

The Cross & Crown



PRINCE GEORGE WINYAH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

301 Screven Street ♦ Georgetown, South Carolina 29440 ♦ 843-546-4358 or 546-4375

From the Rector

SEPTEMBER 2008

Dear Friends,

We have kicked off our fall here at Prince George, and I pray that you will find a place to plug in, grow, and serve, among the many opportunities. This issue of Cross & Crown presents the choices, or at least most of them, and the next step is yours: will you come and be part of this Body of Christ, or will you sit back, hold back, invest elsewhere? “Come on, Paul,” you might say: “You don’t know my life, how busy I am, how many things demand my time, my attention, my energy! You get paid to be at church!” True enough. So, why should you take your truly precious time (and money) and invest it in Parish life, the Body of Christ at Prince George? A few reasons:

- It is not your time and money. Our faith tells us that we are created and chosen by God, that our days, every beat of our hearts, are His – numbered by Him, claimed by Him for His kingdom purposes. The same is true of our resources, including our money. It is not ours, but His. So invest it wisely; be a good steward (trustee) of His time and His money; sink it into His kingdom, His Body on earth, the Church.

- Investing here, or anywhere in the Body of Christ (the Church), pays by far the best dividends. We grow individually when we are active in service, worshipping together, studying together. When we gather, we receive encouragement, comfort, and strength. We can better withstand our losses and pain – of which there is much lately – when we are together. We are a more powerful force in the world for the good and for the Lord when we join together. In Christ, in His Body, there is life, the best dividend of all.

- We need you here. You have spiritual gifts, skills, perspective, wisdom, ideas, resources, that Prince George needs and which God gave you to share here.

- “Solitary Christian” is an oxymoron, a contradiction. It is not a real possibility, or at least not for long. The trite metaphor is true: we are like embers, coals in a fire; take us out of the fire, separate us from the Body, and we go out. Christian faith will not stand apart from the Church.

So please, come and be part of this Parish. And, not just on Sunday mornings. Do we only eat, breathe, or wash one day a week? I think not. Nor do we do well eating, breathing, washing in the Word of God, one day a week. Do we meet with our beloved once a week? Nor can we expect our relationship with Christ to thrive on a once-a-week encounter. There is something for you here – food for the soul, the breath of the Spirit, fellowship, a place to grow and serve – nearly every day. So come, find a place to belong in the Body of Christ here at Prince George. We need each other. Come.

With love and many prayers, in Christ,

Birthdays

September 1	Harry Oxner
September 1	Sandra Ricks
September 2	Katherine Bull
September 4	Beth Ness
September 5	Wanda Grimes
September 7	Duff Dawson
September 7	Cotton Williams
September 8	Conner Summer
September 9	Ann Evans
September 10	Billy Bellune
September 14	Sam Tiller
September 14	Pete Williams
September 15	Tom Bellune
September 15	Tracy Morris
September 18	Alicia DeSpain
September 18	Margot Reynolds
September 19	Tee Miller
September 19	Tracey Rogers
September 20	Otto Kearise
September 21	Joe Bull
September 21	Kelly Kelley
September 21	Nancy Scramtom
September 23	Allison Nation
September 23	Gil Simons
September 23	Isabelle Tennant
September 24	Anna Jones
September 24	Merit Justice
September 24	Logan Moree
September 25	Liz Forester
September 25	Laura Ragsdale
September 26	Vickie Platt
September 27	Foster Avant
September 28	Ann Leal
September 28	Mike Oberst
September 30	Stephanie Oxner

FAITHFUL SERVICE

After many years training and leading acolytes in their duties at Prince George, John Benson has decided to hand the ministry over to new leadership. Gary Gates will now be responsible for overseeing the Prince George acolyte program. He will be assisted by Dick Cambrey and others. It is a big job, and we are delighted that God keeps raising up such capable people to handle it. Many thanks to John for providing such consistently excellent support for our worship services, and thanks to Gary and Dick, to our acolytes, and to all others who put their heart into serving God in His Church.

THANK YOU all for supplying food, snacks, drinks, etc., for our various parish functions; your graciousness is appreciated! The parish hall kitchen is beginning to pile up with food service items which belong to you. Please make plans to remove your food service items soon. We will be disposing of abandoned items on September 9.

