

MINISTER'S LETTER

The appearance of Nick Griffin, the leader of the British National Party (BNP), on BBC1's *Question Time* on 22nd October has proved controversial to say the least. The furore surrounding this appearance is perhaps not all that surprising given some of the beliefs and views expressed by Mr Griffin in the past.



Whilst he obviously has some supporters - two BNP candidates were elected to the European Parliament earlier this year - most people are seemingly, and quite rightly in my view, appalled by what he and the BNP stand for and against.

The appearance has though divided even the most vociferous opponents of the BNP. Some opposed the decision of the BBC to invite Mr Griffin to appear on *Question Time* fearing that it would provide the BNP with a platform of legitimacy that it should be denied; others welcomed the opportunity to take Griffin to task and expose him and his party for what he and it really is.

In the end, this week's *Question Time* proved to be very much a one-sided affair with the other panelists and indeed the majority of the studio audience asking questions of and venting their fury at a decidedly uncomfortable looking Griffin. It was compelling viewing, of course, though after a while, and as questions continued to focus largely on Mr Griffin and the BNP, even I found myself looking at Nick Griffin with some degree of sympathy. Whilst I could not disagree with him more, he is, after all, a fellow human being and as more and more blows landed on him it felt to me like I was witnessing a blood sport; something that I would not ordinarily choose to do. My sympathy only stretches so far, of course, and I was in some ways pleased that he was exposed in the way that he was.

Griffin has subsequently hit back at the BBC suggesting that he was exposed to a biased "lynch mob" and complaining that *Question Time* veered from its usual course. On the latter I would agree with him: the programme did not cover the breadth of issues that it usually does, though

quite what he was ever likely to say on the matter of the postal strikes is beyond me.

There were so many things said or dodged on last night's programme that I would personally want to take Nick Griffin to task over, and certainly too many to list here. I do though want to comment on his attacks both on Islam and on gay and lesbian people, particularly as he repeatedly chose to use the word 'Christian' to bolster his "arguments".

I do not claim to know the mind of Christ. I do though, whenever I look at the gospels, see a Jesus who throughout his ministry seeks to break down those barriers that divide human beings one from another, those barriers that separate human beings from God. I see a Jesus who through the course of his life struggles with issues of race and religious difference but who moves beyond inherited understandings of the world to a new and more inclusive outlook. In the light of this Jesus, any attempts to demonize other groups of people - particularly on the basis of difference - look decidedly un-Christ-like to me.

With every blessing

Paul

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Following on from Paul's letter this month it might be of interest to be aware of the following article that appears in the News Section on the Methodist Church website www.methodist.org.uk

9 July 2009

Methodist Church will bar members from joining BNP

The annual Conference of the Methodist Church, meeting in Wolverhampton, has agreed that no member of the Church can also be a member of a political party whose constitution, aims or objectives promote racism. This specifically includes, but is not solely limited to,

the British National Party (BNP).

The resolution was brought from the floor of the Conference, known within Methodist circles as a Notice of Motion.

Revd Sylvester Deigh, who proposed the Notice of Motion, said; “We must be clear that racism is a denial of the gospel. An openness to all people, regardless of nationality, is at the heart of Methodist identity. This does not mean that people will be excluded from attending church – God welcomes all, saints and sinners alike. But it does mean that members of racist political parties will not be able to become full members of the Church.”

The notice of motion reminds the Church that those who support racist parties are also God’s children, and in need of love hope and redemption.

People who speak on behalf of the Methodist Church will also be barred from membership of such parties. The Church will now undertake the legal work required to put this into practice and report back to the Methodist Conference in July 2010.

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Churches Together Advent Group



This year the Churches Together Advent Group Meetings will be at 8pm at St James' Church (for 3 Mondays) starting the last Monday in November.

30th November, discussing; Luke 3: 1-6, Phil 1:3-11
7th December, discussing; Luke 3: 7-18, Phil 4:4-7
14th December, discussing; Luke 1:39-55, Heb 10:5-10

For more information please speak with
Gwen Wildman

Pastoral Training

The Circuit has organised a pastoral training course which will take place on four consecutive Saturday mornings in Worcester Park starting on Saturday November 7th. Sessions will run from 9.00am to 1.00pm. There is a requirement to attend all sessions. Places are still available, so if you have an interest in pastoral care and feel this is something you may wish to take part in, do please give it careful consideration.

The course is led by a very experienced group of trainers whose work has been highly recommended to us. The training course is entitled 'Initial Bereavement Visitors Training' and is designed to equip people to support and care for the bereaved in their churches, communities, places of work, or any other setting - recognising that loss and grief are experienced at the death of a person but also at the end of a relationship or career etc. We are confident that those who attend this course will be provided with skills and confidence that will help us enormously as we seek to further enhance the pastoral care that we offer at Martin Way.

