

Anglican Church at Crossroads

*Can the new Archbishop of Canterbury halt
the Church of England's drift into an uncertain future?*

Early next year a new archbishop will be enthroned in 'St. Augustine's' chair in Canterbury Cathedral, to serve the Anglican community in England.

Dr Rowan Williams will become the 104th archbishop since Pope Gregory appointed Saint Augustine to that office some 1,400 years ago. As Primate of *All* England (distinguishing him from the Archbishop of York, who carries the title Primate of England), the new administrative head of the Church of England will be closely observed.

Already criticised for recently having joined a Druidic order (whose origins pre-date Christianity), and his views on American plans to go to war with Iraq, Dr Williams will have his hands full with other major problems the church faces. How will he handle controversial issues such as ordaining homosexuals to the priesthood?

Serious doctrinal problems

The Church of England has been described as a garment with many seams, taking pride in encouraging a diversity of opinion within its ranks. But in recent times, controversial issues have catapulted the church

into theological conflict with its membership. An article in *The Daily Telegraph* (31 July) was headlined: 'One third of clergy do not believe in the Resurrection.'

The article brought to light that a poll of nearly 2,000 of the Church's 10,000 clergy also found that only half believe that faith in Christ is the only road to salvation. This in spite of the clear biblical teaching that, coupled with obedience, only

is an intolerable situation where the faithful are increasingly being led by the unfaithful.'

From another source we read of similar concerns, from the words of a bishop and member of the House of Lords: 'Many believed that Christianity was rapidly becoming invisible and the Christian voice was increasingly ignored,' said the Bishop of Rochester, Michael Nazir-Ali. He further stated,

'There are clearly two Churches operating in the Church of England: the believing Church and the disbelieving Church, and that is a scandal.'

through Christ can a person be saved (Acts 4:10, 12). It quoted clergyman Robbie Low, a member of Cost of Conscience, the traditionalist organisation that commissioned the survey, as saying: 'There are clearly two Churches operating in the Church of England: the believing Church and the disbelieving Church, and that is a scandal.'

Waning belief

The survey's report continues: 'Increasingly, positions of authority are being placed in the hands of people who believe less and less. It

'Christians were increasingly being excluded from public discourse by a hostile secular culture.' On an earlier occasion, the outgoing archbishop, Dr George Carey, stated that 'atheism was prevalent across much of the country' (*The Daily Telegraph*, 6 July).

Other firmly based biblical doctrines like the virgin birth are equally questioned. No wonder worshippers are leaving the Church of England disenchanted – with some seeking membership in other churches, and even outside the Christian faith.

Who is responsible?

Many Christians believe that this spiritual state of affairs should be placed to a great extent at the feet of the bishops themselves in that they aren't seen as effectively countering this atheistic and secular philosophy.

An editorial by Simon Jenkins in *The Times* (24 July) reads: 'We need not be Anglicans or even Christians to yearn for those in pulpits to shine new shafts of light on current events.'

'Politicians are partisan. Lobbyists are paid. Journalists are cynics. Priests used once to breathe hell-fire on those in public life who they decided had strayed from the way of truth.'

'Yet the Church of England in recent years has shied from controversy. Quaking before the gods of democracy, it has dragged its moral concerns away to the hermitage of platitude.'

So can any incoming Archbishop of Canterbury affect the state of the church on his own, propelling its spiritual mission and purpose to a higher plane? That may depend on whether he is willing to speak with the *biblical authority* invested in a spiritual leader whose theological foundations are in the Bible and not human tradition (see Mark 7:9-13).

The biblical mandate

The divinely inspired Bible contains the words of life (John 6:63). 'I am come that you may have life, and that you may have it more abundantly,' Christ stated in John 10:10.

That purposeful life is revealed in God's Word and not in any philosophical theology that is unwilling to recognise the irrefutable Word of God.

The commission of the spiritual leaders of society should reflect that of the biblical prophets, who

were not reticent in showing the people their sins. They taught a moral standard based on the Ten Commandments which were given on Mount Sinai.

Today we understand that the Decalogue is even more applicable now because of Christ's magnifying of God's Law in the Sermon on the Mount (compare Exodus 20 with Matthew, chapters 5-7).

We are told to 'cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression' (Isaiah 58:1). Readers of *The Good News* magazine are aware that we are working to fulfil that commission.

If you would like to become more familiar with *The Church Jesus Built*, please request our free booklet by that title.

