

MINISTER'S LETTER



I don't know about you, but I've always loved picture books. The Very Hungry Caterpillar. The Tiger Who Came To Tea. The Tale of Peter Rabbit. These are all books that I have loved since childhood.

Picture books are hugely important. They play a vital role in our education. Most of us first learn to read through picture books: we see the story in pictures long before we can read the words. Pictures help stories to come alive.

Often, when Jesus wanted to teach people things about God, he spoke in picture language. He painted pictures with words, drawing on every day things to help him - things that his listeners were familiar with and/or could visualise, things that they could picture in their minds. Mustard seeds and fig trees, hidden treasure and buried pearls, great banquets and wedding feasts, lost sheep, lost coins and even a lost son all featured in stories Jesus told.

A couple of weeks ago we reflected in church on Jesus' sayings about him being the shepherd of the sheep and the gate for the sheep (John 10: 1-10). As I mentioned that day, with each of these images he was trying to explain something slightly different about himself - who he was, what he was there to do - so he painted slightly different pictures.

When we read or hear the stories and sayings of Jesus, it's for each of us to try and work out for ourselves what we think Jesus was trying to say. When Jesus says, "I am the gate", I take that to mean him telling us: "I am the gate - not you. It's not for you to say who is in and who is out of God's kingdom. That's my job - not yours. It's not for you to say who is and who is not acceptable to God. That's my job - not yours."

As luck would have it, our reading the following week contained that famous saying of Jesus, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14: 6) - the saying that perhaps more than any other is used by people to proclaim Jesus as being the one and only way to God and therefore a really good excuse for them to decide whether someone's "in" or "out" in God's eyes. But

surely that can't be what Jesus is saying, if he's the gate, not us - so perhaps he means something else.

Most parents and children share a close and special relationship. The bond between a parent and a child is a unique one. Parents and children know each other so well. They share things with one another that they wouldn't with anyone else. They see one another in a way that no one else can or does. But more than that, they love one another in a way that no one else can or does. Often we can see something of the parent in the child. And we can understand the child better if we know the parent. Each helps us to better know the other.

When Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" - might this not be what he's driving at? Might this not be the picture he wants to paint for us? Might he not mean that, if we want to know God *as Father*; if we desire to experience something of the parent-child relationship witnessed in God-Jesus, then the only way that this is possible is through himself? Such an understanding doesn't preclude other people (e.g. those from other faiths) from coming to or knowing God: it simply suggests that it's not possible to enter fully into this particular parent-child relationship without going through Jesus.

As followers of Jesus we have committed ourselves to paint pictures for other people - pictures of a God who loved them into being, pictures of a God who will carry on loving them throughout their lives and even beyond them.

Some of these pictures we're to paint with words, and choosing the right words matters. The very pictures of God that people will paint for themselves will depend hugely on what we share with them. But just as importantly, we're to paint pictures through our actions - surround people with love and a God of love, a parent God who loves them as a child, will feel so much more real and possible than if we don't.

With every blessing

Paul

Extreme Parable

Taken from: Extreme devotion, the voice of the martyrs from the co-authors of Jesus freaks. Serious followers of Jesus pay a price, and extreme followers often pay the ultimate price. Each story is true.

LENINGRAD: Aida Skripnikova

"In prison, the most difficult thing was to live without a Bible."

Aida Skripnikova was a beautiful young woman. In her early twenties, she stood on a corner in the streets of Leningrad and handed out poems declaring her love for Jesus and her joy in knowing him as Lord and Saviour. She was soon arrested, but she proved to be resolute in her convictions, even though she was sentenced to a year in prison.

By the time Aida was twenty-seven years old, she faced her fourth prison term for her determination to defend the gospel. She had remained outspoken, saying in one publication, "We cannot be silent about what constitutes the whole meaning of our life --Christ."

Her fourth stay in prison proved her most difficult. The guards constantly tried to corrupt her faith with everything from abuse to offers of chocolate. But the hardest thing for her was living without God's Word. Her copies of the Scriptures was confiscated. As a punishment, she spent ten days in solitary confinement. Later she received a New Testament and guarded it as more precious than life.

When she was finally released, Aida was hardly recognisable -- her dazzling beauty was gone, and she looked decades older. But the love of God shone through her smile, restoring her unparalleled beauty from within.

In many grocery stores, beauty creams outnumber canned vegetables. The cosmetic aisle is crammed with formulas promising to renew and restore outward appeal. If only we were as concerned about our inner character as we are our outward appearance. Martyrs teach us to value the renewal of who we really are on the inside. The inner self. This is the person that no amount of torture can dismay. This is who is evolving into the image of Christ. You may wish to impress others according to worldly standards. However, God thinks your inner self is far more striking. Are you as focused on your inner character as on your outward appearance? In what ways is your inner self growing more beautiful as you age?

Your beauty..... should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is of great worth in God's sight.(1 Peter 3: 3-4)

Christian CARE takes food and other items regularly and long-term to families with little or no money, especially where children are at risk. We try to respond to all appeals for help. Your gifts will help us support more needy families regularly. We prefer **vegetarian food** with **long sell-by dates**.

