

Number 20  
March 2019

# ALCUIN NEWS

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM SAINT ALCUIN OF YORK  
THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CHURCH IN TOURAINE

## The Great War

1914—1919

100 Years On

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## HEROES OF THE FAITH

### Augustine Archbishop of Canterbury

Augustine was prior of the monastery of St Andrew in Rome. In 596, at the instigation of Pope Gregory the Great, he was dispatched as the leader of a group of forty monks to re-evangelise the English Church. Augustine appears not to have been a particularly confident person, and in Gaul he wanted to turn back, but Pope Gregory's firm resolution held the group to their mission. The monks finally landed in Kent in the summer of 597 where they were well received by King Ethelbert whose wife, Bertha, was a Christian. Once established, Augustine returned temporarily to Gaul to receive ordination as a bishop. Pope Gregory would have preferred London to have become the primatial see, but in the event Canterbury was chosen (it is rumoured that Augustine was too frightened to travel through Kent!), and thus Augustine became the first archbishop of Canterbury. He died in either 604 or 605. His Feast Day is 26th May in the Anglican Communion, although Roman Catholics celebrate him on 27th May.

## FR JOHN WRITES



**IF ANYONE HAD ASKED ME WHEN I RETIRED IN 2009 WHAT I WOULD BE DOING IN 2019, IT WOULD NEVER HAVE OCCURRED TO ME THAT I WOULD STILL BE AN ACTIVE PARISH PRIEST. But here I am, ministering to our community of St Alcuin of York in Touraine.**

New, fairly small and away from England we may be, but we are still part of the Church of England – and all that goes with it. It is not just about presiding at the Eucharist, it's also about keeping the records that let the wider Church know what we do. "Statistics for Mission" is the positive name given to the annual chore of doing a major return.

The workload, with only two Eucharists a month to prepare and preside over, is lighter than an English parish. This is all to the good as I am fast approaching 75 and the maximum age for a priest to be licensed to a parish in England is 70. Even archbishops can only go on one year longer, and that needs the personal permission of the Queen!

With a wide area to cover, occasional offices can be time-consuming. A recent funeral, with the pastoral visit, service and committal at a Le Mans crematorium, involved over 12 hours work and 440 km travel.

But I do need to remember that mine is a retirement ministry. I cannot pretend to have as much energy now and, of course, my quality time with Lesley is of prime importance. So far this has worked very well and we have been able to get in time away whilst making ourselves available without exception.

None of this would be possible without the active support of others. Thank you all very much.

*Fr John*

## AT THE HEART OF OUR LIFE

### THE EUCHARIST



**7.00 pm**  
on the 1st Sunday of the Month  
in the Protestant Temple  
32 rue de la Préfecture, Tours  
(tram: Nationale; bus: Gare Vinci)

**11.00 am**  
with Junior Church  
on the 4th Sunday of the Month  
in the Parish Church of St Michel  
Le Bourg, Savigny-en-Véron

## Keep a Holy Lent

- see page 11

## THE ST ALCUIN CALENDAR

*Our worship in the coming months*

March	3rd <i>Sunday before Lent</i>	7.00 pm <b>Sung Eucharist</b>	Tours
	28th <i>Lent 3</i>	11.00 am <b>Sung Eucharist</b>	Savigny
April	7th <i>Lent 5</i>	7.00 pm <b>Sung Eucharist</b>	Tours
	28th <i>Easter 2</i>	11.00 am <b>Sung Eucharist</b>	Savigny
May	5th <i>Easter 3</i>	7.00 pm <b>Sung Eucharist</b>	Tours
	26th <i>Easter 6</i>	11.00 am <b>Sung Eucharist</b>	Savigny
June	2nd <i>Easter 7</i>	7.00 pm <b>Sung Eucharist</b>	Tours
	23rd <i>Trinity 1</i>	11.00 am <b>Sung Eucharist</b>	Savigny

# FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

**IT WAS AN EVENING IN EARLY DECEMBER THAT THE LITTLE RUE PARMENTIER IN TOURS WAS BLOCKED BY TWO POLICE CARS, PREVENTING ALL VEHICULAR ACCESS. In between the synagogue of Tours was celebrating Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.**



The Jewish festival of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, is the commemoration of the eight-day rededication of the temple after it had been despoiled by Alexander the Great as described in 1 Maccabees 4:36–4:59.

Outside the synagogue stood an extremely large nine-branch candelabrum, with a step-ladder beside it.

The atmosphere was festive and it wasn't long before people were dancing hand in hand to the music: Jew with Muslim, Buddhist and Christian, for this was an occasion when the Jewish community had invited other people of faith to participate them.

Merriment, refreshments, but the central act was lighting the candelabrum. It was large and not for the intrepid to go up the stepladder. The first to be invited was the vicaire Générale of the diocese of Tours, Père Christophe Raimbault, who is a good friend of St Alcuin's. Others of other faiths followed.

