

May
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Cheddar &
Crickham
Baptist
Connect

Welcome

Cheddar Baptist Church is a community of people of all ages. We gather together regularly to listen to and be shaped by God's Word, and scatter through the week to share God's love with others in our everyday lives. .

Crisis Response & the New Normal...

How do we respond to a crisis? When we experience a sudden disruption of normality we all respond in some way or another. At first denial is a natural reaction. We think or say; 'It can't be!' and begin in the midst of a crisis to construct a world where everything is as we want it to be. Such denial can be especially persuasive when other people give their support and when the nature of the immediate repercussions are not exploding 'in your face'. To deny the loss of a loved one cannot be sustained for long. However, the deadly effects of addictive behaviour patterns can be ignored far more easily and for longer. On a global pandemic level the loss of personal freedom is 'undeniable' but the underlying causes of it can and are the subject of all sorts of 'plausible deniability' claims. The spread of a virus, the strain on the health service and the tragic loss of lives are undeniable. But understanding the origin, environmental causes and consequences are much harder to comprehend and we are

left wondering, 'How on earth can I process such a complex issue?'

A few weeks ago the closure of businesses, schools, and large sport and worship gatherings was unimaginable. We would have responded with; 'It can't be!' But today we are right in the middle of it. We don't yet know when this will be over. How and who will pay for these shut-down costs or whether this is just the first pandemic of many subsequent ones. How we will answer these questions depends on our preferred view of the world and our personality type.

An alternative response to crisis is facing the truth. Of course this is easier said than done especially since we all inhabit a culture and world governed by Pilate's sarcastic dictum: "What is truth?" It is possible to give up on truth, but is it wise? If we, as a globally interconnected humanity, simply sit this one out and ignore the truths of this crisis, we will condemn ourselves and future generations to a vicious and destructive re-cycling of the same. Prudence demands that we begin to ponder a new normal that not only manages the danger of a threat but creates a

convivial life for everyone *and* everything.

As a Christian I frequently ask myself; 'What is God doing or saying in this?' On the whole I don't find I can answer this question without a large degree of uncertainty. Believing, in my experience, always comes with a large dose of risk-taking. After all, would it not be presumptuous to think that my tiny brain can fully understand the mind of God? However, as a follower of Jesus, I have learned to trust God. I trust that as a heavenly father he is involved, active, faithful and loving and in praying "your will be done and your kingdom come" I acknowledge the priority of his will over my own. The task of discerning God's will is a critical characteristic of anyone who makes the Lord's Prayer central to living.

My hunch is that the 'new normal' will require more than the managing of restrictions and applications of social distancing. This crisis could be a God-given opportunity for the affluent part of humanity to graduate from excessive materialism to *mature materiality*.

(Paul Spanring)

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OUR REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Are All Paused!

However, we 'sort of' meet every Sunday morning by listening to the Church at Home Services

Please see:

<https://www.cheddarbaptist.co.uk/sunday-service.html>

&

<https://www.cheddarbaptist.co.uk/jigsaw-at-home.html>

www.cheddarbaptist.co.uk or contact us: cbc1831@gmail.com or phone 01934 744663

Book Review

I have taken the phrase 'mature materiality' from the book; **"Materiality as Resistance: Five Elements for Moral Action in the Real World"**

by Walter Brueggemann.

Here is a summary of the book: *What is materiality? Jesus practiced materiality when he healed the bodies of the sick, proclaimed Jubilee to the poor, and fed the five thousand. He practiced materiality over materialism. In Materiality as Resistance, Walter Brueggemann defines materiality as the use of the material aspects of the Christian faith, as opposed to materialism, which places possessions and physical comfort over spiritual values. In this concise volume, the author lays out how we as Christians may re-engage our materiality for the common good. How does materiality inform our faith when it comes to food, money, the body, time and place? How does it force us to act? Likewise, how is the church obligated to use its time, money, abundance of food, the care and use of our bodies, observance of Sabbath, and stewardship of our world and those with whom we share it?*

As I was reflecting about my own responses to the current pandemic crisis I found my thinking stretched between two seemingly opposite poles. (1) The *physicality* of the disease, the suffering and consequence of forcing us all to respond by isolating ourselves from normal human interaction. (2) The *spirituality* of prayer, God's Word and worship that enables us as followers of Jesus to remain centred in God.

My reading of this book helped me to understand a little better how the physical and the spiritual are tightly interwoven.

The publishing date of this book is 2020 and as the summary states it seeks to help Christians 'reengage with our materiality for the common good'. My hope is that the readership circle is far wider than 'just' members of the Christian church. Might this little book actually be part of a prophetic conversation for a possible 'new normal?'

BMS; Megan and Alan Barker (April 9th)

Warm greetings from Pokhara!

Around the world this is going to be a very strange Easter. How will you be able to celebrate as a church? 'Zoom' services seem to be a popular choice!

We pray that wherever you are and however you remember and celebrate this Easter, you will know the presence of our resurrected Lord Jesus in a real way.

Here in Nepal, similar to you in the UK, we are now into our third week of lockdown. We can go out for food and other essential shopping. Other than that, Megan can go to the hospital but she's only going occasionally. There's regular police patrols on the streets to make sure people are staying indoors. It's difficult for people here as a lot of life is lived in community with others outdoors. Many people survive on 'daily wages', living from hand to mouth, just earning enough for the day's or the next day's food and so many are suffering from that too. It's encouraging that churches and Christian organisations are supporting local authority attempts to provide food to the poorest people.

The hospital Megan works in is preparing for the worst but at the moment we are thankful that there are only a few recorded cases of Covid-19 and no reports of an increase in emergency respiratory cases in hospitals across the country. Please pray that it remains that way. Nepal's health system is very weak and any serious outbreak would potentially cripple the whole system.

God bless you and stay safe! Praying for you!
With love *Alan and Megan*

Thank you Note:

Fran would like to give special thanks to the regular contributors to the Jigsaw web pages. Without Carole, Esther and family, Andy and Polly and Peter it would be SO much harder! Not to mention all our families sending stuff in as well. Thank you all.

The Marriage Course is continuing to run on-line. It's an excellent course. and is a great way to invest in your marriage. Do look it up at www.htb.org/marriage.

Paul and Jon would like to thank everyone who has made the church-at-home service recordings such a rich and diverse worship offering.

Prayer:

Seeking peace through the pain of worshipping separately, longing for our holy community to be gathering, but also feeling peace through God's presence with each of us as we worship together distantly, we pray to the Lord. **Lord have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, loving Lord. We need you now, as we have needed you every day. We cannot live without you.

Amen.