pen friends, later after the war ended, they met for the first time in London, fell in love and married in 1948. Dad left the RAF and worked as an electrician on the London Underground. But life in London in 1949 was difficult especially when I was born in April. With shortage of suitable accommodation prepared to accept babies, Mum and I moved back to Rhyl and Dad reenlisted in the RAF.

We then embarked on a life of moving every 18 months to 2 years around the country in and out of Married Quarters and abroad to places such as Germany in 1953 where I started school, Tripoli Libya North Africa, Tobruk Libya, also RAF Arkotiri in Cyprus. In between these postings, Mum and I spent many years in Rhyl waiting for suitable married quarters to become available so we could be with Dad. My brother Ian was born amidst all this in 1960, he first walked in Tobruk when we caught up with Dad. Mum and Dad also bought their own houses, first one in Rhyl, followed by many more either in North Wales or around the south east of England. Mum and Dad generally had a good life in the RAF, however in those days Service pay was poor, but the benefits of Service life made up for that. I finally left home in 1965 to join the Royal Navy, what Dad really thought of that, being RAF he never said.

The one strand through all this was the love of Mum, who was patient, generous and kind. She did everything she could to make our lives comfortable in all the circumstances we found ourselves in. We felt loved and safe. One example of this love for us, she would come to pick me up after the school day, unfortunately as she had missed me so much, her first instinct was to cuddle me and call me darling, which during primary school did my street 'cred' no good at all. To my shame, knowing Mum was short sighted, I would jump over a low wall

and return to our married quarter on my own. When Mum came home I would say 'I didn't see you!' I told her this story some years ago and she was surprised I felt like that, but understood and laughed about it.

Mum was blessed with the gift of life being 94 when she passed away. She lived through many experiences, some tested her, many she enjoyed and remembered with fondness. She was blessed with good health throughout her life, with a minor blip a couple of years ago when she fell which caused severe bruising, but thankfully no broken bones.

She was an example to us how she coped with the loss of her dear husband Bill, 10 years ago and her younger sister Maureen some years before. We cannot foresee the trials or misfortunes that will test us along the way of life, or how long we have on this earth, or know what God's plan is for us. However, what we can do is to live our lives as best we can with purpose, **with love**, with joy, with prayer just as Mum did in her life. We can use each day to show those who are closest to us how much we care about them and treat others with the kindness and respect that we wish for ourselves. We can work to make a better world, so that someday, if we are blessed with the chance to look back on our time, we can know that we spent it well and made a difference even small, so that our fleeting presence God has given us can have a lasting impact in the lives of others.

This is how I will see Mum, her lasting legacy on our lives. I will always be proud to be known as the son of Nina Davidson. I feel blessed that I knew this kind, loving and gentle lady who graced our lives who I can call Mum.

May God bless Nina Davidson and may she rest in eternal peace. Amen.

Michael Davidson

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