

My Somerset Life

A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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Is the Church of England in self – destruct mode and following the WHO?

Everyone to their taste in property

– a home for the snails found in our garden during the spring clear up



Taking a break from Vineyard Church

I am taking a break from the Vineyard Church to see what else is going on. There was an excellent article in the always excellent The Conservative Woman this morning that sticks up for human and indeed Christian standards to the best of its

ability. Now I draw your attention to a very good article from today's edition C of E's helter-skelter plunge into heresy by Dr Campbell Campbell-Jack. In the article he describes how the Church of England structure has been infiltrating by the woke mentality with the unspoken connivance of the Bishops and indeed the Archbishop of Canterbury.

If you scroll down to the bottom of this diary you will see the flood of correspondence that this has caused which does give me some hope in that there are people of integrity still left in this country but also whether they are in positions of power to make a decision. I do not know.

Visit to the local Methodist Church



Anyway I decided on a whim to go to the local Methodist Church here in Midsomer Norton. Needing to use the facilities I saw this positive message in the men's loo.

The church service began at 10 am so having time in hand I preceded it with a coffee in Wetherspoons. I was warmly greeted at the entrance to the church and noticed that since I had been in the church five years ago the situation had been

made far more informal with large screens at the front showing hymns or other text so I did not need any books. Half the area did not have any chairs or pews and was devoted to open space for chatting and so on



I found a round table, I have a thing about round tables so I decided to sit there from whence I took part in the service. I had the pleasure and the honour of being ministered to by Simon Topping who is also the local area administrator presiding over many churches. He spoke in very clear terms about the meaning of the word 'covenant' as opposed to the modern term 'contract' that we have to endure on a day to day basis. See below for a transcript of part of his address.

Interestingly there were two sermons or addresses. One was after the reading of the Old Testament and the other one after the reading of the New Testament. I was attracted to the obvious dedication and lack of affectation of his stance. Afterwards I went overboard a little bit and told him that the light of Christ shone through his face. I don't suppose he's used to such upfront comments but he got them anyway. I need to be with people who have 'done their homework' and shine forth with an unambiguous stance.

I spoke to a church volunteer, Sally, about wokeness; she had

no idea what I was talking about so I don't know what universe she has been living in but anyway they have evidently recently agreed to same-sex marriages with which I was disappointed and felt this ruling was a step back and the first step in a slippery slope. Time will tell. These campaigning people exert such pressure and if you criticize them they accuse you of hate crime. Where does free will come into this?

Covernance vs contracts

Dictionary definitions are not very helpful so I found Simon's exegesis very helpful.

Outside our family and friends most of our relationships are contractual such as Gas, electricity, mobile phones etc but we don't have contracts with God we have a covenant with God.

#1 A covenant is based on trust where is a contractual relationship seems to avoid the need for Trust. You could say that a contract is drawn up because the two parties do not entirely trust each other. The arrangement is not on the basis of someone's word alone. A contract plans for a worse case scenario. A covenant plans for the best case scenario.

2 A covenant is based on promises, promises which we then hope to keep. A contract is based not on promises but on obligation. With a job for example you don't have a list of promises but on a list of obligations, terms and conditions. It goes back to the issue of trust in black and white.

#3 a covenantal relationship is based on forgiveness and renewal. A contractual relationship is based on penalties. One party of the contract breaks the contract there will be liable to finds and other penalties. The parties will feel the consequences if they break the terms and conditions. Weather covenant, there are no legal penalties if one person breaks the arrangement with the other party. The only way to repair the covenant is to rebuild it if things go wrong. We have to go through a process of forgiveness and restoration.

#4 a covenant seeks to bring both parties into an ever closer relationship. It is meant to grow and strengthen over a. Of time if things go well. A contractual relationship is meant to be formal and distant and with a termination point. We do not have a contractual relationship with God although sometimes we can find ourselves talking in those terms,

#5 in this church, we are in a covenantal relationship with each other. We do not sign contracts as we engage in activities. We base ourselves on trust, mutual confidences and progress.

This refers to our reading on Jeremiah we could focus on covenant. Familiar this is the relevant part in Jeremiah chapter 31 v33

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

If you want to know about the covenant in the New Testament i.e. post Christ then **this brief video may help.**

Second address on the parable of the seed falling to the ground

Even if we aren't gardeners all of us will be aware of processes that take place in the garden particularly at this time of year. We are beginning to see things start to emerge. We are putting seeds into pots or even into the ground. We are all aware of the miraculous transition that takes place from seed to plant, from something that is small, dry, hard, and apparently lifeless into a living

growing and beautiful organism. Something that looks nothing like the seeds from which it came.

We also know that the new living organism cannot grow unless the seed ceases to be a seed so you can't have both at the same time. The seed has to give up its existence in order to allow this new growth, this new life. The seed in effect must die. It must surrender its present form in order to release growth. That is a powerful message that can be applied in all sorts of different ways and we see Jesus applying that parable today when he says 'unless a grain of wheat falls into the Earth and dies it remains just a single grain but if it dies it bears much fruit'. So Jesus is using this analogy at a key moment in his mission. It is clear that when and where he said these words he is anticipating his own death.