If you have been bereaved within the past years please do not put yourself forward. Otherwise, if you have any questions or would like more details do please speak with Paul Timmis (8337 2348) or Sue Boyd (8542 2377)

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Celebrate @ 8

Sunday Night @ Eight has a new name and a new slot...

You can still enjoy a blend of lively and meditative worship songs, familiar and new, within an informal café-style setting with coffee and tea on tap - but now it's quarterly and we are inviting our brothers and sisters from our neighbouring churches to join us. Just turn up at Stoneleigh Methodist Church at 7.45pm for 8.00pm on Sunday 8th November 2009.

For further information speak to Lesley on 020 8393 4116.



My PGL Weekend

Two weekends ago, 17th/18th October, I went away for a PGL (Parents, Get, Lost) weekend with the Guides. I've been to PGL once before but this one was the best yet! It was in Hindhead next to the Devil's Punchbowl. We stayed in dormitories which held up to six people. It also had it's own sink, toilet and shower.

On the first morning we were woken up at 7am to go to breakfast where we had a lovely cooked breakfast! Afterwards we had two activities to do in the morning and two in the afternoon. There was one activity that day that was my favourite, The Giant Swing. What you did was if you were on it you would be harnessed to this thin rubber seat which was quite high. Then you would be pulled up really high by the other people who were watching. When you were at the top, to release the swing you had to pull a small string and when you did you would drop really fast. It was great! Afterwards we had dinner and then we went into the woods and had a great campfire.

The next morning we were woken up at 7am (again!) for breakfast. We only did three activities this day because this was the day we were leaving. I did have another favourite activity though. This time it was The Powerfan. What you did is you climbed a 40-50ft tower and stood at the top which looked extremely high. When you were at the top you had to hold the braces of your harness and step off in to mid air! You would then float down quickly but when you were getting near the bottom it would slow down as you were attached to a fan so the lower you got the more it would work so it would slow down. I had a fantastic time at PGL and I would love to go back again and recommend the Guides to all girls.

Rebecca Smith

It's a funny old world

Funny how we set our clocks to arise at 6:00 am so we can be at work by 8.00am, but on Sundays we can't make church for 11.00am to praise the one who gave us the jobs!

Funny how we call God our Father and Jesus our brother, but find it hard to introduce them to the rest of our family.

Funny how much difficulty some have learning the Gospel well enough to tell others, but how simple it is to understand and explain the latest gossip about someone else.

Funny how small our sins seem, but how big 'their' sins are.

Funny how we demand justice for others, but expect mercy from God for ourselves.

Funny how we can't think of anything to say when we pray, but don't have any difficulty thinking of things to talk about to a friend.

Funny how we are so quick to take directions from a total stranger when we are lost, but are hesitant to take God's direction for our lives.

Funny how so many church goers sing 'Standing on the Promises', but all they do is sit on the premises.

Funny how people want God to answer their prayers, but refuse to listen to his counsel.

Funny how we sing about heaven, but live only for today.

Funny how people think they are going to Heaven but don't think there is a Hell.

Funny how it is okay to blame God for evil and suffering in the world, but it is not necessary to thank him for what is good and pleasant.

Funny how when something goes wrong, we cry, "Lord, why me?" but when something goes right, we think, "Hey, it must be me!"

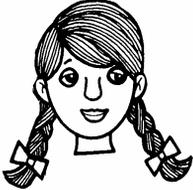
Oh wait...maybe an this isn't so 'funny' after all.



Christmas Appeal 2009

Dear Mister God

Dora my best friend at school is going to have a big party for Christmas with all her aunties and uncles and cousins. She says she will get lots of presents. My mum says she hasn't any money for parties and presents. We live in one room just the two of us. Can you please make it for me to have a present and a party?



*Respectfully
Eva*

Dear God

If I go without toys this Christmas can you help my mum instead? She cries a lot because she doesn't have the money for a house and food and clothes and bus fares. Can you get them for her? Is that too much? At church they say you can do impossible things.



Your friend
Solomon

Can YOU help us to answer the prayers of needy children in Merton by making a gift towards the cost of our New Year Party on Saturday 30th January 2010, where there will be presents for children and parents? Any money over and above the £1000 needed to run the party will be used to support families throughout the year.

Donations may be sent to:

***Christmas Appeal 2009,
Christian Care Association,
Main Office, St Barnabas Community Centre,
Thirsk Road, Mitcham,
Surrey CR4 2BD***

Tel No: 0203 044 0093

Email: christiancaremerton@gmail.com

Time for 'Trick or Treat' or Time for Prayer?



