

The Link



July 2023



Shanklin United Reformed Church www.shanklinurc.co.uk

View From Number 10



Lessons from Windrush

The rushing wind at Pentecost led to people from all over the Mediterranean world hearing the wonders of God in their own languages. The curse of Babel, when God scattered proud humanity, was reversed as the Spirit brought togetherness and understanding in that supernatural moment. It was a sign of the fresh season which had begun as the Good News of Jesus was to reach the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:19 and Acts 1:8).

The rush of this fresh wind has been sadly thwarted by human sin.

As I write, we are approaching the 75th Anniversary of The Empire Windrush arriving at Tilbury Docks on 22nd June 1948. Britain had issued an invitation to the colonies to come and help rebuild the “Mother Country” after the ravages of war. So, hundreds came from the Caribbean to help fill the gaps in the labour market – the NHS was formed in that same year. Many were committed Christians, but they sadly did not receive a warm welcome, in society and even in the churches.

I spoke on Sunday 18th June about the problems of racism that must still be faced in the British Church (catch up on YouTube if you missed it). The June edition of Christianity Magazine was given over almost entirely to this important issue. In that service we looked at the vision of heaven in Revelation 7:9 where John saw, *“a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.”*

John glimpses the glorious future within God’s purposes where followers of Jesus from many nations are united in worship. This picture of global togetherness should inspire and encourage us to work towards that kind of unity among believers now. So often our cultural differences get in the way, and we keep our distance rather than making any real effort to build relationships.

Psalm 133 begins with a beautiful reminder of how things should be: *“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”*

Joel Edwards - the first black leader of Evangelical Alliance, who sadly died last year, wrote a great book in 1999 entitled '**Lord make us one; but not all the same** - Seeking unity in diversity'.

Let's celebrate our diversity and see that glorious image of worship in heaven becoming more of a reality in the here and now - as every tribe and tongue lift our hearts and voices to the same Lord in true unity. We pray "*Your Kingdom come Lord... on earth as in heaven...*" – may this kingdom reality become more visible as we work and serve together as one people – in all our rich variety.

There is only one church – as Paul said to the Ephesians, "*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is **over all and through all and in all.***" (4:4-5)

The Isle of Wight is still predominantly white, and we only have a couple of black faces among those who regularly worship with us – which is similar in most local congregations (did you know there is a black majority church meeting in a school hall in Newport?). We must work especially hard to make them feel a true sense of belonging and being valued - and also be very open and welcoming to all who come through our doors who look a bit different to us.

May we repent of the mistakes made over recent history and seek to actively reverse the prejudices and discrimination that have caused such harm at home and across the world. The Word of God demands that we take justice seriously and care for the marginalised and the most vulnerable. We are called to love one another and that includes our neighbour, who may turn out to be the "Samaritan" that we really struggle to understand and accept.

Lord help us - may your Spirit blow afresh!

Have a great summer everyone,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

I will be taking a summer break from 24 th July – 9 th August

Prayer



Tuesday Prayer at 19:30 - this is still being held via Zoom using the same account as for other activities and groups :

[https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3242665584?
pwd=ZTIXZzBLWnkrWTNBY2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3242665584?pwd=ZTIXZzBLWnkrWTNBY2JBK1o0K2ZXdz09)

Meeting ID: 324 266 5584
Password: 936536.

Text Prayer Network – this has proved a really efficient method of getting prayer needs around. So, if you have an urgent and important issue that needs immediate cover, please text Lou on the number below with your prayer request and she will mobilise a team of intercessors by forwarding the message to the group. Each of the team will pray and then delete the message.

Lou Jupe - 07474 273119

or, as a back-up - Jean Cunningham: 07854 324809

If you'd like to be added to this network, please get in touch with Lou and she will brief you on the protocols.

Prayer for Israel – is held each Monday at 16:00 at Roy, Melodie and Carol's home and on the church Zoom.

Please contact Roy & Melodie for details:

melodieroywilson@gmail.com or ☎ 866912

Eco Church Award Scheme



Please speak to Brian, Robin or Bill Croydon if you are interested in being part of a small team to look at the issues and consider working towards a bronze award.

Church Meeting – Thursday 20th July at 19:30

Refreshments from 19:00.

Zoom link available for those who can't get along – ask Robin for details.



Please do make an effort to be there and to share in our community business. These meetings are an essential part of our church life and allow all members to share in discernment, forward planning and decision making.

Coming again soon...



Summer Special...

Saturday 22nd July

15:30 – 17:30

Please let Yvonne know if you can help.

The Link - July 2023

A Beautiful Day

Not a cloud in the sky sunshine warm on your back, just a gentle breeze on your face to make it a joy to be out enjoying God's creation.

You are walking through a meadow that stretches out before, and all around you.

The meadow rises in a gentle slope, you begin to notice a strange smell in the air, but put it down to what has been sprayed on the meadow.

As you climb the slope the smell gets stronger, and you hear voices, laughing, squealing, and calling out.

When you reach the top of the slope and look you can't believe what you are seeing.