Not all was merriment: heads were bowed when the rabbi prayed for peace and reconciliation to which we could all join in with a heartfelt 'Amen'.

## AN ACT OF KINDNESS

Seeking a trumpeter for our First World War commemoration (see page 6), Fr John contacted the Regional Conservatoire of Music, who advised him to come and ask in person.

The concierge at the gate, on hearing about the mission, helpfully directed him to the correct office, where they were sadly unable to help because it was half-term.



As Fr John passed the gate on the way out, the gentleman he saw previously asked whether he had been successful and hearing about the problem invited him into his office whilst he telephoned his own contacts.

But before he could make even his first call a student who had been practising came to return the key of the rehearsal room he had been using. The concierge—who was not from the Conservatoire at all, but the Municipal School of Music—quickly asked him what his instrument was. Yes, it was the trumpet, so our problems were over in that act of kindness.

What adds to our gratitude is that our helper was a devout Muslim who saw finding a solution for us as an expression of interfaith solidarity.

## A HORRIBLE CRASH



Fortunately, the work for our Carol Services and Christingle had all been done, but that didn't make the spectacular crash of the computer any less difficult, coming as it did just before Christmas.

Luckily, the computer could be repaired, but all the information has disappeared into a dark vault deep inside the machine, never to be seen again.

Not only has the information gone, but so has the download needed to produce our Eucharists easily.

Luckily, all is now coming back on stream, though a casualty was the newsletter which should have appeared in January—we hope you missed it!

All this raises the question of whether we have become too dependent on technology for communication. Should there be a campaign to bring back the quill pen?

## OUR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

It is (in our terms) a long standing tradition that we organise an ecumenical bilingual Carol Service in Tours.

This we did again, which was once more a great success and the Temple in Tours was packed. Participants included Anglicans, Catholics, Orthodox, Reformed and Evangelicals.—and of course, the fine singing of the 'Petit Chœur' of the Temple itself;

But this was the only one. For the first time we joined with Catholics in Chinon to celebrate jointly with them. Over eighty came—not bad for a first time.

And in between, our first Christingle, with our young people making them instead of the sermon. Messy church, if ever there was!



# IT'S THE WAY HE TOLD IT

## Saint Luke and the story of Jesus

by Fr John Neal

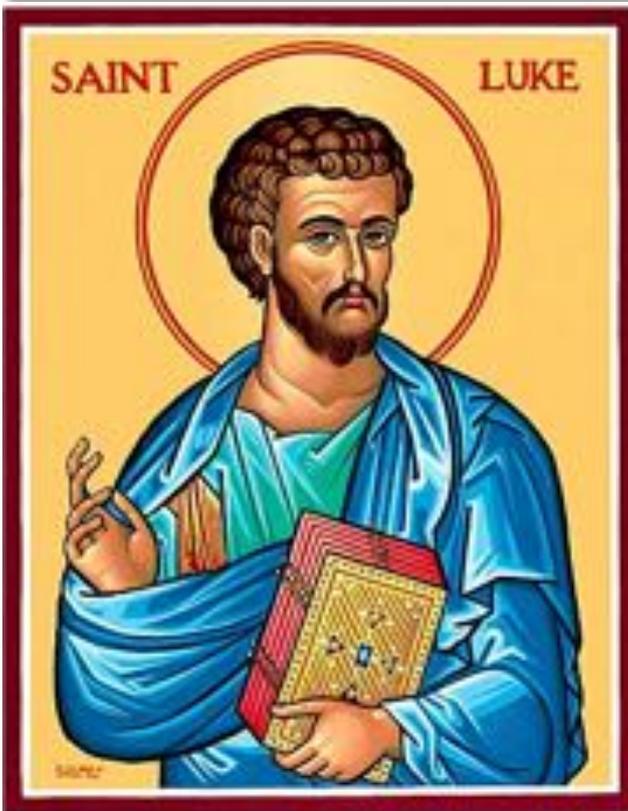
**T**HE NEW TESTAMENT BEGINS WITH FOUR “LIVES” OF JESUS. They are probably the best-read and most popular books of the bible. And in the choice of readings (lectionary) appointed for the Eucharist we read Matthew, Mark and Luke over three years. S. John’s gospel comes at important times – such as Christmas and Easter – over the course of all three years. This year, the third in the cycle, we read S. Luke.

It is a good thing that we read one gospel at a time, as there is much that we can learn about the different approach and outlook of each evangelist.

Their ‘take’ on events is important, for gospels are far from being mere biographies. They were lives of Jesus written with a purpose. Not dispassionate, they were composed by committed believers to encourage belief in others.

They aren’t entirely different: after all, it’s the same Jesus that they are presenting to us. Three of them—Matthew, Mark and Luke have a common basis. For this reason they are called “synoptic” - seen through the same eyes. John, on the other hand, has quite a different atmosphere.

