

# Pembroke Bible Chapel

... from darkness to light ...



Welcome to our Easter Newsletter April 2007

This newsletter is focused on the significance of Easter. The Easter weekend commemorates the most significant event in all of history, the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our feature article considers the symbol of the Cross which has been used to identify Christians since that first Easter. You will find a devotional on the cross, an article on how we see God in the wonders of nature, a commentary on the ten essential points of the resurrection of Christ, a teen article, a missionary article, interesting recipes for leg of lamb and for Empty Tomb Buns, and a review of the book Born Crucified.



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## FEATURED ARTICLE

The Cross and the Crucifix by Don

In the past, the vast majority of people were illiterate, and so the use of symbols to depict some event or idea was very important. An illiterate person could readily identify with a symbol but not so generally with something written.

### Christian Symbols

During the first three centuries of Christianity, the Christian church was under severe persecution and identifying oneself as a Christian meant almost certain death. Thus during this time the Cross was rarely used as a public symbol. There is some evidence that the early Christians traced the sign of the Cross on their foreheads to covertly identify themselves to each other.

One of the earliest symbols used by Christians, in this early period, to covertly identify themselves to each other, was the fish symbol or ichthus (from the Greek word for fish). It is thought that this symbol came into use because of the numerous references to fish in the Gospels, and also because the Greek word for fish was an acrostic where the Greek letters stood for 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior'. The Greek word for fish was spelled with five letters: 'Iota' stood for Iesous (Jesus), 'Chi' for Christos (Christ), 'Theta' for Theos (God), 'Upsilon' for Uios (Son), and 'Sigma' for Soter (Savior).



Another early symbol was the anchor with the tee shaped handle depicting the cross. This symbol was recognizable to Christians but not to others.



Once Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century, the Cross and later the Crucifix, a Cross with Christ on the Cross, became the universal symbols of Christianity in public display.



### History of the Cross and Crucifix

The first known use of the Cross as a symbol of Christianity is from a 5th century tomb. The earliest depiction of a Crucifix, is in the 7th century. During the Middle Ages the Crucifix was generally used as the symbol of Christianity because the sufferings of Christ gave comfort to Christians where suffering and death was a daily reality. During the subsequent period of enlightenment the empty Cross signifying the resurrection and new life in Christ once again became the symbol of Christianity.

During the Protestant Reformation, Protestants generally rejected the use of representational religious imagery including the Crucifix and thereafter the Crucifix became associated with Roman Catholicism. Sometimes Protestants used an empty Cross as the symbol of Christianity but in many circles all kinds of symbolism were rejected. Today the Cross is the universally recognized symbol of Christianity.

### Significance of the Cross and Crucifix

The central event of all of history was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the Cross at Calvary. (History = His story). This marked a turning point for all mankind. It marked a distinct change in the dealings of God with mankind.

The Cross at Calvary is the place where Jesus Christ, who was truly God and truly man, became the sacrificial substitute for lost and sinful man. It was at the Cross that He bore the penalty for sinful man. He suffered in unbelievable agony, taking upon Himself, God's wrath for our sins. In fact, though He was completely sinless, the Bible says He was made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). He passed through death so that we would not have to experience eternal death; He bore God's wrath so we would not have to bear His wrath; He substituted Himself for us.

He not only died and was buried but He was triumphantly raised bodily from the dead showing that His sacrifice had been fully accepted by God the Father. As described in our commentary section, the resurrection of Christ is an essential part of the Christian faith. If Christ has not been raised from the dead, our faith is worthless and we are still in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:17).

The symbol of the Crucifix represents the suffering and death of Christ on the Cross. The symbol of the empty Cross signifies not only Christ's suffering and sacrificial death, but also His great victory over sin and death and Hell by His resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Hosea 13:14). He is alive forevermore. Thus, as a symbol, the Crucifix, which leaves Christ on the Cross, leaves a major part of the redemptive story untold.