There is a lake, not crystal blue, it is full of sewage and chemical waste, you realise what the smell is. People are in the lake struggling because of the shopping trolleys, old bike frames, bed frames, coils of wire and rope, all the people keep getting caught up in the debris and pungent morass. But keep going back in.

You can scarcely take in the scene, you can't believe the stupidity of the people.

As you look around, you see rows of people sitting around watching the spectacle.

You become aware of someone weeping, looking around you, you see an older man weeping uncontrollably, he looks around, shakes his head, and weeps more tears.

You approach him and ask if he is alright. He turns to you and says 'my Son died to put an end to all this'. He looks around at those sitting watching and says 'these are my Son's followers, doing nothing'. His pain lines his face, tears stream down his face, he looks to see if anyone will step out to help.

You realise what you are seeing.

What do you do next?

George Port, May 2023

ENCOUNTER

**On the last Sunday of each
month at 10:30**

**A café style meeting place to drop in
and enjoy some refreshments**



**...a relaxed time of Friendship, Fun, Food
and exploring Faith...
with craft, songs, challenges, prayers...**

EVERYONE is welcome

– why not bring a friend?

**The gathering on 30th July will be led by
Andy Hough**

Becoming an Anti-Racist Church

– a discussion in the URC

Before marrying Bill, I was Church Secretary at Basingstoke Baptist. One deacons' meeting, we were congratulating the pastor on his ruby wedding anniversary. He jokingly replied: "40 years - you get a shorter sentence for murder!" The laughter of him and the other 'marrieds' cut me to the heart. I pointed out that three of us in the room were single, not by choice, and I longed to remarry. Obviously, the pastor had not meant to hurt anyone, it was sheer thoughtlessness. He was mortified, and immediately apologised. He didn't say "I'm sorry if you were offended" or "I'm sorry that you were upset" Such apologies shift the blame onto those who are hurt. He simply said: "I'm sorry I upset you."

If we have experienced prejudice because of our age, weight, accent, hair colour, etc. it should make us more empathetic towards those subjected to deliberate or thoughtless racism. My sister was sexually assaulted on a single occasion by our uncle 70 years ago, yet it still affects her emotionally. In the same way, we cannot expect those who have suffered from racial abuse for generations to 'let it go'. We should not become defensive when something we have said or done, even inadvertently, hurts another. Sadly, bad history often results in further injustice, such as when plantation owners were compensated for the loss of their 'property' following emancipation, or whites lost their employment in Southern Africa.

Jesus could have revealed Himself immediately to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, but He made us. He created our need to talk through disappointments, hurt and anger and have our emotions acknowledged. Jesus listened, and at the graveside of Lazarus, He wept. He encouraged His friends to express their feelings before removing the cause of their pain.

After presenting Open the Book at one church recently, someone asked why our baby Jesus was dark skinned. Would he have done

so if the doll was white? To what racial group do Jews belong? I'm ashamed to say that I did not challenge what he had said but allowed him to laugh it off and change the subject. One of the ideas that has gained momentum since the murder of George Floyd is that silence and inaction are not just inadequate but actually harmful in the face of racism.



The United Reformed Church Mission Council, November 2020, *'unreservedly affirms that Black Lives – the lives of black, Asian and minority ethnic people - do matter in the life, work and existence of our Church. At the same time, we recognise that we are an imperfect body, existing in a world shaped by white supremacy. We are repeatedly reminded - by voices both within and outside the Church - that our Church, too, has been shaped by racist ideals. We lament the truth that many aspects of our lived reality do not reflect the values to which we aspire - values seen in the Word of God as revealed through the life of Jesus Christ and through our holy scriptures.*

Building on our past and current work, Mission Council commits the whole United Reformed Church to embark on a journey beyond good intentions, beyond being 'not racist', towards active anti-racist living. This commitment is neither an initiative nor a project, but a pledge for our future existence as one body with many parts - valuing the presence and gifts of all our sisters and brothers equally, and affirming each individual as being equally made in the image of God.'

John saw those from every tribe and nation in heaven. This indicates that our visible differences will be celebrated in our resurrection bodies. We pray that, as we determine to listen to the pain of others, our own congregation may become more racially mixed.

Julie Croydon

Heart and Soul at Shanklin



We had a cracking evening with Rob Westall from Wales on 9th June as he led us in worship and shared the heart and soul of the Gospel. He played in various parts of the Island and spent time at Christ the King College. It was a real blessing to have him and his parents with us here and at Rylstone Gardens on the Sunday evening, where his dad shared a wonderful poem about all that God has done.

Rob will be back on the Island at Lionheart, this time with his band...