YOUTH MINISTRY

It has been a wonderful delight to have Jason here at Prince George for the past year during his internship. His contribution to the youth ministry has been significant, as have his other gifts for the wider church, especially singing in both the 9 a.m. worship band and the Choir (and being able to lift heavy furniture!!).

Therefore it was an easy decision for us to ask Jason to stay on as our new Youth Minister. Jason has accepted and so, from immediate effect, Jason will be taking over the youth ministry. We will be having a short commissioning for Jason at the 11 a.m. service shortly.

I am very excited for the future of the youth ministry here at Prince George and I know that you will show Jason the same love, support and encouragement which I have, and continue to receive here at Prince George. I know that Jason will covext your prayers for him and his ministry.

As for me? Well, I am not unemployed! I have moved over into an Assistant Rectors' role and look forward to continue to serve our Lord here at Prince George.

Peace,
Andy Morgan

Births

Abbe Parsons Geer born on August 5, daughter of Arthur and Alison Geer

Deaths

Helen Manning on August 27, 2008.

Midday Musical Moments

Music, Readings, A Hymn & Prayers

Noon on Wednesdays in Church *Guest Soloists*

Admission free - Everyone welcome *Most Weeks*

Prince George Winyah Episcopal Church

Do You Need Healing?

On Sunday, October 5, we are planning to have a Charity dinner. The planning and motivation for this event is student based. Headed up by Luke and Madeline Gates. Please visit the Kirabo website: <http://www.kirabofoundation.org>. or our youth website (www.thinkr12.wordpress.com) for sale of tickets and further details.

Thanks, Jason Hamshaw - Youth Minister

Do You Need Healing?

The fact is, *every one* of us needs healing – physical, spiritual, emotional, or otherwise, and so each Thursday at 10 a.m. we conduct a Communion service in the church with prayer for healing. The service is just like a Sunday morning Rite II service, except in place of the *Prayers of the People*, we use a *Litany of Healing* from the Book of Occasional Services, and then those who wish to receive prayer for healing come forward to the rail, where the priest says a brief prayer for them as they may request. We not only pray for physical ailments, but also for guidance, the mending of relationships, alleviation of emotional distress, and any other problem or concern. The service lasts less than 40 minutes. Please consider making this service a regular part of your week. God has blessed us with His presence, and with miracles of healing at our rail. It is a privilege to avail ourselves of this gift.

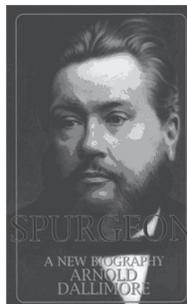
Parents-2-B Please continue to pray for our expectant families and their babies, for healthy pregnancies and safe deliveries, for God's peace and rest, for protection from flu and colds; and for all God's blessings during this special time. Parents-2-B at this time are Jason & Bailey Dozier; Edward & Kelly Kelley; Brian & Susan Welch; Paul & Keira Fuener, Jr. and Perry & Wynne Peace. If you know other expecting Prince George families, please let us know so we can add them to our prayers.

Cursillo

In the dark about Cursillo? Wondered what it's all about? Cursillo is a great weekend held at Camp St. Christopher four times a year. Those who have been (about 30 of us here at Prince George) will tell you it was one of the most important weekends in their Christian life. The weekend is great fun, good food and fellowship, and most of all, a time of experiencing God's love for you in a powerful way. Wherever you are in your Christian walk, Cursillo is an opportunity not to be missed. To go, you must be a member of Prince George and have a sponsor (anyone who has been before). Cursillo is popular in this Diocese, thus you need to get your name on the list to go, and then wait for an opening. For more information, and names of people who have attended, contact Paul Fuener at the church, 546-4358 or Sandy Gresham, 546-4985.

Book Review

Spurgeon: A New Biography by Arnold Dallimore



Quite simply I love Charles Spurgeon!! Nicknamed the Prince Of Preachers, he lived 117 years ago and yet his teaching, sermons and books are still read, valued and useful today.

He was the pastor of the first modern 'mega' church; The Metropolitan Tabernacle in South London. It was the Church he built (both physically and spiritually) and pastured for the last 30 years of his ministry until his death. Each and every week it would be packed with over 5000 people.

