

The day the Anglicans and Methodists signed the Covenant

Last November (1st) an historic event in British church history took place in London: the long-awaited signing of an Anglican - Methodist Covenant. Here are excerpts from what the Archbishop of Canterbury had to say on the great day in the Central Hall, London

"Just over two centuries ago, the insensitivity and missionary sluggishness of the Church of England provoked a dramatic act of protest from John Wesley; and our two families began to grow apart. Yet in those centuries of separation, don't we have to say that both of our church communities have been given gifts and have learned lessons that we might not have learned or received had this never happened? "

"As we now take this significant step in our growing together again, we do so not in the pretence that two hundred years have been wasted, or that we can go back to where we were. We have all, in the intervening years, discovered things about Christ and his Kingdom that we are now eager to share with each other, as brothers and sisters working to overcome the distant legacy of arrogance and resentment."

"Wesley was a very reluctant protester - a loyal conservative High Churchman, expert in the Greek Fathers and the French mystics, he was no natural rebel. He would have been as honoured and delighted as are we all today to see Her Majesty the Queen witnessing and praying with us on such an occasion, marking the full involvement of the Church of England in this reconciling moment through the participation of its Supreme Governor. "

"Yet Wesley came to the point where he believed that he and his followers could only be fully obedient to Jesus Christ if they took the risk of separation. No-one can easily pass judgement on this costly decision, and no-one is seeking to do so; what we can be sure of is that by God's direction it bore fruit in witness and transforming service to the Kingdom of God in this nation and far beyond."

"It is an irony that as we celebrate this new mutuality today, we also as Anglicans face new tensions and divisions, with those on both sides of our current troubles believing that obedience calls them to a risky break with what we have thought of as orthodoxy and good order. "

"But perhaps this celebration is timely after all in God's purpose. It is a reminder that when we can no longer see how to hold together, God will still teach us in our separateness; and one day we shall be led, in both thankfulness and repentance, to share with one another what we have learned apart; to bring to one another a history not without its shadows and stresses, but still one in which something quite distinctive has been learned. And if all God's gifts are given to be shared, we have no option finally but to offer them to each other in reconciliation."

"God be thanked, then, even for our years of separation. Gifts have been given that can never be forgotten or laid aside, because God uses every opportunity of loving zeal and devotion to Jesus Christ to pour out his abundance. Thanks to our brothers and sisters for the good news their history proclaims to us; but thanks again to God for the even better news that our growth together will bring to the Church and the world."

On 4 January our morning worship will take place at 10.30am at Bromley Methodist Church along with our Methodist brothers and sisters and those of other nearby Anglican Parish Churches. The service will be a Methodist celebration of the Eucharist based on the annual covenant service. This will be a good way of celebrating this big step along the road to reunion.

Praying at the wheel

What do you do when you're stuck in a traffic jam? Nearly 3 out of 4 of us pray, it seems, according to research carried out by the RAC Foundation.

A nationwide survey of 898 motorists found that nearly three in four drivers admit to saying the odd prayer while behind the wheel, and 22 per cent say they pray regularly.

While some motorists were praying: 'Get me out of this', others asked 'Please make sure the speed camera didn't have film.' However, not all prayers were selfish. More than half of those who admitted praying said their prayers were for other people suffering in some way.

A church minister, commenting on the survey, said: "Prayer is a great stress buster. God doesn't fix speed cameras or traffic lights but He can fix people, whether they are driving or not."

Top Ten Beauty Tips for 2004

- 1 For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.
- 2 For beautiful eyes, look for the good in other people.
- 3 To lose weight, let go of stress, hatred, anger and the need to control others.
- 4 To improve your ears, listen to the word of God.
- 5 To improve your nose, smell the roses in your life and count your blessings, giving thanks for each one of them.
- 6 For poise, walk with knowledge and self-esteem. Rather than walk this earth lightly, walk firmly with determination and leave your mark.
- 7 To strengthen your arms, hug at least 3 people a day. Touch someone with your love.
- 8 To strengthen your heart, forgive yourself and others. Don't worry and hurry so much.
- 9 To strengthen your back, carry someone else's burden for them.
- 10 For the ultimate in business, casual or evening attire put on the robe of Christ; it fits like a glove but allows room for growth. Best of all, it never goes out of style and is appropriate for any occasion.

Do these things on a daily basis – and they will certainly make you a more beautiful person.

Do you have anything you would like to see in the Key? Are you prepared to write an article about the groups or committees you are involved in?

Please don't be shy – all articles are welcome.

Articles can be left in the pigeonhole in the parish office or e-mailed to me at:

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Next date for copy is Sunday 11th January