



Delight in Science!

Light in the darkness

2015 marks the United Nations International Year of Light and light-based technologies. Light is important to me both as a physicist and as a Christian. It is central to many technologies we encounter in our modern lives, from pulses of light bringing information into home via fibre optic cables to laser treatment of eyes or kidney stones.

Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) was both a scientist and radical Christian thinker, who privately opposed the doctrine of the Trinity. He developed and popularised the idea that light was made of particles in his book *Opticks* (1704). An alternative view proposed by the Dutch scientist Christiaan Huygens stated that light was better described as a wave. Today we understand that light is more complicated than either of these interpretations individually, and instead displays characteristics of both particles and waves.

I am a doctoral student on the ATLAS experiment at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in CERN. CERN (the European Organisation for Nuclear Research) is a particle and nuclear physics laboratory located near Geneva, on the border of France and Switzerland. The ATLAS experiment, located 100 metres underground, is a giant particle detector used to observe the outcome of proton collisions in the LHC.

One of the major discoveries in science in recent years was the Higgs Boson, a particle first predicted fifty years ago and for which Peter Higgs and François Englert won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 2013. The Higgs Boson is responsible for giving mass to the other particles in nature, and decays or transitions into

other particles so quickly that it can only be observed by identifying and piecing together these remnants. One of the most important ways in which the Higgs Boson decays is into two photons, or particles of light.

2015 also marks 100 years since Albert Einstein's 1915 general theory of relativity, which made predictions about the effects of gravity on the propagation of light. For example, it described black holes - objects with a gravitational field so strong that light cannot escape, and gravitational lensing - the bending and focussing of light from distant objects by the presence of massive body, such as a galaxy, on its journey to Earth.

Light has a finite speed, around 300,000 kilometres per second, which means that despite appearing instantaneous in everyday life, light actually can take an appreciable time to cross the vast darkness of space. Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is approximately 100,000 light years across - that light takes 100,000 years to traverse this distance.

This means that looking out at the night sky, we see the light from stars as they existed hundreds or thousands of years ago - they may even no longer exist. The very earliest light that we are able to detect is called the Cosmic Microwave

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Faith and Science in church

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Sir John Purser Griffith

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Light in the darkness *continued*

Background (CMB) and was emitted when the universe was just 400,000 years old (compared to an age of 14 billion years today). This has been studied in great detail by the Planck satellite in recent years and provides evidence for the Big Bang model of the universe's beginning.

The importance of light to life on earth has led to its inclusion in many cultures and faiths. For example the Hindu celebration of Diwali and the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah are both referred to as the 'Festival of Lights'. Secular occasions, such as New Year's Day are often marked with firework displays.

In Christianity, both the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible use light-related imagery. The story of the birth of Jesus

is set at night and traditionally celebrated in winter, around the time of the longest night of the year. As Marcus Borg and John Crossan suggest in their book *The First Christmas - What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth*, this highlights Jesus' role as 'the Light of the World' and the one who brought light in the darkness. This parallels the creation story in which the first words and acts of God are: 'Let there be light' - not light from the sun, stars or moon, which are made later, but something different, something with a deeper meaning.

For people in biblical times, without the aid of the artificial light of today, the darkness held a greater sense of insecurity and fear. It is clear therefore why God is shown to appear in many

forms of light - for example as a smoking oven and a flaming torch to Abraham, and as a burning bush to Moses. Again in the Acts of the Apostles the association of Jesus with light is reiterated: Jesus appears to Paul with a blinding light, which causes Paul to become blind for three days.

The words 'light in the darkness' for me evoke both the wonder of light, both physically, and metaphorically pushing forward the boundaries of scientific knowledge. They also remind me of the spiritual symbolism of light for Christians, and for people of other faiths.

Samuel Webb

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Manchester*



The Resurrection

Patsy Holdsworth 2015

Science and the limits of technology

The picture which appeared with Patsy Holdsworth's article in the April Messenger (page 43) should have been the picture on the left. Due to a glitch with a commercial firm and the editor travelling with poor phone and internet coverage, the picture that appeared was another painting by Sr Holdsworth. We hope that her Resurrection picture will inspire your Whitsuntide!



As in 2014 the May edition of the Messenger concentrates on the wonders of the sciences and all they bring us. This year we also celebrate Whitsun, Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit who brings us both knowledge of creation and wisdom to enjoy and explore it. I hope that the articles in this issue show us some of the ways in which Spirit is sought in today's world.

In May the United Kingdom has a general election. For general principles on voting, the Ekklesia website has a paper, which includes ten key principles that came out of a consultation last year and are based on biblical concepts. See

www.ekklesia.co.uk/sites/ekklesia.co.uk/files/ekklesia_general_election_2015_focus.pdf

The Joint Public Issues Team, which the Province supports, also has guidance through the 'Love your neighbour: think, pray, vote' theme. See www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/issues/politics-and-elections

The Great Game of Creation

Long ago, when science was still relatively new,
And church was packed on Sunday 'cause it was the thing to do,
A clever man called Newton sat and watched an apple tree,
And when he saw an apple fall he thought of gravity.
His laws explained the world around as far as he could know,
But he was wrong about some things and Einstein told us so.

The key to what he came up with was all to do with light,
And how its speed remains the same however hard you fight
To catch it up; it's written in the paper he prepared
In which he wrote the formula $E=mc^2$.

The theory meant a change of view, and new concept of time:
Einstein caused a shift of scientific paradigm.

Science keeps on moving as discoveries are made;
More and more of God's creation emerges from the shade.
From what we see if we look up into the sky when dark,
Right down to things we cannot see, the electron and the quark,
All obey the laws made when God set things on their way.
But God did not just sit and watch, for God delights in play.

