

# THE VOICE



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MAKE YOUR CHURCH  
MORE ACCESSIBLE**



**SEE WHAT YOU MISSED FROM  
THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE!**

**WINTER 2023 NO. 431**

**THE  
CONNECTION**

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# WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



Hello everyone, and welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of the Voice Magazine. I don't know about you, but I had snow the other day – one day, and then it was gone. Say what you will, but winter is the best season of the year and one day of snow was not enough! Fortunately, we had lovely weather at Conference this year and it was brilliant seeing everyone. I wonder... what was your main take-away from the speaker sessions this year?

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In this edition you'll find out what resonated the most with me from Conference this year, plus articles about accessibility in church, a recent induction and the testimony of the pastor who writes the prayer points from Sierra Leone. See if you can spot yourself in any of the photos I took at Conference! Finally, I've been thinking about doing a series on the *Journeys of Faith* of people within the Connexion – whether you were raised a Christian or found the Lord at a later point in life. If you're comfortable doing so, please send me your story so I can share it in the magazine and show how God saves people from every background.

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## **FUTURE DEADLINES:**

**SPRING 2024:** 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024

**SUMMER 2024:** 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024

**AUTUMN 2024:** 15<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2024

**WINTER 2024:** 15<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER

## **SPRING 2024:**

**THE DEADLINE FOR  
THE NEXT EDITION  
WILL BE THE 15<sup>TH</sup>  
FEBRUARY**

# Testimony of Rev. Amidu Koroma

I was born and grew up at Mongegba Community, Western Area Rural District of Sierra Leone, on June 23rd 1986, to my mother Marie Kargbo and Lamina Koroma.

My Mother was a Countess of Huntingdon Connexion Church member around 1980, they were the founding members of my first church in Mongegba Community.

Since child birth, I was a Muslim because of my father. Since I went to King James Countess of Huntingdon's Primary School, Mongegba, my head Teacher was Mr. John Brima Koroma, at one occasion he invited all of us in Class Six (6) to attend a Church Thanksgiving Service at the Newly Constructed King James C.H.C. Mongegba. After that service I felt the spirit of God in me, and from then I made sure to always attend church services.

When I finished my Primary School Education and moved forward to Huntington Junior and Senior Secondary school, I was actively a Christian with no problem with my father, that's the Grace of God. After this, I became a Youth

President at King James Church.

I received my official baptism and confirmation on November 5th 2005 at Christ Church Hastings, Central Circuit 2, under the Superintendent of Late Rev. Sylvanus Alaba Nicol.

I had a dream after my Baptism. The dream was I was standing in front of a Church preaching. I was surprised, but then one year later I was encouraged to Teach Sunday School by Rev. Daniel Bockril Koroma. I saw myself victorious and I felt the power of God in me.

My service and commitment to the church and personal conviction made me believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord and personal Saviour.

I became a Pastor after my senior Secondary school Education, under the Leadership of Rt. Rev. Theophilus Nicol, and was Ordained minister under the Leadership of Rt. Rev. Magnus Bendu Bishop of the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion Sierra Leone.

I felt very much grateful to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion in U.K. I have

successfully completed my course in Bachelor of Theology (Applied). I really appreciate the scholarship given to me, and I pass on appreciation from my wife Mrs. Deborah Koroma and two children (Daniel Koroma and Firstina Fatmata Koroma).

I am what I am by the Grace of God (*1 Corinthians 15:10*). Thank you, Jesus, for my life as a Pastor. I spent

several years at King James Church, Mongegba and later transferred to St. John's Circuit, Goderich, Western Area Rural District.

I finally want to thank God for his blessings over my life, and the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion U.K. and in Sierra Leone.





# Induction Service for Trevor Jones

By Joe Gregory

It was good to be asked to preach at the Induction Service of Trevor Jones in September at Sheppey Evangelical Church. This was about 12 months after I had retired as Pastor at that church, and it was a privilege to be involved in preaching and officially passing on the mantle to the next leader of SEC.

The service was led by Andrew Higgins, who did amazingly well in view of the fact that this was the first occasion on which he had been asked to stand up at the front and co-ordinate everything that had to take place. New to the Leadership Team, Andy may well have a future in this!

The first worship song was *Be Thou My Vision*, and our first reading was 1 John 4:7-16 read by John Palfrey. If we love one another God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

The service continued with *Battle Belongs* by Phil Wickham. We then heard a statement of commendation from John Jennings, another member of the Leadership Team.