That there are such similarities is hardly surprising, since Matthew and Luke rely very heavily on the work of Mark. S. Mark’s gospel



has 661 verses and Matthew uses 600 of them. Sunday Eucharist.

There is another element which links Matthew and Luke—a collection of sayings known as ‘Q’, short for *Quelle*, the German word for source. I have printed at the bottom of the page a chart showing the probable sources of the gospels.

Gospels, too, were not early among New Testament writings. The earliest was S. Mark, composed between 60 and 70 and S. Luke perhaps not until the second century. This compares with a date of fifty years earlier for the first letter to the Thessalonians, the earliest New Testament book to have been written.

As with all the books of the bible, most clearly seen in the letters of S. Paul, the gospels were written with a particular audience in mind. In the case of S. Luke it was for an educated Greek-speaking community and designed to be read aloud at the

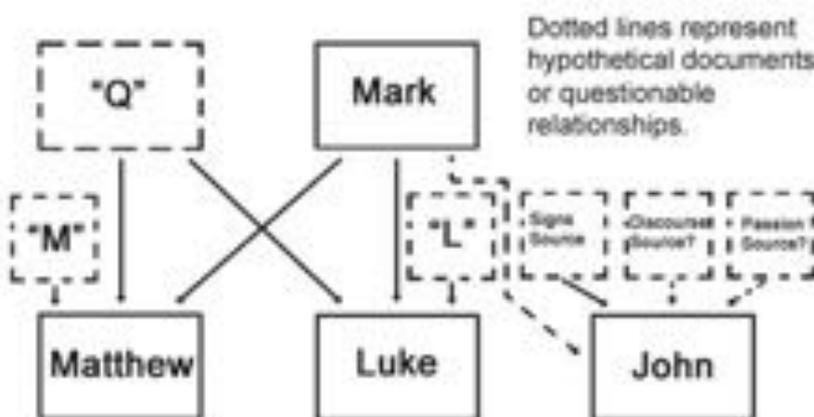
### HOLY SCRIPTURE

**T**he twenty-seven books which we call the New Testament are by no means the only ones written. Nor is the totally same selection accepted universally, though of course the core books are. Some examples of this are that the Syrian churches have not historically accepted 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude and Revelation, though they have been added by some of them in modern times, whilst the Coptic Church of Egypt adds the two epistles of Clement, written quite early.

The final selection of the books that we have was not made until the 4th century and was those books “suitable to be read aloud in Church”.

Books that nearly made it were a third epistle to the Corinthians, the two epistles of Clement and a book called the Didache, which means teaching. Revelation only made it by the skin of its teeth.

## Gospel Source Theories



Different gospels have different emphases. Starting with S. John, the singular one, we have Jesus, proclaimed from the start as the divine Word of God: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.' (John 1.14,18). Then the bulk of the gospel is taken up with signs (miracles) followed by discourses.

In contrast to this, Mark's main theme is what is known as the messianic secret. Even when Peter blurts out, 'You are the Messiah', Jesus 'sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.' (Mark 8, 26,30) Ironically, we the readers are in the know from the start for Mark brazenly begins his book: 'The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (Mark 1.1).

You will see that neither of these has the story of Jesus' birth nor anything about his infancy, unlike Matthew and Luke.

But that's exactly how Matthew and Luke do begin their accounts of our salvation through Jesus: the birth of a helpless baby. And we all know the story, or think we do. But in reality they are quite different from each other.

In Matthew, the angel appears to a devout Jew, Joseph, to bring the news. The next we know is that wise men are visiting the new-born king and his family in their house, which is followed by their flight into Egypt.

Luke begins as he goes on, with those disadvantaged by society. For example, right from the start women play a prominent role—Mary, Elizabeth, Anna. The announcement is made to a young, vulnerable woman, the baby is born homeless and his first visitors were shepherds—looked down on, because their occupation meant they couldn't keep Jewish ritual law.

The dissimilarities in the stories of Jesus' birth give a foretaste of the different approaches of these two evangelists. As we continue to read Matthew we get introduced to a great Teacher, the new Moses. We have already had a foretaste



has been fulfilled in your hearing.' (Luke 4.19-21).

For Luke it was God's concern through Jesus for those who had less value in society, women, foreigners, the outcast, which was his greatest characteristic. This is shown not only in his healings, but also in the great parables only found in Luke, the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son.

It is not only in the unique material that Luke shows his priorities. Matthew's 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 5.3) in the Beatitudes becomes 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God' (Luke 6.20). Not only directly addressed to those concerned, but also much more about bringing good news to the disadvantaged.

Different approaches don't, in my view, make for confusion. Nor do they compromise the bible as the word of God. God didn't create us as automata

and naturally wants to use the brains as well as the pens of individuals to convey his message. God's message is greater than any one person can conceive. It does us well to ponder them all and savour their differences rather than squeeze them into the theology of our favourite author.

In our discipleship of Our Lord, we do well to remind ourselves that we are blessed if we are 'poor in spirit' as well as to remember that God finds the poor blessed. Do we treat them that way?