14th to 16th July 2023

County Show Ground, Northwood

Tickets are available via the website: <https://lionheartfestival.co.uk>

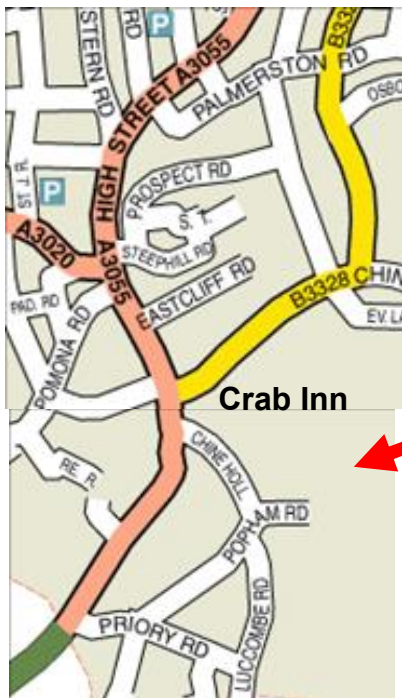
Brian will be leading worship at Shanklin on 16th July but will not be offended if many people choose to be at the festival:

"We need to still provide a service for those who can't easily attend such an event and for visitors who will be looking for a local place to worship. I will travel up and catch the end of Lionheart, as I did after leading at Ryde last year."

CHRISTIANS WORKING TOGETHER IN THE BAY

warmly invite you to join us for

Worship in the Open Air



**Each Sunday 19:30
at Rylstone Gardens**
(turn left just past the Old Village)

**An informal service for everyone led
from the bandstand by local Churches**

Until 27th August

Stepwise

Discipleship Development for Everyone



It's not too late for people to sign up for the online Stepwise group, 'Faith Filled Life'. The start date has been delayed to enable more people to join the group and we really encourage people to sign up.

Stepwise is an excellent opportunity for you to consider your own discipleship and to explore and enrich your personal faith life.

The online group will meet on Zoom on Monday evenings, as per the times and list of dates on the poster on the opposite page.

Bookings: a participant form is available from the website detailed on the poster, or from Brian or Christopher (editor of *The Link*).

Connection Quiz

1. What is Excalibur?
2. Who is the Roman goddess of childbirth?
3. What is the chemical element Au?
4. What is the only US State that starts with the letter 'U'?
5. So, what is the **connection** between the answers to questions 1 - 4?
6. And bonus question... where was the cover photo taken?
(Hint, it's... as if you need a hint!!)



Answers are on [page 35](#)



Stepwise

Faith Filled Life

On Zoom

Mondays, 19:00 – 21:00

Introductory session – 2nd October 2023

8 further sessions:

October 23rd,
November 13th
December 4th
January 2024 8th, 29th
February 19th
March 11th, April 1st

Please do not be put off joining if you cannot attend every session.
You will receive a link by email before the introductory session.

Complete a participant form available on the Synod website

www.urcwessex.org.uk/discipleship

Please book before 12th September 2023

Contact: Ruth Heine
bookings@urcwessex.org.uk
Tel: 023 8067 4513



Further thoughts on 'Night Faith'

Every day I read the daily devotional from Ellel, the Christian Teaching and Healing Centre, and this was the thought for the day on Thursday 15th June. It seemed to pick up on and underline the 'Night Faith' theme of the previous Sunday (11th June). The author, David Cross, is a very solid and clear teacher of Bible truths and I thought this was worth sharing. It was simply entitled, 'Pain'.

Pain is a God-given discomfort resulting from wounding. It's intended to lead to rightful treatment. Wounding may be in the physical body, the human soul, or the human spirit. Each of these locations within us can experience profound pain, telling us that there's something unresolved in our being. The fact that something hurts is essential. It means we can begin the process of acknowledging there's a problem and finding the solution. The writer C. S. Lewis made an interesting comment about this: *'pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains'*.

From the beginning of human life on earth we've experienced pain from wounds to the body, and have looked for relief. We've discovered substances such as opium which acts as an analgesic, a powerful way of suppressing pain. It may bring a temporary relief but, unless the wound is healed, the pain will return, often more intensely, once the means of chemical suppression has worn off.

Something similar happens with pain felt in the heart. If we've experienced the wounding of loss, rejection or abuse, there'll be strong feelings, such as despair, grief or loneliness, all of which are painful. It's common for people to develop coping mechanisms to suppress this pain, and defence mechanisms to protect the wounded place. Our ways of coping may include drug abuse, alcohol, over-eating, obsessive exercise or work, pornography, denial, dissociation, or even self-harming to over-ride the inner pain, just like the Gerasene demoniac.

'Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones' (Mark 5:5).

Suppressing inner pain may give temporary relief, but only adds to the problem, as it denies the healing that comes through the release of emotions. Pushing away the underlying issue just causes further distress. God wants us to come to Him to find true healing for the hurting place, and, in exchange for our pain, to find His comfort (Isaiah 61:2-3). This may all take some time. Shedding tears is very restorative when we give the tears to Jesus (Luke 7:44). Through forgiveness of those who've caused the pain, and confession of our wrongful ways in trying to deal with it, God can restore our lives to a place of peace. He's ready, at any time, to hear the cry of our hearts.

Prayer: Father, I don't like pain, but I realise that You want to bring healing to the wounds that have caused it. Help me to open up these wounds to you. I choose to trust You to search my heart and lead me on a path of true restoration.

Amen.

Ellen Robinson

Source: '[Seeds of the Kingdom](#)' - used by permission

A free daily devotional can be read at <https://ellel.uk/seeds/>, and these are written daily by Ellel Ministries team members from around the world.