Creation as it changes is God's joyful heavenly dance.
Fundamental to it all's the element of chance;
Not the kind of randomness that does not have an aim;
As all potentials are explored it's more like a great game
In which God is the player. God has chosen thus to do,
And by this graceful providence gives joy to me and you.

Michael Newman

*The Mass-Energy equation is: $E=mc^2$
[E (energy) = M (mass) x C (speed of light) Squared].*



Joy's Journal

March - in like a lion out like a lamb, is an old saying about this month of changes. Winter to spring, GMT to summer time and the whole garden seems to come alive, not forgetting the time of preparation for Easter. March is a month of conferences and most years I spend more days away from home than at home. One year I think I slept in eight different beds at conference centres and hotels.

The Moravian European Youth Leaders Conference meets every year. There were only eight of us and this year James Woolford and Eleanor Hollindrake joined me. The meeting is important as we get to share the frustrations of working for a very small denomination, support each other and learn about the work going on across Europe. It is also a time to plan for the future, and to build up work across Europe to areas where there is no paid workers and may be little support. We are very scattered and the support of others who understand about how the Moravian church works (or at least has an inkling as the provinces are different) gives us a network to rely on. We also get to share news from our own countries, talk about new initiatives, good practices, and learn about what the Unity are doing for youth as one of our number is on the steering group. This year we were in the Netherlands and got the opportunity to visit projects in Haarlem, celebrate and share a meal with the 'churches together' group there. We start each day with worship and it was fantastic to be part of this group who sounded amazing - my own singing is a bit off-key sometimes so this is a new experience for me.

I then went to the CGMC spring conference which was in North Wales and as well as working it gave up the chance to retreat and spend some time in a really beautiful place. The guided tour with the poems of R.S. Thomas read in the places they were written and hearing a little of his life story were renewing and enlightening. The hotel food was really good and it felt that body and soul were both fed. Next year March will not be as hectic, as CGMC will be in February and the European conference in April so I might get to spend the month at home!

Latest news from the Provincial Youth and Children's Office



Eastern District Training Day - Hornsey

This year it was the turn of Hornsey to host the training day. The Sunday school teachers and youth leaders gathered for a training session on Saturday 21st March 2015 at 10am. The session commenced with the text for the day and prayer led by Sr Joy Raynor. The training day was sub divided into three sessions:

Working with teenagers, Safeguarding and additional resources (e.g. book list, internet to name a few). Questions were raised and addressed throughout the session.

Various training techniques were used throughout the day to keep the training session lively and interactive.

Edwin Quiden

William Bynum, *A little history of Science*,
Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2012

The complexity of the subject leaves many of us unable to enter into debate about science and religion. We may believe that the two are complementary and that the modern attempts to make them appear contradictory are false, but we are not sure where to start or how to make the case.

The idea of contradiction owes much to the New Atheists like the popular proseleytising biologist Richard Dawkins. It was not always thus: many scientists of the past have had an active faith underpinning their work, and may have written on theology as well as their science.

The author takes us through the methods by which scientific knowledge is attained, through such skills as experimentation and the use of mathematics. Some scientists who are Christians, mainly astronomers, have tried to explain science to believers, not always successfully, for to do so requires the special skills of giving enough information but not swamping the general reader; and the ability to write clearly.

This author's background is medical but he has an interest in other fields of science and a respect for religion. The book deals with the 'how' questions key to modern science in a readable way, following the development of

scientific knowledge from ancient times, as far as possible chronologically. Each chapter is written around a central figure, and while the overlap is greater as we come nearer to our own time and the huge expansion in scientific knowledge, this works well, helping us to clarify how human thought changed and tested itself as well. Interesting for many readers will be the extent to which scientific enquiry grew out of religious belief and a desire to learn more about people, the planet and the universe; and reminds the reader that religion asks the 'why' questions that are part of being human.

The social or cognitive sciences are not covered, and engineering only briefly. The book is Eurocentric, then includes in later chapters North American developments; and it may be that even in a short book more may have been made of advancements elsewhere, particularly in China. More too could be made of the contribution of women scientists who broke through expected patterns, showing that anyone given the chance and urge may help us to explore.

The book never lets us forget that scientists are human beings with human foibles as well as the yearning for knowledge. It provides an introduction to many perplexed questions, laid out in a chatty and witty style.

Gillian K. Straine, *Introducing SCIENCE AND RELIGION: a path through polemic*, London: SPCK, 2014. 154 pp.

The author of this highly readable book is a physicist and Anglican priest. She introduces her subject through chapters explaining what religion and science are, the history of their intellectual relationship, the issues that caused conflict in recent centuries; and the inter-relationships. This last, very useful, section explains the three main theoretical positions: independence of science and religion, where the debate happens in parallel; dialogue between them; and integration of the two. As most scientists, and religious thinkers, take as their starting point some place on the spectrum, it is useful to have

them explained. Her next chapter covers topics from each of these theoretical standpoints, and covers both the physics and religion. The topics are: the Big Bang theory; evolution; quantum theory and the science of the very small; and consciousness and the mystery of our souls.

This is a thoughtful introduction to the subjects, the theoretical positions, and the areas of current discussion, from the point of view of a physicist but containing meat for the discussion of other scientific matters that touch us today.

Rosemary Power

Faith and Science in church



For some years now, my wife and ministerial colleague Zam and I have been working towards an annual science and faith event in local churches.

