

CMA - UK

CHAINLINK

SUMMER 2018



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CHRISTIAN MOTORCYCLISTS' ASSOCIATION

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CHAINLINK

Summer 2018

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A big 'Thank you' to all who have given time and effort to contribute to this issue of *Chainlink*.

The response from contributors has been very encouraging, with some material having to be kept over for the Autumn/Winter issue.

As you read through each article, our hope is that you will be encouraged and challenged in your walk with Jesus.

The views expressed in *Chainlink* cannot be taken as official CMA policy on any subject. The magazine is published up to four times a year, to provide information for CMA members and to encourage them in their personal walk with God. We pray that this magazine will also stimulate non-Christian readers into thinking more about Jesus, and also seeking Him for themselves.

The Bible says: "Seek and you will find" · St Matthew Chapter 7, verse 7

Mike Fitton

"I hate F - - - - - G Christians!"

Recently, I gave a presentation at a branch about what it means to be a significant part of CMA, the call on our lives and the recognition that God sends us out for a purpose.

Jesus motivated his disciples by using the analogy of workers in a field—imagine them all looking around as Jesus spoke—there is a huge crop ready to cut down but there are only two labourers. If they don't get help the harvest in it may go to ruin and decay.

Jesus said to them,

"Wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest.

"The harvest is great, but the workers are few."

(John Ch4 v35 and Matthew Ch9 v37)

At the end of my talk one of the branch shared with me his experience of offering to pray with a local biker who had numerous problems. The biker was a tough guy that many would probably find intimidating to approach, but he accepted the prayer that was offered and God healed him. (I won't mention the names of those involved for reasons of confidentiality.)

The branch member consistently returned to the same biker gathering and repeatedly offered to pray for the biker and wonderfully God healed him again.

Then the biker turned around and said in an aggressive manner,

"I HATE F - - - - - G CHRISTIANS... but you're alright because you are here."

We never know the silent cry of an individual's heart, even the toughest foul mouthed biker appreciates you as you consistently and regularly turn up at the bike café, biker meet or even an annual biker rally. That could be the day they are desperate and have no one else to turn to.

In May I was assisting the Northern Ireland Branch at the NW 200 Road Races. We had a CMA Biker Bible stand in the race paddock right alongside the big names in road racing. One morning I was alone and began praying that God would give me Divine

appointments that day; I wanted to see people changed.

As the word 'Amen' left my lips a guy burst into the tent and asked for help. He explained he was a long term backslidden Christian and a month earlier his marriage had fallen apart and he was broken. I prayed with him and shared many Bible verses and he began to smile as he remembered them, often finishing the verse and telling me where they were in the Bible. He knew God had called him back and he was running into the arms of the Lord.

Both of these occasions reminded me of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts Chapter 8. God placed us in divinely appointed locations, for divinely appointed reasons.

Philip asked the Eunuch if he understood the scriptures he was reading. He replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" Then Philip had the privilege of telling him the Good News about Jesus.

We can't do this in our own strength or ability but when the Presence of God and Power of God impact a life, the outcome is always more than we could ask.

If we are not disturbed by how little we can do in our own power, we'll never be desperate enough to ask God for His.

It doesn't matter if they hate us—what matters to them is that we are there consistently and faithfully, offering Hope to a Hopeless world.

Whatever the question is, Jesus is the answer.

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20)

God Bless you and you bring in the harvest divinely appointed by Jesus.

Mike



“God places us
in divinely
appointed
locations, for
divinely
appointed
reasons”

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This *sizzling* summer edition of *Chainlink* is full of stories and personal testimonies. I have been blessed and encouraged whilst reading through them before inserting them in the magazine. Prayerful care is taken in selecting articles that will be a blessing to our CMA members and supporters, and, of course, anyone else who happens to have picked up the magazine.

The top photo shows 5 members of North Cheshire branch enjoying a 'Full English' at Millenium Motorcycles Bistro in Merseyside. That's FIVE unique testimonies of God's saving and keeping power. All different, all relevant, all amazing. Never think that your own story is bland and not worth telling! Never underestimate Father's ability to powerfully touch someone else through sharing your testimony!

Check out what Tanas has to say on page 14 about sharing your story. Whether it's one-to-one, through a small Bikers' Service (page 8), with an audience of 2 or 3 at Holy Joe's (page 16) or on your back in a muddy puddle (page 12) there is no good word wasted in God's kingdom. Remember, we will have to give an account for every word spoken (Matthew 12:36, 37), both good and bad.

In Mike's introduction on page 3 he mentions *Divine appointments* during the course of his daily activities. I trust that the stories in *Chainlink* too may be timely and useful to bless, encourage, challenge and maybe even correct us in our journey of faith in Him.

If you are considering submitting an article for inclusion in *Chainlink*, please turn to page 30 and check the requirements for sending your article to me. It may appear that I am being 'ultra picky', but the end result of getting it right is worth it. The title of Oswald Chambers' book, 'My utmost for His highest' means a great deal to me. Or, as we say in practical work, 'If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing properly!' As followers of Jesus Christ, this should surely be our normal *modus operandi*.

Chainlink is **your** magazine. Are we getting it right? Is there too much, or too little of what you like? Are we missing something? Please let us know. Send an e-mail in confidence to longjohn.cma@gmail.com

Ride safe, be a blessing and be blessed!

John



**The deadline
for submission
of items for the
Autumn/Winter
edition is
30th September**

Articles for *Chainlink* are most welcome, and should preferably be submitted by e-mail to longjohn.cma@gmail.com

All images should be high resolution (originals from your camera/smartphone) and NOT embedded in a text document. Vector graphics are also welcome. Text documents should be unformatted rich text format (RTF) files. MS Word and OpenOffice documents are acceptable, PDFs are not.

The sender must obtain permission for the inclusion of ALL names, addresses and pictures, especially of children, prior to submission and provide accreditation for all material that is not original. The sender takes all responsibility for all content and rights relating to all items that are submitted. If in doubt, please obtain verification from the National Chairman or the Executive committee. The editor retains the right to correct spelling and grammar as appropriate.

Encouragement in Essex

Phil Roberts, MESS branch chairman

At the beginning of May, John Rowley shared a great message of encouragement from Mike Fitton by email, and my mind went back to a conversation with Mike at the AGM the previous month. I had been sharing with him some of the good stuff that is happening to us in Essex, and Mike said, "You must do a Chainlink article!"

Hebrews 3v13 says 'But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness'.

So here is some encouragement from Essex!

Essex is a large county, at least one and a half hours riding end to end, and efforts can only go so far for members when time is limited to evenings and weekends. In early 2016 MESS branch (Most of Essex & South Suffolk originally, now commuted to Most of ESSex) was primarily centred around members living in the north of the county. I'll never forget my first CMA meeting in Chelmsford, when Bonnie our secretary, with her wonderful characteristic open and blunt honesty turned to me and said, "We've been praying for people like you to come from the south of the county!" She didn't know me so well then, bless her, maybe the Lord had the last laugh on that one . . . be careful what you pray for!

Seriously though, the health and growth of the branch was high on the agenda, and the then branch chairman, Brian Carbonero was (and still is) a wonderful force for encouragement to the branch. His kind and wise direction of the branch and its activities was very much in the forefront of my mind when I was elected to take over the Chairman's role, and I still feel like the apprentice doing the master's job. Based as I am right on the south border of the county, it has been a wonderful encouragement to see God at work, bringing new bikers and committed Christians onto our radar.

So what has God been doing in Essex? Psalm 126 verse 3 comes to mind: **'The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.'**

We have now over 6 more supporters and members for the branch in the south of the county, and with other regulars it's growing! We have some younger men amongst us too! The youngest at 19 years old arrives on his rather lovely Suzuki Intruder 125. MESS branch is determined to get the average age of CMA UK down!

We concentrate on attending bike meets, and particularly in the more southerly parts of the county, with the famous Original Tea Hut in Epping Forest a regular ride now. This is one of those rare places where you will pretty much see a sea of bikes every day of the week once the winter weather subsides. God has given us great opportunities to make friends and talk with people.

Burnham-on-Crouch on the south Essex coast is a favourite haunt for bikers, particular with 10 tight 90 degree bends as you are entering the village! A lovely older couple who attend Burnham Baptist Church, Don & Rosemary (Ro), invited us to come to the church as a base for biker outreach—they are so on fire for God! As a result of this we now have their oldest son Greg and his wife as recently signed Supporters and contact with their younger son Graham (also a biker), who works at the Imperial War Museum Duxford, where I first met him. Graham is struggling to accept God having a place in his life, despite a profession of faith when a child. He has recently been very ill, but I was privileged to be allowed to visit him in hospital and to keep in touch. Please pray for this family who are having a mighty impact on the life of the branch.

