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PRAYER IS FOR PAUPERS? – *Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi*

There are different reasons why people do not pray to the Living God. We will examine a few of them. The first reason is that people have a wrong view of prayer. When we define prayer narrowly as "asking God for things", then naturally we come to God in prayer only when we have a need that we are not able to meet with the resources and connections at our disposal.

A pastor once remarked that members of his church were not interested in a Prayer Seminar because they did not have any need. Materially, they had all that a person needed. Thus **to them prayer is for paupers and not for the affluent**. This is arrogance! Human needs go far beyond what money can buy, so we will always be needy people.

Prayer is not basically for the individual's need; rather, it involves intercession – bringing the needs of other people to God. The prayer life of Jesus Christ and Apostle Paul confirm that. **Prayer also involves praise, worship, adoration and confession** – a basic need of every human being as the means for connecting with the Living God who created us for Himself to have fellowship with Him all the time.

A daily time of worship with God is very important. So much so that when we miss it others can tell. Such was the case when four-year-old Andrew made an honest mistake and spilled something in his house. His mother responded in a screaming tirade. The little psychologist made an astute observation: "Mommy, you forgot to ask Jesus to help you be nice today, didn't you?" (*Christian Parenting Today, May/ June 1991, p. 73*)

Take your pick from the following examples and decide whether the people concerned have a grasp of what answered prayer is: A very timid woman wanted to participate in the visitation program of her church, but was petrified by the thought of actually visiting somebody. The pastor, sensing her anxiety, recommended that she prays before each visit. He spoke about God's promise to give peace which surpasses all understanding. A week later the woman was walking on Cloud Nine. She jubilantly told her pastor, "You were right – prayer works! Before each one of my visits I prayed that

the people wouldn't be home, and they weren't!"

D. L. Moody wrote about a remarkable incident in connection with an early visit to London. He had gone there for a visit. He was unknown in London; hence he did not expect to preach; but a little while after arriving there he was invited to preach in a certain church. He described the ceremony as a very cold and uninteresting service to him, but he announced that he would preach again that night.

Upon reaching the church, in the evening, he noticed that the atmosphere had changed, he did not know just why. At the close of the meeting he was led to give an invitation for those who wanted to be saved to stand. A great crowd of people stood. He left the next day for Dublin, Ireland. Shortly after arriving there he received a telegram from the church to return, stating that the whole community wanted a series of meetings. He went back and found that a great revival was beginning, and hundreds of people were being converted.

Not long after, he learned the secret. An invalid lady, who could not attend church, was praying for a mighty outpouring of the Spirit upon the church. She prayed for months. Once she saw in the papers accounts of some of the Moody meetings in America, and, although she had never heard of Mr. Moody before, she began to pray that God would send him to her church in London for a revival. One Sunday morning her sister, upon her return from the service, informed her of Moody's presence and his preaching, whereupon she spent the whole afternoon in prayer that God would make that night a night of power. That explains the difference between the morning and evening services which Moody led.

Oh, I tell you what we need in the churches, especially ours, is praying members! if we could find even one who would thus resolve to pray to God for salvation and power to come upon the church. This is the need of today – importunate prayer, like the Syro-Phoenician woman's "Lord, help! Lord, help!" (Matt. 15:22-28).

The late Dr. A. C. Dixon, of Spurgeon's Tabernacle London, once said that "When we rely upon organization, we get what organization can do; when we rely upon education, we get what education can do; when we rely upon eloquence, we get what eloquence can do, and so on. Nor am I disposed to undervalue any of these things in their proper place. But," he added impressively, "when we rely upon prayer, we get what God can do." Lord teach us to return to our knees and seek your face.

God does want to use us, and he will – if we will only obey him and follow Christ's example to be a servant. (See Philippians 2:3-11.) We can be the answer to someone's prayer by moving out of our comfort zones to use the gifts God has given us to make a difference in the world. Prayer is one Christian virtue that can be exercised even on our death beds, but you must grow in the discipline and also learn to bring God into every situation, because he cares.

Creation Care

There's a greater proportion under this heading than usual in this edition of *>imprint<*, because of fewer contributions on other topics, but also appropriately because of the current focus on the COP26 conference in Glasgow, starting on 31st October through to 12th November and what we hope will be momentously important commitments to limit the effects of climate change by completing and implementing the Paris Agreement.

By the way, what does COP26 mean? COP is the UN Framework Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC)'s Conference of the Parties ('Parties' being all states that are parties to the Convention represented at the COP). It is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention and reviews the implementation of the Convention and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts, and takes decisions required to promote effective implementation, including institutional and administrative arrangements. It meets every year unless the Parties decide otherwise, and 26 means it is the 26th conference. The first COP was held in Berlin in 1995 and since then would normally meet in Bonn, the seat of the secretariat, unless a Party offers to host. The COP presidency rotates among the five UN regions (Africa, Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe and others) and the venue also tends to shift among these groups. So with the UK being the current President, COP26 is being held in Glasgow this year. Go to <https://ukcop26.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/COP26-Explained.pdf> for more information.