We got moving with this in 2009 with the Darwin bicentenary, and produced 'thank God for Darwin' badges, along with special worship events based round Darwin's life and spirituality. These evolved into material we could share with other churches. We called this 'Dinosaur Sunday', to the delight of our autistic son, who sees the world through dinosaurs, and has contributed artwork and insightful presentations.

In his own words, which were welcomed by the congregation where we began: *'the stories in the Bible about how things began aren't true, but they mean something'*. If a young child isn't troubled by that, why should we be?



From the outset we have had two aims: a mission outreach to those who have swallowed a popular picture of the church as wedded inextricably to opposition to the 'truth' of science; and a building up of the confidence of the congregation in the face of oppressive, if well-resourced

young-earth or more insidious 'intelligent design' material offered mostly from the United States. From the outset we have lent our names to the American 'Clergy Letter Project', and we encourage readers to add the name of their church to this list if they at all acknowledge evolution as a valuable insight.

As time has gone on, we have found that an overt and clear welcome for the honest insights of science is ever more necessary for local churches.

There have been additional bonuses in our reassessing how we read and preach scripture. We have become aware of how the myth of progress has crept in; the assumption of a clear linear progression throughout the Bible stories; and that this has gone hand-in-hand with a misreading of

evolution itself as necessarily a process of linear improvement, rather than the interaction of life with changing circumstances. Life forms often coexist with their descendants, rather than replace them. Within the congregation, people still presume that when Genesis Chapter 1 comes up on the lectionary, we are going to have problems. Not if we face all the questions head on, we're not!

We have been delighted to join the 'grantees' of the Templeton Foundations' Scientists in Congregations, Scotland' (SICS) project, administered through St Andrew's University. This, subject to certain conditions, underwrites the promotion of scientific insights in mainstream and grassroots church situations.

The projects are hugely varied, but SICS has enabled us to expand the scope of our work; to let scientific thinking permeate the everyday life of the congregation. We now call the overall project 'A Time of Wonder'.

Last Christmas, Charles Darwin was a narrator, alongside Lady Wisdom from the Book of Proverbs, in our Christmas play, reflecting on the evidential nature of the birth narratives, and setting the Nativity alongside 'factual' elements in a creative and affirming way, which dismisses neither the scripture nor the science, nor the scholarship.

We invited the education officer of Glasgow Botanic Gardens to talk about 'plants that heal', and we hope to gather into some sort of publication, worship material: prayers, hymns, reflections, liturgies.

We also listen to what the congregation say about events. This has led us to the question of *'What makes us human?'* This in turn had to be modified, following research, to *'what makes our species special?'* I suppose it turns on the sort of sacramental evolutionism that has

occupied us as preachers for some while: that if we teach that Jesus was *fully* human, then he shares with us our evolutionary history, and the boundaries of what constitutes the 'image and likeness' of God is *inclusively* fuzzy.

Define it too sharply, give people reason to define others as 'primitive,' or no longer 'human' due to mental or physical disability, and there lurks fascism. Better to embrace the barely qualified, than to deny dignity and rights.

Ultimately, it is the challenge of *'through a glass darkly'*: we can investigate, research, pray and discern, but we have to be at ease in faith that clarity will elude us.

Because we are working in local ministry, there are severe restraints on the amount of study of other people's ideas that we can engage in. Perhaps then, it is more important to *do* contextual theology than to *study* it. The front line of local ministry can be a very creative place to be, even with the very special pressures of local pastoral life. SICS provides intermittent conferences for grantees, to re-immense the leaders of the individual projects in the frameworks and jargon of science and religion in an academic context.

Please do 'like' our Facebook pages 'Dinosaur Sunday' and 'A time of wonder' which will get more lively as we approach events.

David Coleman is a URC minister working in Glasgow.

God, who calls our species special

Tune 'Neander', otherwise known as 'Unser Herrscher' 87 87 77

Notes:

A valley named after the pastor and hymn writer Joachim Neander was where the bones of the Neanderthal people were first discovered. Additionally, 'Neander' was the writer's classicisation of his surname Neumann ('new man'). We had to have some words to go with our investigation of what, in a faith sense, makes our species special. What makes us human? We have discovered that, in the history of the world, we have not been the only humans. This faces us with the challenge

that it is more important to find our identity amongst other creatures by a positive affirmation of what we share than by trying to say that there is a clear point at which a fellow-creature is no longer to be accorded the respect and privileges due to humanity. There is also a passing reference to the idea of Francis Collins, leader of the team that first decoded the human genome, that in doing so they were seeing 'the handwriting of God'.

1) God, who calls our species special; Christ who shares our flesh and blood; Breath of Life; of cells and coding God of Change, through drought and flood shows what's shared is more important: God sees good from root to bud

2) In each cell of Jesus' body - thus, in ours - God writes a prayer: Many million simple symbols long in writing, still declare: Ours to choose and shape our purpose: shepherding the earth we share.

3) How is God reflected in us? Some say 'love', some 'power to change', Some claim 'body', some choose 'reason' faces friendly, faces strange. God defies our calculation: human life fulfils the range.

4) Those who lack are no less human; Fitness dwells in care, concern. Race, class, gender: senseless boundaries! To be whole's not being alone. Death, then life: our shared inheritance As Creation learns to learn.

Ethics are a set of beliefs about right and wrong. Ethics play a part in every aspect of life, but are particularly important in medicine. Medical ethics is a field that formally considers the morality and consequences of medical decision-making, and addresses the values and guidelines governing decisions in medical practice. Medical ethics is about trying to do the right thing while achieving the best possible outcome for every patient.

The idea of specific medical ethics was first introduced in about the fourth century BC by Hippocrates and it is summarised in the Hippocratic Oath which essentially says that doctors should always endeavour to protect their patients from harm.