Ellel Ministries

United Kingdom

News Updates

Stay in touch with the latest URC news and updates by signing up for a monthly email newsletter at:

<https://urc.org.uk/news-updates-sign-up-form/>





Living In The Here And Now

Recently Neil Anderson has been looking at what it means for Christians to have Freedom in Christ for both today and tomorrow ...

Hope For Today And Tomorrow

“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.” (1 John 3:2&3)

As children of the sinful first Adam, we were obstinate and ornery, helpless and hopeless, with nothing in ourselves to commend us to God. But God's love overruled our unloveliness. Through Christ God provided a way for us into His family. As God's adopted child, you have been given a new identity and a new name. You're no longer a spiritual orphan; you're a son or daughter of God:

"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."
Romans 8:16&17

If you're beginning to think you are someone special as a Christian, you're thinking right - you are special! Your specialness is not the result of anything you have done, of course. It's all God's doing. All you did was respond to God's invitation to be His child. But as a child of God, in union with God by being in Christ, you have every right to enjoy your special relationship with your new Father.

How important is it to know who you are in Christ? There are

countless numbers of Christians who struggle with day-to-day behaviour because they labour under a false perception of who they are. They see themselves as sinners who hope to make it into heaven by God's grace, but they can't seem to live above their sinful tendencies. Why can't they live the victorious Christian life? Because they have a misperception of who they are in Christ. Look again at the hope-filled words of 1 John 3:2&3 (previous page). What is the believer's hope? That he will someday be changed into Christ's image? That's part of it, but that's only a future hope.

What is your hope for today and tomorrow? That you're a child of God now! You must see yourself as a child of God in order to live like a child of God. The blessed hope for the believer is this:

"...God has chosen to make known... the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

Thank You, Father, for the glorious hope of being Your child. I want to live in the security and blessing of that reality today.

Seated With Christ

"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:4-6)

The New Testament clearly reveals that Christ's power and authority over Satan and his kingdom have been conferred to those of us who are in Christ. As Paul explains above when Christ was raised from the dead, those of us who have believed in Him were also resurrected from our condition of spiritual death and made alive "with Christ." It's only logical that the head (Christ) and the body (His church) should be raised together.

And when God seated Christ at His right hand and conferred on Him all authority ~

"He raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right

hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion” (Ephesians 1:20&21) ~ He also seated us at His right hand and conferred on us through Christ all authority because we are "with Christ."

The moment you receive Christ, you take possession of what God did for you 2000 years ago. Your identity as a child of God and your authority over spiritual powers are not things you are receiving or will receive at some time in the future; you have them right now. You are a spiritually alive child of God right now. You are seated in the heavenlies with Christ right now. You have power and authority over the kingdom of darkness right now. We have the authority because of our position in Christ, and we have the power when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul also related this life-changing truth in his letter to the Colossians:

"and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority." (Colossians 2:10)

Notice again that the action is past: We have been made complete. When? At the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. And since Christ is the God-appointed head over all rule and authority, and since we are seated with Him in the heavenlies, we have the authority and power to live responsible lives.

Father, help me want to live responsibly, to claim my position as Your child, and to grow to full stature in You.

Neil Anderson

Freedom in Christ Ministries

Used by permission

Let us not be people of only a future hope, let us live for Christ today!

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:17&18)

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is

noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:8&9)

Heavenly Father, thank You that by Your Grace we have the freedom of being In Christ today. Help us daily to live like this and be witnesses to Your Kingdom, for Your glory.

We ask this in the name of Your Son, our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Robin

All Bible verses quoted are from the NIVUK (UK): Holy Bible, New International Version® Anglicised, NIVUK® Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide

Prayer Ministry Team

You have probably noticed that Prayer Ministry is up and running at the end of our Sunday services ~ or perhaps you have used the team to pray for you!



The prayer ministry takes place at the end of the service on Sundays, there are up to four members of the team available each week (two men and two women) to pray in couples for anyone coming forward for prayer. Usually, team members will be 'on duty' no more than once a month.

We have established a good team, however, we could do with a few more team members so if you are interested, please let me know. Brian and I will help anyone interested to get up to speed and answer any questions you might have, so don't be afraid to step forward ...

Thanks

Sue Wightman

Open The Book – A window into our world

Excerpts from the ‘in house report’ written by one of the Ryde team, Ron (also their narrator). This was after the 14th June, Dover Park OTB assembly, “Mistaken for gods”. With the Bay Team being on hold, Roy and Melodie filled in gaps since regular team members were away. Ron’s words are in inverted commas:



“Good child acting again. And when the teacher asked for ideas on lessons learned, a dear little girl with a stammer took half-a-minute to get it out – but everyone listened respectfully. Lovely.”



“Paul got stoned again, and didn’t over-act as he lay on the floor. A fine performance.”

“It helps if you don’t mind looking silly – and here’s the lame man (Melodie) doing a hop-skip-and-jump after being healed of lameness.”



“Paul’s explaining the gospel to the crowds, and despite his footwear 😊, gets taken for a god.”