As October closes and November starts the children of England and America get ready to celebrate Halloween on the 31st October. It is all about 'trick or treats' and getting all the chocolates and sweets ready for the little callers who have dressed as witches and goblins. How did all this start?

Halloween (*All Hallows' Eve*), originates from the ancient Gaelic festival called *Samhain* (which means 'summer's end'). Over two thousand years ago this festival was held to celebrate the end of summer and the beginning of winter. Also ancient Britons had a similar festival called *Calan Gaeaf*. At the same time it was a festival of the dead. In Ireland bonfires were built and people prayed for the souls of those who died. The ancient Gaels believed that on this day the border between this world and the world of the departed becomes thin and the spirits can pass through. The spirits of the ancestors were most welcome whereas the harmful ones needed to be scared off. In order to do so, people wore masks and costumes to look like harmful spirits themselves and thus avoid harm. For the same reason Irish peasants used hollow pumpkins with a candle inside. Irish immigrants carried their traditions to North America in the 19th century. Today Halloween is celebrated mainly in England, Scotland, Ireland, Western Europe or North America.

In Slavonic tradition there was a ritual which aimed at contacting the spirits of the dead and gaining their favour. It was celebrated twice a year: in spring and autumn. In autumn it was held on the night of 31st October to 1st November. People prepared food for the spirits to win their favour and help them gain peace in the beyond. Bonfires were built for the wondering spirits to enable them to find the way home and spend this night with family members.

In 8th and 9th centuries popes Gregory III and Gregory IV replaced those pagan festivals with a Christian Holiday *All Saints' Day* celebrated in honour of all the saints on 1st November (before that it fell

on 13th May) followed by *All Souls' Day* on 2nd November, which commemorates the departed faithful who have not yet been purified and reached heaven.



Over in South America rituals celebrating the deaths of ancestors have been observed perhaps for as long as 2500–3000 years. Today it is a public holiday (Dia de Finados) in Brazil, where many Brazilians celebrate by visiting cemeteries and churches. The Day of the Dead (El Día de los Muertos or All Souls' Day) is a holiday celebrated in Mexico. The holiday focuses on gatherings of family and friends to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died. In Spain, there are festivals and parades, and at the end of the day, people gather at cemeteries and pray.



In Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy or Portugal people bring flowers to the graves of dead relatives and have time to remember them.

In Poland, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Germany and other countries the tradition

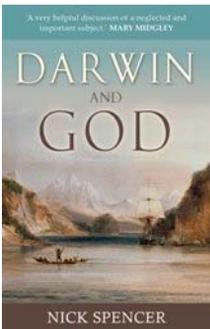
is not only to bring flowers but also to light candles. The candles are the echo of the old tradition of bonfires. Family members and friends visit cemeteries to pray for those have died. They take part in masses to pray for the dead relatives. In some Eastern parts of Poland, Belarus, Ukraine or Russia symbolic food is brought to the graves.

So as you can see, 1st November is the day that the world takes time to remember the family members and friends that have died but are never forgotten. Perhaps this is the occasion we should join the world in remembering our own loved ones who have passed away and reflecting upon our own lives.



Adriana Surowiec & Andrew Fox

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REVIEW from RE:FRESH BOOKS

Darwin and God

by Nick Spencer

160 pages, paperback, RRP£9.99

This year marks the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his *Origin of the Species*.

Darwin and God is the first full-length account of Darwin's religious beliefs to be published in the UK. It presents the moving, compelling and tumultuous story of one of the world's greatest scientists.

Nick Spencer draws on Darwin's writings to explore his view of design, purpose, morality, the universe and the human mind. He argues that, although Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection did undermine his Christian convictions, it was the age-old problem of suffering - first in theory, then through the dreadful loss of his favourite child - that caused his faith to break down.

*This book is available from re:fresh books & christian resources,
23 The Broadway, Tolworth, Surbiton KT6 7DJ*



Christmas Shoebox Appeal

Platform 10¾ are organising the shoebox appeal for the Samaritans Purse this year. This is an organisation that sends shoe boxes full of toys to children all over the world who will not receive a present for Christmas. This year we are asking for presents such as:

- Small Toys; bears, soft toys, tennis ball, finger puppets, small jigsaws, yo-yo's, building blocks, small musical instrument, trucks or cars, dolls, etc.
- Educational Supplies; felt pens, pens, pencils, pencil sharpeners, erasers, colouring book, notepad, picture or puzzle books, chalk, pencil case, stickers, etc
- Hygiene Items; toothpaste, toothbrush, hairbrush, comb, hair clips, bar of soap, flannel, etc
- Other Items; sweets (sell by date to be at least March 2010), gloves, scarf, sunglasses, cap, hat, bangles, necklace, clip-on earrings, etc.
- Knitted Items; hats, scarves, hand puppets (patterns can be found at www.operationchristmaschild.org.uk)

Please do not put in;

Food - especially chocolate

Liquids

Medicine or Vitamins of any kind

Dangerous Items

Any books with writing in

War related items

Clothing (other than listed above)

Anything of a political nature

Fragile items - such as glass containers, mirrors

Hand knitted stuffed toys without the CE mark

There will be two large boxes situated at the entrance to the church and another in the store cupboard in the hall, please could you contribute anything that's new or nearly new. All donations must be given in by the 15th November.