Other bike meets in the south and the north of the county are great opportunities, such as Great Bentley near Clacton, Dick Turpin pub on the



A127 and The Sun at Broadley Common near Harlow for the Harley owners group (whatever you think of Harley-Davidsons, the riders are universally friendly!) and we also find ourselves supporting the Cambridge branch for the fantastic St Ives Motorcycle Show. Individual members have taken to making impromptu church visits to Sunday services and have been well received.

On top of this we get the great opportunity to put up a gazebo and bike display at the annual Essex & Herts Air Ambulance fundraising motorcycle run events held at North Weald Airfield in May, and Harwich seafront in September. These have been terrific events, and we have got to know personally some of the other exhibitors, including the local Firebike team, whose training courses a number of us have attended. The Firebike team are all RoSPA gold riders and firemen who give free training courses as part of the road traffic accident reduction initiative in Essex. As we prayed for them one night, "They are trying to keep us out of heaven and we are trying to get them into it!"

A real blessing has been attending the biker tea bar and shop 'Revved Up' on the Walton sea front. Owner Paul Barton is an interesting character and has been showing much interest in spiritual things, thanks to a local Christian, Barry, who was once a founder member of the British Christian Scooterists' Association. Through Barry's shepherding and Paul spending a difficult night in the shop reading his Biker Bible copy all night



(he'd been thrown out of home for 24 hours), we believe he is not far from the Kingdom. Paul is a big figure in the local and custom biking scene in Essex and if he comes to Christ that would have a huge effect in that community. Paul asked us to run a Carol Service last year in front of the shop, urging us to 'tell the true story of Christmas'. With the local Methodist minister on the Piano Accordion, The local C of E minister and his choir and 4 degrees above freezing it was a joyous occasion!

With the closing of the North London branch, Dave Hope (NL chairman) has graciously and professionally passed on the baton to us for the Ace Café, and it has been a real buzz to be involved with this iconic establishment. It also

Sanders and Jim Harpin of Bedford branch supporting us at the annual Christmas Carol Service. Mark Wilsmore, the owner of the café, and his manager Nick have been so accommodating and supportive we just pray the message will reach them too! Particularly Nick, who is an ex-squaddie and lovable cynic, who cheerfully told me that 'now he knows where to come for some God-bothering!'

So what does the future hold? Well in the words of the old hymn 'I know He (God) holds the future'. A very interesting prospect is with the rapid growth of the branch and with members concentrated at either end of the county the prospect of a southern 'Twig' is under discussion and much prayer. An interesting procedural issue is that the current branch chairman would be part of it, a circumstance that as far as we can see isn't anticipated in the Handbook, but we trust God to raise up the right people to lead this ministry in Essex and North London for his glory.

In the words of Paul to the Thessalonians (1 Thes 5 verse 25)
"Brothers, pray for us" †

brought us a new member (longstanding with CMA) in Ade Badejo, and if you don't know this great lady—you owe it to yourself to meet her! It has also been a lovely opportunity for inter – branch co-operation with Keith



Bikers' Service

Philip Head, Devon & Cornwall

On a Sunday in April the Devon and Cornwall Branch had its first Bikers' Service.

Local bikers were invited to CleerWay Community Church, who hosted the service in the village of St Cleer near Liskeard. The service was led by CMA member Philip Head.

Bikers were invited and asked to submit names of bikers who have died, so that we can pray for their families and loved ones. Only four names were submitted, and none of those four bikers had died in road traffic accidents, so in one regard, that was encouraging news.

Thirteen bikers attended the meeting, a small but significant start.

Since that service, we keep bumping in to those who attended on that Sunday, so relationships are being formed.

Our hope is to have a bikers' service every quarter year, so that a momentum is created over time. Please pray for this ongoing outreach to the local biking community. Thank you. ✝



Welcome

Vince Neale, New Supporter



Devon and Cornwall Branch welcomes Vince Neale as a new Supporter.

He is a sergeant in the Cornwall Army Cadet Force. He is also Chaplain to the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary.

In the picture you will see Vince as he enters the old type 42 TARDIS!

Please pray for Vince as he finds his role within the CMA ministry. Thank you. ✝

Hebion

אֶבְיוֹן

Sunday, September 9, 2018 at 6:30 pm

Bikers Church
Chapel Lane, Rixton,
Warrington, WA3 6HG

Gospel Music
with a distinctly
Jewish flavour,
with ministry
In word and song

Featuring:

Simon Elman
Chrissy Rodgers
Helen Shapiro

TICKETS: £5

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Or Email:
enquiries@bikerschurch.org.uk





January

The year started off with a Caribbean themed meal for the start of our Alpha course, which ran every Wednesday for several weeks and was greatly supported by our local church *Central Evangelical Church*. Several members of the biking community attended and stayed for the duration of the course. New friendships have been made during the course and the changes in some of those attending have been clearly evident to all those around. There are plans to run another later in the year and there already names on a waiting list to attend.

March

The branch found itself with several Easter egg runs to attend, spread over two weeks. The first was the weekend before Easter in aid of the children's ward in the Royal Alexandria Hospital in Paisley, which several members attended helping them raise over £1,000.

Easter Weekend

Friday

Easter weekend was busy in the Hub with Mike Davies, John and Leslee Rowley, and Amanda Drayton coming north to visit, and a puppet show depicting the story of Easter performed by The Messengers, a group of local puppeteers. We had 70+ people in the Hub to watch this, with bikers from the local community bringing their kids along for a great evening of fellowship.

Saturday and Sunday

The Saturday brought another Easter egg run this time in aid of the children's ward in Crosshouse Hospital, in Kilmarnock. Eighteen bikes left the Hub with members and friends joining us on the ride, helping raise over £2,600 in the process.

April

6th April

April came with a surprise visit from a supporter of the *Tyne and Wear* branch, Gregg Hall, and his mate Simon who came all the way from Newcastle to visit the Hub and return home in the one run. This itself was a great feat but what made it more special was they had done it on 125cc bikes and Simon had only just passed his CBT the week

before. Well done guys and most importantly you got your picture taken with Murial as do all our visitors. Hope to see you both back at the Hub soon. The open day in June perhaps?

10th April

After bad weather at the start of the year the *Scottish Bike Show* held in Ingleston was cancelled due to the snow—it was rescheduled for April. The show was down in numbers compared to previous years, but over 100 Biker Bibles were still used and each one left with a good conversation, with lots of bikers communicating via the Facebook page afterwards.

May

5th May

The month of May brought a first for the Bikers Hub with the baptism of one of our members, John Montgomery. John had spoke about water baptism several times before deciding to hold the baptism at the Hub. It was a very special day for all who attended, especially for John himself. It was made more special due to the fact he had asked his good friends to carry out the ceremony, with Gordon Smith and Stuart Strang carrying out the baptism, Alison Mcleod reading some verses she had chosen, members of the branch assisting in various ways and even Branch Chairman John Carden, Billy Mcfarland, Brian Smith and Leslee Rowley drafted in to be the praise band.

The day started with a ride in with 18 bikes with a good mix of members, John's friends and locals alike. Over 80 people were in the hub for the service and bikers who had visited the hub before but not stayed for anything faith related, stayed, and joined in John's special day.

This has already shown to be a success, with interest from a regular visitor to the Hub and to the Alpha who has asked if he may be baptised also.

May has been a busy month as it has also seen us introduce our summer opening hours, which means the Hub is now open 7 days a week usually from 6pm through the week and 1pm on Saturday and Sundays after church. This has already seen a large number of bikes coming in after a midweek run, especially on the lighter evenings with good weather.

We hope to see more of you in the coming months as we certainly have a busy calendar with our Open Day on the 2nd June. Hope to see you all there. ✚



Trail Riding

Mark Brown, Bedford

I have been a member of CMA (Bedford Branch) for a few years now. I used to ride larger road bikes, but my interest these days is mostly in small capacity dual sport or road legal dirt bikes.

Back in 2012, I bought a BMW Sertao, and tried riding it on green lanes—in simple terms, these are roads without tarmac, and a variety of surfaces that motor vehicles are allowed on subject to the usual laws. I crashed it on the first day, and was pinned under the bike, not a great start. Fortunately, I was with an experienced friend who lifted the bike off of me. The damage was fairly minor, but it needed to go back to the dealers for repairs.

Despite this adverse start, I was hooked. I bought a cheap and tatty

Honda XR250 and started plodding about, and falling off quite regularly, though the Honda seemed less inclined to break than the BMW. Then I went to a local *Off Road* school, where they attempted to teach me properly, though I'd gotten into some bad habits which took me quite a while to unlearn!

Once my tired old XR250 was beyond economic repair, I bought a new Honda CRF250L and never looked back. It's had a few levers bent (helped by a fellow branch member who crashed it), and I once burned the clutch out—now it has a motocross clutch, but other than that it just keeps soaking up the punishment. I ride it up and down the country to CMA events, and 'green lane' it. I also have a 2-stroke Beta, solely for green lanes and private off road courses. I rode it 85 miles to the National Rally last year, but won't do so again, as its saddle is slightly harder than a concrete bench! It also needs a service once every 8 hours, and a new piston every 100 hours!