Before this in John's Gospel we hear the story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on his donkey to a different King not the warrior King, differently from that which people are used to seeing, entering in triumph with all the accoutrements. But nevertheless, Jesus knows that it is a provocative act and does indeed trigger events that led to his death only a week later. And yet in the verses after our passage today Jesus speaks specifically about his death and the manner in which he is going to die. Starting with the metaphor of the seed Jesus is not just speaking about his physical death but another kind of death which is the death of his own will.

He makes reference to that in the battle between his will and God's will which is taking place within him these days leading up to Good Friday. Is this also the death of his desire to control the course of his life and allow God to take control. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is still battling to submit his will to the will of the Father he finally declares 'let your will not mine be done'. And you could say that that point there is a death within Jesus

even before his death on the cross. This is the point of which Jesus is self-will dies and in dying he allows God the Father to take charge and to lead Jesus through what lies ahead.

Not only through the suffering of the cross but onwards to Resurrection, and life in all its glory not only for Jesus but for us. Can we connect this story of the seed going into the ground and dying with our own Christian journey as a challenge we face to declare in our own lives 'your will of God be done' not my will. This calling to fall away from our own life is at the heart of the Covenant prayer which says 'your will not mine' be done in all things. As our self-hood falls away so we aspire to calm acceptance of what God's will might lead to serve. We seek to be content with whatever course our lives might take. We have let go and allow the desire for self-will to die within us.

We pray to be free from our attachment to control and self-will and our desired outcomes 'my way' and in a society where the culture is to do it my way this sense of autonomy it is so important, this sense of autonomy, inner control, making personal choices to direct the course of our life on our own terms, it is so strong so submitting to the will of another including God feels like death and is a death for us. We have to struggle within us to achieve the death of our self-will. God's will to take over.

I went to Saint Biden's monastery in North Wales trail during which we had a taster of a 28 day period of learning to accept God's will. Take and receive lord all my memories my understanding and my entire will, all that I possess. You have given all to me, to you good Lord I return it all. All is yours to be used according to your will give me your love and grace for this is sufficient for me

Am I a traditionalist?

You will gather from the above that I might be a traditionalist. My father was a Church of England vicar so I was born and bred into the Church of England but as for being a traditionalist this is only partly true. I'm a great fan of looking at the actual words of Jesus and trying to figure out what they mean. I do not appreciate being told that anything I say against any group no matter how malformed amounts to hate speech. I do assert my right of free speech in other words saying what I think without being deplatformed. It looks like we are well on the way towards a Chinese type society where everything you do is monitored and recorded.

This also applies to what you spend and your spending permissions are based on your brownie points. This means if you have said the wrong thing on social media you get de-merited and you may not be able to travel. I think we are sleepwalking towards this in the western society of which I am a part. The latest computers can make 1.7 million decisions per second so The Powers That Be are really gearing up for mass surveillance.

However, the unexpected morning Methodist service cheered me up considerably and I will be going back for more.

See above

A few of the pro-traditional responses connected to the article above

#1 (see article for all of them)

Sadly getting rid of ABC Welby will not change anything. The rot at the heart of the CofE establishment is too deep. For believers Ezekiel 36, 16-38 is a good chapter to meditate on, especially v. 21-28, the premise being that these promises have passed from Israel to the church (at large, not just the

CoE). The Wesley revival in the 18th century bypassed the Anglican church who rejected the New Methodist movement, and it would be just the same today. We need another, or many Wesleys. There are many good living and growing churches in the UK but, although effectively locally, few if any have a strong national voice.

P.S. Obviously Wesley would turn in his grave at the condition of the Methodist church today which is now even more woke than the CoE. It, too, is in free-fall.

P.P.S. I am sure Welby will retire soon and my money is on Dame Sarah. If so, then God help the CoE.

#2 When visitng a church/cathedral and I pass one of those boxes which invite you to fill a card out and pop it into the slot, so that the prayer will be read out at the next available opportunity – I always request an end to “wokeness”, including climate-change peddling, race hustling, Alphabet promotion, etc.

I would put money * on them NOT reading out what I write, at a service.

#3 It seems the traditionalists and conservative evangelicals in the CofE are now the guardians of the gospel, doing the job that the bishops are supposed to be doing. There is a battle going on, between human relativism and absolute scriptural authority. As Christians, we can only be defined by ‘Christ alone’ and ‘Scripture alone’.

* probably giving them ideas, but with everything else that’s gone on, what price betting facilities being introduced in places of worship? “Will the next Archbishop be female/black/otherwise inclined – here are the latest odds”.

The ‘Church of England’ that has been a bastion of hope, succour and deliverance for so many people over the centuries is being brought low by ‘politically correct’ degeneration.

#4 The Archbishop of Canterbury and the King swore to uphold the Faith. They are failing to do so.

The Soviet Union also suppressed its Christian orthodoxy. But it has risen again. I pray the Church in England may do the same. It is all very odd.

#5 The ruling classes simultaneously worship the alphabet people, the rainbow dildo and Islam.

The ruling class don’t seem to be able to understand that Islam and team dildo are not compatible at all.

On the bright side once Islam is the dominant religion the alphabet people will no longer be an issue, feminism will be a thing of the past and general criminality will vastly reduce as heads and hands will be chopped off of the criminal class. I'm hoping that the new Islamic rulers will allow us to keep Christmas, I like Christmas.

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