We are also having an Autumn Afternoon Tea on Sunday 15th November. It will be held at the church from 3.00pm until 4.30pm and all the money raised will go towards the postage of the shoe boxes! If you have any further questions or queries contact Abby Herring or Tony Loft.

More information and ideas can be found at the shoe box appeal website at www.operationchristmaschild.org.uk.

*Platform 10¾
Young Peoples Fellowship*

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**SIGMA CHRISTMAS
PRODUCTION**

'The Christmas Dream'
7pm, Sunday 13th December 2009



As you know SIGMA has put on a production at Christmas as part of the Seasonal Celebrations. This years Sigma Production is called 'The Christmas Dream' It is a musical by Val Hawthorne.

It is a 'What if' play. What if you were there? What if I was there? A group imagine what it would have been like to be in that far-off land at the first Christmas. What if they had been one of Mary's friends or a workmate of Joseph? Or what would it have been like to be a shepherd boy? Supposing one of them had an uncle who was one of the Wise Men or maybe worked in the court of King Herod? What would they have done? How would they have felt?

The performance is on Sunday 13th December at 7pm in the church. It is suitable for all ages from the youngest to the oldest! There will be refreshments including mince pies after the performance.

Please come and support us.

Anne Conquest

PUZZLE CORNER

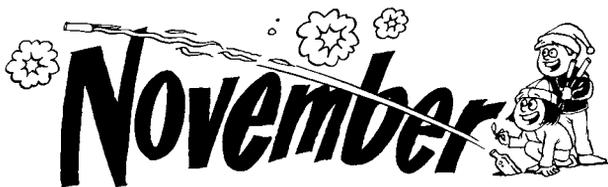
Write the answers to the clues in the boxes to the right of each clue
Copy the letters in the numbered boxes to the other boxes
 in the boxes below with the same number.

This will give you verse from the Bible.

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The above puzzle is thanks to <http://biblewordgames.com>

CHURCH DIARY



Sun	1	10.30 am	All Age Worship led by Laura Cockram
Tue	3	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	4	7.00 pm	Midways Group - <i>Travels with Pauline Riley</i>
Sat	7	BIG BRUNCH - <i>profits to go towards the cost of Spring Harvest</i>	
Sun	8	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	10	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	13	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	15	10.30 am	Praise Service led by David Eagle
		3.00-4.30pm	Afternoon Tea with Platform 10 ³ / ₄ - <i>to raise funds for the postage of the Christmas Shoe Boxes</i>
Tue	17	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>All that jazz</i> - Mike Mortley
Weds	18	7.00 pm	Midways Group - <i>Rev Ray Leigh</i>
Sat	21	10am-noon	Midways Jumble Sale - <i>profits to church funds</i>
Sun	22	10.30am	Morning Service led by Joanna Williamson
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	24	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	27	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	29	10.30am	Morning Service led by Rev Paul Timmis

Please refer to the Website (www.martinway.org.uk) or Weekly Notice Sheet for any additional information

We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday this month a very

Happy Birthday

and especially to:



Jennifer & Rosemary Fernando
 on **6th November**
Megan Sweby on **7th November**
Jack Pallister on **9th November**
Jacob Passfield on **27th November**

PUZZLE CORNER ANSWERS

Solution
 to the
 Anniversary
 Gifts
 Hidden Word
 puzzle from
 last month's
 Newsletter

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

New Position at Cheam Methodist Church

An exciting new post as an **OUTREACH WORKER** with funding for three years, with possibility for extension

25 hours per week

Salary: £14,615 per annum

Full details are available from David Worthington

Closing date for applications: 5th November 2009
Interview date: 27th November 2009
Contact information: David Worthington
020 8644 5160
72 Matlock Crescent,
Cheam, Surrey SM3 9SN

Email: THEWORTHIES72@AOL.COM

Stoneleigh Methodist Church - 7.45pm for 8.00pm

Celebrate @ 8

Café style Worship in the

Link Room Coffee Bar

Live Band - Refreshments

Lively worship AND quiet reflection

Once a Quarter

Just turn up for more info contact 202 8393 4116



Items for the **December Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 22nd November** at the latest