



Ebenezer News

January 2009

Christmas Bah Humbug

Once again Christmas has come and gone. For many with a sigh of relief. The reason of course is that they have missed its true meaning and therefore the blessing God intended for them. I hope that that is not true of you.

Every Christmas I love to watch the Charles Dickens ghost story 'A Christmas Carol'. His idea when he wrote it was to bring to our remembrance that we all have a past and a conscience, a present to reflect upon and a future to contemplate so that we may learn the great lesson of life as to our moral obligation – before it's too late.

In the story I can't help seeing the wretched character of Ebenezer Scrooge sitting in a dark empty room by himself having just been reminded of his past, his selfishness and his regard only for making money.

As he awaits the promised visit of the second spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Present, with a message to help his recovery from eternal ruin. He sees a strange light under the door from the next room and a strange voice calling him by name to enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room but it had undergone a surprising transformation. Everything was full of light and life and every conceivable delicacy you could imagine was laid before him. Sitting on a couch sat a jolly giant with a glowing torch and a horn of plenty.

Scrooge could not believe his eyes as he peeped around then door. "*Come in*", exclaimed the ghost, "*Come in and know no better man and look upon me*". I can't help reading these words without thinking of Christ's message to the church of Laodicia in Revelation 3v20. What a promise he holds out to those who will hear and obey his call.

The difference is that He is the one who is knocking at the door.

Is he still outside your life?

Pete Sheldon

Cold contact evangelism

Most of us see the need to tell people about the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in order for them to be saved. It would be great if people just turned up at chapel every week to hear the gospel being preached and explained. Occasionally, in revival times, that is precisely what seems to happen. But it is fairly rare nowadays. We try to tell our friends and close acquaintances of course and invite them to special events. But what about the masses who are not in contact with evangelical believers?

Some of you may have heard of Fiona Stewart. She works with UFM in Bordeaux, France. She believes in the strategic nature of work among students. Student years are some of the most formative, so it is vital that students hear the good news. Most will not come even if invited to a church service! Fiona believes in reaching the students where they are, so part of her work involves *cold contact evangelism*, mainly through questionnaires on the university campus. This provides opportunities for friendship evangelism and evangelistic Bible studies with some who answer the questions. She also teaches English using the Bible as the text book (no pun intended!) which is another way of reaching all kinds of students from many different lands.

But it is slow, time consuming, energy-sapping, personal work. There are 100,000 students in Bordeaux, most of whom have never heard of salvation through Jesus Christ. Please pray that many, especially French, would hear and be saved. Fiona is also looking for others to join her in the work. Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into the harvest fields. If you have run out of people to talk to about the Lord and salvation, perhaps you need to consider some method of *cold contact evangelism* too!

The Pastor

The snow fell soft and fresh last night,
I stepped into a world of white.
The wind had eased, the air was still,
My path rose steeply up the hill.
I reached the top, and, looking back,
I saw a curious, crooked track.
I'd thought my steps were straight and true –
The snow revealed a different view,
For what had seemed a steady stride
Had wandered wildly, side to side.

Dear Lord,
Forgive me when I go astray,
And keep my footsteps in Your way

Snow by Enfys Hankey

Guidance: Trusting that God has a plan for my life

I was very nervous when I was given this opportunity to share an example of God's guidance, as I am not a naturally gifted writer or speaker for that matter. But I've always believed that even the weakest voice can bring a powerful message. The most recent and life changing example of God's guidance has occurred in between being asked to write this and actually sitting down to write it.

God's providence is perfect. I have been working as a physiotherapist for 2 years and I had recently started to apply for promotion within my hospital and in Singleton in Swansea, both jobs I really wanted. I did not manage to secure those jobs, despite working hard prior to the interview. I prayed beforehand about having the right answers and coming across well but I had not prayed about the job itself or whether it was the place where God wanted me to be.

A further job I applied for in Neath was cancelled completely, a few days before interview. I was starting to feel quite despondent about it all, as though I would never be good enough. Many Christian friends and my father reminded me of God's hand in everything and to trust in him always.

A job was then advertised in the Gwent NHS Trust, a place covering an area I would be happy moving to. I prayed hard about this job, that God would guide me if he wanted me to be there. I didn't trust in what I wanted, but what he wanted. The interview went well, I thought, and a week later I received a phone call from the manager who started off by listing all the faults in the interview, my heart sank, I had put my trust in God to lead me and I felt like everything was being taken away. But suddenly she offered me the job and asked me to start as soon as possible. My spirit was completely lifted. A complete answer to prayer.

This experience has taught me to pray deeply, as God always hears our prayers and answers them. It may be yes, no or not yet. Writing this has given me a good chance to look back and reflect on the past few months and realise how faithful God is. *Jeremiah 29 v 11 "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

Pete Cumpstone

Congratulations!!!

To Julie who reaches the half century on 12 January

Meetings and dates

Sunday services

	10.30	18.00
04 January	Pete Sheldon	Steve Price
11 January	Pastor	Pastor
18 January	Pastor	Pastor
25 January	Pastor	Pastor

Tuesday prayer meetings

	19.30
06 January	Pastor
13 January	Claire Grimble from INF
20 January	Pastor
27 January	Pastor

Every week

Saturday morning prayer meeting at 8.00
Men's Fellowship - every Wednesday at 10.00
Sunday School - every week at 14.30

Every week in term time

Mothers and Toddlers - every Tuesday and Friday at 9.30
The Ark - every Wednesday at 17.45 & 19.00
BYY Youth Group – Fridays at 19.30

Every month

Fellowship Lunch - Fourth Sunday after the morning service (25 January)
Over 60's tea - 2nd Saturday at 15.00 (10 January - speaker: Pastor)
Service at Thistle Court - Third Sunday at 15.00 (18 January)

Tea rota for the month:

Brian & Brenda, Pat, Angela & Ann

Cleaning rota

03 January	Edward & Tracy
10 January	Pete & Shirley
17 January	Lynne & Stacey
24 January	Bob & Judith

Sunday School minibus drivers

04 January	Bob
11 January	Dave Jarrett
18 January	Phil
25 January	Ken

Please Note

If you are unable to drive on your Sunday please make arrangements with one of the other drivers to ensure children are not abandoned

Visit our website at: www.ebenezer-pontnewydd.org.uk