

Mehefin/Gorffennaf RHIFYN 46 2022

June/July ISSUE 46

Babell Zion Newydd

Cast thy burden upon
the Lord, and he shall
sustain thee.

Psalm/Salm 55:22

Bwrw dy faich ar yr
Arglwydd, ac fe'th
gynnal di.

Mike Shephard writes

BIG GATES AND LITTLE HINGES



Have we ever considered the way in which our life pans out? We determine on a course of action and work, meticulously, to achieve a given goal. We then meet a person – a stranger possibly – and the encounter results in a complete re-evaluation of our aims and changes the direction of our lives. A remark, overheard in passing, causes us to examine our prejudices and leads to a reappraisal of our values and beliefs. A passage in a book can have the same effect. It brings us up short and opens our mind to new possibilities. Seeming coincidences happen and transform our very existence. Big gates do indeed swing open on little hinges.

If I had to choose a favourite Bible character, it would be Simon of Cyrene. He may well have been a wealthy black African who had converted to Judaism and who was visiting Jerusalem, possibly for the first time, to participate in the Feast of Passover. It was pure chance that his visit occurred in a momentous year and that he entered the city on a day when three felons were being compelled, by Roman soldiers, to carry their own cross to Golgotha, this being the skull shaped hill, outside the town wall, where they would be crucified. Had Simon left his lodgings five minutes earlier he might have missed so grisly a procession. Had he arrived five minutes later he would have avoided being caught up in an event not of his making. It was sheer bad luck. It was an unfortunate coincidence – a classic example of a big gate swinging open on a little hinge.

One of the prisoners was struggling to carry his cross. He had already endured the travesty of a trial and had been sentenced to death despite being adjudged innocent of any crime. In accordance with custom, he had undergone scourging and had been whipped, mercilessly, with a lash threaded with metal shards. He is exhausted and falls, repeatedly, beneath the load. It becomes clear that he is unable to complete that final journey and that someone must help him do so. The officer in charge of the execution squad is in something of a quandary. A Roman soldier must not be asked to carry the wood for a criminal. No ordinary Jew in the crowd could be compelled to do so. Our phrase, “touch wood,” goes back to the early days of Christianity when some devout people claimed to possess a splinter of the original cross and wore it as a charm. But no one in that crowd, then, would have wanted to touch wood. It would have made a pilgrim ceremonially unclean and made it impossible for him to share in the religious rites. There might well be a riot! Simon solves the problem. He is strong. He is a stranger. Moreover, he is black. It would not be the first time in history that a black person has carried a white man's cross. Nor would it be the last – as protests linked to ‘Black Lives Matter’ demonstrate so well. The Centurion in charge of proceedings could always argue that he didn't realise that the man was Jewish. It was an opportunity too good to miss!

“That man there! Yes, You! The black man! Help this wretch! Pick up his cross and carry it for him! Don’t pretend to be deaf! Move! Now!”
Poor Simon. How he must have cursed his luck. He might well have thought, “Why me!” He must have considered that it was his ill fortune to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Or was it case of being in the right place at the right time? Is it conceivable that the incident signified a huge gate swinging open on small hinges – a life changing happening based on a series of ‘insignificant’ and ‘accidental’ coincidences? It certainly seems, from Simon’s subsequent history, that such might have been the case.

And is this not the case, albeit in varying ways, with you and me?

It was ‘by chance’ that I, as a teenager, began doing an evening paper round, this being inclusive of selling football echoes around the pubs, and door to door. It was coincidental that, one Saturday night, I had papers over and decided, out of the blue, to try my luck at the local manse. It was fortunate that the resident minister decided, probably out of kindness, to purchase a weekly copy, so commencing a friendship that culminated, some few years later, in my own ordination to the Christian Ministry. It was ‘by chance’ that I happened to be sitting on the perimeter wall of Bangor Cathedral and met the woman who would become my wife. Had I not been there, at that time, wearing a silly looking hat and winkle picker shoes, our paths would not have crossed, our children and grandchildren would never have been born and the Shephard Family Tree might have been very different.
It was ‘by chance’ that I enquired of Revd Tom Evans, then Lead Police Chaplain, if he had vacancies for other voluntary chaplains. As it happened, there were none. Coincidentally, the Welsh Ambulance Service, at that very moment, wanted someone to help set up a chaplaincy scheme. I applied for the position and, ‘by chance’ was successful in my application and my retirement was revitalised. Big gates and little hinges once again.

Let me leave you with this thought. It was ‘by chance’ that Simon of Cyrene carried the cross for someone who needed help in bearing an impossible burden.

Is there someone known to us who needs support today? Is it possible that we are the very people to offer help? Could doing so change our lives? Is there a big gate, hanging there, waiting to swing open?

