

Nifty News

Dagenham Parish Church

January '10



Dear Friends,



The latest film success is 'Avatar'. It is set in the year 2154 on Pandora - a distant planet. Humans are after a precious metal. And a race of humanoids called the Na'vi oppose them because their whole ecosystem is threatened.

To bring peace the humans design a genetically engineered body called an 'Avatar' that looks and functions like a Na'vi body, but which is controlled by the mind of a human. The film cost something like \$450 million. It took just 17 days to rake in \$1 billion! So 2 sequels are planned. What makes it special is that you can watch it in 3D. Special cameras had to be made just for the film. The cast were sent off to a jungle for a boot-camp bonding experience so they would work well together. It shows.

Inevitably any story has a value system built into it. Avatar is no exception. There is the 'green agenda' - where trees play a big part in sustaining the Na'vi community. It isn't the gospel.

But it has gospel in it. Central to the plot is a rescue story. A crippled man finds himself up against the vested interests of larger opposition. In an Avatar body he identifies with the Na'vi people.

Now 'Avatar' in Hinduism, is the word for 'descent' - as in a deity coming to earth. The English translation of this Hindu word is 'incarnation'.

It seems as if God has planted the rescue mission of Jesus, that is central to this world, into the DNA of all the best stories. He uses both cinemas and churches to reveal something of the greatness of his Son.

In a petrol station after Christmas Debbie overheard a man telling some friends that 'Avatar' revealed the ideal world he'd like to live in.

She wished she'd asked 'What, one in which a Saviour makes a difference? Good job we've just had Christmas to tell us who that Saviour is!'

Mike Reith

HOW TO LISTEN TO SERMONS



Last year we started learning from Christopher Ash how to get the most out of good sermons.

His third tip is to listen to sermons in church - rather than miss them or get them off 'God TV' or the internet.

God told Moses 'Assemble the people before me to hear my words (Deut 4:10). That's the usual way we are to hear him - where the preacher knows us, and we know each other.

The key to see the importance of this is to realise that God's intention is not to make individuals like Jesus, but to form a Christlike church.

When we listen to a sermon together, we are accountable to each other for our response.

If my mind drifts to counting up the number of cobwebs on the ceiling, then those sitting around me might notice! And it'll become clear my mind has not been focussed if someone talks to me about the teaching afterwards. It'll be embarrassing if I didn't have a clue!

When we listen together, you know what I've heard, and I know what you've heard and it creates expectations on how we'll both live as a result of the message. It means that if a life situation crops up, we'll be able to help each other to react in the way we've been taught.

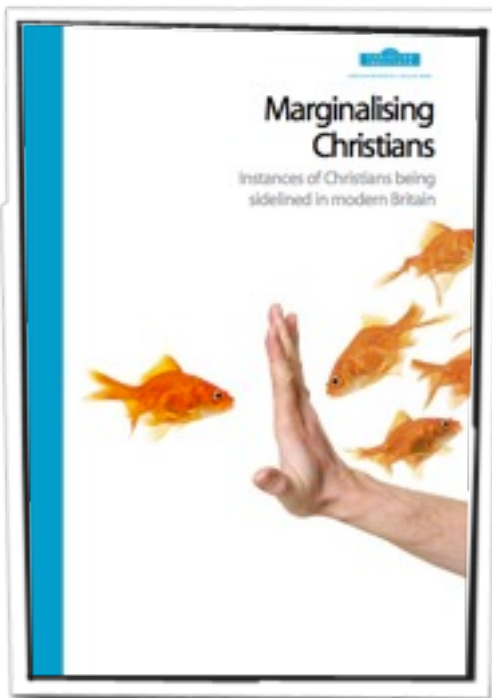
The Bible is written to a group. The word 'you' is more often in the plural than in the singular. So it isn't really a question of what God is saying to me, but what is God saying to us?

When we listen with others it is good if we can say to each other afterwards, "I was really encouraged by.... what about you?" Or if there are questions still puzzling us, how about "Can you help me understand what.... means?" Let's strengthen each other in this task.

READING AHEAD...

This term we shall be studying Peter's first letter. It is much shorter than the larger books we have been studying lately. It is very practical in the encouragements it gives us living as Christians in a non Christian society. Please read the whole letter in one sitting. Peter says it is brief! And join a Growth Group as well to get the most out of this letter.

“Cold’ place for Christians”



Frozen Britain - the Brits always have at least one topic of conversation - yes the weather. What a lot to talk about at the moment.

In July 2009 the Bishop of Winchester wrote “mounting equality laws have made Britain a ‘cold’ place for Christians. The sad fact is that Britain – which owes so much to its Christian heritage – is increasingly becoming a ‘cold’ place for Christians”.

He also went on to say “There appeared to be a concerted attack on the rights of Christians and when there were clashes, the rights of other groups triumphed”.

The Christian Institute’s very recent report ‘Marginalising Christians’ is well worth a read. The report can be read on line at :

<http://www.christian.org.uk/wp-content/downloads/marginchristians.pdf>

‘Equality and diversity’ laws are reaching into every area of life and society. So many laws have already been passed that are marginalising Christians. It appears that these laws punish Christians rather than protect them.

Hopefully after reading this report, it will spur us into action in 2010, to be more informed, write to our MPs, support useful petitions and above all pray for the work of the Christian Institute, our government and our country.

A few copies of the report will be found at the back of church, Please read and return it, so that others can be informed.

January 2010 diary (see website for the whole year)

16th Jan - “Cockney Rubble” - Robert Clack Upper School
7.30 pm - ticket only

27th Jan - United Prayer Meeting - Oxlow Lane Baptist Church with
Pete Woodcock (P4L Mission speaker)

30th Jan - Men’s Breakfast - 8.30 am - Exeter Road Hall

a **passion** for life

PRESENTS
STEVE PAUL
AT UPNEY BAPTIST CHURCH



“Magic & Mayem” to make you smile.
Steve is a great entertainer.

Businesses pay him to draw together
and entertain a crowd at their shows.

He'll use his illusions to explain his Christian faith.

Both shows will be great for families. No tickets.

Phone Billy Young 020 8591 4013 if more info needed.

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