The following items are *particularly needed*:

Rice – long grain/basmati [*not* risotto or dessert] - 5kg, 2kg and 1kg bags

Lunch box items – small drinks cartons, raisins, dips, biscuit bars, jellies and custards

Sugar - Granulated

Cereals – e.g. Cornflakes, Weetabix, Cocopops, Cheerios

Biscuits – sweet, [*not* savoury]

Pasta sauces – tomato, cheese [*not* curry]

Tinned vegetables – sweetcorn, peas, green beans and chick peas
[*not* mushy peas]

Fruit squashes

Fruit juices – e.g. tropical, mango

Treats – peanut butter, strawberry jam, chocolate spread, honey

Tinned fruit – any [*not* prunes or grapefruit]

Tinned desserts – rice

Drinking/hot chocolate [made with water]

Tea – ordinary in *small packs*, [*not* speciality or herbal]

Nappies – especially sizes 3, 4 and 5

Baby wipes, baby bath, baby lotion, baby talc, baby shampoo

We can *rarely use*:

Soups, tins of spaghetti, marmalade

There will be a large box clearly marked as food items for Christian CARE in the vestibule of the church hall during June for donations.



**CHRISTIAN
SOLIDARITY
WORLDWIDE**
VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

May Press Releases from CSW

The **CSW Nigerian team** (staff, volunteers, coordinators, partners and friends) are praying for Nigeria and ask that we be faithful in joining in their prayers:

- ✠ Pray and ask for God's mercy upon our nation, our leaders and also pray for the church to be strong in their lamentation prayer. Let God arise and defend his name (ps 3:7)
- ✠ Pray for God to remove violent spiritual roots that have been allowed to grow in the nation and that every altar raised against God's purposes for Nigeria shall fail.
- ✠ Pray for God to strengthen the military who are struggling to protect civilians from this insurgency and for God to give the government His strategies for victory over death and destruction. (Pr 11:11)
- ✠ Pray for the girls captured by Boko Haran, for their release, for the counties that have pledged to assist us fight terrorists, that God would help them track and release the girls. Pray for the parents and families of the victims, for their healing from the de-humanisation, anguish and humiliation and for justice to be served.

The **United Nations World Refugee Day** is observed on June 20th each year. This event honours the courage, strength and determination of women, men and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict and violence. CSW work with many people who have had to flee their homes due to war and religious persecution, and those who have been forced to flee to other regions within their own countries because of violence and threats on account of their lives.

As we remember refugees, let us:

- ✠ Pray for Syrians who have fled the war in their country, and especially those who remain in Syria and are seeking refuge;

- ✠ Pray for God's protection over refugees from Eritrea, who are often mistreated when they flee to Israel, Libya, Egypt and Italy;
- ✠ Pray for protection for internally displaced people in Darfur, the Nuba Mountains as they continue to face attacks from Sudanese armed forces and its allied groups;
- ✠ Pray for protection and provision for people displaced during the fighting between the Government of South Sudan and its opponents;
- ✠ Ask God to protect converts to Christianity who are often forced to move to another part of their country in order to live in safety;
- ✠ Pray for Christian and Muslim communities in the Central African Republic, where over 10% of the population has been internally displaced and thousands have fled to neighbouring countries;
- ✠ Thank God for the strong community that Iranian refugees have built outside Iran.

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"We gave you three days to recant but you insist on not returning to Islam. I sentence you to be hanged to death."

Meriam Ibrahim

Meriam Yahia Ibrahim is a Sudanese Christian. Meriam was originally arrested on 17 February, and sentenced to 100 lashes for adultery, after Sudanese authorities became aware of her marriage to a Christian man. On 13 May 2014 she was sentenced to death for 'apostasy' – leaving Islam – although she's been a Christian all her life.



She was given until 15 May to recant, with the implication that her sentence would be annulled or reduced if she did so. Meriam stood firm and refused to recant, so her death sentence was confirmed. Meriam gave birth in prison to a baby girl in the early hours of 27 May. She is currently detained in Omdurman Federal Women's Prison and will be held there

until her newborn daughter is weaned, a period of up to two years, then will receive 100 lashes for alleged adultery before the death sentence is carried out. Her 20-month-old son, Martin, is also in prison with her.

Since her sentence was confirmed her husband, Daniel Wani has been allowed to accompany her lawyers and visit her, prior to this she had been allowed no visitors. During her pregnancy she was denied vital prenatal medical treatment.

Although she testified that she is a life-long Christian, the court ruled that she abandoned Islam, and that therefore was originally Muslim. Since Muslims are not allowed to marry non-Muslims, her marriage is deemed invalid under Islamic law – so she was convicted of adultery as well as apostasy.

Please don't allow this terrible injustice to happen. Join CSW's campaign and lobby the Sudanese embassy on Meriam's case at: csw.org.uk

Please pray...