As we study the bible we can discover the immense indescribability of God, revealed through his Son, Jesus Christ. If we try to restrict what we read in scripture, our God becomes too small. We put him in a box of our own making, probably with the theology we find most amenable, and limit the effectiveness of our witness.

Let us profit from the year of St Luke.

**There are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.**

St John 21.25

# THE WAR TO END ALL WARS

Articles in commemoration of the centenary of the end of the First World War in November 1918 and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919

## SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION

**R**ATHER THAN THE USUAL SUNG EUCHARIST, our service in Tours on 4th November was one of commemoration of the centenary of the Armistice of 11th November 1918.

The service followed the order proposed ecumenically in Great Britain for Remembrance Sunday, started with the Wilfred Owen poem 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' and included a reading from Sebastian Faulks' 'Birdsong'.



Poppies were much in evidence and a trumpeter, a student at the Regional Conservatoire had been engaged to play Last Post and Reveille. Although these

were previously unknown to him the excellence of their performance very much enhanced the two-miutes' silence.

As is befitting on such occasions, the service was ecumenical and partly bilingual: the passage from the New Testament being read by a representative of the Archbishop of Tours.



## REMEMBRANCE AND THE CHURCH

*being the Homily preached by Fr John at the Service of Commemoration*

Micah 4.1-5  
St Matthew 5.1-16

**I** WAS BORN DURING THE WAR. JUST SIX WEEKS BEFORE D-DAY. That's just it, isn't it? When we say "the war" we generally mean the Second World War.

But we are here to remember "the war to end all wars", the First World War.

The war which blew my grandfather to pieces and changed my grandmother's life from being upwardly mobile to one of servitude: with two small children to feed, she had to work in domestic service until she retired.

The carnage was terrible. In Britain we remember the Somme and Passchendaele, in France, Verdun.

Two great monuments recall British servicemen killed in action but have no known grave: the Menin Gate at Ypres and the memorial at Thiépvál on the Somme.

Sebastian Faulks, in his deeply moving First World War novel, "Birdsong", writes of a person, Elizabeth, caught up in the history of that war visiting the memorial at Thiépvál sixty years later, in 1978.

She notices all the names on the pillars and speaks

to a man who is sweeping nearby:

"Who are these, these . . . ?" She gestured with her hand.

"These?" The man with the brush sounded surprised. "The lost."

"Men who died in this battle?"

"No. The lost, the ones they did not find. The others are in the cemeteries."

"These are just the . . . unfound?"

She looked at the vault above her head and then around in panic at the endless writing, as though the surface of the sky had been

papered in footnotes.

When she could speak again, she said, "From the whole war?"

The man shook his head. "Just these fields."

It is as if Faulks has taken up with what Wilfred Owen said of his poetry: "my subject is war and the pity of war".

The war to end all wars, which left so many dead, injured and bereaved.

The war to end all wars, which was followed less than a generation later by the Second World War. More death, injury and bereavement.

It is tempting to stray into historical or political speculation as to why lessons were not learned in 1918 onwards. I won't do that: far too many preachers stray into realms where they have no expertise, although I believe that to keep our faith in some sort of cocoon and not relate it to issues the world presents to us is also wrong.

My task is to try and tease



some understanding of what we're doing here today. To see what the phrases "Lest we forget" and "We will remember them" mean for us in a Christian context.

I would wish to start by saying that these two assertions involve the present and the future, not just looking backwards. That has always been the case.

What guides do we have to help us look to the future?

First, our base document, the Scriptures. And in this regard, I think the passages the Churches have chosen for this commemoration can hardly be bettered.

We have the first reading from Micah, from the Jewish prophetic tradition in which Christianity is firmly based. It has special significance for a commemoration of the First World War, because after that terrible conflict there was a real belief that talk, almost on its own, could keep the peace. It was a time of blind optimism: "Nation shall speak peace unto nation", using ideas from this evening's first reading from the bible as well

as from Isaiah, became the motto of the new British Broadcasting Company in London. Communication could solve all ills, it was believed.

The second reading, known as the Beatitudes can be called a handbook for living. They're not easy and too many Christians see them as merely an ideal which can never be attained. If we have that idea fixed in our minds, we often don't even try! But think what a world it would be if these were genuinely the principles we lived by.

Individuals who live in this tradition can make a difference. No effort is too small. But so can the Church as a whole.

In this I have been much impressed by two books which have come my way since moving to Tours.

The first I found in that lovely little bookshop, "La Boite à Livres à l'Etranger" and was a text book for the English department of the university.

It's by Arthur Marwick and called "British Society since 1945" It's not, in fact, a religious book at all, but sociologi-

cal. What struck me while reading it was his notion of 'secular Anglicanism', by which he means society having a tolerant attitude. I believe this to be a great compliment towards our expression of the Christian faith.

The other, 'L'anglicanisme - un modèle pour le christianisme à venir?', was written by Rémy Bethmont, a French Anglican.