“You get all kinds of strange conversations in OTB and Bill is totally unaware that he has horns on. (He’s playing the high priest to foreign ‘gods’).“



Back at St James’, the next rehearsal was for the presentation of Paul and Silas in prison. When the jailor asks Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved, “We realised this is the key moment for the children (and teacher) next week; we’re not allowed to preach, but the printed answer for me to read out is, “Put your trust in Jesus, follow Him, and He’ll show you what to do.” Let’s pray this will find a home in many hearts.”

“Julie is looking justifiably proud of what is being achieved in the Lord’s Name (and enabling).“

“And finally, we’re hoping to go into St Blasius Primary Academy in Shanklin in the Autumn, but we need two more members (*and a car*)! Prayer please.”



Melodie Wilson

Wight Christian Walkers

Nightjar walk: 22nd July

Preceded by optional evening meal at The Three Bishops, Brighstone. Three miles by moonlight to hear, and hopefully see, nightjars churring on Mottistone Down.

Don't expect to get home until around 23:00.

Please contact the walk leader who will tell you the starting point and time. People can come on 3 walks before 'joining' the group, which costs a whole £2 per year!

Contact julie.croydon@icloud.com



Source: *Wight Church Network*



Refresher Safeguarding Training

Part 1 - 19 October 2023

Part 2 - 2 November 2023

Part 3 - 16 November 2023

Virtual sessions on Zoom
19:00 - 21:00

A full day's training for all individuals working with children, young people and adults at risk. Also important for Ministers and Elders of the Church. The course covers:

- **Policy and Programme**
- **Premises** (risk assessments, security, accidents and first aid, fire safety, Transport)
- **People** (recruitment, working together culture, communication online & phones)
- **Protecting Children and Adults at Risk** (forms of abuse, recognising signs of abuse, responding to concern or disclosures, reporting structures)
- **Paper Trails** (forms, records, registers,)
- **Safer Church Culture**

Certificates are presented to those completing this training course.

Trainers - Phil Ray and Ruth White, Children's & Youth Development Officers

For more information and to book your place please contact:
bookings@urcwessex.org.uk / 023 8067 4513

Good News for All!

'Good News' is a contemporary outreach newspaper used by churches and missions to take the good news about Jesus Christ into communities across the UK.

Every month, Good News reaches thousands of readers with true stories of how God is changing the lives of those who put their trust in his Son, Jesus. Using jargon-free language, it also explains how everyone can find a personal relationship with Jesus.



Copies are available at the back of church - and is such a great resource for people to read and then pass on to others!!

This month's edition (also available to read online at www.goodnews-paper.org.uk/viewlatesteditionspage.htm) has several great articles, including the headline article 'I Know He's Real' - All about the man who as a boy 'died' three times says Jesus spoke to him.

Other contributions include:

- **Women's World Cup** - Three players for England, USA and Canada who tackle life with faith
- **Friends Star** - Matthew Perry believes in the best Friend of all
- **Big George Foreman** - How the former world champion boxer became a pastor
- **Summer Giveaway** - Win a great activity book to keep the kids occupied
- **Vicar Who Played For England** - Remembering cricket star and bishop, David Sheppard
- **Gambler Bets On God** - Gambling addict set free by Jesus

Good News... for a change

Have you prayed for Kim Jong-un today?

North Korea is the hardest place in the world to be a Christian (Number 1 on the World Watch list). Being discovered to own a Bible could lead to execution or a life-sentence in a brutal prison camp. Your whole extended family might be punished alongside you. At the head of this horrifying regime is Kim Jong-un, a dictator known for his severe persecution of enormous numbers of people, including turning on those who have once been close to him.



North Korea is the hardest place in the world to follow Jesus

North Korea is back in the news at the moment, with investigations into the increasing desperation faced in the country. Many believe that there could be a return of the North Korean famine of the 1990s, which killed around three million people. This is the context in which believers maintain their secret faith, knowing that discovery could make life even harder.

“God watches over the North Korean church,” says Brother Simon*, coordinator for Open Doors’ ministry to North Koreans. “But we should never forget the high price the Christians pay. North Korea truly is the place where faith costs the most.”

Many Open Doors supporters pray every day for the estimated 400,000 courageous Christians who continue following Jesus in the face of these extraordinary risks. But have you prayed for Kim Jong-un

un today?

Brother Andrew's challenge

The question is similar to one that Brother Andrew, the founder of Open Doors, used to ask people. He was known for arranging meetings with people the world regards as terrorists and enemies. Just because someone violently attacked the people of God or led violent campaigns didn't mean Brother Andrew didn't want to share the gospel with him – in fact, it made him want to share the love of Jesus even more.

From guerrillas in Latin America to brutal militia leaders in Africa to the heads of terrorist organisations in the Middle East and the Gulf, Andrew insisted on meeting with them. He would tell them about Jesus, give them a Bible and pray for them. As he was fond of saying: "Better a Bible than a bomb."

The one person he really wanted to meet, but was never able to, was Osama bin Laden, the notorious leader of Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda. However, Andrew prayed for him every day – and challenged others to do the same with a simple question: "Have you prayed today for Osama Bin Laden?" Of course, he is only echoing Jesus's instruction: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

Why do North Korean authorities hate Christianity?