- That the death sentence would be annulled, and that Meriam and her children would be released from prison;
- For protection for Meriam and her two children while they are in prison;
- That Meriam and her children would be allowed to receive visits from Daniel, her husband;
- That God would continue to give wisdom, courage and strength to Meriam at this wearing time;
- For peace, comfort and strength for Meriam's husband Daniel, who has been separated from his wife and children;
- For wisdom for Meriam's lawyers and that God would guide them as they work on her behalf;
- That the truth about Meriam's religious background would be accepted by the courts, and they would have compassion.
- Pray that international outcry on Meriam's behalf would help secure her release;
- Pray that the appeal against death sentence lodged on 22 May would be successful;
- Pray for wisdom for Meriam's lawyers during the appeal process.



The 2014 Embrace the Middle East Calendar not only features beautiful pictures of the Middle East, but also Bible verses and recipes on the reverse.

Here is one of the recipes that would be excellent for a barbecue.

Kofte with Tzatziki

Lamb kebabs with a cooling cucumber and mint yoghurt sauce

Kofte

Ingredients (for about 8 kebabs)

- 900g (2lb) minced lamb
- 2 onions, grated
- 6 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tsp dried chilli flakes
- 1 handful of parsley, finely chopped
- 1 small handful of mint, finely chopped
- Olive oil (for brushing)
- Salt & pepper, to taste



Method

Prepare the barbecue and soak 8 bamboo skewers in cold water.
Put all the ingredients into a bowl and combine together with your hands.
Divide the mixture into 8 and mould into long sausage shapes around the drained skewers
Brush with oil (and lightly oil the bars of the barbecue)
Cook, turning occasionally, until browned all over and cooked through.

Tzatziki

Ingredients

- 500ml (18fl oz) plain yogurt
- ½ cucumber, peeled and finely diced
- 1 small handful of mint, shredded
- 1 garlic clove, finely diced

Combine all ingredients in a serving bowl and leave to chill for 30 minutes in the fridge before serving.



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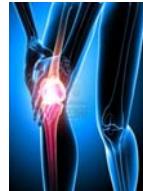
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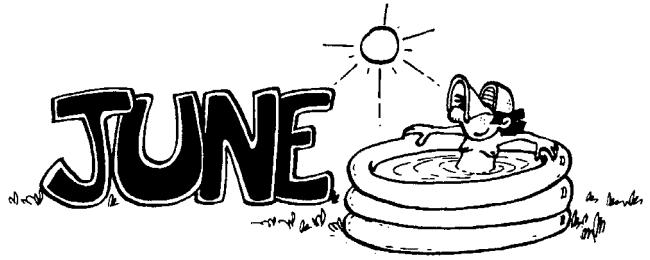


You can't change your life if
you don't change your thinking

FOREVER 

**For further information contact:
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CHURCH DIARY



Sun	1	10.30 am	All Age Worship led by Brenda Cannon
Tue	3	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
Fri	6	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	8	10.30 am	Morning Service including Baptism led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	10	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.00 pm	Circuit Meeting at Ruxley
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Thurs	12	8.00 pm	Church Council
Sun	15	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Valerie Ashcroft
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	17	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
		7.00 pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Maxi Martin</i> - My Life
Fri	20	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	22	10.30 am	Morning Service led by David Eagle
Tue	24	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	29	10.30 am	Communion 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:

Alice Day on 27th June

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Christian Aid Week has been amazing. We've been overwhelmed by the number of you who joined together to take a stand for justice. We've been astonished by your extraordinary efforts in the fight to eradicate poverty.

This year, we reflected on stories of change in Colombia, Iraq and South Sudan - how war tears lives apart but how our partners are helping to piece them back together again.

Thank you for playing such a crucial role in helping to transform lives across the world. Thank you for standing on doorsteps, for organising events, for raising sponsorship. Thank you for praying for Christian Aid Week, and for the world's poorest people.

With every blessing,

Lorraine Reimmer

London Church Coordinator
Christian Aid

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God has given us two hands,
one for receiving and the other for giving.

Billy Graham

CHURCH BOOKINGS

During the months of June and July the Church premises will be used by Trinity College of Music for exams. This will, as usual, mean some rooms will be used during the day, beginning 26th June up to and including 16th July.

This will mean that the Luncheon club will have to use the Hall, Coffee and Chat the Link Room and the photocopier will have to be moved to the Coffee Lounge.

I apologise for this disruption but the income generated is considerable and, hopefully, worth the inconvenience.

For further details of use please look at the Weekly Premises Usage displayed on the notice board in the corridor.

For any bookings, please note the Timetable on the same notice board, the Church Diary in the Vestry or contact the Booking Secretary on 8542 2377 or at peteboyduk@yayoo.co.uk. Any comments on lettings should also be made directly to the Booking Secretary.

Pete Boyd

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Wimbledon Circuit Open Meeting June 10th ~ 7pm for 7.30pm ~ Ruxley Church

Exploring Methodist Diaconal Ministry Speaker - Deacon Jane Rice

The circuit is looking at different types of ministry and has invited a deacon to the next circuit meeting. The meeting is open to everyone and there will be time for questions and answers during the evening.

Margaret Adams

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