Trevor came out to the front looking very smart in his suit! It has to be said that Trevor spoke powerfully about his call to lead the church and his journey as Pastor so far. Like many of the great people in the Bible who were chosen by God, Trevor wrestled with the Lord before agreeing to be the next Pastor of SEC. The key thing that the Lord made clear to Trevor is that He would be with him, he would not be alone in his ministry.

Trevor shared how all the practical details have been sorted out by God even though he still has to work for 4 days a week as a carpenter. The Lord has been changing me and my heart is for you, proclaimed Trevor in his moving address.

Julie, who is a prison officer and mother, spoke with great honesty and humour about the challenges of now being the Pastor's wife. Julie encouraged the church by saying that she recognised that there were people with gifts in the church and God was getting people ready to move out. She concluded with 1 Thessalonians 5:11, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.



After singing Chris Tomlin's *Our God* it was the turn of David Lockett to carry out the formal Induction part of the service. As Chair of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion Trustees David asked Trevor to acknowledge his call to ministry before God and before the congregation. In turn the congregation promised to pray for and support Trevor as Pastor. Duly inducted, spontaneous applause broke out in the crowded church!

Bethany Burrage, another of the Trustees who had travelled down from Hertfordshire, led the congregation in an impressive Spirit-filled prayer over Trevor and Julie. Greetings from various local and Connexional churches were heard before singing *The Goodness of God*.

# Summary of Sermon

I was humbled when Trevor asked me to speak at his induction service. Yes, I was there partly in my capacity as President of the Connexion, but more importantly I was there as occasional mentor and friend. As I said in my message, Trevor and I go back a long way, back to when I was a nervous 22 year old probationary teacher and he was in a class of boisterous year 7 pupils at Danley Middle School.

I spoke on Jeremiah 1:4-10, which outlines the account of the Lord calling Jeremiah into His service. The key verse I focussed in on at the beginning was verse 5, Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart.

As I wrote in the Spring 2023 edition of the Voice, God has a plan, and 44 years after meeting Trevor in that classroom He was enacting the next phase of the life of Sheppey Evangelical Church. History is God's story.

When we are first called by God to serve in any capacity, the natural instinct is to argue and resist, just



like Moses, Gideon and Isaiah all did when they were called. Each one of them had a reason for objecting to God's plan for his life. Jeremiah claimed that he was too young, but God overruled his objection by promising to be with him. It's amazing to think that the same eternal God promised to be with Trevor around 2750 years later. The reassuring thought is that whenever we set out to serve God, we need not rely on our own limited capabilities, but on God's **unlimited possibilities**.

Psalm 139 shows us that God is involved in our lives. The good news is that it is never too late to reach out and acknowledge Him. The



challenge for each one of us is whether *we choose* to follow His plan for us. His plan is that as followers of Jesus we will build and plant just as Jeremiah was asked to do. As disciples we are called to reach out and enrich our community.

We do this because we are motivated by love. Trevor prayer-walks the streets of the local area each week. The thing that motivates him to do that is love.

Jesus said that the greatest commandment was to love God and love one another. The church heard at Andrew and Lisa's wedding a few weeks before how love is the greatest gift. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. God has infinite love for everyone. The Bible says that God is love.

Now human love is finite. There will be times when the challenges of leading a church will be so great



that only a personal passion to love and honour God, and a personal passion to love and journey with the people will be enough to keep you going.

It's crucial that the local church affirms and encourages Trevor and Julie. It's worth remembering that all of our Pastors and Ministers in the Connexion need prayer and practical support. Pray for their families also. It's incredible how one or two encouraging words make such a difference. Say nice things, don't just think them!

## A Challenge

Finally, for those of you who may be reluctant to join in with God's plan for your life. Remember Jeremiah.

Jeremiah points us to Jesus. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus has given us an opportunity to come back into relationship with God the Father.

Jeremiah later would proclaim, "*For I know the plans I have for you,*" declares the

Lord, *'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'*" (Jeremiah 29:11). My prayer is that for anyone reading or viewing this who is unsure, or who has drifted away from God's plan for your life, that you will reconnect with Him today. God loves you, and offers you hope and a plan through what Jesus has done.

Pray with someone today, go to your local church on Sunday, grab hold of your future in God. Rediscover your purpose in life.