Mike Shephard

Flowers/ Blodau		Cleaning/Glanhau	Announcing and Communion Cyhoeddi a Pharatoi'r Cymun
Helen Gibbon	Gorffennaf/July	Pat/Molly/ Doreen/Charmaine	Pat Morgan

FROM MIKE SHEPHARD

Email Mike.Shephard49@gmail.com

The M and S are capitals

‘Big Gates and Little Hinges’ is the first article in my new book of Chaplain’s Columns which should be available in the Autumn. The book will cost £14 plus P&P where appropriate. I will deliver whenever possible. The last book raised £2500 for charitable funds which was most encouraging. I hope, on this occasion, to raise sufficient funds to cover production and printing costs and to purchase yet more books – these to be given free of charge to those who cannot afford to purchase a copy. They will nevertheless be helped by the content.
The book has been written against the backdrop of a pandemic and war in Ukraine. The writings will reflect that background but some will pursue other themes. I write every week for SIREN – this being the staff newsletter of the Welsh Ambulance Service. The articles have a more general appeal and will be of interest to a wide audience. Please email me to order a copy BUT SEND NO MONEY UNTIL THE BOOK IS RECEIVED.
Thank you so much for your support. It is appreciated
Mike Shephard

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A Ten Pin Bowling Evening

At long last we were able to come together for a social evening on Monday June 27th at The Xcel bowl in Johnstown. 5 teams comprising of adults and children were in tough competition with, not only each other, but also within teams, for Sian had promised a trophy for the highest scorer. Mrs Nesta Wyn Davies, our previous winner yielded the challenge cup to Mr Lynn Davies and it was 10 year old Leia Roberts who won the children’s trophy. After the meal, which had also been arranged by Sian, Lynn proposed a vote of thanks. Thank you Sian.



**THIS SUNDAY! DON'T FORGET.
GWYL HIR DDYDD HAF
OEDFA YM MHARC CAERFYRDDIN
SUL GORFFENNAF 3YDD 4.30PM**

The children will be taking part and representing BZN

Dates for the Calendar

Friendship Centre/Canolfan Dydd

The Friendship Centre will be open every Thursday from 10-12 serving teas, coffees and biscuits until the end of July. It is then hoped that we can formally open in September and provide light lunches until 2pm.

Cwrdd Dosbarth

Cwrdd Dosbarth nesaf yn y Babell Zion Newydd Gorffennaf 4ydd am 7 o'r gloch.

Next Elders'/ Meeting

July 11th at 10.30am at BZN or via Zoom

Alzheimers/Dementia

Every other Tuesday there will be a bilingual traditional hymn singing session at Babell Zion Newydd for people with Alzheimers/Dementia and their carers followed by tea and biscuits. Dates have had to be changed because of Covid sufferers. Therefore the hope is to start in September. Please let Molly know of anyone who might be interested.

The Big Lunch

Lee will be holding "The Big Lunch" on Saturday August 20th at Babell Zion Newydd

Coffee Morning

September 17th Saturday Morning at Babell Zion Newydd

Sunday Services/Gwasanaethau ar y Sul

Revd Emyr Williams Communion Please note	11.30	3/7/2022
am Gwyl Hirddydd Haf Service in the park.	4.30	
pm		
United Service /Cwrdd Unedig with translation	10am	10/7/ 2022
Soar Pontyberem		
Mr Hugh Waddell BZN	2pm	
Mr Martin Dalling	10.30 am	17//2022
Mr Hugh Waddell	2pm	24/7/2022
Revd Chris Rees	2pm	31/7/2022
Revd Mike Shephard	10.30 am	14/8/2022
Revd Adelaide Wheeler Cocks Communion.	10.30 am	4/9/2022



SUNDAY CLUB/CLWB SUL

Eisteddfod Genedlaethol yr Urdd Dinbych

You may have seen Ellie Grace as member of the Model School Creative Dance team competing in the Urdd National Eisteddfod in Dinbych during the Whitsun Bank Holiday. The Eisteddfod had been held virtually for the last two years but this year all schools were invited to the 'Maes' to compete in one of three pavilions and all competitions televised. Well done Ellie Grace.

Sunday school

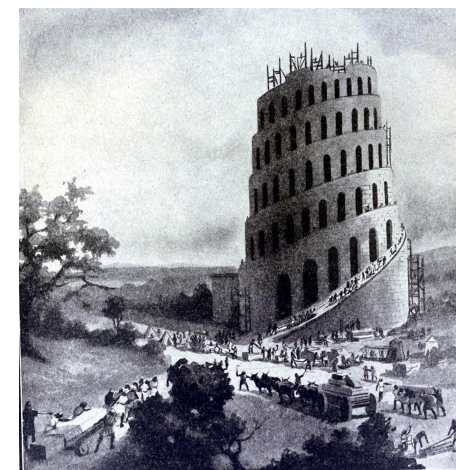
We have been looking at the first four main stories in Genesis these past few weeks. Catrin has made them very interesting for us with all kinds of games and crafts. Imagine us all having to stand in a line from the tallest to the shortest, then the oldest to the youngest, those with the biggest shoe size to those with the smallest, then those who have birthdays in January to those in December and all this done without speaking to each other – not a word. All these games had a point of course. Last week it was the story of the Tower of Babel.

