

Book Review—Having Nothing, Possessing Everything

by Michael Mather

(Available on Kindle currently for £2.18)

As we are looking forward to joining together in God's dreams in the months and years ahead we ask the question, what will this look like?

I think this book gives some pointers to the answer. Quoting from the foreword

Something needs to be turned on its head.

Graduates get sent out every year to "make a difference" in the world, and yet, how is this venture then ... NOT about THEM. We don't go to the margins to "make a difference" we go to the margins so that the folks at the margins make US different.

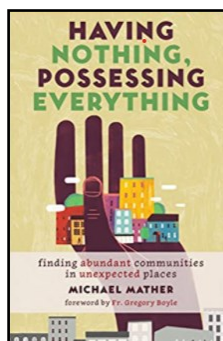
Mike Mather invites us into the beauty of exquisite mutuality at the margins. The scales fall from our eyes as we no longer insist on the divide between "Service Provider" and "Service Recipient". We want to bridge even the space that keeps us from each other in service. ...

We are all a cry for help ... we are all in need of healing. This is one of the very things that joins us together as we share our common humanity. When we discover that there is no longer daylight separating us from each other we inhabit our mutual nobility and dignity.

The book goes on expanding on this idea that "we are all in this together" which is very evident as we continue to travel through the pandemic. The book challenges ways and practices that have become part of our experience of being church and in turn introduces us to new possibilities.

I sense something of what is ahead for us as church is brought out through this easily read book. If you have opportunity, please give it a read.

Andy



A big "thank you" to all contributors this month. To continue monthly we need YOUR news, YOUR pictures, YOUR poem, YOUR story, any articles of interest to others. Please send by email to susan@msbye.co.uk, or phone Sharon Joddrell or Susan Bye and dictate, or by post, to arrive by **15th March** for the April edition.

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Website: www.mrbc.org.uk

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CHURCH MAGAZINE—MARCH 2021



Mansfield Road Baptist Church

Message for March from our Minister

Psalms 139 v13

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

Matthew 6 v28-29

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.

Dear sojourner

That may not be a title you are very familiar with, but a sojourner is one that is residing temporarily in a place and is dependent on the community they are within. This shouts about the bonds that we hold together as sisters and brothers of Jesus. We are a people whose home is with Jesus and yet in the present are about revealing the things of Jesus, the things of heaven, in our midst. We do not do this individually but together we are resources and companions for each other.

Looking to the future, it would be easy to rush into activities and busyness, making up for the lost time of our buildings being closed for a whole calendar year. I recently heard this story:

Once a child was trying to open a flower bud. Under their persistent efforts the blossom fell apart in their hands. In exasperation they looked up at their parent and asked, "Why does the bud fall apart when I try to open it, but when God opens it the flower is beautiful?"

After a little while the child exclaimed eagerly, "Oh, I know! When God opens the flower, he opens it up from the inside."

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus reminds us not to worry about how we are looking (our clothes), but to look at the flowers. God brings them into their brilliance. Similarly as we look at each other in our humanity the psalmist reminds us that God is at work in the deepest places bringing out the beauty. In our sojourning together we are in partnership with Jesus. As we keep in step with Him then the beauty of ourselves, our neighbours, all humanity will be brought out.

As we look to form the beauty of heaven in our everyday experiences the call is to first and foremost wait on God. Can we encourage each other in this?

Andy

An extract from the February prayer letter of —Pippa and Toby Vokuhl

(thanks to Joan Sheppard for keeping us in touch by sharing these regular letters)

Thank you so much for partnering with us in prayer throughout the last year. We have been so blessed to see prayers answered.



We are committed to continue serving in Nepal. Just now we are hearing that entry into Nepal may become possible again, so that would be amazing news. We are very pleased that God has blessed us with a suitable flat in Kathmandu, and with friends who have arranged the rental. On arrival we will start a new phase, living and working from the 1.4m inhabitant city Kathmandu, so we need to be prepared for all that a more urban life entails. We are all tired of this transition period and remaining 'in-limbo', but God has provided so faithfully for us all, including schooling options in the UK and in Nepal. Do pray for Pippa in her support of schooling needs for the kids, and for a new role for her in Kathmandu. Toby was accepted onto the doctoral training programme at the Oxford Brookes School of Architecture, and will carry out fieldwork relating to reconstructed housing stock when back in Nepal. We are grateful for this development. Please pray for a solid work visa provision in 2021, allowing us to stay in the country and serve.