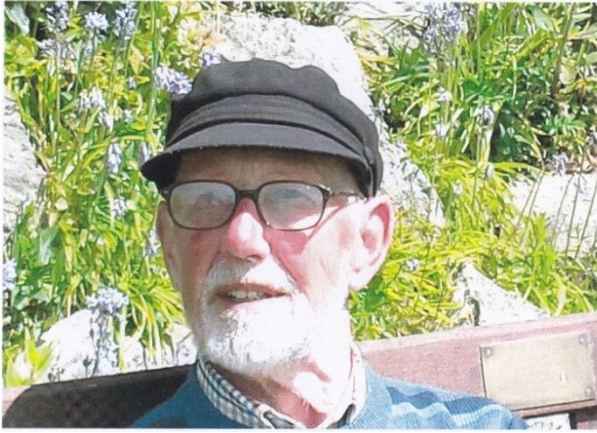
## Conclusion

It was a special service and I know that the Leadership Team at SEC wishes to thank David and Bethany for taking part. Also, a big thank you to Ljiljana and Dorrit for travelling such a long way, as well as Gordon and Sue. A particular mention must be given to June who travelled on several buses from Canterbury to join us. Finally, it was wonderful to have Anne Wiggins in attendance. Anne is the widow of George who was the first ever Pastor of SEC, and he would have been proud.

## NOTICE

**We love receiving your donations and are so grateful for every penny given to the SLM. In order for us to keep a proper record of everything you give, please make sure to send a message or email to Janet Foord with your name and where you would like your donation to go. This is very important information that will help us send your money to where it needs to go and know who to thank for it!**

# Obituaries



Our dear brother Arthur Leitch went to be with the Lord on August 27th 2023. He will be remembered mostly by those in the Connexion for his many years as a pastor from 1980 on at Turners Hill.

He and Margaret moved to Honiton in Devon when he left Turners Hill and subsequently to the Wareham area. In all those places Arthur actively served his local church until his struggle with dementia, cared for by Margaret. Please pray for comfort for Margaret and their children, Rob, Alison, Stu and Jason and their respective families.

On a personal note, I have much to be grateful to Arthur for. When we moved to East Grinstead in 1981, it was Arthur who visited our home and invited us to Turners Hill. It was Arthur's preaching, friendship and encouragement to read a book by Chuck Colson, "Born Again", which triggered my recommitment to the Lord at a time when I was far from him and it was Arthur that drew me into leadership at Turners Hill. By Dave Sweetman.



Bernard Mayo a former trustee of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, went to be with the Lord on 11<sup>th</sup> November aged 87, after a short illness.

Bernard had been an active member of Copthorne Chapel for in excess of 40 years and had spent several terms as their treasurer, as he did for the trustees. The current connexional treasurer can recollect many a time of dreading a call from Bernard regarding Middleton's accounts.

Bernard was a trustee for a number of years, and connexional treasurer for a number of years and members at St Ives, Sheppey and Broad Oak can all remember visits from Bernard to their churches on a Sunday.

Bernard had been married to Margaret for over 60 years. As well as his widow, Bernard leaves two children, two grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Bernard's funeral service will be held at Crawley URC, on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm, all are welcome. It was felt Copthorne Chapel would not be big enough for the number expected to attend.



# Conference Photos!

If you were at conference this year, you probably saw me walking around with a fancy looking camera. Well, I can assure you that despite the fancy camera, my photography skills are minimal, but here are a few that I captured this year...





# Breaking Down Barriers



My name is Annette Stuart and I'm a Roofbreaker at the Countess Free Church, Ely.

What's a Roofbreaker? I hear you ask! It's a church disability champion - someone who chats to disabled or chronically ill people in the congregation about any barriers to them accessing church life, and truly feeling a part of the church.

Roofbreakers is an initiative run by Christian disability charity Through the Roof (TTR), who I now work for. The name comes from the account of the paralysed man in Luke 5. I heard about TTR at the Countess, through the Rich Tea Community group for adults with learning

By Annette Stuart

disabilities that I help with in Ely.

TTR wants all churches to catch the vision for disability inclusion. Here is some more information about what they do, and why it matters.

## Breaking down barriers for church disability inclusion

The last recorded survey suggests only 5-10% of disabled people hear the gospel in their lifetime (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation).

In the UK there are 16 million disabled people who need to know churches are places to experience God's love and be valued as you.

(Family Resources Survey, 2021-22)

Through the Roof is working with churches so everyone's presence and gifts are valued.

