

Elder's Report

I freely admit that this years report has not been as easy to put together as in other years, not I hasten to add a non willingness or motivation but simply for a lack of inspiration. I have found it hard to be inspired when I look, see and feel the pain of those, who through not fault of their own are going through difficult and trying situations. Yet observing and witnessing these often and painful times in peoples lives gives me inspiration that regardless of their fears and circumstances they cling and hold onto their faith in an all loving God. Though at times He may seem far away He is actually carrying them day by day and step by step.

The Psalmist David knew this all encompassing love.

Deep sea diving has progressed and unmanned diving vessels are now able to dive to the bottom of the oceans, scientists for a long time believed nothing survived in such a hostile environment, a place of dark and cold where no natural light is present, yet amazingly great mysteries have been revealed and in this darkness there are creatures who not only live but they give off light.

David in Psalm 139 had grasped the true greatness, majesty, love and compassion of God. In verses 7-10 he came to the conclusion that no matter what the depth of despair or darkness that surrounded him God is light in the situation, God is love in the situation, God is able in the situation. Much as Paul in Romans 8 too realised that nothing can separate us from the love of God regardless of the depth and darkness of the situation. Paul in his letters encourages us to persevere, in doing so our reliance of God is a witness and light to all. He also encourages those who are not hurting to stand and help those who are weak and suffering, this too is a witness to all of God being in our hearts and lives and in the body of the church, a true reflection of His love and compassion. God is able to inspire as we marvel at what he has done for us through His son and what he is doing in others lives.

As I attempted to prepare for this report some weeks ago I was prompted by a BBC 1 television programme *Fake or Fortune*. The programme sets out to prove whether a work of art (usually a painting) is either a viewers fake or worth a fortune. A family presented a painting they bought for £1000,00. believing it was a work by a famous artist, asking the programmes expert to ascertain if it was a fake or not. It did turn out to be a fake , the owner, though disappointed said he still liked it, although I suppose you would say that if you have paid out that sort on money for it.

It challenged me to question, do I spend too much time and energy on perhaps, things that I believe to be important and **Godly** aren't quite the real deal.

Holidays, taking time out for leisure, hobbies and most importantly family are in my opinion vital for a balanced life in God, indeed being involved in our local community, leisure and sports clubs is a way of being a witness to our friends, acquaintances and families to the love and extension of His Kingdom, Jesus in Matthew 13:45-46 compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a merchant seeking fine pearls, when finding one of great value he sold all he had and bought it.

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It is all too easy I find for me to spend time on something I believe to be worthwhile that in time turns out to be of no heavenly value. In these times we live in it is so easy to be sidetracked by all sorts of things. My prayer this year is that His will, will be seen in my life and in the life of Oasis Christian Centre.

Thank you for your prayers love and support for me and my family. We will continue to love and care for you, please forgive us where we fail.

John Hill