Kim Jong-un is the third ruler of North Korea who has come from the Kim dynasty. His father Kim Jong-il, led North Korea from 1994 to 2011. And Kim Jong-un's grandfather, Kim Il-sung, founded the modern North Korea in 1948 – and built a cult of personality around the Kim family during his nearly 60-year rule.

Perhaps surprisingly, given North Korea's decades-long persecution of all religions, the Korean peninsula hasn't always been known for brutality toward Christians. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Christianity flourished, and in the first half of the 20th century, it was even called the 'Jerusalem of the East'.

After World War II, Korea was split into two: the north was occupied by the Soviet Union, and the south was occupied by the Western Allies. Eventually, this led to the creation of the two-nation peninsula

The Link - July 2023

that continues: a communist North, ruled by the Kim family, and a democratic South that is allied with much of the West.

When Kim Il-sung took control of North Korea in 1948, he came with a surprising background. His mother was a Presbyterian deaconess and Kim Il-sung went to a Christian school. Yet, when Kim began to rule, he immediately began to brutally persecute Christians, as well as any other religion. Putting a deity above the Kim family was, and is, forbidden. Many North Korean priests were executed, and there was a mass exodus of Christians to South Korea.

Ever since, the persecution of Christians has been brutal. The two-pronged goal has remained the same: to stamp out any religious movement that might threaten the rule of the Kim family, and to remove the Christian presence in North Korea. With the exception of 2022, North Korea has been number one on the Open Doors World Watch List for two decades – and the level of persecution is only increasing. In the World Watch List 2023, North Korea's persecution score is the highest that any country has ever received.

How to pray for Kim Jong-un

It's hard to pray for those who persecute the body of Christ. But that is Jesus's command, and North Korean Christians faithfully follow it. And it's hard to even know *how* to pray.

Open Doors experts in the region, who work with North Koreans through secret networks in China, have spent much time prayerfully considering the question. They have sent six ways that we can all pray for King Jong-un today.

- **Pray for the heart, mind and soul of Kim Jong-un.** It is rare for the most severe persecutors to become believers, but it happens. Pray that Jong-un will finally see the truth
- **Pray for Kim's family.** Pray for his wife, his three children, and his brother and sisters. Pray they will turn from their ways and rely on God for their salvation. Also pray for their protection. Pray against the indoctrination of Kim's children. Pray that God will protect their minds, hearts and souls
- **Pray that North Korea will soon abandon its evil policies.** Pray for protection of the Christians and other citizens

of North Korea

- **Pray that North Korea's elite will be saved** and/or that they have to step down from their positions
- **Pray for the prayer movement inside and outside of North Korea.** Pray that God's Spirit will motivate and give strength to North Korean Christians, so that they can pray for their government and their country. Pray for healing
- **Pray that God will inspire millions of Jesus followers** around the world to pray for Kim Jong-un, his family and his regime.

Brother Andrew said, "Our prayers can go where we cannot... there are no borders, no prison walls, no doors that are closed to us when we pray." If we as Christians truly believe this, then what choice do we have than to fall to our knees, praying for Kim Jong-un and for the country of North Korea?

Will you join the North Korean church in this radical act?

**Name changed for security reasons*

How many Christians are there in North Korea?

Open Doors estimates there to be some 400,000 Christians in North Korea, which is less than two per cent of the country's total population of 26 million people.

How are Christians persecuted in North Korea?

North Korea is once more the hardest place in the world to follow Jesus, and a brutally hostile place for Christians to live. If discovered by the authorities, believers are either sent to labour camps as political prisoners where the conditions are atrocious, or killed on the spot – and their families will share their fate as well. Christians have absolutely no freedom. It is almost impossible for believers to gather or meet to worship. Those who dare to meet must do so in utmost secrecy – and at enormous risk. Even owning a Bible is a serious crime and will be severely punished.

Source: Open Doors - used by permission

CWM shares solidarity with Taiwan

Published On - 19 June 2023



The Council for World Mission (CWM), has held its Annual Members' Meeting in Changhua, Taiwan, as an act of support and solidarity with the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan (PCT), and the wider Taiwanese society.

CWM comprises 32 member churches – including The United Reformed Church – from six global regions.

Karen Campbell, URC Secretary for Global & Intercultural Ministries, was delegated to be part of a small group to draft a statement on behalf of CWM and then to read it out to the gathering. The statement reads:

Meeting under the theme “Break Down the Walls of Division”, CWM has actively listened to the voices of the Taiwanese people. Caught in the escalating geopolitics between competing Empires, Taiwan is living under the constant threat of war. Empire-policies have created deep divisions not only within Taiwanese society, but also in the entire Asia-Pacific region. The situation has been intensified in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war, with Empires taking more

aggressive actions than in the recent past. Taiwan has experienced increased military exercises (simulations and provocations), and the Taiwanese people feel increasingly vulnerable.

Taiwan has been one of the most isolated nations in the world during the Covid-19 pandemic, primarily because of its exclusion from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Health Regulations (IHR). Taiwan was not allowed to participate in the global response to the pandemic, including accessing information and resources, sharing data and best practices, and participating in international discussions and decision-making.