Gerhard Marx

The 'Conversion' of England

Augustine was one of 40 monks sent to bring a *Roman-accentuated* Christianity to the English. The time was late in the sixth century. Once King Ethelbert I had been persuaded by Augustine to accept the Christian religion, the doors of Kent were opened for the spreading of Roman Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons in AD 597. (Remember that Celtic Christianity was already present in the British Isles, emphasising the laws of God as well as the sacrifice of Christ. Records show that some of the Celts kept the seventh-day Sabbath.)

From Kent this new Christianity spread to other parts of the English mainland.

But it almost didn't happen, at least at that time. As Augustine and his missionaries approached this island, they took fright, even contemplating returning back home. They sat down and wrote a letter to Pope Gregory,

asking him to overturn the commission to convert England. Gregory wouldn't hear of it, reminding them of their commitment to bring Christ to the English and encouraging them to continue, in spite of the danger, with these words: 'My very dear sons, it is better never to undertake any high enterprise than to abandon it when once begun' (Bede, *The History of the English Church and People*, p 67). Duly encouraged, they continued with their journey.

But we should ask ourselves a very important question: Was the Christianity that came to England in the seventh century really the Christianity of Jesus Christ and the New Testament Church? This question can best be answered by reading the Bible yourself. Why not enrol in our *Bible Study Course* to help you find the answer. Your spiritual destiny could be at stake.

Three Trends You Should Watch in Europe

Our generation is witnessing the world-transforming rise of a European superstate.

European unity has been gradually developing step-by-step ever since the fledgling beginnings of the economically based European Coal and Steel Community in 1957 with six founding countries.

Today there are 15 nations in the European Union (EU), with several more applications currently being considered.

However, major divisions of opinion between Britain and the core countries of the EU have troubled progress for the last 25 years or so.

Again and again the founding members (Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) have made it crystal clear that they are absolutely determined to press ahead with much closer integration than was ever envisioned by the British.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has been one of the most adamant of such voices. He said: 'But let it be clear that if we are stopped we will find a way outside of the structure of the [European] union.'

Very disturbing words! They call to mind a time just prior to World War II.

Three trends in Europe reflect varying differences between German thinking and that of France and Britain.

Trend 1: The emergence of Berlin's assertiveness

Germany has been pressing harder than ever for an increased pace of European integration. The Fatherland wants a renewed drive to persuade all EU members to cede even more sovereignty to Europe. Berlin's leadership has resulted in progress towards a fundamental rewriting of the founding charter, the 1957 Treaty of Rome. In the German view, no member nation (including Britain) must be allowed to stand in the way of further progress.

The first major sign of this renewed assertiveness came in May 2000, when the German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, delivered a speech setting forth his vision of a federal Europe. In this lecture, he called for a European federal superstate with its own elected president and constitution.

Mr Fischer urged 'the transition from a union of states to full parliamentarisation as a European superstate' (*The Daily Mail*).

The excuse for rewriting the Treaty of Rome has been that taking on new members from Eastern Europe will require a fundamental revision of the rules.

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has since given Mr Fischer's vision his full and enthusiastic backing. And according to *The Guardian*, Berlin's intelligentsia has begun to

feel 'that Germany has as good a right as any other state to take its head'.

Trend 2: The mixed French response to German leadership

In contemporary history, no nation in Europe has been more enthusiastic for further integration than France. One especially remembers the days of Jacques Delors, a remorseless supporter of a centrist EU. In the founding years, the principal architects of the European Economic Community have been Frenchmen. And up until the last couple of years, French voices have even tended to drown out the Germans.

Yet some pronouncements from Berlin have met with even French resistance. For example, former French interior minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement spoke of 'a tendency for Germany to imagine a structure for Europe which corresponds to its own model. Fundamentally, *it still dreams of a Holy Roman Empire*.'

'It is still not cured of the derailment which Nazism was in its history. Germany has a conception of the nation which is that of the Volk, that is to say an ethnic one' (*The Daily Telegraph*, emphasis added).

Strong words those! The reaction was immediate and spontaneous from staunch French

defenders of Germany. Giscard d'Estaing (a former president of France from 1974-81) 'declared that it was intolerable to accuse the German leadership of a Nazi inspiration and culture' (Daniel Johnson, 'Federalism Finds a Time'). Monsieur d'Estaing is presently at work presiding over the proposed revisions of the Treaty of Rome – the founding document of the new Europe.

Trend 3: The channel gap – a British conundrum

But the British position is more sensitive and difficult than that of the French. Britain joined the European Community in January of 1973, some 16 years after France. Many Britons have expressed their scepticism from the very beginning.

The English Channel highlights both fundamental and subtle differences in basic mentality between the British and the Europeans. It geographically separates the United Kingdom from the European continent. These differences are conveniently summed up by the expression, 'the channel gap'. Not even Eurotunnel can significantly bridge this gap in thought and action.