As I was slowly learning where I could and couldn't ride, and why, I came across groups of motorcyclists riding these ancient roads, sometimes in the back of beyond, and from them I learned about the *Trail Riders Fellowship* <http://www.trf.org.uk/>

The TRF is a (secular) national organisation aimed at promoting and preserving responsible trail riding, with branches throughout the country, and over 5,000



members nationally. I first got involved with them by tagging along on some beginners' rides, then I became a member. A few years later, and I lead group rides both for members, and complete beginners who are thinking of joining us, deal with new membership enquiries for my branch, and help with rights of way matters amongst other things.

I had a few more lessons when I was down under in NZ—it was much more full on than I am used to, but helped my confidence. I still class myself as a keen amateur, I'm far from an expert, and I continue to lurch from disaster to disaster with no loss of enthusiasm.

I only occasionally wear my CMA hi-viz machine washable cross, on drier summer days, for obvious reasons. However, the conversations about my faith usually start when I'm lying in a muddy puddle wondering what went wrong this time and someone helps me pick my bike up, and asks me what that Christian Motorcyclists sticker on the front is all about. 🙏



The Ride

Colin Woodford

It is great to get the bike out and go for a ride, it's even better when there are a few of you. With this in mind, 5 members of the CMA North East branch decided to go for a ride. Okay, you can go for a couple of hours to the Whistle Stop Café in Whitby or the Pitstop Café in Stockton (always loads of bikers at these places), but we decided to be a little more adventurous.

Rooms were booked at the Premier Inn, Bridlington, and a route was produced that would be challenging as well as fun. It was 10:00am Saturday morning when Rob, Kevin, Barry, Antony and Colin met at a lay-by right on the edge of the North Yorkshire moors, at the top of Birk Brow on the A171. Although we had a route, at the last minute we decided to take a more scenic ride through the beautiful Esk Valley, with its narrow roads, sharp corners and steep hills, stunning!

After an hour and a half, we made our first stop at the town of Pickering on the other side of the York Moors. A nice town, but you have to pay for car-parking. It's amazing how many bikes you can get into one parking bay! It was warm enough for us to sit outside the café and it was a great opportunity to get to know Kevin, who is fairly new to CMA.

The next section of our ride took us along some major 'A' roads, before turning off on to a small 'B' road leading on to the Wolds. As we rode, above us it seemed to be getting darker and darker, then it hit us—not rain, but greenflies, zillions of them!! Now, I have a windscreen and I only heard the beasts as they crashed into the top of my helmet, on some strange suicide mission, but those without windscreens struggled to keep their visors clean. We later found out that Barry keeps a damp sock on his bike for such a time as this!

Soon the flies were behind us, left to pick on some other unsuspecting road user, and we continued on our ride to Bridlington. It seems that, although the bikers are getting older and older, and our group was no exception, it was the younger ones who are suddenly in desperate need of a comfort break! I think the owner of a pub in Foxholes thought he was suddenly going to get some business but was then disappointed when only the pub's facilities were used.

All too soon we arrived in Bridlington, where we found a small café on the seafront. The food was tasty, cheap and the



weather was still relatively warm so we were able to sit outside. The bikes were parked on an area outside the café next to the tables. However, we became a little concerned when a traffic warden was noticed walking our way, writing out tickets as she drew nearer. Anthony went and had a chat with the lady and she told him it would probably take 15 minutes for her to get to us, by which time we should be on the move!!

As it would be another couple of hours before we could book into the hotel we decided to ride to Flamborough Point, where Rob could have an ice-cream. The ride was nice and there were already a number of bikers parked up in the (FREE) car park. We took the obligatory photos and chatted with a number of bikers before the first spots of rain were picked up by my rain detector (bald head). Arriving back in Bridlington, we were able to book into the hotel, another palaver with parking, which resulted with 3 bikes in one bay and the others on the path outside the entrance. The hotel had only been open a couple of months and was excellent.

After an evening meal in Wetherspoon's we returned to the hotel and all crammed into one room for an hour and a half Bible study, before settling down to a good night's sleep. Next morning bright and early we were back at the same seafront café, this time for a first-rate breakfast. Again, we were able to sit outside and were too early for the traffic wardens.

The intention was to travel back to Teesside, but via Squires café near Sherburn in Elmet. The ride was mainly on 'A' roads and took about an hour and a half. As we arrived at Squires the sun came out and so did the bikers and the place seemed to fill up really quickly. There was also a custom car show in one of the back fields which was very interesting. One Biker Bible was given away.

After a couple of hours, it was time to head back north. After a spell of motorway riding, we went onto the minor roads through Borough Bridge, Northallerton and Osmotherly before stopping at the Rusty Bike Café in the village of Swainby. It was here that Anthony and Barry left the group to make their way back to Redcar, while the others had a cuppa before also making their separate ways home.

A super weekend, great fellowship and I'm looking forward to our next major ride-out, hopefully a day trip to the Keswick convention at the end of July. 🙌



Teacher or Missionary?

Tanas Alqassis, Thames Valley

Hello all, It has been a while since I have written for Chainlink. I love the new look and I am hoping to contribute some more this year.

On my recent trip to the Middle East, I was sitting at a café having a good cuppa before my teaching session started. A young man sitting close to me noticed my accent and asked me where I was from. It is normal in the Middle East to do that and start a conversation. Let us call the young man 'Adel'.

Adel: "Where are you from?"

Tanas: "I am Palestinian from Bethlehem but now I live in the UK."

Adel: "What are you doing here in Cairo?"

Tanas: "I teach the Master Degree Class at the university."

Adel: "You are a teacher?"

Tanas: "No, not really."

Adel: "So what do you do then?"

This is when it gets complicated as I do work for the Church Mission Society, and I have missionaries in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. How would I answer? What should I say? This is a normal question that I get almost every time I travel. What should I say? What do you tell people when they ask you about your job? Some may say, I am a doctor, police officer, manager, builder, carpenter and so on. Is that our true job? When Bishop that I work with said to me once, "Tanas, my first job was as a Medical Doctor. I managed a hospital and when people asked me what I do, my answer always was, "I am a missionary that is a doctor and work at a hospital."'" This happened over eight years ago and it challenged me to say what I really do when asked. So back to Adel's question on what I do:

Tanas: "I am a missionary."

Adel: "What does that mean?"

Tanas: "Well, I preach the gospel to Muslims, Jews and Christians."

Adel, with his eyes gazing at me and excited, said, "I understand that you want to reach Muslims and Jews



but why Christians? They are already Christian, so why do you want to make Christian again?"

I smiled and said to him, "When you were born, did you choose your faith? You see, we are all born babies and our religion is already decided for us. We grow in that religion and we start calling ourselves Muslim or Christian or Jewish. In reality none of us made the choice, so as a missionary I want people to make that choice. Not everyone who calls himself a Christian *is* a Christian. To be a true Christian you will need to ask Jesus in your heart and accept him as your Saviour and live for Him."

Adel: "That is very interesting and makes sense. I never questioned my religion because I was born into a Muslim family, thank you for explaining."

Sadly, I had to go because my class was about to start.

What would you answer people if they ask you about your job? And what would you answer if I asked you, what does it mean to be a Christian? How would you tell someone about your faith? Many years ago, WWJD became very popular—many people wear it on their wrist, others on their T-shirts and so on. The sad thing is, if you would ask people what it actually means they will only tell you 'What Would Jesus Do?' And when you ask them, 'What *would* He do?' they will struggle to answer. It is easy to wear our visible cross on our backs and people will see it, but what is more important is carrying our invisible cross and making people see it. **'My identity shapes my behaviour but my true behaviour shows my real identity'.** It is very

easy to say anything we want but if we do not live it then people will know the truth about it. If I want to practice WWJD, then I need to really know Jesus well to be able to know what He will do. ***The more intimate I am with the Lord, the more I know the Lord, the more I can talk about Him and the easier it will be to share my faith.***

So as the summer rallies start and we have many opportunities to share our faith let us be more

confident about our faith as we made the choice to be called His children because He first loved us. Go out and let your *invisible* cross be shown so that others would want to join you in your faith.

***'Fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.'***

Isaiah 41:10 †

Trouble in Tavullia

George Laws

It had always been a dream of mine to watch MotoGP in Italy and see the famous Valentino Rossi race. Unfortunately the world revolves around money and I don't have much of it. So when my wife, Caz, told me we were going to Italy for our holidays I asked if we could stop over at Tavullia, the home of Valentino Rossi and his unfeasibly large ranch. I packed my CMA tee shirt with the white cross on the back and headed off to Naples. We hired a car and for the next few days drove up to Tavullia, stopping at a few hotels on the way.