In modern medical practice, 'Four Principles'¹ is one of the most widely used frameworks as it offers a broad consideration of medical ethics providing a general guide that leaves considerable room for judgement in specific cases.

The Four Principles

- **Autonomy** means respect for the patient. People have the right to control what happens to their bodies. This principle simply means that an informed, competent adult patient can refuse or accept treatments, drugs, and surgery as they wish. Where possible, doctors should take the wishes of the patient into consideration when deciding on treatment and should not withhold information from them or share confidential information with others.
- **Beneficence** means acting in the patient's best interests. This considers the balancing of benefits of treatment against the risks and costs; the doctor should act in a way that benefits the patient. However what is good for one patient may not be good for another, so each situation should be considered individually.
- **Non-maleficence** means never doing anything that intentionally harms a patient. 'First, do no harm' is the bedrock of medical ethics. All treatment involves some harm, even if minimal, but the harm should not be disproportionate to the benefits of treatment.
- **Justice** means that all patients should be treated equally. Justice also means that doctors should think about how what they do affects society as a whole.

Ethical principles are often easy to understand, but can get complicated when there is a conflict between different principles. The theory is one thing but putting it into practice is often more difficult. For example, a patient might have an incurable disease and asks their doctor to stop the treatment which is keeping them alive. This causes a conflict between autonomy and non-maleficence.

Doctors and patients often have to make their own personal ethical decisions. Frequently there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers and even people with similar beliefs or backgrounds can arrive at different decisions. Clearly it will also not always

be possible for the Church to present a definitive Christian view on a given issue.

Modern science and medicine has allowed mankind to do more than ever before but as the opportunities have increased, often, so too have the ethical issues and risks. There is greater potential to do harm than ever before and the longer term effects of seemingly straightforward interventions and procedures may not be fully appreciated or understood.

The recent controversy around so called 'three parent babies' is a good example.

MPs have recently voted in favour of the creation of babies with DNA from two women and one man. The UK is the first country to license the technique by which a small amount of faulty DNA in a mother's egg is replaced with healthy DNA from a second woman, so that the baby would inherit genes from two mothers and one father. This could potentially be used to prevent babies being born with mitochondrial diseases.

A small number of children each year are born with faults in their mitochondrial DNA which can cause diseases which tend to strike in childhood and get steadily worse, often proving fatal before adulthood. This new technique replaces the faulty DNA and ensures a healthy child.

While it is true that only 1% of DNA would come from the 'third parent' there are obvious ethical implications from creating an embryo with genetic material from three parents.

From one perspective, as a result of this development, women who carry severe mitochondrial disease may now have the opportunity to have healthy children without passing on devastating genetic disorders. From the other perspective it is argued that mitochondria are not completely understood and the DNA they hold might affect people's traits in unknown ways. Children born using this new technology would have heritable genetic changes and there may perhaps be significant unknown risks to future generations. It is further suggested that once a precedent has been set for altering the genetic material of an embryo prior to implantation in the womb, it is impossible to predict how these types of techniques might be used in the future.

Scientists and clinicians continue to hold opposing opinions and different Churches have taken differing views. This is not the first medical ethical dilemma faced by society and it will certainly not be the last. As is so often the case only time will tell who is right. In the meantime we must apply the principles of medical ethics and our own conscience to each situation as we seek to make progress.

Br David Johnston is a medical doctor.

References

1. *Beauchamp and Childress; Principles Biomedical Ethics, OUP, 5th edition 2001.*

The traditional channels for making babies remain deservedly popular but do not necessarily result in a healthy child or even conception at all.

This article will look at the legal background to surrogacy (dating back to the Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985) and also at the recent development of mitochondrial donation, popularly reported as leading to 'three-parent babies'.

What is surrogacy?

Surrogacy is explained in the 1985 Act as 'the process by which a child is carried through pregnancy by a woman who has entered into an arrangement made before she started to carry the child with the intention that, at birth, the child and parental responsibility for it will be transferred to another person or persons who will become legal parents of the child'.

The surrogate mother is the person who carries the child for the 'commissioning parents'.

In 'straight surrogacy' the surrogate mother becomes pregnant using the intended father's semen. The baby is conceived using the surrogate's egg.

In 'gestational surrogacy' the surrogate mother's egg is not used; she is genetically unrelated to the baby.

An arrangement involving both eggs and sperm from donors is not permitted.

A 'parental order' is the court order needed to make the commissioning parents in every sense the legal parents and completely cancel claims of anyone else to be parents. Same-sex commissioning parents are not called father and mother, but first parent and second parent.

Until there is a 'parental order' the surrogate mother is the legal mother of the child. Her husband, if he agreed to her being a surrogate, is the legal father.

Only a couple (married, in a civil partnership or in an 'enduring family relationship') can apply for a parental order. At least one of them must have provided the genetic material (egg or sperm) used to create the embryo.

At the time the commissioning parents apply to the court for a parental order the child must be living with them. The application should generally be made within six months of the child's birth. Unconditional agreement of the surrogate, given after the child is at least six weeks old, (and of her husband if he agreed to her being a surrogate) is necessary unless she can no longer be found or is incapable of giving agreement.

A child born of a donation after March 2005 can obtain information to identify the donor.

Commercial arrangements and payment of money apart from reasonable expenses to the surrogate or anyone else (such as an introduction agency) are not allowed; there can be no profit element.

Surrogacy abroad

This ban on commercial surrogacy in the UK prompts many couples to go overseas. India, where for more than 10 years contractual surrogacy arrangements have been encouraged but not closely regulated is a popular destination.