Spurgeon was converted at the age of 15 almost by accident (if you can say that about a Calvinist!!). He was sent home from the boarding school he attended due to an outbreak of fever. While at home he went to a small Methodist Chapel one Sunday morning. No more than fifteen people were there due to a snow storm the previous evening. Dallimore, (quoting Spurgeon himself) writes:

"The minister did not come that morning: he was snowed up, I suppose. At last a very thin-looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort, went up to the pulpit to preach. Now it was well that preachers be instructed, but this man was really stupid. He was obliged to stick to his text, the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was – 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was, I thought, a glimmer of hope for me in that text. When he had managed to spin out about ten minutes or so, he was at the end of his tether. Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I daresay, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said "Young man, you look very miserable." Well, I did, but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made from the pulpit on my personal appearance before. However, it was a good blow, struck right home. He continued, "And you will always be miserable – miserable in life and miserable in death – if you don't obey my text: but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved." I saw at once the way of salvation. . . ."

And hence the journey for Spurgeon began.

This book is well written, easy to read and is a wonderful introduction to the life of Spurgeon. By reading it I hope you will be encouraged to seek out his sermons and his books and see exactly why he was named the Prince of Preachers!!

Andy Morgan

Book Review

THE SHACK BY WILLIAM YOUNG – A Harmless Novel Or A Theological Nightmare?

For the most part, the reviews that we write for *Cross and Crown* are aimed at encouraging you with good books to read. However, this review is not a recommendation of a book but a warning. *The Shack* by William Young began as a small, self-published book with a marketing budget of \$300. Today it is a huge best seller, reaching #3 on the *USAToday* book list. But while it has become a huge success it has also become a source of controversy. It had not been my intention to read this book. However, a fellow Youth Minister called me to see what my view was on it and encouraged me to read it – so I did. Because of the large success of this book; that both adults and young people are reading it and that Eugene Peterson (author of *The Message*) has recommended it (even calling it the modern *Pilgrims Progress!*) I think it is important that we understand both the draw of this book, and the problems it is causing.

The Shack is about a guy called Mack (short for MacKenzie) who now lives in the aftermath of his young daughter's murder. His daughter was abducted during a family camping trip and was murdered in an isolated shack.

Some years after the murder Mack is convinced that he has to go back to the shack for a weekend - he does not know why, but, without telling his wife, he goes and discovers three people, who in fact are the Trinity. God the father is an African American woman (called Papa – a term that Mack's wife uses for God), God the Son is white young man in jeans and the Holy Spirit is a young woman. Here in the shack Mack has a conversation with God. The majority of the book revolves around this conversation with the Trinity and especially about Mack's anger at why God would allow his daughter to die.

It is well written, engaging and moving. You empathize almost immediately with Mack and the struggle he has. The book tackles two huge theological issues - the Trinitarian relationship and the problem of evil and God's role in suffering.

Can a novel, a fictional story, bring light to topics on which many scholarly books have been written? Of course, the author would say that is not the purpose of *The Shack* because it is a novel. Though *The Shack* is not a textbook for theology and though it may not appear on the outside to be theological, as long as it discusses the nature and the plan of God, it enters fully into the realm of theology.

The first, and perhaps the biggest concern for me was how the Trinity is represented in this book. The author has all three members of the trinity at the shack and God the father as an African American woman.

Exodus 33:18-22 says: *Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."*

Of course, the problem is not that God the Father is portrayed as an African American woman – it's the fact that God the Father is portrayed AT ALL! No-one has God the Father (John 1:18 and John 6:46)

and lived. Also, to portray God the Father in any way goes against the commandment to make an idol of the creator God.

It would have been fine to have portrayed Jesus in the way the author has (see *Dinner With A Perfect Stranger* by David Gregory) but not God the Father or God the Spirit. Now some of you may immediately think of Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel and his famous portrayal of Adam and the finger of God. **If** Michelangelo *intended* this to be a representation of God the Father then yes it is idolatrous and unscriptural. However I look at this as Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15) and through whom all things have been made.