## Our Identification with Christ

The importance of both Christ's death and resurrection is that the born again believer in Jesus Christ is identified with Christ in both death and resurrection:

- Identified with Christ in His death (co-crucifixion with Christ - I have been crucified with Christ – Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:3),
- Identified with Christ in His resurrection (co-resurrection with Christ - raised with Christ Romans 6:4, 5, 11; Ephesians 2:5, 6; Colossians 2:12).

The born again believer is in fact now identified by God the Father as now being seated with Christ in Heaven (Ephesians 2:6). The empty Cross signifies that Christ has risen from the dead and is no longer here – He is in Heaven with the Father – and we are seen by God the Father as there in Heaven with Him.

Today the Cross has become such a widely recognized symbol of Christendom as a whole that it does not necessarily identify a person who is a born again believer in Jesus Christ. Today many born again Christians have returned to the original symbol of the fish to indicate to other believers that they are born again believers. Another common symbol is the dove which represents the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling permanently within believers.



## HIGHLIGHTED DEVOTIONAL



The All-Pervading Cross by Miles Stanford, None But The Hungry Heart

"But God forbid that I should glory; save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14).

"It will save years of frustration and effort for one to understand that prayer can never be learned, or developed. Prayer is the outflow of the new life as one grows, as the Cross frees the new from the old, there is the growth of effective prayer."

"Without the Cross, prayer becomes a mere religious formality; without prayer, the Cross is arrested in its purpose. As the Cross works in us keeping in the place of death every assertion of the old man, and everything in our natures that is against God, our spirit finds a clear way up to the communion at the throne and a clear way out into conflict with our enemy."

"Prayer is the spring of power in conflict, and conflict gives the proof of the value and need of prayer. It cannot be too frequently emphasized that for the believer, the ground or basis of prayer is the death of Jesus Christ the victory won by the Son of God on Calvary, just as the ground and basis of His intercession at this moment is His propitiation on the Cross. Away from the Cross prayer becomes nothing more than an ecclesiastical ordinance or a religious exercise expressed in devotional phrases; and I beg of you, when you read a book on prayer, to find out the place in it which the author gives to the Cross, and you will be able to estimate its value." G. Watson

A daily devotional like this one can be found on our website at [www.pembrokebiblechapel.com](http://www.pembrokebiblechapel.com) "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23).

## SCIENCE & CREATION

The Amazing Big Brown Bat by Chris

While some animals are equipped to survive the tough northern winter, some are much more fragile, and many species have been designed to hibernate. Hibernation is an ingenious feat which saves a lot of energy that would otherwise be spent for migration, heat production, and foraging. It also spares the hibernator from tough competition over remaining food and resources. One amazing winter survivor that is often disliked is the Big Brown Bat.

The Big Brown Bat can migrate a little, and then congregates in caves in the winter. These cannot be just any caves: they have to be just right for hibernation. Too dry or too cold, and the Big Brown Bat won't survive. Their body temperature drops to about 2°C (36°F), hardly above the cave's temperature, to minimize heat loss. The bats huddle closely together to reduce heat loss. The heart rate lowers from a normal of over 600 in flight to less than 20 beats per minute.

If the cave gets too cold during a rough winter, many individuals will freeze to death. The survivors will have to produce more heat to survive, taking the energy from burning stored body fat. But if too much fat is consumed too quickly, the energy from the fat storage will soon deplete, and the bat won't survive till spring. They usually hibernate at least 5 months without eating, in a fragile balance between life and death.

An interesting fact: during hibernation, the males wake up a few times to drink and urinate. In so doing, their temperature rises to normal for a short while, and then they copulate, while the females still hibernate. They drink condensation on their fur or the wet cave walls. Hanging upside down requires just about no energy, since the long curved claws on their toes hook into a fissure or a little ledge easily.