Every country has its own legal system. Laws on nationality and immigration, as well as on enforcement of agreements made in other countries, can conflict with each other.

The complexity of the rules between different countries, and the infinite variety of people's situations, lead to very tangled legal problems, often involving the law and courts of more than one country. In UK law 'the paramount consideration of the court must be the child's welfare, throughout his life'; the UK courts use this principle to try to achieve a sensible result for each child.

What is a mother?

In a case in the High Court in London in February 2015 a man in his twenties wanted a baby. Using his own sperm, and a donated egg, his own mother was impregnated and carried the child. At birth she and her husband were the legal parents of the child. The man, being single, could not apply for a 'parental order', and so had to apply to adopt the child, for it to become his.

Reports from social workers supported the arrangement. The man was said to be 'committed to explain the circumstances surrounding of the child's birth to him in an age-appropriate manner in the future both to assist with his identity and enable him to understand the lengths the family went to for him to be born.'

After adoption the man's mother, who carried the baby, would assume the role of grandmother. Approving the adoption the judge said that the close relationships within the family were critical to the court's decision.

The report of the case does not tell why the man did not have a female partner of his own.

Is using one's sperm to impregnate one's own mother to be encouraged? How many mothers does this child have?

Mitochondrial donation

The Human Fertilisation & Embryology (Mitochondrial Donation) Regulations 2015 were approved by Parliament earlier this year. They permit the creation of babies with DNA from two women and one man in an attempt to avoid some genetic defects. They permit the transfer of 'nuclear DNA' out of an egg and into another egg or an embryo. The process is allowed only when the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has acknowledged a risk of a particular embryo having mitochondrial abnormalities leading to serious disease.

A person wanting to know whether he was conceived by mitochondrial donation may ask the HFEA for information about screening tests carried out on the donor and for information about that donor's personal and family medical history, and for other background information about the donor 'as a person'. As the law stands the donor's identity will not be disclosed.

A central objection to the technique of mitochondrial donation is that it is not aimed at curing disease in one individual, but rather creating a new individual designed to be without disease.

Science enables and the law permits; is it then right to do?

Paul Mitchell

Moravians in Britain and the Scientific Study of the Bible

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the development in Germany of an approach to Biblical studies known as 'higher criticism' or, more commonly, the 'historical-critical' method. While the Bible was traditionally read from a position of *faith*, the new approach studied the books of the Bible in an objective, *scientific* way, just as one might any other ancient book. When was it written and by whom? What was the purpose of writing and what was the original meaning? What sources did the author use and how has the book changed over its history? The answers to these questions were not infrequently in contradiction with prevailing Christian beliefs and represented a challenge to traditional Christianity, particularly on ideas on Biblical inspiration.

On the evidence of the *Moravian Messenger* how did British Moravians react to these developments in Germany?

Bishop Reichel of the German church had alerted British Moravians to the dangers in a *Messenger* article of 1869. 'We are living', he writes, 'in times when everything that is most holy is brought into doubt. The Bible is spoken of as though it were a human book like any other. Unless the whole Bible in all its parts is true, we should have no certainty in regard to any of its declarations, since we have no other infallible judge in the matter. It is therefore a matter of incalculable importance for us to know that the whole Bible is infallible truth, as God's word to man.' The new science of higher criticism, he continued, was the thin end of a wedge to destroy Christian belief.

By no means everyone agreed with this view. An anonymous article of 1883 argued that the popular impression that German theology was identified with heresy and the corruption of youth was wrong. German theologians had devoted themselves to 'the great work of fixing and enlarging our conceptions of Divine truth'. An article from 1901 praised Charles Gore, a newly-appointed Anglican Bishop who had upset traditionalists with his broad acceptance of higher criticism, for resisting 'narrowing and illiberal tendencies' and for refusing to ignore 'the voice of criticism and science on the question of biblical inspiration'.

1907 saw a confrontation when the Moravian minister Joseph Hutton authored two long articles on the topic in the *Messenger*. He concluded that the higher critic was not an enemy of faith but a champion of the truth. After a brief introduction to the methods of the higher



Rev Joseph Hutton

critic he recorded some of their conclusions, which he happily accepted, namely that the author of the Pentateuch was not Moses nor the author of Matthew's Gospel the apostle of that name. He then discussed the literary variety of books in the Bible, using the creation story in Genesis as an example of myth and the book of Jonah as an example of allegory. The second article argued that Sunday school teachers should have liberty to teach whatever they held to be true. If he taught a literal six-day creation or that the Book of Jonah was history but did not believe it, he was 'a hypocrite and a coward'.

These articles drew a response in the following month's *Messenger* from Bishop Hassé, a firm traditionalist. Although, he wrote, there was much in Hutton's articles with which to agree (although quite what he does not make clear) he continued to believe in full, 'plenary', inspiration. Because Jesus himself believed in the authorship of Moses and referred to Jonah as a real prophet, neither could be open to doubt. Like Reichel, he argued that higher criticism was the thin end of a wedge and those who questioned the Books of the Law could end up denying the Resurrection itself. He was most firmly against introducing the topic into Sunday schools. He preferred, he continued, to trust in the inscrutable wisdom of God than in the efforts of man.

The following month the Moravian minister R. Klesel gave his views in a review of 'The Bible: Its Origin and Nature' by Marcus Dods, professor at New College, Edinburgh. The book dealt,

among other topics, with biblical inspiration, the canon of scripture and biblical infallibility. This book, Klesel states, deserves a place in *all Moravian Sunday Schools* (surely a deliberate reference to Hutton's article) and in the library of every thoughtful and intelligent Christian. Dods, a minister in the Scottish Free Church, was thoroughly immersed in higher criticism. His sermon on Inspiration delivered in 1878 had brought him before the General Assembly of that Church on a charge of unorthodoxy. Klesel quotes with approval Dods' statement that salvation does not depend on the absolute accuracy of every word in the Bible but on a living Person we can know and trust.