There are many areas where I find the discussion between Mack and God unhelpful, but here is one exchange that was particularly worrying. In one of the first encounters with Papa (God the Father):

"Mack noticed the scars in her wrists, like those he now assumed Jesus also had on him." (pg. 95)

Note that these scars were present on the wrists of the Father and not just the Son. Explaining this Papa says:

"Don't ever think that what my Son chose to do didn't cost us dearly. Love always leaves a significant mark" she stated softly and gently. "We were there together." (pg. 96)

How could this be, that the Father was on the cross? It becomes clear just a few pages later where Papa remarks:

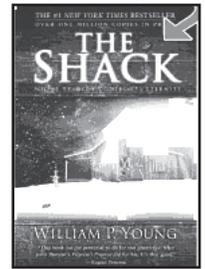
"When we three spoke ourselves into human existence as the Son of God we became fully human. We also chose to embrace all the limitations that this entailed. Even though we have always been present in this created universe, we now became flesh and blood." (pg. 99)

Nowhere in scripture do we find that the Father spoke himself into human existence. Only Jesus, the second person of the Trinity became fully human while maintaining his full divinity.

This illustrates the danger that *The Shack* has fallen into. Yes it is a novel. Yes it is an engaging read – but it also states things about God and the Trinity that go beyond the boundary of dialogue for the sake of entertainment, and are theologically wrong.

There are other areas of concern such as the author downplays the importance and uniqueness of the Bible, subjugating it or making it equal to other forms of subjective revelation and the misrepresentation of redemption and salvation, opening the door to the possibility of salvation outside of the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross; but, space is limited and we can't tackle all of this here.

The Shack may be an engaging, and at times moving read but it is one that contains far too much error. I'll end by quoting one reviewer (Tim Challis) who gives a wise caution; *read it only with the utmost care and concern, evaluating the book against the unchanging standard of scripture.*



FALL ADULT EDUCATION

ECW Offerings

FALL BIBLE STUDY

MARK YOUR CALENDERS!

The Episcopal Church Women present:

Priscilla Shirer's Discerning The Voice of God: How To Recognize When God Speaks

TIMES:

Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8 p.m.
Sept. 2 - Oct. 14 at the Rectory

Wednesday mornings, 10-11:30 a.m.
Sept. 3 - Oct. 15 in the Parish Hall

In this study you will learn to recognize God's character, language and tone of voice as you spend time in his word and understand the role of the Holy Spirit. You'll more easily recognize His voice, as well as discern the voices of strangers.

Please join us and bring your friends!

For more information please contact: The Rev Linda Manuel, (843) 436-0437. Child care is available on Wednesday mornings. To Sign up, call the church office at 546-4358.

MONDAY WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Mondays in the Panel Room at the Parish Hall, from noon until 1 p.m. beginning on September 8. Open to all women of the Parish, no registration required.

ST ANNE'S GUILD – Meets on Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m. in the Parish Hall, the first Tuesday of the month. Open to all women.

SUNDAY MORNINGS – New programs from 10:10-10.45 a.m.;
Starting Sunday, September 7 through October 12, 2008

Whose Book is THE BOOK? Man's Or God's? *5 Weeks on The Doctrine of Scripture*

We talk about how the Bible is the WORD of God, but how did the Bible come together? On what basis do we say that it is the Word of God and therefore trustworthy and true? This five week course will explore the who, why and how of scripture. We will spend two weeks looking at how the Bible came together. We will look at what INSPIRATION means and how that applies to the Bible – what role do the human authors have in writing the scriptures? What does inerrancy mean? We will look at Bible difficulties and put them in perspective. And finally we will ask the question: What are the implications of the Bible being the very word of God. Led by Paul Fuener, Andy Morgan & Matt Walter.

Encounters With Christ: *Conversion Stories of the New Testament*

We will spend five weeks looking at some of the wonderful conversion encounters in the New Testament which will encourage and inspire us; The Sinful Woman (Luke 7:36-50); Zacchaeus the Tax Collector (Luke 19:1-10); Nicodemus (John 3:1-21, 19:38-42); The Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-42) & St. Paul (Acts 9:1-31). Led by Paul Fuener, Andy Morgan & Matt Walter.