When we got there I noticed, on the main road, the sign announcing



Tavullia ahead. Many people had passed this way with thoughts of the racer on their minds because the sign was filled with stickers and signatures, the likes of which I had never seen since Fairy Bridge on the Isle of Man. Pulling out a fibre pen I wrote CMA in bold letters and had Caz put on her CMA shirt and point at it while I took a photograph. Filled with hope I entered the town and in the first shop asked how much a tee shirt was. It was yellow with the number 46 on it. '€38', I was told. Picking myself off the floor I pointed at a smaller Rossi cap. This was €35. Heading out of the shop empty handed Caz told me of a Rossi fan club shop. I entered wondering how much this would cost. To my surprise entry was free and if you joined the fan club you would get a free tee shirt and cap. 'How much?' I asked. '€40', came the reply. Resigning myself to this I paid the €40 and also received a life-sized cardboard sign saying Tavullia. On



it were all the signatures and stickers I had seen earlier except for my own. Happy, I left the shop and went to the hire car where I had been given a parking fine of €28. That night I sat in my hotel room and watched Rossi come in second at Brno in the Czech Republic. I wasn't too disappointed as he was beaten by a Brit, Cal Crutchlow.

The rest of the holiday consisted of me driving my wife around Italy and all the way to Venice carrying a two foot cardboard sign saying 'Tavullia', with me. †



You've Been Nabbed 27

Sid O'Neill, Chairman, North Cheshire



“Sid!” . . . “That young lady over there was asking who *Holy Joe* was?” As I walked over I was tempted to shout, “I’m Spartacus and so’s my wife!”, hoping the rest of the guys in there would join in with a chorus of *you know what!*

The young lady had walked into our *Holy Joe’s* tent at the NABD with her husband this May. As I walked over she patted the seat next to her and we introduced ourselves to each other! They were in the military and had done three tours of Afghanistan, she exclaimed. Quite an introduction!

“So, who is Holy Joe?” She enquired again. “Well, I’m Sid and I’m a member of *CMA UK* and we’re hosting this *Holy Joe’s Café* you’re both sat in and I’m surrounded by friends here, all members of *CMA*, and **WE ARE the *Holy Joes!***” I explained that the name was given to us years ago by the bikers who one night had written in marker pen **HOLY JOES** on the tent being used. Probably for a laugh, but they blessed *CMA* with a wonderful name, one which we own now in the UK.

Then unfolded a wonderful hour of conversation around our Lord, our faith in Him and how they too could trust in the Lord. Lots of questions and even a few tears as we dipped into some parts of life



too private for Chainlink! Lots of brews later, a handful of free custard creams, a Biker Bible and a hug, I was allowed to pray for them before they left. A wonderful opportunity to share the love of God, all made possible because CMA has a wonderful outreach called *Holy Joe's Café*!

Never take it for granted, never just leave it for others to host and run! Get involved, look for events you too can host a Holy Café at! It's a place of rest for folk and a brilliant way to get alongside bikers taking a breather from the hectic life of a rally goer!

Please pray for the couple we met and the many others who took Bibles and asked for prayer.

Sid O'Neill ✝



Testimony of Michael Dymott, Hampshire & Dorset

Who am I that Father God would send a messenger 12,000 miles to speak to me?

The most difficult part of writing a factual account or indeed any other form of narrative is where to begin. At what point in time in the sequence of events do I begin? My reference point for this circumstance is not one particular episode or singular event, but rather a collective of many circumstances from my childhood until the moment my world crashed in a tumultuous experience that I was to endure for at least the next seventeen years.



In September of 1995 I was a serving Police Constable in the Hampshire Constabulary, with three further years of service in order to complete a full term of thirty years. At that time I was a village bobby in the heart of the beautiful Valley of the River Test. I had enjoyed a very full, exciting, and at times, frightening career commencing in the City of Portsmouth, followed by service in the Central Division of the City Of Southampton.

Finally I served as a village bobby in my beloved English countryside.

In the summer of the year to which I have referred I used my annual leave to be a leader/helper at a church camp on the Isle of Wight. My family and I enjoyed the experience very much and in just a fortnight saw a dramatic improvement in the health of our young son who at that time suffered from asthma and eczema, the sea air being so beneficial. Such was his condition and my desire to change that I sought and was granted the opportunity to make an inter-divisional transfer to a police station on the island.

When the day to view my new-to-be posting came, my family and I set out on an early ferry crossing to Cowes. I had little sleep that night having been involved in the pursuit of armed poachers who at one point had been shooting their rifles from one field to another. This was across a sunken farm track in which I had secreted myself in my police car to avoid its conspicuity giving my observational presence away.

For my own safety I had to leave the area and seek support from colleagues on night patrol in a nearby town.

I was tired at the end of an abortive day's search for an island home. That evening my family and I were guests at the home of a dear friend of my parents-in-law. During that night I awoke with violent shaking and terror, so much so my shaking moved the bed across the floor and awoke my wife. I had no inkling what had happened—all I knew I was desperate to return to the sanctuary of my mainland home. I was in no fit state to do anything. My wife drove our car to return us to our home. I had become the victim of anxiety and clinical

depression which had built up over a lifetime, but of which I was unaware.

Once home I sat in an armchair and cried. For a week I would not leave my home. I lost the ability to speak without stuttering and stammering. My eyesight deteriorated markedly, I would jump and shake at the slightest movement or sound, even a sweet paper blown along the street by the wind would send me into orbit. When friends or family visited I would either lock myself out of my house in the garden at night or cram myself into a cupboard so that I could avoid meeting or speaking with them. I was totally irrational. Such was the extent of this irrationality that one day I was walking along the Old Barge path in my home town, when I heard a train on the nearby railway line. As its approaching sound increased so I convinced myself it was chasing me and it was not until I ran to, and crossed over the nearby canal bridge did I feel the train could no longer chase me!

I was a member of the *Christian Police Association* at that time, and this shows just how much our lives

are in Father God's hands and how much He deeply cares for each and everyone of us. He foreknew what was to befall me and His perfect plan was already in place.

The Christian Police Association was to hold its first international conference and the United Kingdom was to be the host nation in the September of that year. Sergeant Garry Raymond of the New South Wales Police Service in Australia, a Traumatic Stress Counsellor, had been invited to attend and my Branch Chairman and his wife were hosting Sergeant Raymond in their New Forest home. As part of the programme Sergeant Raymond was invited to the then Police Headquarters in Winchester to meet the Chief Constable of that time. My home was en route between the two such that they called to see me at my home.

We enjoyed a time of fellowship in which Sergeant Raymond prayed for me. He said "God is telling me He is pleased with your twenty seven years of service, He does not require you to serve a further three".

"No! No!" I protested, "that cannot be true".

I learned a valuable lesson that day. Do not argue with the Holy Spirit for He is right and I was wrong. Despite the very best love and care of the Chief Constable, the force Welfare Team, friends, colleagues and members of the medical profession I was not able to recover within an acceptable time frame. The force Medical Officer was so kind, knowing of my desire to

complete my thirty years service he allowed me a period of grace in which to accept he would have to discharge me from the force. In June 1996 I was medically discharged from the Hampshire Constabulary. This was not the end of my condition, far from it. For the next seventeen years I endured the most agonising and debilitating anxiety and clinical depression imaginable.

Where was Father God in all of this? He was right there beside me holding my hand every step of the way. He was forming my character to be stronger and to be the person I am today, content to be me the way God made me as He moulds me to be the person He wants me to be.

Where was Father God
in all of this? He was
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During that time Father God used me to found a *Christian Motorcyclists Group*, the *Runaround Group* for mothers and toddlers, a daily prayer group and oh so much more. He involved me in these things to heal me. I am still on medication and likely to be so for the remainder of my life. Am I content with this? Yes I am, because God is and so am I. The medication I am prescribed is Sertraline and the reason I am

subscribed it is because my brain lacks sufficient of the chemical compound Serotonin. Amongst the many well-meaning remarks and words of wisdom which people have spoken over me and which I found the most difficult to accept was, "The reason you have depression is because of the sin in your life". That is not what the force Medical Officer told me. He said, "You have abused your body for far too long by the sleeping and eating routines you have endured in your service." He knew it was by choice I had undertaken unconventional shift patterns which had led to my illness.

Like us all I fall short of the Glory of God, but sin was not the cause of my illness any more than it is for anyone else to suffer an illness. Has it been disadvantageous to my life? Not a bit of it. Whilst a police constable, death and distress in the lives of others was an almost daily feature of my duties. I regarded myself as my section's suicide and sudden deaths officer, because being a Christian, I have no fear of death. Enduring the anguish of my illness has given me great empathy and understanding for those who walk the same road as me. It is a privilege which Father God has allowed me to have befallen this, the greater to allow His Great Glory to shine.

I appreciate this is a long article but I have submitted it for publication in the hope that it may inspire others to put their trust in Jesus, never to give in or give up the hope we have in Him.

With all God's glorious blessings,
Michael. ✚

Prayer – a quick study

John Hodgson, South Lancs

Recently, the Lord really spoke to us as a couple from the scripture in Revelation 3:20. May we encourage you to rekindle your first love for Jesus.

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.'