The Moravian Church was strongly evangelical in the nineteenth century, and one might expect a high view of biblical inspiration and an attachment to a literal interpretation of scripture. The Moravians, however, were far from usual in their evangelicalism. They were not burdened by required beliefs on dogma or biblical infallibility and the Moravian principle of unity in essentials and liberty in non-essentials gave considerable freedom for personal opinion. The nature of one's belief as to how God spoke in the Bible was not an 'essential'. Moravians also had the highest regard for education and would not readily turn their back on the results of scholarship. They were proud to be within the mainstream of Christian churches (Anglicans were moving steadily in the direction of accepting the results of higher criticism), and they intended to remain there.

Equally important, younger Moravian ministers were not only thoroughly trained but exposed to German higher criticism as part of their training.

It would be unusual if there were not differing opinions in this respect among Moravian ministers and laypeople. But Joseph Hutton reminded readers in his *History of the Moravian Church* (1909) that their Church was a wide tent. 'As long as a [Moravian] holds true to the broad principles of the Christian faith, he may, whether he is a minister or a layman, think much as he pleases on many other vexed questions. He may be a ... a higher critic or a defender of plenary inspiration ... he may have his own theory of the atonement ... and his own belief about the infallibility of the gospel records. The main essential ... is his personal relationship to Jesus Christ'.

Adrian Wilsdon

With thanks to Lorraine Parsons, Archivist

Contra the Bully

A previous article of mine (March 2015) was a little light on doctrine and theology, someone told me; and it was deliberately so, to establish the point that bullying is rooted and grounded in the human condition, arising from our darker, atavistic nature. Bullying is in stark contrast to God's intentions for us, that we are meant to live 'crowned with glory and honour' as Psalm 8 puts it.

Whilst the Biblical writers had strong objections to bullying, a search will reveal no instances of the word in the Scriptures, because our English translators did not have access to the term until the eighteenth century. By then the use of 'oppression', 'to oppress', was well established, and in over 80 references the context clearly refers to bullying or abuse of power.

We might begin with Deuteronomy 23:16 and the Mosaic injunction not to oppress the runaway slave, and continue to Amos 4:1, 'Hear this you cows of Bashan who are on the mount of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy'. Other prophets run with the same theme, as we find in Micah 2:1-2 'Alas for those who devise wickedness... They covet fields and seize them: houses and take them away; they oppress householder and house, people and their inheritance'.

A particular case that evidently sticks in the throat of Hosea was that of the priesthood who abused the power that the faith of the faithful lent to them to bully those who were thus vulnerable. He found that the priests had recruited temple prostitutes and feathered their own nests in abuse of their sacred trust. It still stinks a mile when we hear today of abuse and bullying by priest and church, or of priest or minister by church officials. Such abuse, in the very context above all others where God's aspiration that we should live 'crowned with glory and honour' should prevail, is simply intolerable.

Which raises the question of what do we do with victim and bully; how do we respond to their respective situations? It must be acknowledged that the church has historically found it easier to deal with the bully, via the route of repentance and forgiveness - scarlet sins white as driven snow and all that - than with the victim. My great hero Paul must bear some of the responsibility for that, and it is not surprising in view of his history of persecution. A brief survey of the liturgy of the church, from the beginning to this day, reveals a persistent tendency to dwell on restoring the sinner/bully/abuser. It's enough to make an irreverent mind like mine ponder the history of the authors, what they had, or have, on their consciences!

In contrast, we are a bit weak on the victim side of the equation. Whilst the bully who claims to be repentant can walk away scot-free from the church's condemnation, the victim's wound may still fester unhealed. The beaten wife still sports her black eye to go with a broken spirit, abused children are still forever at odds with a world which betrayed them, the penitent thief leaves ruined families in his wake. In view of the irreversible nature of the damage done by the bully, we do not take it very seriously, not at least, from the victim's point of view.

There is not much that we can do as church, to physically restore those who are injured and left bereft by the bully, but I believe that we must make a beginning to establish a better balance between victim and bully. A determination to do more to affirm the victim would be a good beginning, and a better balance in our liturgy would help. Can we hope that our thought and doctrine will move a little bit victim-wards and away from consoling the conscience of the sinner, in the hope that more of humanity will find it possible to live as God intends 'crowned with glory and honour'?

John Wilkinson

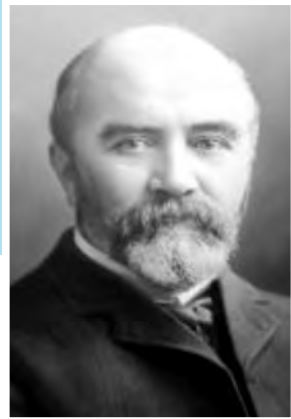
**Jesus our Saviour,
you lived in the world of an Empire
that brought peace at high price;
you walked through a land made barren
by kings whose chose pleasure above service;
you prayed at a temple corrupted
by priests who chose power before Scripture;**

**We thank you
for our part in our governance
our freedom of choice
our knowledge of issues
our duty to those chosen
your prayer to guide us.**

**Help us to place
the needs of the many above personal desire
the wish to do right above being proved right
the lust for power above good use of power
for our nation, and our world.**

Prayer for Elections

**Guide our minds and our hands at this time
that we may vote in the light of your love
for the healing of creation
that the Spirit reign. Amen.**



Sir John Purser Griffiths

The story of the Griffiths, important lay workers in the Moravian Church, begins in North Wales. William and his wife Alice farmed Drws y Coed Uchaf from

1744 until 1782; their home was a centre for Moravian work. Five of their daughters went to the Sisters' House in Dublin, three remained in Wales: Dorothy, the youngest married William Evans and their daughter Alice, born 1808, was sent to Dublin Moravians to be educated. In 1843, Alice married a relative, William Griffiths, a minister in the Welsh Calvinistic Church in Holyhead, though she retained links with the Dublin congregation until she died on 21st March 1865. Her husband's death is recorded in the Dublin congregation diary on August 18th. 1881 as the father of our organist.