CWM has been working closely with the PCT and other ecumenical partners through the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum (TEF), advocating for the rights of the Taiwanese people to “self-determination”, including religious, political, and economic freedom, and in pursuing peace in the region.

CWM affirms Taiwan’s right to rise to life through the pursuit of justice, peace, and reconciliation. It acknowledges the resilience of the people of Taiwan in resisting the oppressive structures which threaten to destroy peace in their communities and limit their opportunity to flourish. CWM commends Taiwan’s generosity in contributing to the welfare and wellbeing of other nations, even in the face of its own challenges—including assistance for Ukraine, financial support during Covid, and standing in solidarity with Hong Kong.

CWM calls for greater global cooperation within and beyond the CWM family to support Taiwan in its struggle for peace, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. It urges global multinational and ecumenical organisations to hear the voices of the Taiwanese people, to speak out against the military hostilities being suffered by Taiwan, and against the injustice of Taiwan’s continued isolation.

Christian wisdom reminds us that we are all connected, and “if one member suffers, all suffer together with it” (I Corinthians 12: 26); CWM affirms its solidarity with Taiwan and its people, and says, “You are not forgotten, and you are not alone”.

Source: <https://urc.org.uk/>

FOCUS

on our Christian Brothers and Sisters in Nigeria being persecuted for their faith

Can you share the news about #14EveryDay?



Every day, on average, 14 Christians in Nigeria are killed for their faith. Can you stand up to violent persecution by raising awareness of this shocking fact?

Every day, on average, 14 Christians in Nigeria are killed for their faith. It's a shocking statistic, but these atrocities seldom get reported in the media. Even the church around the world often doesn't know the extent of the persecution faced by our brothers

and sisters in Nigeria. More Christians are killed for their faith in Nigeria than the rest of the world combined.

Raise awareness on social media

The church in Nigeria is asking for people to pay attention. And you can answer that call – with the #14EveryDay social media campaign. We're asking you to share a photo or video of yourself holding the hashtag #14EveryDay – spreading awareness, raising prayer and standing up to violent persecution with our brothers and sisters. Why not get your friends, family, followers and church involved?



You can be inventive with how you share – we've suggested something you can say, or words you can put in a caption, but it's up to you how you spread the sad news about our Nigerian family.

Thank you for standing up to violent persecution in Nigeria, and across sub-Saharan Africa, with our persecuted brothers and sisters.

What you can say

Today, 14 Nigerians will be killed for being Christians.

If 14 of your family were killed in one day, it would likely be headline news. That's what's happening, on average, every day to our church family in Nigeria. These atrocities seldom get reported. We need to tell our churches, tell our friends, tell everyone.

Nigeria is an epicentre of escalating extremist violence. We need to stand up to violent persecution today with our brothers and sisters.

Use the hashtag #14EveryDay, tag @opendoorsuk and share your #14EveryDay image.

Please Pray

Father God, I lift before You my persecuted brothers and sisters in Nigeria and the wider region. Please comfort all who are mourning and show Your loving, fatherly care to my church family who are scared for their futures. Please help me to raise awareness of violent persecution in sub-Saharan Africa so that the body of Christ can unite in prayer and support for vulnerable believers..

Information

- Nigeria is number 6 in the Open Doors World Watch List 2023. Last year it was number 7.
- There are just over 100 million Christians in Nigeria – that's almost half of the country's 216.7 million population (46%).
- As the government persists in its official position of denial of religious persecution, Christians' rights continue to be violated with impunity.

Source: [Open Doors](#) - used by permission

You are welcome to Living Well Together

**A safe place for friendship, support and
refreshing – here at Shanklin URC:**

Wednesdays 11:00 – 13:00

Free refreshments and craft activities

Just drop in at any point



Bible Society Prayer

God, you created all there is by the power of your word and you renew us daily by your life-giving Spirit.

We give thanks for the Scriptures in which you give us the wisdom leading to salvation through Jesus Christ, and that teach, train and correct us.

We pray for all involved in the translation, distribution and production of the Bible worldwide, and for all who help people understand and live by it. Lord, so shape your people by your word that we will bring life and hope to all around us through Jesus, your living Word.

We ask this for your glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Source: Bible Society - used by permission



Connection Quiz Answers

1. The mythical **sword** of King Arthur.
2. **Juno**.
3. **Gold**.
4. **Utah**.
5. Connection: They are **four of the five D-Day landing beaches, the other one is Omaha**.
6. This issue's cover photo is of... **Shanklin Esplanade**.



The Puzzle Pages

Sudoku

A numerical placement puzzle!

To solve it you need to fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3 x 3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Enjoy!

						1		
			6	5				8
	4	1			8		3	
9			5		7		8	3
		7						
1			3		2		9	4
	8	3			4		6	
			2	8				5
						8		

1		2		3		4		5		6			7
						8							
9				10									
						11					12		
13					14								
							15		16				
17				18									
									19			20	
21	22	23				24		25			26		
	27							28					
29				30	31								
32								33					

Last month's Sudoku - how did you do?