He explores Anglicanism from the sixteenth century onwards and also looks at how we deal with questions Christians find important today: sexuality and the ministry of women in the Church.

He concludes that because we put our

recognises that others who believe differently from us are at least as intelligent and well-informed, sometimes more so, than we ourselves.

That way, I believe there is hope. BUT ...

It is a feature of Western society today that organised Christianity is in serious decline. Only two dioceses of the Church of England are experiencing growth. One is ours, the Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe.

I wonder whether it is a coincidence that consensual, pragmatic politics is also in decline and that there is a rise of populist leaders. Women and men who hold in disdain views other than their own.

Where often the greatest enemy is the free press.

It is also a world where past alliances and treaties which bind nations together and have helped keep the peace are questioned: where "I" is more important than "we".

It is a world with a need for greater humility and respect for others, particularly for those who are different in some way: which needs the words of Micah and the Beatitudes

more than ever before. A world which needs the pragmatic and loving approach of faith to the human condition.

A world which many who fought and died in wars dreamed of.

"We will remember them".



practice of worship higher than dogmatic statements - he quotes with approval Archbishop Michael Ramsey's comment that "we do our theology to the sound of church bells" - we are better able to hold together those whose views differ from us. Very like Marwick's 'secular Anglicanism' in wider society.

Two books, quite different, one dealing with society as a whole, the other with what are internal church matters, but both having this common thread: it is a pragmatic, rather than a dogmatic, approach which yields results.

It is an approach which respects the views of others, rather than telling them what to think. An approach which

## ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

What passing bells for those who die as cattle?  
Only the monstrous anger of the guns,  
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
Can patter out their hasty orisons.  
No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,  
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, -  
The shrill, demented choirs of waiting shells:  
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.  
What candles may be held to speed them all?  
Not is the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.  
The pallors of girls' brows shall be their pall;  
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,  
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Wilfred Owen



*Britain, it was argued, had a moral duty to defend smaller countries, and to ensure that the might of the German army did not trample over what was right*

## WHY DID CHRISTIANS SUPPORT THE FIRST WORLD WAR?

*by Stuart Bell*

**ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGES FOR CONTEMPORARY BRITISH CHRISTIANS is to understand why the Christians of a century ago were in general so hugely supportive of Britain's engagement in the Great War.**

Charles Gore, Bishop of Oxford, told his clergy: 'I may take it for granted, I dare say, that we are all of one mind in believing that it was our duty to engage in this war.' The President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, a denomination far removed from the established Church of England, wrote: 'The call of our beloved nation to all of us to render service in any and every conceivable way will meet with a ready and immediate response on the part of us all.'

The contrast with the responses of the British Churches to more recent conflicts is self-evident. We may recall the attitudes of church leaders to the first Iraq war, or to the sending of the task force to the Falklands. In 1918 there was no argument between Church and State comparable to the confrontation between Arch-

bishop Robert Runcie and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher over the tone and content of the Thanksgiving Service after the liberation of the Falkland Islands. Almost all the main denominations in 1914 fully supported the government. The big question, from the perspective of 2018, is 'Why?'

While just days before the declaration of war, many in the churches had been urging that Britain should avoid getting involved in the crisis which was brewing across the Channel, the invasion of Belgium by Germany totally undermined that argument. Germany's military action was brutal, and while some stories may have been exaggerated by the press at the time, it is indisputable that civilians who offered any resistance whatsoever were attacked, killed and raped,

their houses razed to the ground, on a massive scale. Very soon, press reports enraged the people of Britain, and within a few days, boat loads of refugees were being warmly welcomed in British towns.

Britain, it was argued, had a moral duty to defend smaller countries, and to ensure that the might of the German army did not trample over what was right. Whatever the technicalities of the various international treaties, the pillage and rape of 'brave little Belgium' triggered a gut response of outrage and horror in the people of Britain, which motivated a grass-roots response.

In 1914, while the halcyon days of the British Empire were past, Britain still saw herself as the guardian of civiliza-

tion for the world. Moreover, for many in the churches, it could not be that it was purely by chance that a quarter of the land on classroom globes was pink. Indeed, it must have been divinely-intentioned that the Empire had become so large and so powerful. Therefore, it was believed, Britain and her Empire had a God-given duty to respond when the militarism of Germany threatened Europe. The conflict was not between two countries with conflicting geopolitical interests, but between good and evil. On August 2, 1914, the Archbishop of Canterbury had declared, 'The thing which is now astir in Europe is not the work of God but the work of the devil.'

Consequently while some British Christians did become conscientious objectors, the vast majority supported the war and well over a million practising Christians enlisted. For many it was a matter

of Christian duty - a matter of conscience.