Starting October 12 through November 23

Science And Christianity (7 Sundays) a brief look at the relationship between science and the Christian faith, seeking to understand together the tension which seems to exist today between the two. Drawing on the writings of Richard Dawkins, Alistair McGrath, Phillip Johnson, Stephen Barr, Paul Davies, C.S. Lewis and others, we'll look briefly at the history of this relationship; consider some specific, troublesome areas today, such as creation vs. evolution, bioethics, genetic engineering, and the like; and seek to develop a practical way of thinking Christianly about science.

Great Anglican Thinkers – we will spend 7 Sundays exploring the lives, work and significance of some of the great Anglicans of history and the modern era (some well known, others not so) such as; Thomas Cranmer, William Law, Richard Hooker, John Donne, John Milton, J.I Packer and John Stott. Learn how Anglicanism was enriched and grown through the lives and work of such men.

Experiencing God – Monday evenings, beginning Sept. 8, in the Panel Room. This is a powerful, life-changing study which will help you see God's work in your life, past, present, and help you discern how where God may be leading you into the future. Led by Barbie Culbertson (527-8594).

Men's Tuesday Morning Bible Study and Breakfast in the Parish Hall at 7 a.m.

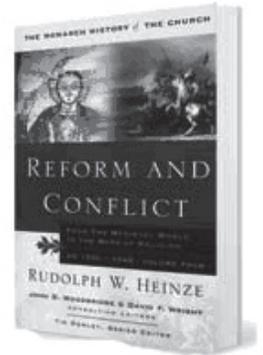
Men's Wednesday morning Book Study, 7 a.m. at Thomas' Cafe.

Prince George Parish Family Weekend BOOK NOW!!!

November 7-9 2008 at Camp St. Christopher

This year we will be having our Parish Weekend Away to Camp St Christopher. Our aim is to have a WONDERFUL time away together, of fellowship, teaching and relaxation. This is why we are trying to bring you a very exciting speaker.

Canon Dr. Rudolph W. Heinze - Rudi Heinze has a Phd from the University of Iowa and an Honorary Doctor of Letters from Concordia University. He is a priest in the Church of England and a Canon of the Diocese of Port Sudan. He has taught at the University of Iowa, Ohio State University, Concordia University and the University of Illinois. He spent twenty years in England where he was on the staff of Oak Hill College in London and served as Lecturer in Church History, College Dean and Vice Principal. He also taught as a visiting lecturer at Cambridge University. In addition he wrote and presented three programs for BBC Television on the Early Church. He has published three books and numerous scholarly articles. His most recent publication is a study of the 16th Century Reformation entitled Reform and Conflict. While in England he served as honorary curate of the parish of St. Peters London Colney in the Diocese of St. Albans.



The cost for the weekend will be as follows:

If you want to stay in a lodge room the cost for double occupancy, for the whole weekend (just for the room) is \$160. So, a family of 4 will pay \$160 for the room and a married couple will pay \$160 for a room. If two or four men would like to stay in the lodge room it will be \$160.

On top of that price, the cost for the meals is \$66.00 per person. So a married couple will pay in total \$292 for the weekend (\$160 for the room and \$66 each for the meals).

A family of four with two children under 12 will pay \$342 (\$160 for the room, \$132 for the two adults food and 2 x \$25 for each child under 12 (for food).)

A family of four with two children over 12 will pay \$424 (that's \$160 for the room and 4 x \$66.00 for food)

To stay on a beach front cabin will cost \$120 per person, including ALL meals. For children under 12 the cost is \$50 including ALL MEALS.

RESPONSE FORM FOR THE PARISH WEEKEND AWAY

(FAMILY) NAME _____ No. Adults _____ No. Children/Ages _____

I would like to book a: **Cabin:** No. of people _____ **Lodge:** No. of people _____

** Make sure you have enclosed a deposit of \$50 for each person.

(Please return to Andy Morgan or the Parish Office- Thank you!)

NOTES FROM THE CHOIR LOFT...

BY JON BLAMIRE – MUSIC DIRECTOR

A WAY BACK INTO LOVE

We have recently been loaned the film “Music and Lyrics” on DVD. It’s a chick flick romantic comedy and the girls love it! The premise of the story is that a ‘has been’ pop star is asked by a current number one pop star to write a song for her. She has had a painful break-up with her boyfriend and is quite specific about the subject / title – “Way Back Into Love”.