Columnist Reginald Dale expressed this ongoing dilemma. He wrote in the *International Herald Tribune*: 'When the British finally committed themselves to European economic integration by entering the European Community in 1973, many thought they were becoming members of a club with static rules. Few seemed to realise that they were joining a dynamic process headed inexorably, if in fits and starts, toward closer integration. For profound reasons of history, culture, geography and national character, every new step along that road is painful for many Britons.'

Many British citizens want free trade and cultural exchanges with the European Continent, but not a superstate.

Mr Dale continued: 'But the country's history cries out against being incorporated into what its opponents call a 'European super-state run by foreigners in Brussels.' Richard W. Rohn, Senior Fellow of the [American] Discovery Institute, recently commented in much the same vein. 'The unelected bureaucrats of the European Community [now the EU] have increasingly become micromanagers of both business and their own citizens with a never-ending stream of

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regulations that strip away individual liberties, including freedom of speech, and stifle creativity and initiative' (*The Washington Times*).

News break: A worrying development in Austria

Our readers may remember the emergence of Austrian right-wing politician Jörg Haider just a few years ago. Although he was forced to step down as the leader of his party, Mr Haider has remained a significant and influential figure both in his country and among members of the far right in Europe.

Now one reads that 'Europe's far-right parties have held secret talks at the mountain lair of the Austrian populist politician Jörg Haider to forge a pan-European movement' (*The Daily Telegraph*, 31 July). Prominent among those in attendance were leading right-wing politicians from Italy and Belgium. Apparently another conference is to occur in Belgium at the end of the year to forge a joint manifesto.

Prophecy's central role

Along with the Middle East, the European scenario is a centrepiece of biblical prophecy. Both areas will play a very heavy role in the fulfilment of many major prophecies, which the majority do not even realise are in the Bible. But ignorance will be of no help when many of these things begin to occur in earnest.

In order to comprehend the vital significance of current events both in Europe and the Middle East, you might want to begin an in-depth study of Bible prophecy. The United Church of God has published two free brochures which will be of particular help in understanding the whys and wherefores of prophecy. Please request *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* and *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*

Please do not think that Jesus Christ and the Christian religion have little to do with prophecy. That concept, popular in some circles, simply is not true. The Olivet Prophecy recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 contains Christ's predictions of what will happen to our world when this age of man draws to a close and the Second Coming heralds the beginning of Jesus' 1000-year reign over all nations.

John Ross Schroeder

Our Unique Window of Opportunity

*We need to know why we are here,
and what God wants us to do about it.*

The grief that must be felt by the families of the two brutally murdered ten-year-olds, Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman, can scarcely be imagined. What must be equally difficult to come to terms with for them, and for the rest of the village of Soham, Cambridgeshire, is the sense of shock and betrayal that comes from knowing that a member of the local community has been arrested for the girls' murders.

It is only six weeks since another community, this time in Cheshire, was horrified to learn that a 15-year-old schoolboy had been arrested for the murder of a local pensioner.

Horrifying events like these, along with many other tragic trends, indicate that we are closer than ever to the end of this present evil age. What all this means is that we have a remarkable window of opportunity to search out the revealed purpose of our existence and to find our way back to God.

Mankind desperately needs to be reconciled to the Creator (Isaiah 59:1-4). It is our sins, our abandonment of God's laws, that stand in the way. Only when we repent of doing things contrary to biblical instruction can we experience a true relationship with our Creator.

What God expects of us

We need to learn what He expects of us. We should not distance ourselves from the presence of God, as did the ancient Israelites at Mount Sinai (Deut. 5:23-27).

What does He advise us to do? The answer is straightforward: 'Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God for He will abundantly pardon' (Isaiah 55:6-7).

The Bible refers to this process

'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

as *repentance* – as turning away from our way of doing things and the bitter fruit that this way brings, and surrendering to God to begin living according to His ways. God 'now commands all men everywhere to repent' and to forsake our ignorance (Acts 17:30). (To better understand what it really means to repent, please be sure to request your free copy of our booklet *Transforming Your Life*.)

God wants to show us the way out of our hardships and miseries and grant us understanding of the awesome knowledge of His plan

for humanity. 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know' (Jeremiah 33:3). Our Creator will reward those who seek Him with their whole heart.

Knowledge of God needed

In our information age we sadly lack the most vital data of all, the knowledge of God. He wants to reveal it to us, but we must be willing to accept His spiritual knowledge and do some serious digging ourselves. 'He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him' (Hebrews 11:6).

God offers you the help of His Church, the spiritual body Paul described

as 'the pillar and ground of the truth' (1 Timothy 3:15).