A Rocha Field Notes Podcast and Blog

Two more **Field Notes podcasts** have been posted since the last issue of *>imprint<*: Episode 11, posted on 13th October, where Peter Harris and Bryony Loveless interview **Deepa Senapathi** on the topic of 'Balancing the needs of nature and humanity', trying to address the question: are human livelihoods more important than nature? and talking about the challenges this creates, and hopes for the future. Dr Senapathi is Senior Research Fellow in Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services at Reading University. She also serves on A Rocha International's Conservation Science Advisory Council.

Episode 12 was posted on 27th October and features **Seth Appiah-Kubi** talking with Peter and Bryony about the work of A Rocha Ghana and the race to protect the Atewa Forest from exploitative bauxite mining in 'Fighting for Ghana's forests and the intrinsic value of nature'. Seth comes from a background in finance and his work highlights the interdisciplinary approach needed in caring for creation (economists, politicians, and others as well as scientists).

Go to <https://www.arocha.org/en/field-notes-podcast/>, or from wherever you get your podcasts to listen to the interviews.

The latest **A Rocha International blog** features **Professor Alfred Oteng-Yeboah**, an international negotiator and trustee of A Rocha International. He was recently awarded the prestigious John C Philips Memorial Medal by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In this blog, entitled '**CBD COP15: In conversation with Professor Alfred Oteng-Yeboah**' he's being interviewed by Bryony Loveless about the upcoming CBD COP15 due to be held in Spring 2022 after having been postponed twice. Confused? Note the 'CBD' prefix. It's not the same as the climate conference – it stands for the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Find the blog at <https://blog.arocha.org/en/cbd-cop15-in-conversation-with-professor-alfred-oteng-yeboah/>

Hope in Action – local activities (see <https://www.hopeinaction.uk/regional>)

The October news is in the archive section of the Hope in Action website, if you haven't yet signed up to receive them by email:

<https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=38128d83eaf82d7f9b5ef6e87&id=c237d69b82>

and for a supplementary bulletin about the St. Albans Global Day of Action on Saturday

6th November and also the London March, go to:

<https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=38128d83eaf82d7f9b5ef6e87&id=674b8d4bf7>

Please note, the update states that if you were hoping to go with other local Christians to join the Tearfund gathering for the London March, they are now leaving St. Albans by the **10:50** am train, *NOT* 11:35 am as stated in their October news.

The St. Albans COP26 Day of Action will involve meeting from 11.30am on the paved area between the St Albans Arena and the St Albans District Council offices ready to march to the St Albans Clock Tower at 12noon for speeches, including from the St Albans MP, Daisy Cooper.

Christ Church Caring for Creation (C4)

Bat Survey at Christ Church

A bat detector was lent to us and installed in our grounds between 27th July and 12th August, by Margaret Clarke, a local enthusiast who also analysed the recordings. Over the seventeen nights the detector registered 1259 bat calls triggering the recordings.

Six species were detected during this time, by far the most common (98% of recordings) being the Common pipistrelle, a tiny bat weighing about 5 grams foraging for insects around the trees and hedges and using their calls to echolocate the bugs.

There were also 14 recordings (1.1% of the total) of the less common Soprano pipistrelle which is similar to the common pipistrelle but with a higher frequency call.

There were 5 files (0.4% of the total) recording the Brown long-eared bat, which has huge ears and very sensitive hearing. It often misses being within recording range of detectors, though, because of its quiet call.

Another three species were recorded as 'fly-bys': Natterer's bat which has broad wings enabling it to fly more slowly than other species (3 records, approx. 0.2% of total); Noctule, the UK's biggest bat, but still no bigger than a palm of a hand (4 records, including a feeding 'buzz', evidence of one catching an insect, approx. 0.3% of total); and Leisler's bat, slightly smaller than the noctule and furrier (3 records, approx. 0.2% of total).

You can find out more about these bats, see pictures and hear their calls (transposed down into the human hearing range) and several other UK species, by visiting <https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/what-are-bats/uk-bats>.

COP26 service and Fungal foray (aka mushroom and toadstool walk)

Don't forget the fungal walk, led by Dr Avice Hall, on Sunday 7th November starting at 2:30 pm from Toulmin Fields car park before venturing into Batch Wood.

Our morning service that day will have a particular creation theme, with content from Tearfund's COP26 service.

Sermons at Christ Church

The series of 10 sermons on the Marks of Mission (based on the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion) continues until 12th December, with the exception of 28th November. For the full list click the following link: [>imprint< no.96](#), and go to page 6.