I won’t spoil the outcome for you, but it got me thinking: most people are searching for a way back to love. We hear it reflected in the songs on our radio stations and TV’s. Popular songwriters through the ages have drawn their inspiration from human love and its many aspects: crushes, infatuation, love rejected, mature love, loneliness and even lust. However, good as human love is, it can never satisfy the really deep longing of our hearts to love and be loved in a way which is utterly dependable. Human love always fails. Only in God do we find unfailing love, and the way in to God’s love is through Jesus.

The film “Music and Lyrics” simultaneously follows the progress of a growing love relationship, and the development of the song, which is a duet. We find something similar in the Bible as it charts the developing relationship between God and man, first through His chosen people, and then for the whole world. But what of a song, a duet? You might think it fanciful, but scripture hints at a duet between God and man. At first it is one sided as God takes the initiative in a love duet to last into eternity, but as people hear it and respond, the human half of the duet grows and becomes “audible”.

As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. Isaiah 62:5

The Lord your God is with you, He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17

The living, the living - they praise you, as I am doing today; fathers tell their children about your faithfulness. The LORD will save me, and we will sing with stringed instruments all the days of our lives. Isaiah 38: 19 – 20

We may not directly hear the music of heaven, but the psalmists acted as human agents, expressing both halves of the duet: musically articulating God’s love to his people and also man’s love for God. When they were writing, the song was expressed in terms of God and Israel, but now the song is wider, and through Jesus, the whole world is invited to join the human half of the duet. In fact, more than that, as Christ came to redeem the whole of creation, we find ourselves with the whole of creation as it ‘sings’ out praise to the creator and sustainer of all things. Psalm 19: 1 – 4:

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or lan-

guage where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

Don’t get me wrong; whilst the good news of the love of God is for all mankind, I’m not saying that all mankind will respond and sing ‘the song of the Lamb’ in heaven. Revelation 15: 2 - 4 makes it clear that only those who love Jesus and have resisted and overcome Satan will sing in heaven:

And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb:

“Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

Those who know and love Jesus are members of His church, and the church is to be part of the greatest celebration ever, where there will be much singing - the wedding feast of the Lamb. Harking back to Isaiah 62, alluded to in the Song of Songs, running through the parables of Jesus and on into the writing of the apostle Paul and finally to Revelation, we come to understand that Christ loves us, the Church, as a bridegroom loves his bride. This is no shotgun wedding, nor a society charade: Jesus went through Hell and back to rescue, woo and win us for himself. He loves us with a passion unknown anywhere else in the whole universe.

So, for all who seek a “way back into love”, just listen. The love song of heaven is there for all to hear, if only we would stop our busyness and ‘tune in’. The Bible is shot through with it, all creation sings it and Christians should declare it clearly. It is beautiful - telling of the Father’s love for His lost children and inviting us to respond to that love by living our lives for Him and singing the song for others to hear.

The Song of the Lamb is sung by an exclusive group. Where are you now? Stood like a small child with their fingers in their ears yelling “La, la, la, la, I can’t hear you!”; stumbling through life yearning for love but unrequited as you try to find it in the wrong places; aware of God’s song and His invitation but scared to join in case you don’t sing well or make a mistake? Or are you a part of the heavenly chorus which spans earth and heaven, time and eternity, singing the song of the Lamb?

I pray you hear God’s call and join the chorus! Alleluia!

DEVOTIONAL - By John Piper

LESSON FROM A LOST MASTERCARD

I used to carry a Mastercard for identification and rare, unforeseen expenses. Noel (my wife) and I quit using it for regular purchases after the personal finance seminar at our church that exposed our own foolish habits with credit. That solved the problem of overspending our monthly budget. We use checks and cash for everything now.

So we know how much we have spent before the horrible reckoning at the end of the month. But I still carried it. Then I took it to California on vacation and lost it – and I had no idea where. It could have been in the seal show at Sea World. It could have been in the fruit shop in Tijuana where the bees covered the watermelon. It could have been in who knows how many McDonald's or on the beach in Coronado, where the sand really is gold and the condos sell for half a million dollars. (We were swimming, not shopping.) I had no idea where it was.

But the wonderful thing is that I felt no worries. Now, mind you, that's not natural for me. I am by nature a pessimist, and under ordinary circumstances I would have concluded that someone had already charged the limit on my card. I would usually have gotten mad at myself or my family and taken my frustration out on everybody. I would have looked hard for some divine purpose in all the trouble and had an awful time being happy.