One example is Laurie, who uses a wheelchair and an assistive device to communicate. Laurie's church welcomed and encouraged him to take an active role. He says, "I am

writing magazines, helping out with a special needs group, emailing prayers and talks of services and helping with social media.”

Everyone has unique God-given gifts to share.

## Who Are ‘Through the Roof’?

At Through the Roof we are passionate about disability inclusion in Christian life. Our mission is to transform lives through Jesus with disabled people. For 25 years, we’ve been:

**Enabling Faith:** Equipping churches and Roofbreakers (local disability champions) to empower disabled people to participate and belong in Christian life.

**Bringing Freedom:** ‘Wheels for the World’ provides wheelchairs and Bibles for disabled people in developing nations where 90% of those needing a wheelchair don’t have one.

**Sharing Fellowship:** Christian-focused accessible holidays, retreats and groups bring fun and friendships for everyone.

Through the Roof provides free resources, training and support to local churches to fulfil the great commission to – and through – disabled people. The Roofbreaker project equips volunteers in local churches and ministries to act



as disability champions – listening and responding to the challenges disabled people face, enabling them to use their gifts and talents to serve as equal members of Christ's body: the church.

## **Are churches fully including disabled people? Are we disability aware?**

In the UK, **over 20%** of the population are disabled people (Family Resources Survey, 2021-22).

Not all disabilities are visible, but disabled people are still underrepresented in UK churches – especially in positions of responsibility.

Fiona MacMillan, disability advisor in the Church of England and herself a disabled person, says: "We are more likely to be known by our needs than celebrated for our gifts".

**Through the roof can help your church or ministry to welcome and value disabled people more fully. They offer:**

- a FREE 2 hour Zoom Disability Awareness workshop for churches who appoint a disability champion or 'Roofbreaker'
- access to a free downloadable 'Church Toolkit' and 'Removing Barriers' church accessibility audit, available to all Roofbreaker disability champions
- a 50% discount on Through the Roof resources to all church Roofbreaker champions
- advice and support from one of three Regional Roofbreaker Coordinators covering the whole of the UK, to encourage disability inclusion in all churches
- support through monthly emails, events, Facebook and Roofbreaker Networks

For more information, visit [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org) or @TTRChangesLives on social media.

# Youth Conference 2023

By Nina Killick

This year in the youth there were nine of us and two leaders. We met in a tiny room at the back of beyond, which turned out to actually be quite cosy.

Becky led our talks this time around, and we focused on the Word, whether that be the Word of God, or our own words and how they can impact people. We talked briefly about the seven 'I Am' statements of Jesus, and how Jesus was mentioned throughout the Bible, but as the Word of God!

We baffled many members of the public when we were set free in Hoddesdon town for a scavenger hunt. We split into two groups and were given the task to take pictures of as many weird and wonderful things as we could, such as a human pyramid in the town centre and as many people in a tree as possible. We also found two miss-printed Lego people, and stuck someone's head down the toilet, or at least made it look like we did for a video, which is always great fun!

We played a lot of games during our sessions, including 'Empires' and 'Wolves' which we had a blast taking part in.

One of the highlights of Youth this year was being able to write our own songs. We split into two groups once again, and had just over an hour to write some lyrics for a song, although we took it a step further and came out of the session with two worship songs, both very different, but moving in their own ways.

We all had such an amazing time at Conference this year, spending time with each other after so long is always such a special thing, as we're all extremely close after so many years attending Youth Conference. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are people we should hold very dear to us, and the Conference feels like one big family.



I was inspired to write this article after listening to the first talk at the Conference this year where tattoos were named under the heading of 'A Crisis of Culture'. As a young person who has gained her first tattoos in the past couple of years, this caused me to ponder on my reasons for engraving my skin.

Tattoos have a long and detailed history, with evidence of them being used from over three thousand years ago. That history has included pagan rituals, cultural status symbols, labels of deviance, memories of events, and so much more. In modern times, the tattoo has been used in so many different contexts that some might argue that their significance has been forgotten and anyone can get one for any reason – or even for no reason at all.