The organist was John Purser Griffiths, their only son, born on 5th. October 1848. At 13 he went to Dr. Brigg's preparatory school in Devizes; moved to Fulneck Boys' School in Yorkshire at 15, then two years later to Trinity College Dublin (TCD) to study Civil Engineering.

As an old man, he is said to have commented on the influence of environment on his career, recalling how William Provis, resident engineer on the Conway and Menai Suspension bridge was 'the ideal gentleman' of his childhood and how the construction of the National Harbour of Refuge of Holyhead, which began the year he was born, fascinated him.

After completing three years at TCD he became a pupil of Bindon Blood Stoney, Chief Engineer to the Dublin Port and Docks Board. In 1870 he was an Assistant Surveyor with the Antrim County Council, and then returned to the Dublin Port and Docks Board in 1871. In his summary of the career of John Purser Griffiths as one of Ireland's foremost engineers, Ronald C. Cox states 'For 27 years he served as assistant engineer to Bindon Blood Stoney at Dublin Port before taking over as Engineer-in-chief in 1898. During his time at Dublin Port, John Purser Griffiths was responsible for the introduction of an extensive system of dredging and land reclamation and the electrification of the port. He was a leading authority on harbour engineering, and chairman of the Irish Peat Inquiry Committee, which paved the way for the large-scale mechanised extraction of peat. His leadership of the Water Power Resources of Ireland was accompanied by his own extensive investigations into the harnessing of the hydro-electric power potential of Ireland's rivers, in particular the Shannon and the Liffey.'



Rathmines Castle

His generosity was not confined to the Moravian church; he gave substantial sums to establish schemes in Trinity to help needy undergraduates and make loans available to young graduates. With his wife's cousin, artist Sarah Purser, an annual scholarship was set up.

Rathmines Castle, purchased by Lady Griffiths' grandfather, became their home after the death of her brothers; here hospitality for Moravian events and visitors was generously provided. The Castle was demolished when the land was sold to the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland in 1965 and a complex of buildings now stands on the site. A small estate bears the name Purser.

Sir John Purser died in 1938 in his 90th year and at his funeral this tribute was paid: *Sir John was a true brother and friend, and a great Christian. His Church attendance was exemplary and his life an inspiration. His outstanding characteristics were those of simplicity of heart, mind, soul and mode of life, and a childlike faith, which made him so great that he could stand above all that was small.*

Sources. Ronald C.Cox. 'John Purser Griffiths, Grand Old Man of Irish Engineering'. Dictionary of Irish Architects and Dublin Moravian Records.

Edna Cooper

Yorkshire District Conference

Congregations were urged to give financial help to send the church's young people to summer camp this year. Around 30 to 35 youngsters usually attend. The cost is £260 a head but there are reductions for early bookings.

The Provincial Youth and Children's Committee is also proposing taking on two full-time youth workers - one to cover Yorkshire, Lancashire and Ireland and the other the East, West and Midlands. Funding would come from money set aside for new work. The committee stated: 'There are great opportunities for expansion of youth and children's work and these posts would stimulate congregations and explore new ventures.' The plans are still at the formative stage and anyone with ideas or comments is asked to e-mail youth representative Eleanor Hollindrake (eleanor.hollindrake@hotmail.co.uk)

Br Simon Dunn, who leads the Yorkshire District Singers, reported that numbers had peaked at around 38 over Christmas. The Advent Sunday service at Wellhouse had included Gawthorpe Brass Band. Br Dunn said the singers would perform at Baildon on Palm Sunday. He remarked that when the singers took part in Love Feasts it brought in more people and the singing took on a greater confidence and significance.'

The conference re-elected all officials. These were: Br Ken Evans, chairman; Br Michael Newman, vice chairman; Sr Diane Thornton, secretary; Sr Margaret Shaw, social responsibility; Br Dick Porter, Messenger correspondent; Sr Elanor Hollindrake, youth secretary; Sr Elizabeth Hollindrake, renewal secretary; Br Les Machell, treasurer and Br Paulk Greenhough, mission secretary.

Dick Porter

Noticeboard

Fellowship Weekend 08-10 May At Shallowford House near Stafford. Register with Paul Greenhough, 01274872633 or paulgreenhough150@btinternet.com

Men's Fellowship Day At Fairfield Moravian church Manchester, Saturday 27 June. Contact Br Ken Evans.

The Methodist Modern Art Collection, sponsored by local churches and Mid Antrim Council, opens at the Braid Centre in Ballymena on 11 Mar. The exhibition closes on 19 June, Entry is free.

Prayer of the Society of Ordained Scientists

Almighty God, Creator and Redeemer of all that is, source and foundation of time and space, matter and energy, life and consciousness:

Grant us and all who study the mysteries of your creation, grace to be true witnesses to your glory and faithful stewards of your gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Congregation News

Tytherton
Fulneck

Over the past 12 months we have had a lot to be thankful for, although this has been overshadowed, especially for me, by the failing health and death of my mother, Joyce Mellowes in October.