From our perspective, it is all too easy to dismiss their response as naïve and misguided, if not plain morally wrong. Yet I suspect that most of us, in their shoes, would have done the same. The 'mud and futility' narrative of the Great War, so dominant in popular culture, has warped our perceptions of the conflict. It is arguable that the First World War, responding to the invasion of Belgium, was just as morally justified as was the Second, triggered by the invasion of Poland. The Kaiser may have been less of a danger than Hitler, but in 1914, no such comparisons were possible. Nor should we let what happened in 1914-18, a military stalemate along the Western Front caused by the state of military technology at that particular time, affect our judgment of the decision to respond

to the invasion of Belgium.

Of course, war is contrary to God's will for humanity. Of course, we should pray and strive that wars may cease. Those who are pacifists will reject the validity of every declaration of war, and I respect their opinion. For those of us who do not - and it is the rise of Hitler which stops me from being a pacifist - we cannot honestly claim to remember and respect the Christians of a century ago if we do not try seriously to understand why they believed that it was right for Britain to go to war in 1914.

*Stuart Bell is the author of this article and a Methodist minister, and an honorary research fellow of St John's College, Durham. In his book 'Faith in Conflict', published in 2017 by Helion & Co, he examines how the Great War affected the faith of the people of Britain*

## A CLASH OF EMPIRES

by John K. Bromilow

**A**T THE END OF THE ROW OF TERRACED HOUSES WHERE I LIVED AS YOUNG BOY STOOD A SHABBY COTTAGE IN AN UNTIDY GARDEN. Sometimes an equally shabby old man would leave the cottage and walk towards the town. He always wore, summer or winter, a long black overcoat, heavy boots and, strange to a young child, he never wore socks. He never spoke to or troubled anyone and everybody seemed to ignore him. I found him rather curious and asked my family who he was. I was told that he used to be smart young man but had been a soldier in the first world war where he had suffered shell shock. By the end of 1914, the first year of the war, between four and ten percent of British soldiers suffered from shell shock and the proportion increased as the war progressed. Recovery was partial or never - like the old man above.

Nine million combatants died in only just over the four years of the war; that is over six thousand - about the whole population of Loches - per day. Fifteen million combatants were permanently physically disabled and the majority of combatants showed some kind of psychological damage, from which many never completely recovered. Spanish flu, spread by troop movement then wiped another forty million young adults, whose immune systems had been compromised by the effects of the war.

At the beginning of the war the British government relied on volunteers to 'join up' but by 1916 conscription had been introduced. It is arguable whether the iconic poster of the grandly moustachioed Lord



Kitchener, pointing an over large finger at the observer and telling them 'Your

Country Needs You', encouraged men to rush to the recruiting offices. Those words remind me of a much later politician telling us that we are all in this together. The country suddenly becomes our country when it suits the government. At the beginning of the war 40% of male adults did not have the vote because of property qualifications and women, of course, did not have the vote at all. Even men who would be eligible to vote could not do so until they were 21 while, at the same time, they were called for military service at 18. It came as a jolt to me to learn that the German Empire at the same time had one of the most progressive election franchises at the time while our ally Russia was governed by a tsarist dictatorship. Furthermore less than 25%

of the British population owned their own property. How could it have been 'our' country?

At the end of hostilities in 1918 Prime Minister David Lloyd George promised *his party would make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in*. However the reality was very different: the troops returned from a war which had destroyed Europe's economy for a generation and put an end to the social and economic improvements of the later Victorian and Edwardian periods. There was massive inflation in a number of European countries which led to world economic depression with mass unemployment, poverty and destitution. Britain witnessed the famous Jarrow March and the General Strike. These years saw the rise of the dictatorships of Mussolini, Hitler, Franco and Salazar; the Russian revolution led to the rise of Stalin.

Again as young child I would see marchers heading for the war memorial at the top of our street. These memorials were constructed after the war in memory of the dead but now more names were being added following WWII. This march always occurred on November 11th and I was told that this was *Armistice Day*, the day the war had ended in 1918. The dates 1914-1918 are engraved on the popular mind as much as on the war memorial so I was surprised to see many years later the words *the War of 1914-1919* engraved on another monument. Had the sculptor made a mistake perhaps? He had not: the word

*armistice* simply means a cease fire and the war did not in fact end until the signing the Treaty of Versailles the following year.