## **What does the Bible say about tattoos?**

The only real mention of tattoos in the Bible comes from Leviticus 19:28: *"Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the Lord."* Now this is pretty condemning for tattoos, but let's break it down. The command God gives to not wear a tattoo comes in the same command as not participating in another ritual 'for the dead'. As we have already mentioned, tattoos have been used in these pagan or occult rituals over time, but this is not the sole way in which tattoos have been used, and it certainly didn't inspire any of the other ways, since travelling across the land of different cultures and religions was no easy feat in those days. The Vikings didn't learn the practice from the Amazonian tribes, nineteenth century urban gangs weren't inspired by seventeenth century pilgrims to the Holy Land. The art of tattooing has popped up all over the world, for the most part with little connection to each other. I was speaking to my tattoo artist and she told me that the most popular reasons her clients get tattoos is either because it means something personal to them, such as a memory of a loved one or symbol of a journey they have made, or simply for no other reason except that they found a design





they liked and wanted it to turn their skin into a work of art. In this case, it's the *motivation* of getting a tattoo that gives it meaning, not the *action* – because the action simply can't be claimed by anyone.

Let me ask you a question... Men, raise your hand if you've ever trimmed your beard. Okay, you can put your hand down, but if you ever "*clip off the edges of your beard*" then you have disobeyed the command the Lord makes just one verse before tattoos are mentioned. These are laws which time has allowed to be interpreted differently across the denominations of

Christianity – they even have different interpretations within the Bible itself. Take Isaiah 44:5, for example: "*Some will say, 'I belong to the Lord', others will call themselves by the name of Jacob; still others will write on their hand, 'The Lord's,' and will take the name Israel.*" This verse might be referencing getting a tattoo as a symbol of worshipping God, and it says that this is okay. So, in the same way that we couldn't bow to a false god and would only bow to the one God, we shouldn't get a tattoo for a false god but can get one for the one God.

## Every view is different.

I'm sure that as you read this article you're wondering when I'll bring up the big verse: "*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies.*" 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. I titled this article as 'A view of tattoos' because there are simply so many views and opinions that none can truly be condemned and none can truly be called correct. There is no one answer to whether as Christians we should all love tattoos or hate them. It has always been the interpretation of tattoos that has given them their significance throughout history – from



them being seen as labels of deviancy, to power, to devotion. If your personal view is that getting a tattoo would not be honouring God with your body, then obviously there is no need to feel you have to get one.

If, however, you believe that getting a tattoo reflects the artistic beauty of the world and does honour God, then go for it! That's what I did when I started getting my own, and the cross on my

arm reminds me every day of how close God is to my heart; just as wearing my cross necklace does. This verse in 1 Corinthians reminds us that we should live for our maker and use our bodies to honour him, and as long as you do that and keep God at the centre, you will not be letting him down.

## Conclusion:

Throughout my research I found many contrasting views about how tattoos can be seen as a part of a 'crisis', but the main issue seemed to be how some people believe that tattoo shouldn't have to have to any meaning at all, whereas others believe they are losing their meaning through an increase in accessibility and destigmatisation. I questioned myself after learning about these views, wondering whether I had been drawn into the trap of wanting a tattoo for no reason and thus dishonoured God in doing so, but my conclusion has been that my motive was not contrary to Christianity. Though I've always known that some people don't approve or agree with tattoos, I've found that my decision reflects who I am as a young person, finding my own ideas and still following God with all my heart. But I am interested in what you think – do you have tattoos? What meaning do you give to them, if any? Do you believe tattoos can honour God, or should we strictly follow the rules in Leviticus?

# Response to the Testimony in Voice Autumn 2023

I would like, as gently and sensitively as possible, to respond to an article in the Autumn issue of Voice (p. 24-25) that I really feel needs a clear response, as it presented (and even urged) some things that run contrary to the central teachings of the Bible. I feel this response is needed because the issue at stake does not merely come in the category of 'matters of secondary importance' (i.e. things that Christians may disagree about without threat to their salvation) but it is a matter of *primary* importance in the Christian faith (i.e. it is a matter that no true Christians could disagree on), and the things written in the article may have detrimentally influenced some readers of Voice with consequences of the utmost seriousness. It is for the benefit of any such readers that I feel it is necessary to submit this response.

The article in question was entitled as being a testimony, but it was not a Christian testimony (which would testify of God's grace towards the person, and of their repentance from sin and faith in Christ, such as in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10): instead, the latter part of the article encouraged worshipping gods other than the one true and living God revealed the Bible, and the concluding sentence of the article told anyone pursuing this path (i.e. of paganism and idolatry) that they are guaranteed not to find themselves in hell. It is not putting it too strongly to say that this could not be further from the truth of Christianity taught in the Bible.