If we glance over this we can miss the whole point of it. There is something strange about this verse—Jesus is knocking, yes, but look deeper. It says, *'If anyone hears my voice'*. The knocking is actually a call—and it is a call that raps at the door of our hearts. This is not the only place in scripture where this happens.

'And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day' (Genesis 3:8)

(The Hebrew word used for *sound* is קוֹל (qowl, pronounced *kōle*) which actually means, a *voice*)

Here again, it is the voice of God that is calling to man.

Finally in Song of Solomon 5:2,

*'I slept, but my heart was awake.
A sound! My beloved
is knocking'.*

The Hebrew for sound in both of the above verses is *qowl* and means a *voice*, the *sound of a voice*, or the



sound of many voices. This is why some translations replace sound with voice.

If we look further into Genesis chapter 3, verses 8 and 9 we find that *qowl* is the very first time that this word is used in the scriptures—it is the first use of the word for voice. I must admit that I think this is one of the saddest verses in the Bible. The same God who spoke into existence light (Genesis 1:3); the expanse in the midst of the waters (Genesis 1:6); the seas (Genesis 1:10) and every other creation in the first 6 days—then calls out to Adam in Genesis 3:8-9, but has to say *"Where are you?"* since Adam does not respond to God's call. The rest of the history of the Bible records God's dealings with man, ultimately restoring men to God through Christ. So today God calls to us, *"Adam—where are you?"* You, reading this article—

you are an individual whom God is calling too!

From John chapter 1 we see that from the beginning Jesus has always been the *Word of God*; the *Word* that *speaks*. So it is the voice of Jesus that knocks upon our hearts for us to open to have fellowship with Him. The Laodicean church in Revelation chapter 3 thought they had it all. This can be the same for us—we crowd the Lord out with our busy lifestyles but Jesus wants us to *eat* with him. The Greek for *eat* actually refers to the main or evening meal. Note that God walked in the garden in the cool of the day—referring to the evening breeze.

'The evening and the morning were the first day'.
(Genesis 1:5)

To us the day's ending is the evening but in the scriptures the

evening is the day's beginning!

The first call from God to each one of us is for fellowship with Him. This has to be the starting point of everything we do—all our service in His name.

It is from this point that we can then move into the other aspects of prayer which are also so important: but prayer should be seen as ultimately a relationship with our heavenly Father. Requests need to spring out of our fellowship with Him and should not be our primary focus.

Sadly, many believers only see prayer as a time for asking God for things.

When Jesus was asked by His disciples how to pray, the first thing He taught them was to say:

***'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.'***
(Matthew 6:9)

Two important details here are, firstly, that we have to be in a relationship with Him. This may seem obvious, but unless we have been washed and covered by the blood of Jesus we cannot call upon Him as Father and thus we do not know Him. The only way to come boldly before the throne of grace is through the Lord Jesus Christ as our sacrifice. There is no other way. (John 14:6)

Secondly, God wants us to grow in our knowledge of Him and worship Him for who He is! In fact, before

entering into petition with God we are encouraged to worship Him.

***'Enter his gates with
thanksgiving, and
his courts with praise!'***
(Psalm 100:4)

It is interesting to me that in 1 John 4:8 we are told that God is love, but here in prayer Jesus instructs us to worship God for His holiness. *Hallowed* in the Greek means to be *pure and clean, sanctified and set apart*. God's holiness—His cleanliness and purity—is whiter than white hot,

***'who dwells
in unapproachable light,
whom no one has ever
seen or can see.'***
(1 Timothy 6:16)

And yet we can approach into the very Holy of Holies boldly in our time of need. (Heb 4:16)

Many believers only see
prayer as a time for
asking God for things

True prayer starts with the appreciation of who God is—we are in wonder and awe of Him and love Him for who He is and what He has done for us! Worship focuses our prayers on Him and not us and so it springboards us into prayer with the right focus.

***'Worship the Lord in the
splendour of holiness'***
(1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:2 and Psalm 96:9).

Finally, like anything else in life, prayer can become repetitive—a routine that we have to do every day, and once done the box is ticked. This is especially true in this modern world of hustle and bustle, but I want you to look again at Genesis 3:8. God walked in the garden in the cool of the day. The Hebrew word used for *cool* is רוּחַ (*ruwach*) and in the Hebrew has so much meaning. It is usually translated as *spirit* or *wind*. The fact is that we need God by His Spirit to breathe or blow upon our times with Him. We need Him to touch us—we may need to repent on our face and get right with Him rather than just plough on in what could be hard-hearted prayer! And so I would like to finish with what I started . . .

Revelation 3: 19–20 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. ☩

It all began in 1966 after a lot of pushing, sweat and pain, out I popped. "It's a boy!", they shouted. I can't remember too much about that, but I've seen some photographs to confirm the incident. The name they settled on was Graham. My earliest memories were of growing up on a housing estate in Liverpool called 'Dodge'—named after Dodge City. I think the name says it all, it was a very rough housing estate.

Mum and dad weren't really religious but they insisted that my sister, Coreen, and I went to Sunday School from an early age. We found this boring, irrelevant and all the other words people use to describe a 'traditional' church. Some people like traditional churches but it never really did anything for me.

Mum had an unusual job, she's a fork-lift truck driver. Dad was a night club bouncer who occasionally helped himself to the payroll of local banks. As you can imagine, I had quite an unusual upbringing so it wasn't long before I started getting introduced to crime—believe it or not it was my dad who introduced me to my first felony! The local fruit and veg shop was broken into and dad asked me to take the wheel barrow and fill it up with whatever I could. By the age of eight the social services were very involved in my life and they decided I was better away from home on the grounds of being out of parental control! I lived in a number of foster homes and assessment centres which really messed me up. At this early stage I started to get introduced to soft drugs and by the age of sixteen I was selling and supplying a large amount of various drugs. For a number of years I was getting more and more deeply involved in crime, violence and drug trafficking. Things really started to go wrong . . .

I nearly died a few times from drug overdoses which entailed me having to be 'pumped out' at the local hospital. I started to ask some serious questions about where my life was going and what would have happened if I had died. Little did I know at this stage that God had his hand on my life. I'd come across some outrageous and wild people in my life, but nothing could prepare me for the people I was about to meet. I started going to the local youth

centre to play pool and really just for somewhere to go to spend a few hours before the clubs opened. While at the youth centre, I came across these really strange people, Lyn and Arthur, and Chris and Margaret—they were Christians!

There was just something about them that fascinated me. They had that 'Ready Brek' glow.

They were always happy, smiling, full of joy, peace and everything else I was taking drugs to find. What these people had I was spending about £100 a night trying to find! This intrigued me so much I had to ask them what made them so happy. When they told me it was Jesus I was really shocked, had no-one ever told these people he was dead? I said, "Isn't he dead? That's what I learned in Sunday school." What they quickly pointed out is that he rose again and no-one ever explained to me that he had been resurrected. I didn't fully understand all this but I was genuinely interested and wanted to find out more, especially the bit which Lyn said that if he's alive, you can meet him and he can change your life. Little did they know the kind of things I was into, so I began to confide in them about my drugs problems. Lyn was quite shocked and suggested I go back to her house for a coffee. On arriving, she went into the kitchen to put the kettle on, taking an unusual amount of time. I followed her through to the kitchen and I found her talking to God on my behalf. I'll never forget what I heard. "Oh God," she was saying "I don't know what to do with Graham. Please show me what to tell him." She didn't see me so I walked out very quietly, not wanting to disturb her. She soon emerged from the kitchen and, telling me she'd been praying for me. I tried to laugh it off by saying, "I know, I caught you." The laughing soon stopped when she said "God has just spoken to me about you." My instant thoughts were "Who's on drugs here!" especially when she said "He has given me a vision of a man I've got to take you to." I was convinced she must have taken something to see the visions



and have God talk to her. Very confused, I asked her to explain what she saw and she began to tell me about Dave Cave who runs a project in Liverpool reaching out to inner city people with similar backgrounds to my own. I wasn't too sure of whether to go, but she told me he was alright. I had reservations because he was a minister and my experience of the clergy had never really impressed me. I had never really related to all that stuff, you know, the *Batman* cloak, the ring of confidence and one who dressed up like mother but we called him father. I've still not worked that one out!