To build up their fat reserve, the Big Brown Bats feed mostly on moths during the autumn, since moths are abundant and fatty. But these bats are also outstanding mosquito eaters, eating easily 600 per hour. Their hunting technique is quite simple: they catch these insects while flying, with the skin flap between their hind legs and their tail, scooping them as with a net. They then bend their head to grab their prey, while still beating their wings. Bat wings are very different from birds': a thin skin is spread between the elongated fingers, made of very thin bones.

NASA engineers were very interested in understanding the Brown Bats' ability to maneuver in the dark with only their echolocation system, based on very high-pitched sounds. They noticed that these bats navigate comfortably between single wires across their path,



The Big brown bat in flight catching a bug

even as thin as human hair, without touching them. It has also been noticed that they know what prey species they are dealing with before catching it: they decide whether or not it will be a meal. Not bad for a little brain! What an amazing specie, which can migrate, hibernate, fly, echolocate, and destroys insects while fertilizing the soil.

## COMMENTARY

Ten Essential Points About the Resurrection by Kenneth Samples, Facts for Faith, 2002

The following 10 points convey essential theological information about the resurrection of Christ and help one think through the most important elements of the doctrine, especially its implications about the deity of Christ.

1. The Resurrection confirms Jesus Christ's identity as the divine Messiah, Savior, and Lord (Romans 1:3-4; 14:9). It proves Jesus to be who He said He was. In His resurrection, Jesus Christ permanently identified with humanity and became the God-man forever.
2. By the Resurrection, God the Father vindicates Jesus Christ's redemptive mission and message (Matthew 16:21; 28:6). Jesus' resurrection confirms His words as true.
3. Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:24; 3:15) involved all three members of the Trinity: Father (Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:20), Son (John 10:17-18; 11:25), and Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11).
4. The Resurrection designates Jesus Christ as the ever-living Head of the Christian church (Ephesians 1:19-22).
5. Christ's resurrection power generates and ensures the believer's salvation (Romans 4:25; 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:5-6; Philippians 3:10).
6. Christ's resurrection power enables all believers to live lives of gratitude to God (Romans 6:12-13).
7. Christ's resurrection supplies the pledge and paradigm for the future bodily resurrection of all believers (1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:20, 2 Corinthians 9:14; Colossians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:14).
8. Christ's resurrection answers mankind's greatest predicament, the inevitability of death. The Resurrection provides hope, purpose, meaning, and confidence in the presence of death (John 11:25-26; Romans 14:7-8).
9. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the major theme of the apostles' original preaching and teaching (Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:2, 33; 17:18) and the principle doctrinal tenet of the New Testament as a whole.
10. The truth or falsity of the Christian message rests squarely upon the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:14-18).

After almost two millennia the only genuinely reasonable explanatory hypothesis for the events surrounding Jesus' death is that the apostles told the truth and Jesus truly rose bodily from the dead. The proper way to examine such a miraculous claim is to carefully scrutinize the evidence and follow wherever the facts lead. It is logically illegitimate to reject the Resurrection a priori based upon a preconceived commitment to naturalism. As amazing as the Resurrection may be, the bell of truth resonates on every level.

Contemplation of the inevitability and imminence of one's death can quickly lead to existential angst, desperation, and despair. The truth and the promise of the resurrected Lord delivers all who believe in Him from this dreaded human predicament. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).

## TEEN SECTION

Exam Study Tips for Christian Teens by Kelli Mahoney

Whether you are about to take final exams, midterms, or the ACT, knowing those tests are looming in the future can be pretty stressful. Don't let the stress get to you. Here are nine surefire ways to make sure you are ready physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually to take those exams.

### 1. Pray

Before any study session spend a few moments praying. Sometimes teens think that God is only in the most spiritual parts of their lives, but God is in every aspect of your life. He wants you to succeed. Praying can bring you closer to God and make you feel a little stronger and relaxed going into test time.

