

## Great Gonerby Rectory

Dear Friends,

The later the date of Easter so the earlier the sun rises (obviously!). So I was concerned that our Easter morning Sunrise service would be at some unearthly hour. However because Easter is late, it benefits from the move to British summertime - so it is not so bad after all -- only 5:30 am.!!

But it's worth it, because Easter Sunday is the day that makes all the difference in the world for Christians. Christ's resurrection tells us that we also, who trust in him, will also be able to pass through death and into a new life with God in the new heavens and the new earth. So we don't need to be quite so intense and worried about this life -- it's only the first chapter of a large book -- as C. S. Lewis once described it.

But, if Christians are to constantly look beyond this world to our real home in heaven, does that mean we shouldn't be concerned too much about what is happening in this world around us. Unfortunately, through the ages, some Christians have taken that approach. They have withdrawn from this world -- if not literally then in their attitudes. They have not played a full part in it -- after all, they would argue, "what is the point of rearranging the furniture when the whole house is going to be demolished."

This is a mistake. When God created the world he declared it to be good. And although because of sin there is much evil and suffering in the world, it is still God's world and Christians are still called to play their part in human society. We have a responsibility under God to do what we can to make this world as good a place as possible. It will never be heaven but we can at least attempt to make it less like hell.

The involvement of Christians in our society and nation probably comes in two ways. First of all there is the social concern -- the help that Christians give both individually and through supporting many, many charities to relieve the suffering and deprivation of others.

But there is a second way -- and Christians are less good at this. Social concern deals with alleviating the symptoms of the faults in society, but shouldn't we also be striving to deal with the causes. In other words shouldn't Christians be getting more involved in the institutions of our society. In politics, in the media, in the arts and culture. There are over 2 million churchgoers in this country, yet it seems that we have little influence on the policies and direction in which our society is moving. Is it because our lips are too often sealed -- we have a Christian voice but we don't seem to want to use it? We don't want to get involved but Jesus commanded us to be involved -- "you must be in the world though not of it".

Someone, I cannot remember who, once wrote "the role of Christians is not to follow the world on its downward road but to lead the world on an upward road".

It's for each individual Christian to get out there and do it.

Happy Easter,

*Revd. Peter.*