I was quite shocked when I met Dave, denim jeans, T-shirt and suede shoes. For the first ten minutes, we debated whether he was really a minister because he did not look like one. On seeing his ordination papers he convinced me. I told him a little bit about my past and my drug problems. His reply was quite bold, but honest. He said "Graham, God can help you, but don't mess about with God." So, I was quite impressed by his reply and on agreeing that I would come to church on Sunday morning with Lyn, I departed home. This was late on Friday night. Inside I really wanted to look into this, because I'd tried a lot of other things to bring happiness into my life. A bit like the song says, 'I can't get no satisfaction, but I tried and I tried.' I'd experimented with nearly all of the illegal street drugs that were available, and nothing ever really met the cry deep down

inside of me wanting to be loved. Don't misunderstand me, the effects of drugs are very strong and you do get a 'high' and get a kick out of taking them, but you do come back down with a bang. Through all of my drug taking I was never really satisfied, so on Saturday I decided "I'm going to give this Jesus thing a try." I went out on a bit of a leaving party, my last farewell with my friends and the drug culture I was involved with because tomorrow I'd decided to start a new life. About twelve of us in number hit the town. We all had large amounts of drugs with us ranging from LSD, cocaine, speed, cannabis and who knows what else we took that night. We usually shared what we had as a group, so quite a cocktail of drugs was in my system. I still knew what I had in my pockets even after selling quite a bit to customers. I made a conscious decision to take these drugs because I did not want to take any drugs home with me because I was going to start a new life the next day. This was my strange thinking and to this day I don't really know whether what I saw was due to the drugs I had taken or if I was actually seeing what I will now describe.

I was just minding my own business passing drugs to the left and to the right of me and to my friend under the club table. I glanced up quickly to make sure no one was watching us and there he was. About thirty feet away from me, Jesus was standing there surrounded in this bright light, looking very displeased with me. In my hands under the table were large amounts of drugs, and there staring at me with eyes that penetrated deep down into my life was the Son of God. I felt so guilty, so convicted. A bit like a little boy discovered doing something wrong. I quickly passed the drugs on to my left and to my right while staring at this vision of Jesus. His facial expressions changed to that of approval and he sort of smiled at me as if to say "Well done". I turned to my friend on the right of me to ask him if he could see anything unusual in the club tonight. He replied that he could not, so I turned back ready to point Jesus out to him, but he was gone. I stood up on the bench looking for Jesus in the night club, but much to my annoyance, I couldn't find him.

At this point, I decided it was time to go home and saying good-bye to my friends and, leaving them looking a bit confused, I left. As I jumped into a taxi, I was expecting the taxi driver to ask me what my destination was. I was very shocked and even annoyed when he turned around and smiling at me asked me if I believed in Jesus! This question was the first thing out of his mouth. You don't usually get asked questions like "Do you believe in Jesus?" from a taxi driver. After quite nicely telling

him to shut up and take me home, I started to think about what was happening to me. I thought I was dying again. My brain was racing over the events of the last two nights, talking to Lyn about her helping me, God talking to her and her seeing a vision of Dave Cave, meeting Dave and him saying God can help you, meeting Jesus in a night club and then having one of his taxi drivers pick me up and witnessing to me. All of this was a bit too much for me to take in. I decided to go and see Dave and ask him to help me make sense out of all this. It was the only thing I could think of, even though it was 2.30am.

On arriving at Dave's house, I kept a finger on the doorbell until he came down. He was wearing funny pyjamas I must admit. I immediately launched out verbally at him saying "What's going on Dave? I only met you last night, I met Jesus tonight and he sent his taxi driver after me. I don't understand what is happening." What Dave said just melted me. He said "Graham, we were praying for you this morning that God would speak to you and show you that he loves you." I just did not know what to say. I just blurted out "Do me a favour Dave, go back to God and pray again and tell him to back off." You see, it was all a bit too much for me. I wasn't really looking for God, he came looking for me. That was my first real encounter with God.

Eventually, when I got home, I got a bit of sleep and woke up in time to get myself ready for church. On arriving, I sat by Lyn and I was quite shocked to see people were clapping, dancing and shaking tambourines. I thought 'Wow! This is really good!' Nearing the end of the service, Dave asked if anyone wanted prayer and people would pray for them. At my request, Dave asked a friend of his from Manchester to pray for me. When he prayed, I was a bit confused as the language he used was not in a Manchurian accent! In fact, it sounded very foreign to me! While this man was praying for me in this funny unknown language, I nudged Lyn next to me and said quite loudly, "He's not from Manchester!" They just laughed at me and said that he was speaking in tongues. I didn't really know what tongues were but I did know that while he was praying for me something was happening. I felt really warm and loved and a presence of peace and security just filled me. It would be really nice if I had come off drugs straight away, but I didn't and for about a month I still dabbled. I was not taking anywhere near as much as I had been used to. I still had one foot in the world and one foot in the kingdom of God. Accepting Jesus as my saviour was easy, receiving him as my Lord took some working through.

The second encounter I had with God put an end to that. I was in my dad's house one evening. I'd taken a small amount of drugs with two friends of mine called Rod and John. These were probably not the best people for a new Christian to hang around with. John was into witchcraft and he told me on a number of occasions how he had sold his soul to the devil in a contract. Rod was a hopeless alcoholic. We were in my bedroom when the room became very bright and feeling of heat and fire filled the room. God spoke to me in an audible way. He said "Choose this day what you are going to serve. Serve either me or drugs." Not being very religious I quickly replied, "God, you just can't take drugs away from an addict and leave him with nothing. You've got to give me something better to keep me off drugs!" On saying that, it felt as though someone had attached a 2000 watt Hoover to the top of my head and hit the power button. It felt as though everything had been sucked out of me. I was just lying there in the chair so weak and so drained and so helpless. Then from my feet to the top of my head, I started to get filled with such a peace and presence that I would never forget. I was just so overwhelmed with love and a feeling of joy. I was so clean I felt as if I'd been given a brand new start. The amazing thing was that the whole desire and craving for drugs was gone. I was on a different 'high'. Rod and John then asked me what was the voice and bright light. I then went on to explain to them what was happening in my life and how I had been trying to run away from God. Their comment was not surprising. They said I was stupid. Here we all were mixed up in all this stuff and God came along and put his hand on my life and he chooses me and I was trying to run away from him—stupid!

From that day on, I've really been impacted by God. I have such a passion for him and a desire to serve him. I have been involved in many evangelistic events and missions including a number of church planting initiatives over the last ten years. I just have a desire to tell other people about my experience of meeting Jesus. ✝



Graham preaching in Brazil, 2015



A tribute to Ian Bell (1958-2016)

George Laws

Ian Bell, from Bedlington, died in a crash at Ballaspur during the Sidecar Race 2 at the Isle of Man TT 2016 races, aged 58. He was competing with his son, Carl, who suffered minor injuries in the collision. As a previous race winner and British champion, he was a well-known racer in the sport. His friends and family described him as, 'Popular and funny, a true gentleman.'

He made his TT Race debut in 1995 and finished fifth and sixth. He was finally victorious alongside passenger Neil Carpenter in 2003, but retired after a high speed crash the following year. He returned to the sport in 2007 with his son Carl in the chair. Racing was his life. He was very popular in the biking world and everybody liked him.

I took a photograph of him coming over Ballaugh Bridge, at the TT, and thought it strange as he was the only one not to leave the ground as he passed

by. After presenting the photograph to his son Carl, he told me that he did that on purpose as the sidecar lost speed in the air. He was an amazing rider and competitor and he will be missed.

Brian Calvert and I went to Ian Bell's shop and presented Carl with the photograph and a Biker Bible. He thanked us, saying he would hang it on the wall in the shop. †



God Loves Us, We Love God

Bill McNamara North Cheshire

Love causes us to obey God, not because we have to, but because we love to. To love someone does away with any rules or constraints. Love is a verb, meaning it's an action word. To love God means we should be stirred into action, to do things that please Him; so obeying Him becomes a way of life which will last a lifetime.

If you love someone it causes you to react, not just the butterflies in the stomach but you want to do things for them, not because you have to, but because you want to. Love causes a person to change. Once again, not because they have to but because they want to. The great thing about true love is it brings about *true change* in people. When we get married before God we commit to one another, two become one flesh. Two can't become one without change—it's impossible. Change can't happen without action—if something needs doing then all the thought in the world isn't going to make it happen.

There are lots of things we need to do if we say that we are Christians. The word *Christian* is a noun. I had to look this up as I feel being a Christian is more of a *doing word*, more like a verb. Christian means a *follower of Christ*. The word *follow* is a verb. To say we are a Christian without adding a verb is extremely static, non-moving and stationary in practice, as some Christians and churches do appear to be. I'm not being judgmental—its how the world sees them. The great commission has ninety five words in it and at least ten are verbs. Jesus Christ, who we follow, was a man of action, a doer, crusader and a breaker of tradition. Those who don't really know Jesus only know snippets and some unknowledgeable facts and consider Him and His followers (Christians) a rather weak mob led by a weak leader. This couldn't be further from the truth—Jesus a wimp? I don't think so. His great love for us kept Him hanging on the cross. At any time He could have stopped it happening. The world is full of artificial heroes but Jesus was the

real deal. He was the only perfect example of unconditional love this world has ever seen and will never see again.