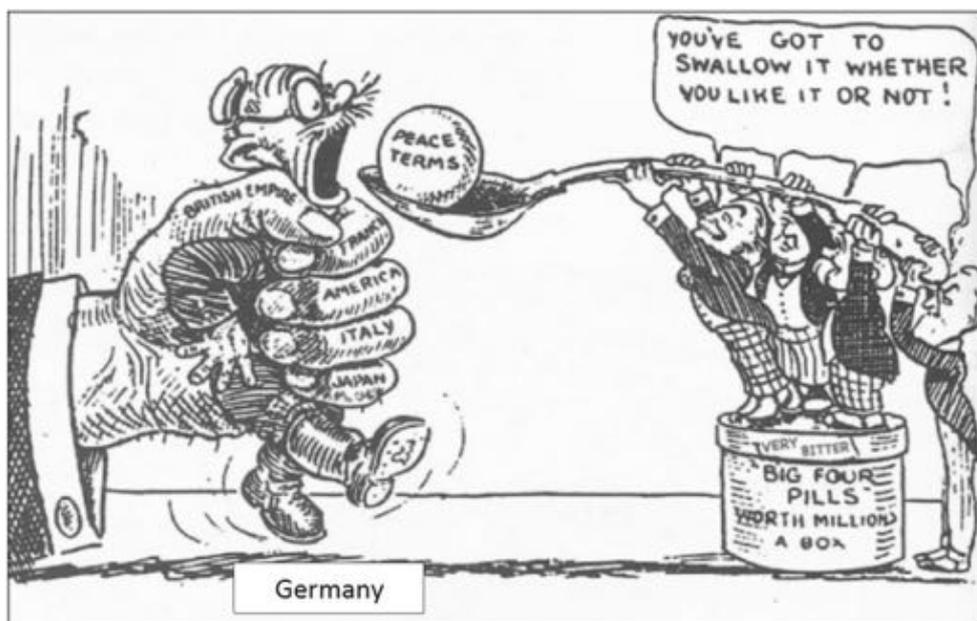


many was to disarm, make ample territorial concessions, losing 13% of its European territories and all of its colonies (for example Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France) and pay reparations to certain countries equivalent to £284 thousand million in 2019. John Maynard Keynes, known more today as an economist, was a delegate at the signing of the Treaty and predicted that the conditions were not only too harsh but also counterproductive. On the other hand the French Marshal Foch thought they were too lenient, stating *This is not a peace but an armistice for 20 years*. Both of these very conflicting views predicted the same outcome. Germany was neither pacified, conciliated nor permanently weakened but humiliated and resentful.

Little has been said in the recent commemorations about the campaigns in the east against the Turkish Ottoman Empire: the effects of its partition still live with us today. Incidentally my Grandfather fought in World War I in the disastrous Dardanelles campaign so was lucky to return alive and well although he would never speak of his experiences.

This treaty was actually the most important of several to effect the ending of World War I and was signed on 28th June 1919, curiously five years to the day after the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand which was said to have started it all. The treaty was harsh on the defeated: Germany and its allies (Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Turkish Ottoman Empire) were to accept the responsibility for causing all the loss and damage during the war. Furthermore Ger-

Was it right to end or ruin the lives of so many young men and their families by this clash of empires? Did many of the men who fought really know why they were fighting? After all, and after a century, historians still cannot agree.



# KEEPING A HOLY LENT

from the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, Canada

## WHAT IS LENT ALL ABOUT?

**L**ENT, THE FORTY DAYS IN THE CHRISTIAN YEAR THAT LEAD UP TO EASTER, is a valuable time for Christians. The word "Lent" comes from a variety of Anglo-Saxon and Germanic words meaning "spring", a time budding with new life and hope. For Christians, Lent is not a celebration of nature; rather, it is a process of prayer and spiritual renewal looking to a time budding with new spiritual life and hope. The Lenten season is an opportunity to cultivate the interior life through spiritual exercises and practices.

In the early Church new believers were baptised into its fellowship once a year at Easter. Leading up to their baptism a period was set aside for their formation in the faith. In their baptism they would signify their death to the power of evil and their call to be risen into new life in Christ, who overcame the power of death on the first Easter. In time the whole community of the faithful came to experience this season as a time for growth in faithful discipleship. Lent emerged as a time when both new converts, as well as the body of believers, would join more closely with the living, dying and rising of Jesus. Thus in today's Church, as in the early Church, Lent is meant to be experienced as a time for the making of disciples.

Rather than being seen as a forty day endurance test, or a bleak and restricted time, Lent is a quality season. It is a time of rediscovery, a golden chance to open ourselves more deeply to the beauty and power of the dying and rising to new life in Jesus. It is a time to ponder the reality of death and resurrection and to allow it to soak into our deepest parts.

Lent is the time for new life and hope. In the Lenten season, self-examination is crucial. An individual's response to the call for purposeful reflection on one's need for God is an important factor in choosing how one will observe Lent.

Through the centuries, Lent became characterized by practices which typify the meaning of this season. One of these is *prayer*. Lent invites us to step aside from the busyness of our daily life, the many things that clutter and crowd our life in order to get in touch with the self and at a deeper level, with the Spirit of God within. Essentially, prayer is attention to God; it places us in a posture of listening. Amidst all the noise and tumult of our daily life, Lent encourages us to experience a new depth

of prayer, an authentic attentiveness to God through which we learn to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

A second practice associated with this season is *fasting*. Fasting signifies a willingness to free ourselves from the desires, ambitions and pursuits that centre on the demands of the self. It points to a willingness to be freed from the self-centredness that drives so much of our life in order to experience more fully the liberating power of Christ. Fasting reminds us of the truth that the deepest

hunger in our lives must be the hunger for God.