Last summer our annual cream tea was combined with a lavish midsummer village fete, a very lively, fun event that ended with a Barn Dance on the village green.

Our harvest festival was well-attended and our guest preacher was the Rev. Ann Massey, the vicar of Bremhill. It was her very first visit to a Moravian church.

Our little church was beautifully decorated for Christmas and the village carol service started our celebrations.

We have recently welcomed two new members and have several villagers who often join us for Sunday worship.

On March 26th our sister Mollie Batstone reached a milestone birthday, 100 years! We presented her with a beautiful white orchid, and everyone was invited to her home to celebrate this wonderful occasion. We wish her good health and many happy returns.

Spring is now here and we look forward to welcoming our new minister in May.

Anne Waldron

Spring has been a busy time. The popular Lent lunches for charity began and volunteers have been plentiful. Sr B.Pearson has organised the whole venture with her usual efficiency.

There has also been this year's first meeting of Women Together, this time a Swap Shop evening at the parsonage. The group is becoming firmly established since it began in 2013, organising various events during the year. These have ranged from shopping excursions, to sharing recipes and seasonal readings, demonstrations of flower-arrangement, make-up and fashion-related activities.

The Men's Fellowship has also recently been revived. A quiz and corned-beef hash supper was well attended considering it clashed with the first night of Fulneck Dramatic Society's latest play. It is anticipated that regular activities will take place. The next one suggested is a walk in June and it is hoped to have about four events each year.

Also in March there was an open meeting for people interested in Fulneck's museum, looking forward to the annual reopening in April on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 2pm-4pm. New tour guides are to be recruited. Br and Sr B.Newton are to be property stewards. Sr. M.Dickinson has agreed to be in charge of displays.

The play 'Barefoot in the Park' by Neil Simon was presented in the Comenius Centre and was enjoyed by full houses. Br.D.Robbins was celebrating 25 years of directing plays at Fulneck with the same play he began with in 1990.

David Ingham

Congregational Register

Baptisms Fulneck 22 March George Raistrick
Twins William and Samuel Nuttall

Dates to remember

14
May

Ascension Day

10
May

16
May

May Christian Aid Week
www.christinaid.org.uk

24
May

Pentecost

31
May

Trinity Sunday

Inseparable Love

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Romans 8.35

**For me, to live is Christ;
All else I'll hold as nought.
In love His life He sacrificed
Who our salvation wrought.**

**The love that binds to Him,
no earthly power shall shake;
no passing clouds of doubt e'er dim,
nor pain nor suffering break.**

**Secure in this, Love's hold,
my soul has found its rest:
So let the path of life unfold -
In peace, for ever blest.**

Words: PAUL GUBI. 2015

Tune: "Shere" (Eric Thiman) MHB 524

Br Gubi wrote this whilst thinking about the casualties of the recent crash a few yards up the road in front of Bath Weston church, which included a four-year-old; and contemplating his 80th birthday.

Prayer Notes

Richard Ingham

Sunday 3rd May [Easter 4] John 15:1-8

Christ, true Vine, come to us in your fullness and power: closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands or feet. As the branches to the vine, so may we remain in you; for apart from you we can do nothing. Should our hearts be hard, or choked with weeds and briars; water the barren soil. Send your angels to plough and cleanse our unfertile ground; making it blossom with the dew of heaven. Growing up into you in all things may we prove to be your disciples and bear much fruit to the glory of the Father. Amen

Sunday 10th May [Easter 5] John 15:9-17

Loving Lord, whose will and joy it is that your children should love one another; bless our friendships that they may be kept pure by your unseen presence. Where love is, there you are and whoever loves another is born of you and remains in you. Make us gentle, courteous and patient. Direct our lives so that we may look to the good of others in word and deed. Hallow all our relationships by the blessing of your Spirit in the name of him who loved us and gave himself for us. Amen

Thursday 14th May [Ascension Day] Luke 24:44-53

Lord Most High, seated at the right hand of God; grant that your voice may speak to us more compellingly than any earthly voice and your will be dearer to us than any earthly ambition. May we judge things, not in the light of time, but in the light of eternity; acting not for human pleasure, but to please you. Here in the present may we always remember the things which are beyond; until you come at the end of the ages as Judge and King. Amen

Sunday 17th May [Easter 6] John 17:6-19

King of Glory, who ascended your Father's throne where you have gone ahead to prepare a place for us. Gone up on high that you might fill all things. Grant that whilst you reign in heaven, we may not be bowed down to the things of earth, but might set our affection on the things above. Following your holy steps on earth, grant us also to seek the courts of the heavenly city and give us such fellowship with you that our souls thirst for that time when we shall see you in your glory. Amen

Sunday 24th May [Whit Sunday] John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

Holy Spirit of God, who descended on our Lord at the river Jordan and on the disciples at Pentecost; make your home in our hearts. Cleanse us from all evil and cause the fruits of love and goodness to flourish in our lives; that we might be conformed more and more to the image of our Lord. Come, gracious and willing Guest into all the dark places of our life and bring faith to the doubting, hope to the fearful, strength to the weak and more and more increase the pure in heart who see their God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Sunday 31st May [Trinity Sunday] John 3:1-17

Christ, whose miraculous birth means nothing unless we be born again, whose death and sacrifice nothing unless we die to sin, whose resurrection nothing if you are risen alone: raise and exalt us, O Saviour, both now to the estate of grace and hereafter to the state of glory; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, God for ever and ever. Amen [E.Milner-White]

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