Below are a few prayer points looking forward:

Nepal: The recent dissolving of parliament is creating political instability in the country. Please pray for orderly processes and restraint by parties and protesters. Please pray that the expected second C-19 wave has less impact on the population than feared. India has just gifted 1m doses of C-19 vaccine to Nepal. Thank you, God. Please pray for an equitable distribution of this valuable gift, and for further vaccine availability. Christians have visibly reached out to their neighbourhoods in these challenging times. Would God's love be evident through these acts of service.

INF We are so grateful to God that INF frontline staff have received a first dose of a C-19 vaccine. Please pray for the financial situation within INF. Do pray that the GoN will sign INF's General Agreement, which is needed for all expat visa applications, including ours.

We are reminded that when Christ walked among us on this earth he indeed brought 'good news from a distant land'. There is no better news than God's offer of forgiveness, fellowship, and of a future with Him. This type of good news has the strength to sustain us all. I am hoping that our next prayer letter will be written indeed from that 'distant land' that is Nepal, as we re-enter and continue our journey. Thank you for caring. *With much love from us all, Toby, Pippa, Jakey, Ella, and Mille*



A Personal Reflection from Eunice Campbell-Clark

This passage is written by a prophet living in exile in Babylon and gives a message of hope to his fellow-exiles. Isaiah's words are quoted in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark to introduce the ministry of John the Baptist "the voice in the wilderness". John knows his message will not be popular but that he will be proven right.

The phrases "Comfort ye my people", "Every valley shall be exalted" and "And the glory of the Lord" are all used at the start of Handel's

Messiah to illustrate Isaiah's prophecy of salvation.

This is my message to the people of Nottingham City, that the year 2020 when as a Council we had to deal with COVID 19 as the residents of Nottingham did not quite understand the implication of this pandemic. We saw a spike in the number of students not following the rules. However it was not just the student population. The government did not send a clear message out at first and this led to a great deal of confusion amongst members of the public. In my humble view as a Christian we should not have advocated to this referral from the Government as this led to further confusion during the build-up to Christmas. We saw a very high percentage of hospital cases. We should have had clear instructions to say: "No one outside your bubble should have been allowed to spend Christmas together." It was harsh but this important day of the year has further increased the number of COVID virus cases.

My reflection for 2020 has brought some families closer, but for many thousands has led to isolation and loneliness, for those who could not see their loved ones, and also many hundred have lost families and friends. This included myself as I lost my beloved mother, shortly followed by my brother who was full of the laughter and smiles when he entered a room. God has a plan for all of us, but at times when we are grieving we can't see it. I know my brother would not able to sit around, not able to do the things he enjoyed due to the after effects of COVID 19. He served in the Army for over 30 years. He returned from the Army and set up his own kitchen and bathroom business. All our families and some friends have benefited from his handy work. They were others too, who have benefited from his handy-work in Aylesham his home town, London and elsewhere. I know that he did live life to the fullest. Indeed when my younger sister who took his funeral service, paid him an amazing tribute of his life on earth and finally sent him home to be with his heavenly father, together he is now with my beautiful Mother and loving husband RIP.

So my brothers and sisters in Christ, we all have some stories to tell to our children, great grandchildren that 2020 was a year none of us will ever forget. Let us look forward to 2021 and give the glory to the Almighty.

"As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever". Psalm 125.2, NKJV

DIARY FOR MARCH

Each Sunday there will be a pre-recorded service available on the church website. (This will usually be uploaded by the Saturday morning each week)

It is anticipated that services will be resuming in the buildings during the month. It will be necessary to book in initially through the Church Office.