The Bible is absolutely clear throughout, that we "should turn from these vain things [i.e. pagan gods] to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them" (see Acts 14:12-15). The true God (in whom we live and

move and have our being) calls us to repent of worshipping all other gods but Him (Acts 17:16-31, especially verse 31). There

are a vast number of Bible passages that make this clear – I will just give a very few of the many of them here. Exchanging the worship of the true God for other objects of worship is the fundamental sin of the fallen human heart (Romans 1:18-25). The worship of any god other than the true God is forbidden in the first of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3). Old-Testament Israel provoked God to anger by disobeying this (Deuteronomy 32:15-21) and eventually God sent them into exile to punish them for this sin (2 Kings 17:7-20). Pretty much the whole of the long book of Jeremiah is God's condemnation of this sin (e.g. Jeremiah 10:1-11). All other gods are a delusion (Isaiah 41:29)—such 'gods' are nothing and therefore those that worship them sin greatly (Isaiah 41:23).

One of the wonderful promises in the Old Testament (which is fulfilled with the coming of Christ in the New Testament, and in particular by the sending of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2) is that God would *cleanse His people from all their idols* and give them a new heart and put His Spirit in them to bring all this about (Ezekiel 36:25-27). Let me finish this (very incomplete) survey of the Bible with a list of verses from the New Testament on this subject, and the key thing about this list is that each one of these passages clearly indicates that there can be no hope of salvation from hell for anyone that unrepentantly worship gods other than the true and living God. Here are the verses that tell us this—look out for mention of “idolatry”: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8 and 22:14-15.

But let me finish with the Bible's Good News! God bids all who have sinned (and who hasn't?) to come to Him in humble repentance from our sin, and put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for our salvation from the judgment we each deserve. And for each person that does this, for each person that walks in the light of Christ in repentance, *the blood of Jesus cleanses you from all sin* (1 John 1:7). What a wonderful promise! Along the same lines, can I finally recommend you read Isaiah 45:20-22, which beautifully brings together all that we've looked at here.

# <sup>23</sup>Sermon Template:

## Luke 23:32-43

By Paul Woodbridge

The last words of a dying person are often never forgotten. Some enter eternity without saying anything, while others say things that disclose their values, priorities, and innermost thoughts.



We shall leave this world, unless Jesus returns first.

**“Death spread to all humanity because all sinned”** (Rom 5:12). Every hour approximately 5,417 people die! That is well over 47 million people a year! Are we ready to leave this world?

Jesus was crucified between two thieves. **First thief** can think of nothing but himself and his agony. This thief speaks sarcastically to Jesus and taunts him but still he wants Jesus to save him. ‘Are you really the Messiah?

Maybe many people today think of God in this way - "If you're a king, get me out of this sickness, out of this financial mess, out of this boring job, out of this crummy marriage." Just get me down from this cross.

How many of us never plan for our death and what happens afterwards, which, according to Jesus, is judgement and eternal separation from God.

John 3:18 – ***‘Whoever believes in me is not condemned, but***



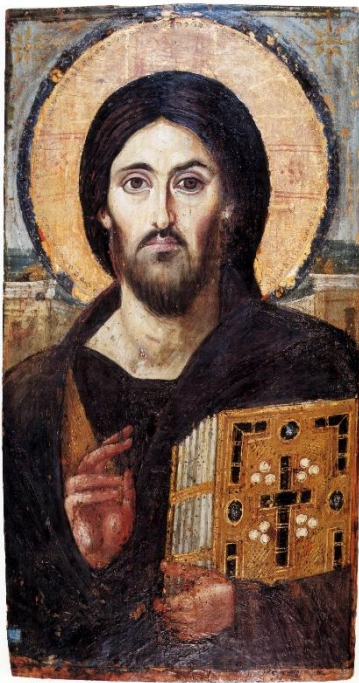
***whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.'***



John 3:36 – ***'Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.'***

One writer says, 'Of the 1,850 words in the NT that record Jesus' words, 13% of them deal with the subject of eternal judgement and its consequences.'

***'So please, Lord, may none of us be like this thief, blind to our real needs, blind to our need to know you, even if we've heard much about you.'***



**Second thief's** reactions are very different – vv.40-42.

- **His perspective is different.** "Don't you fear God?" He knows he's lived a life against what God requires, and he fears what that will mean.
- **His awareness of his failings is different.** He acknowledges he's being punished justly.
- **His recognition of Jesus is different.** "This man has done nothing wrong".
- **His plea to Jesus is different.** "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He saw a king and appealed to him

for mercy.