The Tower of Babel

The people of God thought they could live without God. They were full of their self-importance and pride. They were a growing population and spoke one language. They decided to build a tower that would show how mighty and powerful they were. "They said, "Let's build a city with a tower that reaches the sky so that we can make a name for ourselves and not be scattered all over the earth." They did not want to be scattered across the world and so they disobeyed God. They wanted to show that they were like God- indeed that they were gods. That was their downfall. God did not like their pride and arrogance and so He muddled their language. Now they could not understand each other and could not follow each other's instructions. The Tower was never completed and became known as Babel which means confusion. From then on the people were scattered across the earth.

It is not the building of the tower that is under condemnation but the selfish attitude of seeking praise for their deeds and their belief that they could be self-sufficient enough to build their lives entirely without God. They had disobeyed God. God's intention from the beginning was to create a variety of peoples and languages but peoples over the ages have wanted to show their supremacy over the world and by building a city with a tower as a symbol of their superiority and, what they thought, would be their security, was to prove to be their downfall. In the words of that familiar hymn:

"Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey."



Pen-Y-Fan

On Saturday 21st of May a small group of the Babell Zion Newydd walkers set off on a trip to Pen-y -Fan in the Brecon Beacons. The weather was lovely, ideal for us. We took the scenic route and had an enjoyable journey seeing the countryside at its best. It was a good start to an unforgettable day.

On arriving at the area of the Brecon Beacons which was an awesome sight the reality sunk in that we were going to climb to the peak of one of those mountains. Two of our group, Gareth and Lee had done it before so they knew what to expect. The rest of us had not but we were confident that we'd make it. We were kitted out with all the gear, the boots, the walking sticks, backpacks, hats, food and drink. There were crowds of people everywhere, people coming and going. We started our journey at 11.30 and were soon in the middle of all those people who were coming down having already been to the top. We were stopped often by people wanting to chat with us and giving us encouragement. Maybe seeing a white haired lady in the group prompted this. It was tough going but good company helped. Lee had streaked ahead of the rest of us but every so often we could see him in the distance looking out for us.

We arrived at the top about three hours from when we set out. The weather was good so we were able to enjoy the beautiful sights all around. We had our picnic and a welcome sit down. The photo shows us all in front of the plaque which indicated the peak of Pen-y-Fan which is 886 meters. We noticed a family of three young children with their parents having their photo taken in front of the plaque holding a Christian Aid flag. While we were having our picnic a red kite suddenly flew over us and was near enough for us to have a good look at him. He carried on flying around for quite a while as if he was giving us a show.



We started our way down after about an hour. The walk down seemed to be much harder than the walk up. It was a great relief to reach the bottom.

We left Pen-y-Fan about 6pm and headed for the Angel Inn at Salem Llandeilo where we were booked in for a meal. This was enjoyed by everyone and very welcome it was. The general view of the day was how friendly people were and how much goodwill was all around. At the end of the meal Gareth presented the ladies with an award to remember the day. It had been an unforgettable day. It was good to arrive home safe and sound. Our thanks to Gareth and Dawn for making all the arrangements as usual.

Molly Thomas



Gweddi

Diolch i Ti ein bod yn adnabod dy gariad. Rwyf bob amser yn gofalu amdanom ni. Rwyf yn gwybod am ein gwendidau ac rwyf yn ein helpu ni yn ein gwendid. Pan fyddwn yn cwmpo rwyf yn ein codi. Pan fyddwn yn methu rwyf yn ein hadfer ni. Pan gawn ni ein clwyfo rwyf yn ein hiachau ni. Pan fyddwn ni'n galaru rwyf yn wylo gyda ni. Gweddiwn dros bawb sydd yn derbyn triniaeth ar hyn o bryd. Cofiw'n am Meurig a Carole a gweddiwn y byddant yn cael eu nerthu a'u cynnal gan eu ffydd ynot Ti. Gweddiwn am heddwch yn ein byd ac am gyfiawnder lle mae llygredd ac anhegwch.



O Dduw clyw ein cri.

Prayer

We thank you Lord that we know of your love. You are always there to care for us. You know of our weaknesses and you help us in our weakness. When we fall, you pick us up. When we fail, you restore us. When we are hurt, you heal us. When we grieve, you grieve with us. We pray for all who are receiving treatment at this time. We especially remember Meurig and Carole and pray that they may be strengthened and sustained by their faith in You. We pray for peace in the world and for justice where there is corruption and unfairness.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

Quiz

1. *One* causes more joy than "ninety and nine just persons."
2. The Good Samaritan used *two* of these.
3. Peter wanted to make *three* of these on the mount of Transfiguration.
4. Philip the deacon had *four* of these.
5. The woman of Samaria had *five* of these before she met Jesus.
6. *Six* of these were given for work.
7. The Book of Revelation contains letters to *seven* of these.
8. *Eight* were saved in the ark.
9. Og, King of bashan had one which was *nine* cubits long.
10. God gave *ten* of these to Israel by Moses.
11. *Eleven* of these witnessed the ascension.
12. Jacob had *twelve* of these
13. At *thirteen* years of age Ismael underwent this rite.
14. Jacob served for *fourteen* of these for Rachel.
15. Bethany was *fifteen* of them from Jerusalem.