Through His death on the cross we have victory over evil and death. Why then is the church of Jesus Christ so quiet in victory? Jesus wasn't scared to talk out, to stand by the truth even though He knew this would get Him killed. The church (meaning the people not the building) needs to wake up. As Paul says, *"May I never boast except in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has crucified me and I to the world"*. We as followers of Christ need to get back to basics and follow God's Word. We need to read it and apply it to our lives, our understanding, and our way of living until the Word indwells us. We shouldn't read it and change its meaning to suit our way of thinking—how can we believe that we know better than God Himself? Israel was taken into exile after God warned them about going their own way—they thought they had God all boxed up in the ark, freeing them to do just as they pleased. God will not be put in a box. God does not live in the church (the building) He lives in the church, His people. His people should reflect Him in their lives. God's Word has all the answers we need, so we need to stop thinking that we have the answers.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:24-35

Are we as Christians living up to Jesus' command? ☩



Biker Fashion

By George Laws

The common perception seems to be that bikers pay no attention to their clothes. “They might as well dress in the dark,” I heard one lady comment at *Stormin’ the Castle* in 2017. She went on to say that, “They just throw on a pair of jeans and a T-shirt, without any thought!” Nothing, I have found, could be more incorrect.

Bikers take as much trouble over their clothes as the most fastidious dresser. In fact, they can be really picky about some things like the crease of their trousers, leather or textile, or even Kevlar, the length of their shirt sleeves, the width of the cuff, the shape of the collar, or no collar at all, to name just a few. Remember the ‘Cut’—the wrong patches and rally badges can cause insurmountable problems. You don’t want to turn up at *Stormin’* with a scooter rally patch—or do you? Self-expression is everything as long as it doesn’t land you in hot water. Bikers have realised that they are also judged by how they look, so it’s best to make the right impression. Too long have they made the wrong impression.

Since bikers today value self-expression and the freedom to make their own identities, rather than fit into a mould, rules of fashion are few, though quality, fit and protection remain the biding principle.

As a photographer I spend a lot of time with a camera waiting for an image to pass by my lenses rather than looking for it. At *Stormin’ the Castle* *people watching* is a great hobby of mine, especially on Saturday night.



Fashion has a no-holds barred approach to enjoyment. Anything goes, and Cole Porter would blush if he saw what hardened bikers wear when they let their hair down, or up. Caz, pictured with the ‘Rainbow man,’ felt some accessorised too much. I discussed this with a chap sporting a Mexican hat and,



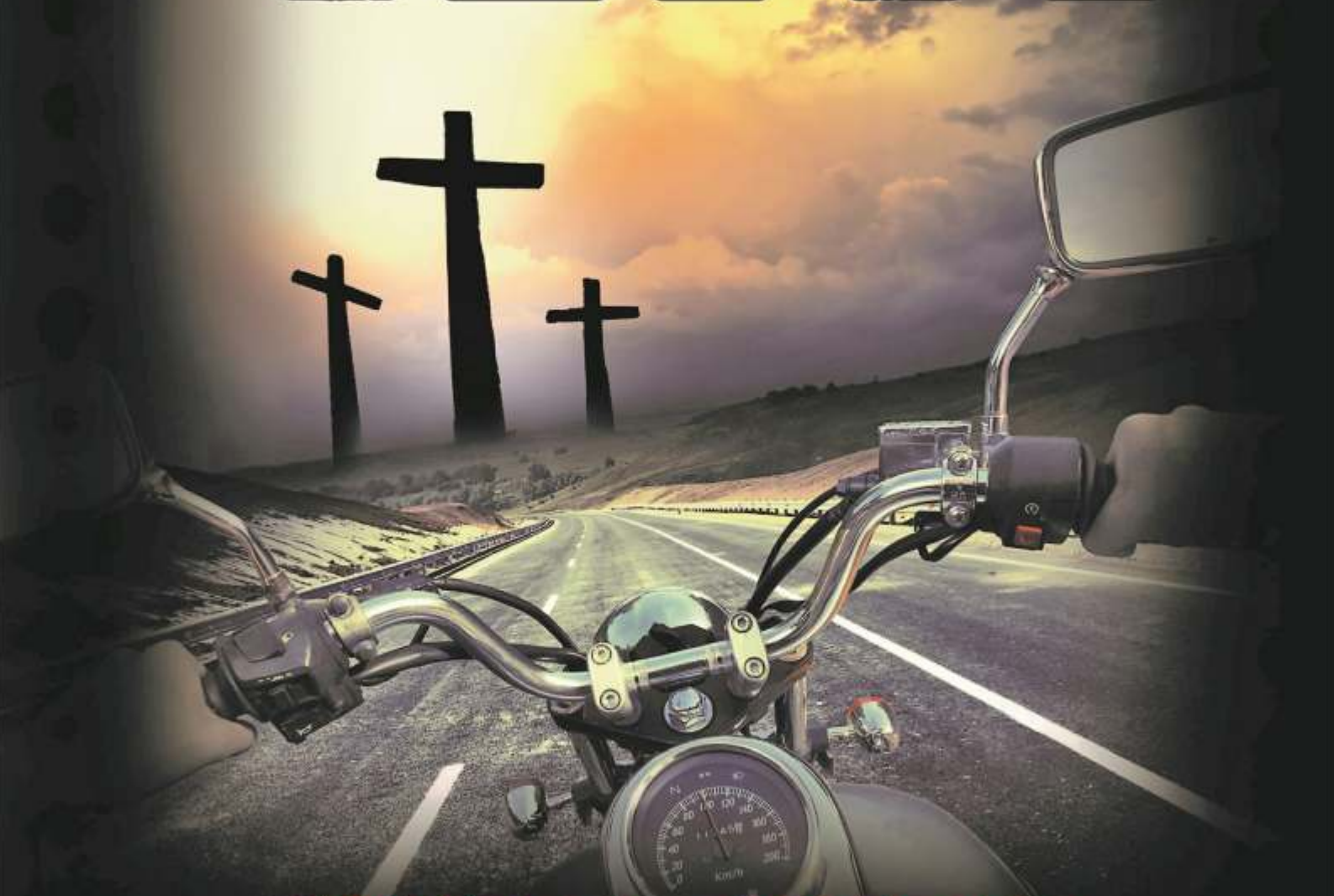
not wishing to be out done, quickly ran into the tent next to Holy Joes and came out wearing a recently purchased pair of fighter pilot’s goggles. The perfect accompaniment, he thought.

Sometimes the weather plays a role in what we wear and this was evident when bin bags were given a run out. The health and safety issues of serving coffee when they hand to arm holes was overlooked, I thought. As a fashion aficionado I can’t knock other people’s choices, especially when it comes to head gear. A Monty Python sketch stated that all of the world’s problems would diminish if more people wore hats. I’m not sure about



this but it would be a more fun place. I spoke to one chap who spent a fortune on an American Civil War hat only to find, when it arrived, that it was a Confederate hat. Apparently he wanted a blue one and it turned up grey. Unperturbed he still wore it for *Stormin’*. That’s the ‘British stiff upper lip’ for you. ☙

ON THE MOVE FOR JESUS



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My early childhood had been quite happy. Mum and dad worked very hard in our two butcher shops which my granddad Smith had started off in the 1930's. There was money in the family because of the two shops. Among all my little friends at the time, mine was the first family to own a TV set and we also had a car, very unusual back then. We were comfortably off and I have happy memories of camping holidays in the countryside like the Lake District, Wales and Scotland. I was brought up to love the countryside and I always have until today.

Just after my 14th birthday disaster came and my childhood was finished.

My big sister had already left home and got married. It always felt as though the house had died when she left. I had no real friends to speak of apart from some boys at school, during school-time. I was lonely. Mum and dad began arguing constantly and bitterly. I cried myself to sleep on some nights as I listened to them, mum yelling at dad for hours, dad trying to ignore her. Eventually dad tried to commit suicide early one morning and I found him unconscious on the kitchen floor with all the gas taps turned on. Mum was too distressed to use the phone so I had to dial 999. When the ambulance and police arrived I was interrogated alone at the hospital by two police officers who tried to make out that I and mum had tried to kill him. When mum found out what the police had done with me she was enraged. When it was all over and dad was still in hospital I was left feeling very insecure and confused and extremely angry. There were no trauma counsellors back then in the 1960's, I had to go to school as usual the next day. Nobody came alongside me to talk to me. I had to cope alone. I did not sleep well in those days. Mum and dad got over it all in time and stayed together. They were not talkers. They could not discuss feelings or anything like that. When I had problems I could not tell them. If I did try and tell them, dad would go quiet and mum would become frustrated with me.

My sense of loneliness increased but at 16 I started to learn karate. I was a founder member of the first karate club in Wigan. I was very good at it and practised every day.

I ended up fighting in the British Championships at Crystal Palace in London. Black belts were rare in those days and I dreamed of becoming one, probably the youngest black belt in the country at that time and my Instructor assured me I would be by the age of 19—but at Crystal Palace I received two heavy blows to my head and body and lost the tournament. The brutality of the training and the awful injuries many received during training bothered me a lot so, bitterly disillusioned with it all, I left it. Karate had become my whole life up till that point so there was a big void in my young life. When you're a teenager, 2 or 3 years is an awful long time.