A third practice is *almsgiving*. True hunger for God leads to the giving of ourselves to others. Lent calls us to a greater compassion for others, especially the poor and needy. It invites us to examine ourselves honestly on how subtly we have accepted society's addiction to possessions, to affluence. Through the days of Lent we are encouraged to focus our eyes on Jesus who gave his whole life in faithfulness to God, giving his life totally out of love for all. As we keep that clear focus we join our life in the loving intention of Jesus to give himself for all.

Lent is a shining opportunity for experiencing "the unsearchable riches of Christ", a time for spiritual growth so that we might walk in newness of life. Let us determine how we can take advantage of this opportunity and then dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly to our Lenten practice.



## SOME IDEAS FOR OBSERVING LENT

### Prayer

Take a daily "Time Out" for God. Go to a quiet place, light a candle and:

- Read the Bible;
- Read a book about God;
- Write a thankfulness journal;
- Spend time listening to God, rather than speaking to him.

### Fasting

Set aside one day a week on which you will go without one meal, and spend an equivalent time intentional-

ly seeking God's presence with you.

On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, from sunrise to sunset, refrain from eating solid foods and only drink water or juice. Every time you feel hunger pangs, think of God and pray.

### Almsgiving

Give up eating/drinking something that you like and/or give up watching television or some other activity and donate the money and time

saved.

Bring non-perishable food items to a place where they will be taken to the Food Banks for the needy.

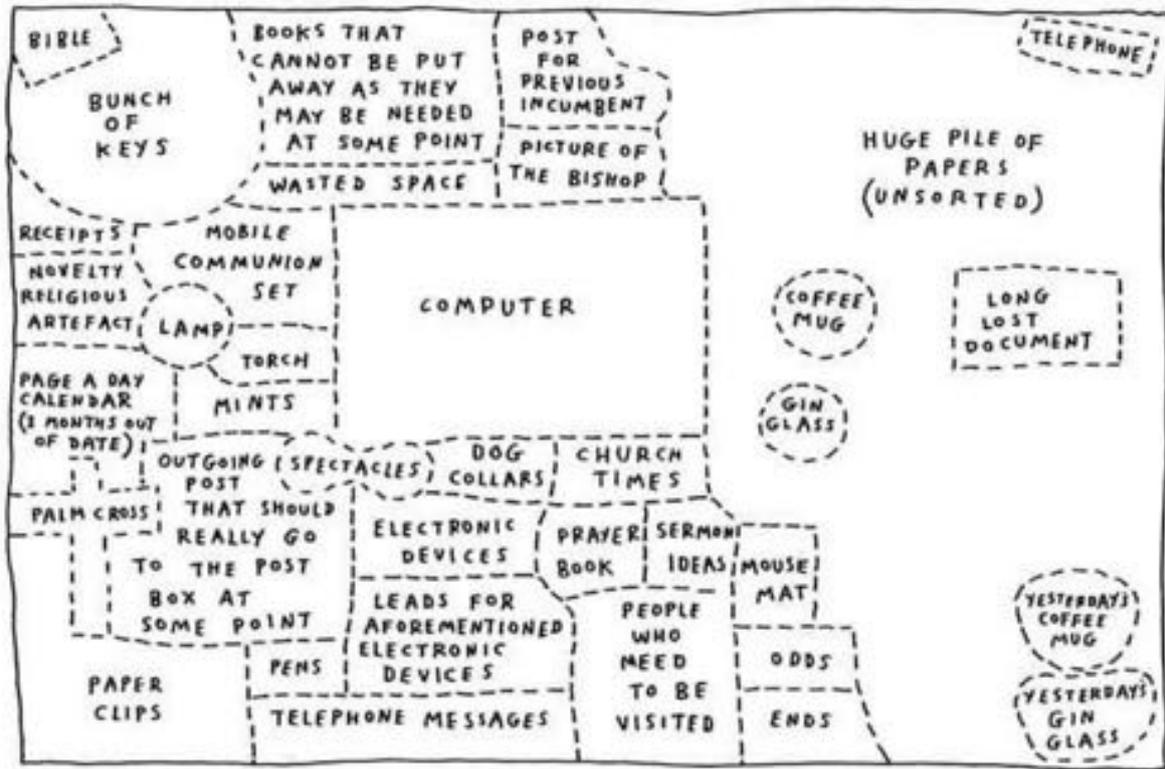
Give money to the Bishop's Lent Appeal.

Visit someone who is a shut-in, ill, alone, or otherwise needs a friendly visit.

Invite someone who lives alone to have a meal with you and your family or cook and deliver a meal to someone who is ill or grieving or alone.

# THE CLERGY DESK

THE TRIED AND TESTED WAY TO ARRANGE IT



CartoonChurch.com

**Churches that become passionate about people outside their walls will be far more effective than churches that are passionate about keeping the few people they have inside their walls.**

Carey Nieuwhof