6	5	1	3	2	9	8	7	4
4	7	9	8	1	6	5	3	2
3	8	2	7	4	5	9	1	6
5	2	7	4	9	8	3	6	1
9	1	4	2	6	3	7	5	8
8	3	6	1	5	7	2	4	9
7	9	5	6	8	4	1	2	3
1	6	3	9	7	2	4	8	5
2	4	8	5	3	1	6	9	7

Across

- 1 - the Gaul (7)
 5 Composed the '*New World Symphony*' (6)
 8 Chris -, singer/songwriter who drove home for Christmas (3)
 9 Creative activity (3)
 10 Ladies' upper support garment (3)
 11 3rd colour of the rainbow (6)
 13 King Charles' sister (4)
 16 Journey in a car (5)
 17 Bard associated with 1 across (9)
 19 Expression of readiness to do or give something (6)
 21 Moving stairway, often found on the tube (9)

26 Anger (3)

27 Thanks *slang* (2)

28 UK snake (5)

30 Porridge cereal plant (3)

32 US singing family who sung '*Crazy Horses*' (7)

33 Studies, en français (6)

Down

1 Fall of snow (9)

2 Ship, famously sunk in 1912 (7)

3 Red gemstone (4)

4 Medical images (4)

5 Every day occurrence (5)

6 Capital of Norway (4)

7 Distance measuring unit abbreviated to km (5)

12 June -, actress associated with Terry Scott (9)

14 - -, Yogi Bear's friend (3)

15 3.142 (2)

18 Bird of Prey (6)

20 To - is human... (3)

22 Saint, abbreviated (2)

23 Not showing or feeling nervous (4)

24 Young children (but not kids) (4)

25 Not found in large numbers (4)

29 Not yes (2)

31 After BC (2)

Can You Guess The Year?

- Chelsea win the FA Cup, after a replay, beating Leeds United.
- NatWest Bank formed upon merger of two other banks.
- First Boeing 747 lands in Britain.
- And UK No. 1s included:
 - Dave Edmunds with '*I Hear You Knockin*'
 - Elvis Presley with '*The Wonder of You*'
 - Dana with '*All Kinds of Everything*'
 - England World Cup Squad with '*Back Home*'

Answer next issue

This Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Questions

1. Where was St George born?
2. When did '*Riverdance*' have its premiere in Eurovision?
3. What is the capital of Slovenia?
4. What was 'Operation Dynamo' in WW2?
5. Which princess died at Carisbrooke Castle, in 1650?
6. Which RAF aircraft was manufactured by SEPECAT?
7. Who wrote the 1923 play '*The Ghost Train*'?
8. When was the '*NatWest Tower*' in London opened?
9. On the periodic table, which element is Au?
10. In what year was Euro Disney opened?

Answers next issue

Please note that the **deadline** for contributions for the next magazine is:

Sunday 23rd July

Contributions can be emailed at anytime up to the deadline day to the editor at:

surc.thelink@btinternet.com

Last Issue's Solutions

- Guess the year: it was 1990

- Last issue's crossword ↓

K	E	R	M	I	T			E	I	L	E	E	N
I			A		A		A	L		O			O
N	E	U	R	O	L	O	G	Y		S		I	V
G			I		E		A			E			E
S	P	R	A	I	N		I		B	R	O	O	M
T			H		T	O	N	Y			I		B
O	H	M				B				E	L	B	E
N		I	N			B	A	Y	E	U	X		R
			R			M		V		O		D	
P	A	R	T	Y		A	B	E	R	D	E	E	N
E		O		A	M		I			U		W	E
A	R	R	O	M	A	N	C	H	E	S			W

Last Issue's 'Pot Luck' Quiz Answers

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Portuguese bearded princess | 6. HMS Ark Royal |
| 2. 1985 | 7. Terence Rattigan |
| 3. Riga | 8. October 2005 |
| 4. Battle of Normandy, incl. D-Day | 9. Iron |
| 5. Prince George of Denmark | 10. 6 th May 1994 |

Sunday Service

- Morning** **10:30 Morning Worship** in church
Broadcast live on YouTube
- ➔ **Holy Communion** on 1st Sunday of each month
 - ➔ **Encounter service** on last Sunday of each month

Weekday Activities

- Monday** 16:00 **Prayer for Israel** on the Church Zoom
- Tuesday** 14:00 **Bible Bite** ministry in church
- refreshments and fellowship from 13:30
Broadcast live on YouTube
- 19:30 **Prayer Meeting** on Zoom
- Wednesday** 11:00 **Living Well Together**
- Friday** 10:00 **CatURpillars**
- Saturday** 10:30 **Coffee Morning** on Zoom
- a chance to catch up and have a chat

Details of any other services/activities that we hold will be posted:

- ➔ **inside the church**
- ➔ **on our Facebook page**
- ➔ **and on our website**

Minister: Rev Brian Harley



10 Dracaena Gardens, Shanklin PO37 7JQ



01983 862485



brianharley58@gmail.com

Day off: Monday

Secretary: Robin Wightman



robinwightman@aol.com

Shanklin URC is a member of the **Evangelical Alliance**

www.shanklinurc.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 1130459