I hated my job as an apprentice engineer but couldn't see a way out of it. Again, it was almost impossible to discuss this with my parents. All they knew about was the butcher's shop and hard work.

My loneliness increased. I didn't know any girls. I didn't know how to talk to girls. My hobbies, mainly karate and shooting, were not the type to bring me into contact with girls. My school, Wigan Grammar School, was all boys only.

I tried to find meaning in my life through music, progressive rock music. I bought a superb HiFi system. For a short while it worked, but I began to suffer from deep depression and insecurity, which I managed to hide. I struggled on alone.

At 19 I bought a 250cc motorbike, passed my test in 6 months and bought a great big Honda 750cc motorbike. I soon realised I could not buy happiness and plunged into depression yet again. The loneliness was the worst thing. I kept all my feelings hidden from people at work. You had to. I constantly pretended everything was fine.

Then one day I had an accident on my motorbike. A man stepped out in front of me as I rode down Market Street and I knocked him down. I went flying over the handlebars, did a somersault and landed on my back and slid down the road. Amazingly I was not injured, neither was the man I knocked down. However, my big

bike, my pride and joy, WAS injured—badly. The road surface had scraped a hole in the engine casing, and the front end was smashed up. Back at the bike shop they told me it would be off the road for 6 weeks waiting for parts. Oh I was fed up.

Seeing how fed up I was, an acquaintance of mine invited me to spend an evening at someone's house where we could listen to music and chat to a couple of girls. I decided to go and watched while he and his girlfriend smoked a cannabis cigarette. I had never tried drugs and had no intention of doing so. However, a few days later I decided to try a smoke and from then on began to smoke cannabis every day. I liked it. Then someone offered me an LSD tablet and I took it. My first acid trip was beautiful so I decided to take another one the next day. The second one was horrific as sudden terror seized hold of me and drove me out of the house. I walked for ages and ages. I vowed never to take the stuff again. That second acid trip changed my personality, I was not the same afterwards. I was worried about that. I became weaker and weaker. Once I had been a very fit and dynamic young karate practitioner, slowly I was becoming a wreck. I used to wish I could be a carefree little boy again, who went catching frogs and newts and went looking for birds' nests.

So, then, to summarize—In 1973 I was a very lonely young man aged 21. My young life had been messed up first by the crisis in the family, and then by drugs like marijuana and LSD. I was very unhappy at work and scared to death of the future because it looked very threatening indeed.

Jesus said He had come to Earth to search for and save those who are lost.



On Saturday January 27th in 1973 I went into Wigan and saw some people (ex-hippies and bikers, etc.) preaching about Jesus on the street. I stopped to listen. As I stood listening I was so moved in my heart I wanted to weep. Two of them came over to me and I let them pray for me out loud in the street. I did not pray though, I just listened to them asking Jesus to come to me. As I walked away from them I felt myself being nudged by a tremendous, tremendous joy, as though it were following me down Market Street and tapping me on the shoulder.

The Lord himself was calling me. I just carried on walking and did nothing. I was not quite ready yet.

The next day, Sunday 28th January 1973—the crisis came.

At quarter to midnight I arrived home from seeing friends and went into my room. My body began to shake like jelly and I collapsed and fell onto the floor. I remembered the men who had prayed for me the day before. I prayed and said 'Jesus, I love you! I've been a ***** stupid *****.' Yes, I swore in my prayer of repentance, foul words, but the Lord did not mind. He met me where I was and answered me at once. Without any expectation of it I was filled with the love of Christ as His Spirit flooded into me. It was like being in a sea of pure love. It was deep, utterly full and overflowing. Filling all of me to overflowing. I went from darkness and despair into His glorious light and love in an instant. I was immediately transported into God's presence in a way impossible to describe in words. The Lord saved my life that night, of that I am certain.

I went happily and peacefully to bed as though in heaven and slept a deep peaceful sleep. Next morning my first prayer after I had become a Christian was that the Lord would always give me the right words at the right moment to lead others to Him; so that others would find Him like I had done. I walked along Wallgate on my way to work, loving everyone I met. I started reading the old family Bible we had hidden away in a drawer. As I read the words of scripture the words came alive and I wept with joy. I enjoyed a week of delightful peace and joy and wonder because of what had happened to me. So, I learned right at the very beginning that God was a God who did things, who intervened and answered prayer. A God who listens and cares.

The last 44 years since my wonderful conversion have sometimes been astonishing and at times agonizing but much of it has been in private as He has continued to reveal Himself to me. Prayer and agonizing intercession have been my pathway.

The Lord Jesus Christ is nothing like most people imagine Him to be. Blessed be His Name in all the Earth.

"Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." (John 14:21)

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:23) †

Bill recited this poem at Bikers Church, Rixton, in June 2018. He introduced it with this explanation:

"I was in a house meeting one evening when the leader asked us all to write a poem stating how we became a Christian. I wrote the poem in about two minutes flat."

Dedicated to the 28th January 1973, 11.45pm



**"Breathe on me breath of God"
Once said so much to me.
Standing in rows at school,
Tears welling up inside of me.**

**Just nine years old I was,
My child's heart sensing God's care.
Stories of miracles, and the cross.
No doubts that Jesus was there.**

**Then growing into teen-time,
Forgetting all I had sung,
Bringing grief to my parents,
No communication, a life gone wrong.**

**The excitement of a false way
Came to captivate my mind.
A young adult now with much to say,
But only emptiness could I find.**

**My own ways then did tell me,
My life was beginning to fold.
O how I longed for my childhood,
For a bigger hand to hold.**

**With flesh and strength a-crumbling,
And falling to the floor in despair,
Words of repentance I was mumbling,
And my words on High were heard.**

**The Spirit of God came pouring
Into my life that day.
His glorious Name adoring,
Bathed in His love I lay.**

**And then I learned of His great cost,
And of the joy of angels all around.
When this His son who was lost,
Was searched for, and was found.**

Well, for this issue, I've taken the liberty of giving myself my own page! Hope you don't mind, but there are a couple of important things I want to bring to y'all's attention (*sorry, spent too long in Texas*).

First:

Our Daily Bread Ministries, one of our valued partners in ministry has very kindly produced four new evangelistic leaflets for us. These have been specially written and designed for the UK biking community and have been supplied to us *free of charge*. CMA has been involved in the production of the leaflets as consultants from a biking perspective. We have so far had a delivery of 2,000 each of the four leaflets. Small quantities have already gone out to certain branches in the North West and in Scotland. Their front covers are shown to the right.

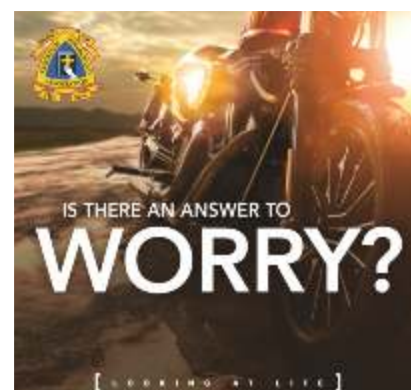
We want to draw your attention to these outreach tools personally, in case your branch has a delivery of them and then they end up being stored away somewhere, never to be seen again. It happens. Please ask your branch chairman or secretary how you may obtain a quantity of the leaflets for your personal use. They're ideal to be given away with a Biker Bible, especially if you sense that one of the four leaflet topics would be appropriate for the recipient. There is also a place inside where you can write your own contact details, to make the gift more personal.

Second:

I have struggled lately with so many photos received from contributors that are low resolution. I realise now that the requirement for images as outlined on page 5 of the last two issues is misleading. This is my mistake. 300dpi (dots per inch) really doesn't make sense unless a final physical size for the image is specified. You might send me a small 300dpi photo which is fine for, say, a 60mm by 30mm image on the page (see the *Bible Society* logo on the next page). But if I need to enlarge the same image to fill, say, a whole page or more (see the image of *The Hayes Conference Centre* on pages 16 & 17 in the last issue or *Holy Joe's at the NABD Rally* on 16 & 17 of this issue), then, although it might look OK on your computer/tablet/phone screen it would be very *pixilated*, or *blocky*, on paper.

So, what I really need from you is a copy of the *original* image produced by your camera or smartphone. Today's mobile phones are capable of producing some very high quality images compared to 20 years ago.

However, a major problem arises when I receive an image that has been copied from *Facebook* or other social media. Because, as I mentioned above, your electronic device's screen typically displays an image at 72dpi, any photo uploaded from the camera/phone to social media sites is automatically reduced in size and resolution by something like $\frac{1}{50}$ (one fiftieth) of its original size. This is obviously not suitable for Chainlink. So, please, *please*, may I have *original* images from your camera or phone. Now, these may be anything from about 2Mb to 6 or 7Mb or higher and may cause a problem when sending via e-mail. You can send each image in a separate e-mail, or upload all of them to a Dropbox account and send me a link so I can download them from there. Or give me a call. Hope all this makes sense! *Ed*.



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