He didn't have long to live. But even his faith may have been small and his timing far from ideal, still he cried out to Jesus and it was enough.

This criminal had little time left. But the man got an immediate promise - 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.' In Heaven **with Jesus** that day!

***'Whoever believes in me will not perish, but have eternal life'*** (John 3:16).

'Look to me and be saved', says Jesus.

Salvation is all about grace, about God being good and kind even when we're bad, and giving us something much more wonderful than what we deserve.

**"For it is by grace, God's undeserved mercy, you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."** (Eph. 2:8-9)

What happens to every Christian after they die? They go to be with Jesus in Heaven – immediately. And when Jesus returns to this earth and renews it, he will give every believer a new body, a resurrection body.

So 2 thieves – both wanted to be saved from death, both said 'Save me', but how differently they sought this –

*'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us'*

*'Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom'.*

**Can you see the huge difference between SAVE ME and SAVE ME? Which one am I? Which one are you?**



# 19<sup>th</sup> SLM Golf Day Summer 23

The sun shone at Horne Park Golf Club and the course was in very good condition. Twenty-eight players played in seven groups of four. The overall winner was Ian Larkham with 42 points, closely followed by Bill Sedgeman on 41 points.

The winner of the nearest the pin on the 6th was Wayne Brooks.

The winner of the longest drive on the 11th was Mike Webber.

The winner of the nearest the pin in two on the 16th was Ian Larkham.

The winning team was; Chris Finch, Richard Hayden, Neil Osmond and Ian Phillips.

There were three twos scored, David Taylor, Tim Wells and Dave Huzzey.

The main winner was the Sierra Leone Mission who benefitted by £471

Next Years S.L.M. Golf Day is on 20th September 2024

## The Stones Speak

We know that Jesus said in Luke 19 verse 40 that the stones would cry out, but we didn't imagine that our garden stones would be able to share the love of God with people in our neighbourhood.

Readers of The Voice may remember that here at Rosedale Community Church we have been able to create a beautiful community garden. For many years at the front of the building we had old broken dirty paving slabs and mainly prickly thorn bushes that had been planted when the hall was built by the local council, but we had the wonderful opportunity to create a community garden nearly 2 years ago. We have written how this came about in a previous article.

We have found that the garden has been an outreach to people in various ways. But recently we found that the stones speak...

One of our members was working in the garden one day, and a passerby stopped to admire the garden, as many do, and she said that she had been feeling very low the previous week so she came into the garden and wandered about, and she picked up a stone which read, "You are safe in God's hands." This brought her comfort and she felt so much lighter and happier as she went on her way.

## HOW TO GIVE TO THE SLM

We support the work of our churches in Sierra Leone through contributing to ministers' wages, providing funding for ministerial training, and building and maintaining churches. We also support the care and education of children through the Bethesda Orphanage and The Connexion's schools, helping with teachers' salaries and teacher training. When necessary, we help to restore homes damaged during unrest, and can assist in times of emergency or urgent need.

**You can give by Bank Transfer to:**

**Barclays**

**Sort code: 20-16-08**

**Account number: 30799076**

**Account name: Sierra Leone Mission**

Or, perhaps you would prefer to send a cheque to:  
Janet Foord, 2 Cheyne Close, Church Milton  
Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2SQ

**When you donate, please ensure you state your name and clearly label which area of SLM outreach you wish for your donation to go towards. To do this you can email Janet Foord at [norman.foord@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:norman.foord@yahoo.co.uk).**

You can find out more about where your donations go by going to WHAT'S NEW at the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion website.



# **THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON'S CONNEXION UK AND SIERRA LEONE**

**CHAIR AND SECRETARY  
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DAVID PRICE

**CHAIR OF THE  
CONNEXION SIERRA  
LEONE:**

MAGNUS  
BENDU

**AGENT TO THE SLM:**

DANIEL  
KOROMA

**EDITOR OF THE VOICE:**

ESTHER BURRAGE

ESTHERBURRAGE22@GMAIL.COM

**DISTRIBUTORS OF THE VOICE:**

BRIAN AND ANN MITCHELL

BRIAN\_ANN.MITCHELL77@NTLWORLD.COM

**DESIGNER OF THE VOICE:**

MARY OLADELE

**WEBSITE MANAGER:**

CHRISTINE LONG

CHRISTINE@COFHCONNEXION.ORG.UK