### 2. Lose the Excuses

It can be easy to put off studying until the last minute. The things going on around you can be tempting ways to procrastinate. Some teens also find excuses to fail, because they just give up learning. Exams are overwhelming. They do test your limits, but you can learn. You need to keep your pace reasonable and learn what you can. If you feel truly overwhelmed, discuss it with your teachers, parents, friends, or leaders. Sometimes they can help.

### 3. Plan Ahead

You know that certain tests are coming up, so plan your study time wisely. At final exam time you will have a lot of tests within the span of a week, so you should have a plan of attack. Which areas will need more of your time? Which test comes first? Second? Which subjects need review? Your teachers should be giving you some guidance as to what will be on the exam, but you can also use your notes to guide you. Try and write down a study schedule so you know what you need to study and when you need to study it.

### 4. Find a Study Group

Whether you study with people in your church youth group or people at school, having a study group can be very supportive and helpful. Your study group can take turns quizzing each other. You can provide insight into certain topics for one another. Sometimes you can just laugh and pray together to blow off some steam when the pressure gets to be too much. Just be sure your study group is actually focused on studying.

#### 5. Eat Well

Teens are known for eating badly. They are drawn to junk foods like chips and cookies. However, you may find that those foods are not very helpful to your study habits. High sugar foods may give you energy at first, but then it plummets pretty quickly. Try to eat healthy "brain foods" high in protein like nuts, fruit, and fish. If you really need a boost of energy, try a diet soda or sugar free energy drinks.

#### 6. Get Your Rest

Sleep is one of the most important tools you have in studying for exams. You may feel stressed and like you don't know everything you need to know, but a good night sleep can help relieve that stress. A lack of sleep can end up clouding your judgment or increase your number of mistakes. Get at least 6 to 8 hours of sleep a night, including the night before your exam.

#### 7. Practice For Your Exam

How do you practice? Write your own exam. As you are studying, take some note cards and write down questions that you think may make it on the exam. Then compile your note cards and begin answering your questions. If you get stuck, just look up the answer. By taking the "practice test" you will be much more prepared for the real thing.

#### 8. Take a Breather

Breaks are a good thing. Even the test preparers of major tests like the ACT and SAT know the importance of taking a breather, as they schedule them into the test time. Studying can take its toll on you, and after a while the words and information can just seem like a jumbled mess. Step away from what you are studying and just clear your head with something different. It will help make you fresh to continue.

#### 9. Have Some Fun

Yes, exam time is stressful, and you may feel like you have to devote all your time to studying. However, if you develop a good plan you should have some time to spend with friends and family. Make some time to do some things with your youth group that week to just blow off steam. Taking an hour or two to get away from the stress is a good thing. It will make your head a bit clearer when you back to studying and you will feel re-energized.

## Life as a Missionary

### Reaping the Harvest by Benton

Mamaduba is the first person in our area to trust in the Lord Jesus as his personal Savior. He is from the Mixi Fore tribe, but, after the death of his father, came to live in a village only two kilometers from the village where we live.

I first came to know Mamaduba about seven years ago when I took him to the bonesetter after he had fallen from a palm tree. He had a dislocated back, leg and arm. I watched the bonesetter work on him, and then followed his progress. Today he can walk, though his left knee does not bend. He still works like the other men - cutting fields, planting, and plowing the rice paddies - but more slowly and with more pain.

During the time I was teaching Bible lessons chronologically in our village, I began to teach Mamaduba privately. When I recounted the story of Abraham, Mamaduba told me something I'll always remember. His father had called him aside shortly before he died and said, "Son, I named you Mamaduba, I named your younger brother Isa (Arabic for Jesus). Isa was the greatest prophet. Remember that and follow him."

This really shocked me. Mamaduba was a Muslim, though not very devoted. His father was buried as a Muslim. His grandfather was an idol worshipper. How did Mamaduba's father know about Jesus?

I learned that his father, as a child, had heard many Bible stories from missionaries who had lived in his village. The Word of God had left a lasting impression.