The members of the United Church of God *British Isles*, publishers of this *British and European Supplement to The Good News*, are committed to fulfilling Christ's admonition to carry the message of God's truth to the world in general, and to this region of the globe in particular (Matthew 24:24; 28:18-20).

We welcome you to share in that work as you discover more and more truth in the pages of the Bible.

The Friendly Games of Manchester

A look back at ‘probably the best Commonwealth Games ever’

This past summer (26th July to 4th August) saw the staging of the 17th Commonwealth Games in Manchester. The event – the largest of its type ever to be held in the UK – and widely known as ‘the friendly games’, brought enthusiastic athletes from 72 Commonwealth countries and territories to compete in 17 different sports.

Competitors came from cultures as diverse as Africa and Oceania, Malaysia and the Caribbean. Even the tiny island of Niue, with a population of around 2,000, sent a team of athletes. Competitors from some countries could not afford proper equipment, such as bicycles, so Manchester businesses rallied round and provided them.

These Games were one of the highlights of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the head of the Commonwealth, Queen Elizabeth II. They were officially opened and closed by the Queen.

Manchester committed

According to the Commonwealth Games web page, Manchester was committed to staging an ‘inclusive Games’, meaning that there would be equal opportunities for everyone – spectators, volunteers, employees and competitors – regardless of race, gender, age or disability. At the Olympic Games it is customary for the disabled to compete only after the able-bodied Games are over. This was not the case in

Manchester. Here the disabled athletes marched or wheeled themselves alongside their able-bodied colleagues at the opening ceremony. In some cases they even competed alongside them in the Games themselves.

One such athlete was Natalie du Toit, a South African swimmer, who lost a leg following a road accident two years ago. Instead of this bringing an end to her career, she fought her way back to two gold medals in the disabled swimming events and qualified for the finals of the open 800m. For all this she won the title of ‘outstanding athlete of the Games’.

A perfect example

When Jesus Christ walked this earth, He showed a remarkable acceptance for those of other races and those with serious disabilities, surprising those around Him. Lepers and blind men received mercy, women were treated with great dignity, and even the normally despised Samaritans were shown in a good light in one of His parables (Luke 10:25-37). Nor did Christ show preference for the wealthy or those held in esteem by local society, but instead He ate with ‘tax collectors and sinners’, those who were despised by that society (Matthew 9:10-11). In chapter two of his epistle, the apostle James warns Christians against feelings of prejudice. He calls it ‘respect of persons’ or ‘partiality’ (James 2:1, 9).

Friendship and cooperation

It is perhaps easy to admire athletes like Australia’s Ian Thorpe, going for seven gold medals in the swimming pool (of which he won six), rather than some of the less able athletes from poorer countries. However, all had worked hard to earn the right to be at the Games, and all the competitors were aiming, if not to win, then at least to achieve a personal best.

The lasting legacy of these Games was the friendship and cooperation. Everyone appeared to obey the rules and follow instructions to the letter. Before the fireworks died down at the end of the Games, one last message had been left during the closing ceremony: ‘Seek Peace’.

In a world of so much discord, the Games showed just how much peace there could be between different races and cultures. *If* everyone were determined to seek God and His way – and to make things work in a spirit of cooperation – what a different world this would be.

While few of us are world-class athletes, we each face challenges in the ordinary areas of our lives. To help us meet those challenges, *The Good News* publishes a free full-colour brochure, *Making Life Work*. The principles it contains are well worth making part of your daily training routine.

Questions & Answers

Q *Regarding the Bible Study Course, I think that question 8 in lesson 3 is ambiguous. Only one answer is supposed to be correct, but I thought that both a) and c) could be right. Let me explain. As Jesus often spoke of God as His Heavenly Father, there is certainly the Father and Son relationship, so that is okay. But in Matthew 28:19 it says that all power and authority has been given to Jesus. Of course, this was after His resurrection. Then in Philippians 2:6, Paul says that Jesus was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal to God, speaking about His pre-existence with God. So in this case He was coequal to the Father.*

I hope I have explained myself so that you understand me okay. I'm finding the lessons thought provoking and extremely interesting.

W S, Northern Ireland

A We are glad to answer your thoughtful question and clarify this topic. Also, we understand the point you are making. In reply first of all we reproduce the course question.

The relationship between God and Christ is

- a) a family relationship (Father and Son)
- b) definitely Trinitarian
- c) coequal when it comes to authority
- d) just exactly like all the angels

Although Jesus is indeed co-equal with the Father in the sense of being God as an intrinsic personage in the divine family, the

Bible does not view Him as co-equal in terms of authority. As you mentioned, Christ was given all authority in heaven and earth, but it was God the Father who gave this authority to Him, of necessity making the Father greater.