All Sundays at 3pm - **Young Disciples**

(This is a Zoom Session with Meeting ID 7032705653 and password mrbc)

DEACONS MEETING

Wednesday 17th March at 7.30pm

This will be done through the telephone service provider WHYPAY as previously

LENT MEETINGS

Thursdays 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th March & 1st April

(This is a Zoom Session with Meeting ID 7032705653 and password mrbc)

"A Light at the end of a Tunnel"

Shared by Tony Peace who took this photo while experimenting using a Macro lens.

He quotes a Graham Kendrick song which fits in with this thought:

"Like a candle flame flickering small in our darkness, uncreated light shines through infant eyes.

God is with us, alleluia, come to save us, alleluia.

Stars and angels sing, yet the earth sleeps in shadows; can this tiny spark set a world on fire?

Yet His light shall shine from our lives, Spirit blazing, as we touch the flame of His holy fire"



Homeschool learning—the Hirani family



Finding home learning tough—we as Parents would like to share our experience of home learning school.

As we have to adjust with everything, keeping children focused on work while they're sat at the kitchen table. It feels like an impossible task but it's important to keep positive and celebrate wins.

Yes! We might have bad days, but know these are to be expected and remember that better days come along.

Our main advice and experience is that homeschooling is very stressful for us. We get frustrated and disappointed when it doesn't work out like how we want. Overall we have to be very kind to ourselves, knowing that we are doing the best we can.

Lockdown is hard for all of us and for our kids as well. It's important that families acknowledge that it's been a difficult start time to end time routine. The nice thing about this is we have been with our own children and we know their behaviour quite well, so all we can expect really is an honest effort.

I think lots of parents have experienced this and if you have to sit down with your children for 2 to 4 hours daily, you may try to get something out of this. It is an opportunity to do something differently by looking at the opportunity, not something negative but always thinking positively how to deal with it.

Always we need to think and say: **-WE ARE VICTORIOUS IN THE MIGHTY NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, NEVER VICTIMS.**

Yours in Christ, Mr/Mrs Hirani

Online School is like a Blessing in this period of quarantine. A wonderful idea to create a joyful routine.

I admire my school's virtual traits, not letting us feel that we're in a dire state.

Digital classes are giving us an immense zing, even in this downtime, studies are in full swing.

Virtually talking with buddies, I'm in studies. Starting a new day in such a unique style gives me a huge smile.

We are loving these classes at such times. They keep us climbing.

But I believe in living God from the bible verses it really makes me encouragement.

(Isaiah 43:18 - Forget the former things: do not dwell on the past, see, I am doing new things! Now it springs up: do you perceive it? I am making it in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.)

By: Mansi Hirani



Lockdown is a Scary time. So I thought that I would write a rhyme to put a smile on lots of faces.

Lots of time with my family fills me with joy.

Home school teaching from Mom & Dad with my Sister gives me great happiness.

Missing our friends and all our teachers.

Missing my bicycle ride and playing in the park with ice cream on my hand.

Watching movies, playing games like Kahoot, Monopoly gives me good vibes but still it's not the same as school.

One day when this will come to an end we will look back and cherish our thoughts.



By: Khushi Hirani

Mary Wilson shares news from James Ducker in Inverness. He writes:

"I moved into a flat of my own a fortnight ago. I signed up for it literally 2 days before Christmas. Since then I've had issues with the ceiling in the bedroom and an extremely temperamental front door lock. However, today I am in the flat with some lovely furniture, a fixed bedroom ceiling and a new lock on the front door. I'm trying to thrive. I still have a lot to sort out. Utilities are done, boxes are unpacked but there is still general clutter to organise.

I'm struggling a little bit for motivation when cleaning and it gets on top of me at times. But I have my own space and, hopefully, a fresh start."

Let us remember James in our prayers, giving thanks for his new flat.



4th—8th April 2021

Spring Harvest Home 21 will be streamed on their new, custom-made platform. You can watch and interact with exciting live worship celebrations, transformative teaching, insightful Bible study, fun kids sessions and so much more. This year there is a charge, but no travelling involved—all can be experienced from the comfort of your own sofa! www.springharvest.org