But this time it was different. I felt no worries at all. I didn't feel angry with anyone. I went about my business as usual, trusted God and loved my family.

And when I got back from vacation, there it was in an envelope. A friend had mailed it to me from California. I had dropped it in his car.

Do you know what the secret to my happiness was? I never knew I had lost the card until I saw it in the envelope at home.

I stood there holding it in my hand and smiling. Just think how feisty I might have been if I had known I lost it. Think how depressed and worried and angry and frustrated and irritable I might have been. And the whole time the card was safely on the way to my home. All my anger and frustration and discouragement could have been absolutely pointless.

Now, is there not a lesson in this? There is for me. It's this: As soon as we discover we have a problem, God has already been working on it and the solution is on the way.

I have seen it happen again and again in my life. A letter arrives with the solution to some problem. But just the day before I had been discouraged and downcast, not knowing that the letter was already in the mail.

If we believe in the God of Romans 8:28, we will always remember that by the time we know a problem exists, God has already been working on it and the solution is on the way. Ponder the eagerness of God to work for us. "From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides thee, *who works for those who wait for him*" (Isaiah 64:4 RSV – emphasis added). "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, *to show his might on behalf of those whose heart is blameless toward him*" (2 Chronicles 16:9, RSV – emphasis added).

That is what was happening before I knew I had a problem. And that is what God is doing all the time for those who trust in him. Of course, the point here is not that God spares his people trouble. And all of us know that a lost credit card is the least of our worries in a world of suffering like ours. The lost credit card is merely a parable of much greater things. They will not always turn out the way we think is best. But that does not mean God is not at work. He is always at work. And he is turning all our losses and all our pains into something good for us as we trust him. This is his promise.

Therefore, fret not. Cast all your anxieties on him. They are as unnecessary as mine would have been for the lost Mastercard. The time will come when you will see the wise and loving point of it all. By faith live in that moment now, even before you know.

(Taken from *Taste and See – Savoring The Supremacy of God In All of Life* by John Piper)

Upcoming Events – Important Dates

Adult Ed Begins	September 7	10:10 a.m.
Women's Bible Study Begins	September 8	Noon in the Panel Room
Charity Dinner	October 5	
All Saints' Carnival	November 1	Bourne Building
Parish Family Weekend	November 7-9	Camp St. Christopher
Food Fair/Art Sale	November 22	Parish Hall

Youth Ministry

Student Leadership Conference

Thirty young people from across our diocese (including Prince George) gathered at Camp St. Christopher for a week of fellowship and leadership training. Unlike most Youth Diocesan events this was not open to everyone. To participate required a recommendation from a youth minister or Rector.



The aim of the week was to give the students an in-depth experience in the skills of leadership. It centered around three 'C's' – Calling, Character and Competency. I (Andy) had been invited to give the main Bible Teaching for the 5 mornings as well as to be a seminar leader in the afternoons. Jason also ended up teaching on two seminars for the five days, as well leading a small group.

The week was structured very well. After the morning Bible teaching (which focused on character – from the book of Titus) the students then did one of three seminars (each group rotated each day) – one on How To Study The Bible; Biblical Worship & Biblical Prayer. After lunch there were three 'practical' seminars (competency) which involved How To lead A Small Group (myself and Jason); Mission (the students went to a local mission for practical involvement) and Personal Retreat (a time of reflection and study). This was not done just in a classroom setting, but the students were sent out to see these things in practice (observing an actual small group; visiting a local mission etc).

In the evenings the program and the talks revolved around the calling of leadership and were given by various Youth Ministers from around our Diocese.

As you can see it was a packed program, and one which the young people really appreciated. The sense amongst the young people was that this was the best week EVER!! (Maybe an exaggeration – but certainly one of the best I have been on!) I believe that it has huge potential to be a VERY significant spiritual formation week for young leaders. It will be running next summer – so look out for the information!

Andy Morgan



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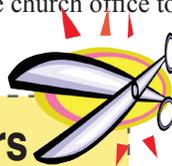
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EMERGENCY Numbers

Please call with any questions or concerns.
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