Hebrews presents Jesus Christ as the Being through whom the Father brought the world of space and time into existence, and who 'sustain[s] all things by His powerful word' (Hebrews 1:3, NRSV).

However, Jesus was willing to voluntarily surrender His godly power and exalted position for our sakes. The apostle Paul tells us: 'Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: *who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross*' (Philippians 2:5-8, NIV).

After Christ had been sacrificed for our sins and then restored to eternal life, He 'sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high [that is, the Father]' (Hebrews 1:3). After Christ had directly experienced what it was like to be a flesh-and-blood human being, He returned to the Father's throne – His previous habitation throughout all past eternity (John 1:1-3).

Remember His words just before His impending death and resurrection: 'And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself with the glory which I had with you *before the world was*' (John 17:5).

1 Corinthians 15 tells us that everyone in God's Kingdom will be subject to Christ, the Father being the only exception. 'It is evident that He [the Father] who put all things under Him [the Son] is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him [Christ], then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him [the Father] who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all' (verses 27-28).

Earlier in 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul clearly states that 'the head of Christ is God (11:3). In both passages Paul describes two divine Beings, with Jesus being subject in authority to God the Father. Christ Himself said, 'My Father is greater than I' (John 14:28) and 'My Father . . . is greater than all' (John 10:29). The Father is the undisputed Head of the divine Family.

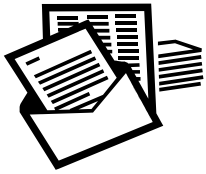
So a) is the only completely correct answer to question 8 of lesson 3. (If you would like to know more about this very important subject, please request our free booklet *Who Is God?*)

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Letters From Our Readers

The Good News magazine

I've been a slowly progressing Christian for 20 years or so and have been disillusioned with established churches for various reasons. I find your publication most refreshing and a great help. It is well balanced and has helped me keep perspective in this depressing and stressful world.

I have a close friend who was into the world of cocaine in a big way. I saw something in him that I really liked, so I gently dropped bits of Bible prophecy into the conversations. To my surprise he quickly showed a real interest, so I asked him if he'd like me to get him on your mailing list.

Since he started receiving *The Good News* about six months ago, he has quickly accepted the Bible as the Word of the one true God. His grasp of creation, love, Christ's purpose and so much more has been a joy to behold. This is quite amazing as he cannot remember ever reading a book in his life. Now he comes to me and tells me about the twelve tribes, etc. We are both sinners struggling to cope with the world, so please pray for us.

L D M, Royston, Hertfordshire

Your magazine is a view of golden truth in a dark world.

T L, Ayrshire, Scotland

The articles on relationships in this magazine were excellent. I became a Christian five years ago and realised the Christian way of

relationship had considerable merits, even though I wasn't entirely sure what they were. I was just convinced that the way I had gone about life hadn't produced the results I was after. So in faith I have gone out with the resolve to make friends only and not have sex again outside of marriage.

Reader from New Zealand

I read your magazine with big interest. The thing is that I have started to write a scientific work about the three world religions with one God: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In your magazine is a lot of needed information, but maybe you have some information which parallels these three religions.

L K, Latvia

- *To date we have very little in print about Judaism and Islam. However, for an overall look at the Christian Church (true and false), we recommend two of our free booklets, The Church Jesus Built and The Book of Revelation Unveiled.*

I thank God Almighty who made it possible for me to write you this letter. Also I have to thank you for the wonderful magazine, *The Good News*. What really makes me very happy is reading more of your published booklets with all the references from the Bible. Not only just reading, but getting ideas out of what was read.

E P A, Italy

Searching for the truth

I have been reading *The Good News* for some months now, and a number of your booklets. I have also downloaded a few articles from the website. All have been enlightening and mind opening. I am also studying your *Bible Study Course*.

I first came into contact with the Church of God back in the 80s. I attended some church services back then, but I eventually stopped attending. At the beginning of this year I invested in a second-hand computer and I have now found out what has been happening. I have been searching the website and I believe I have now found the true Church of God. Your booklets and your teachings are what I read and heard back in the 80s.

How can I donate money? I do not have a cheque book to send a cheque.

P C, Denny, Scotland

- *Thank you for your kind comments about The Good News and the Bible Study Course. We appreciate your interest and your desire to help with proclaiming the gospel. One way of donating without a cheque book is to obtain a postal order from the Post Office. Or alternatively, you could make payments via a local bank directly into the United Church of God account. If you wish to do the latter, please let us know.*

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