As I taught through key Old Testament stories, Mamaduba believed the message. When we reached the New Testament, he was in love with Jesus. After hearing and believing the Gospel story, he told me again that he had often thought about his father's words to him. He had had no idea how he was ever going to learn about this Jesus. He had lived as a Muslim because that was all he knew besides idol worship. But he believed that the truth was with Jesus, and now the truth has been made clear to him.

He said "God brought you to me to teach me the Word of God; I didn't even go looking for it. If someone is involved in anything else other than Jesus, they should follow Jesus. They should put their trust in Him. He is God's Son."

With Mamaduba, I feel very much like the disciples to whom Jesus said: "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors." John 4:38.

As for our villagers, please keep praying for them. We are still sowing the seed with the hope of an impending harvest.

## RECIPE of the MONTH

### Leg of Lamb

The leg of lamb is a traditional Easter meal pointing to the Lamb of God who was slain on the Cross to purchase our redemption. This baked leg of lamb, served with gravy and mint jelly, was my mother's masterpiece! Our family always looked forward to having it on Easter Sunday. Servings 6. Cook time is 1 hour and 15 minutes.

- 1 (3 pound) leg of lamb
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour



Cut five slits in the meat; insert garlic. Combine salt, pepper, thyme and garlic powder; rub over meat. Place on a rack in a roasting pan. Broil 5-6 in. from the heat until browned; turn and brown the other side. Turn oven to 350 degrees F. Add 1/2 cup water to pan. Cover and bake for 25 minutes per pound or until internal temperature reaches 160 degrees F for medium or 170 degrees F for well-done. Remove to carving board and keep warm. Pour pan drippings into a large measuring cup, scraping brown bits. Skim fat; reserving 1/4 cup in a saucepan; add flour. Add water to drippings to equals 2 cups; add all at once to flour mixture. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir 1-2 minutes more. Slice lamb and serve with gravy.

#### Empty Tomb Buns by Kyung-Hea

Prepare your favorite recipe for yeast dough. Roll into buns.

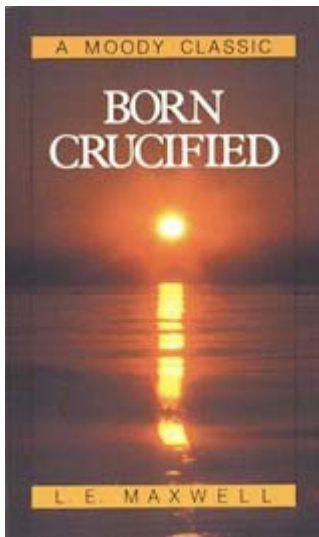
Enclose one large marshmallow in each bun. Be sure to seal the dough well. Let rise, then bake as you would normally (you can also roll prepared buns in melted margarine or butter and then in a mixture of cinnamon and sugar before baking).

The marshmallow melts and leaves an "Empty Tomb" in the center of each bun (and some sweetness is left at the bottom – yum!)

This is fun for Easter, and a real hit with children!



#### BOOK REVIEW



#### Born Crucified by L.E. Maxwell

L.E. Maxwell was the principal and founder of the Prairie Bible Institute at Three Hills Alberta when he wrote this book in 1944.

Every sincere Christian wants to know how he can overcome temptation and be used of God in His service. How can we find freedom from anxiety, and really know the peace which passes understanding? How can we live a consistent Christian life that we teach? How can we have real power in personal conversation as we seek to witness to unbelievers?

One of the most important keys to a life that knows victory is the truth of the believer's identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. This book illuminates this truth from Scripture using pertinent illustrations to show Christians how to have victory over sin, and have power in God's service.

Chapters consider topics such as the believer's identification, the secret of victory, the cross and the world, the cross and consecration, the cross and the crucified, the cross and self, the cross and the two natures, the cross and the flesh, and ten more subjects related to the cross.

This book can be viewed in pdf format in our [references](#) section

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