

‘Christian nationalists?’

It’s been said that **nationalism** is a two-edged sword. The nineteenth century was often referred to as ‘the age of nationalism’, but you’d be hard-pressed to decide whether – in the words of Sellar and Yeatman (authors of *1066 and All That*) – nationalism was ‘a good thing’ or a ‘bad thing’!

Contrary to what many of us thought would happen, nationalism seems to have re-emerged in many parts of the world, including our own country – and, sadly, in less than pleasant forms. Anti-Semitism, racism and religious prejudice have all reared their ugly heads increasingly in recent years, and it’s amazing how **flags** have become symbols of division and intolerance. Being Welsh, I always preferred the Red Dragon to the Union Jack, though one has to admit that the three stages of the Union Jack’s development were an extraordinary example of artistic dexterity, especially when it took on its final form in 1805.



Some years ago, I had to give a lecture on Charles Wesley in **Belfast**, and my host took me for a mini tour of the city whilst dinner was cooking. Of course, I never saw scenes like the one opposite, which dates from 1977, but I shall never forget the thousands of flags and banners which clearly proclaimed sectarianism in what I felt was a threatening way. It was my first and only visit and perhaps I was rather naïve, but the contrast between what I saw both on the TV news and in the flesh, and the extraordinary kindness and openness of my hosts, made a lasting impression.

As Christians we must surely wonder what our God thinks of this.

In 1914 the British poet J C Squire wrote:

*God heard the embattled nations sing and shout,
“Gott strafe [‘punish’ – ed.] England!” and “God save the King!”
God this, God that, and God the other thing.
“Good God!” said God, “I’ve got my work cut out!”*

A love for the land of our birth, which is best expressed in Welsh in the almost untranslatable word **‘hiraeth’** (which embraces ‘longing’, ‘nostalgia’, even ‘homesickness’) is surely laudable. But as Christians we cannot agree that an aggressive triumphalism has any place in the way we think of our country, irrespective of our political views. Moreover, when you come to think of it, a noble patriotism can be held by a person who happens to be a pacifist and also those who want a united Europe and who voted ‘remain’ ten years ago!

So what should we say as Christians in the present political climate?

I found **one of Isaac Watts’ hymns** based on Psalm 100 helpful here. In the 1932 *Methodist Hymn Book* (No. 3) the first verse began: ‘Before Jehovah’s awful throne, ye nations, bow with sacred joy’,

but it was sensibly altered in *Hymns & Psalms* (No. 61) presumably because the word 'awful' has completely changed its meaning in general usage – and actually, John Wesley himself changed some of the words before the compilers of *Hymns & Psalms* got to work! Verses 1, 2, 4 and 6 now read:

Sing to the Lord with joyful voice;
Let every land his name adore;
The farthest isles shall send the noise
Across the ocean to the shore.

Nations, attend before his throne
With solemn fear, with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone;
He can create, and he destroy.

We are his people, we his care,
Our souls and all our mortal frame;
What lasting honours shall we rear,
Almighty Maker, to thy name?

Wide as the earth is thy command;
Vast as eternity Thy love;
Firm as a rock thy truth must stand,
When rolling years shall cease to move.

We don't sing it anymore, of course, and it didn't get included in *Singing the Faith*, but Isaac Watts makes two important points. First, that God's power and love are over all, and that he loves every member of his creation without distinction or favour. We are all part of one creation. Secondly, it follows that the only way in which this world can grow and develop in the way God longs it to do, is for us as nations to share our individual treasures, and celebrate our God-given distinctiveness with each other in joy and peace.

And that sentiment, that hope for the whole world, is my own 'hiraeth'!



A Prayer:

Loving God, save us from a narrow view of our country, our church and our own upbringing and view of life. Help us to share our treasures with others, so that we may more fully appreciate and enjoy the varied gifts that you have bestowed upon us.

In the name of Christ, Amen.

Every blessing to you all,

Barrie Tabraham

Resources/Good News

Small Strips, Big Questions – How to Recycle Shredded Paper

Got a pile of shredded paper and not sure what to do with it? You are not alone. Surprisingly, it's one of the most common recycling questions.



While shredded paper looks recyclable, it can't go straight into your recycling bin loose. The small strips can wrap around recycling machinery causing breakdowns. In short, it's excellent at identity protection but terrible at behaving.

The good news is there are simple steps you can take to deal with it responsibly. See the link below.

[Small strips, big questions - Surrey County Council](#)

Guided Tour of Guildford Cathedral

Step into the story of Guildford Cathedral with a guided tour of Surrey's iconic hilltop cathedral. Led by expert guides, this engaging one-hour experience explores "The People's Cathedral", a Grade II listed masterpiece designed by Sir Edward Maufe during one of the most turbulent periods of the 20th century.

Discover how more than 200,000 people helped bring the Cathedral to life through its remarkable brick-giving campaign, and admire its stunning architecture, sculptures by artists including Charles Gurrey and Vernon Hill, and sweeping views towards the North Downs.

A memorable experience for history lovers, architecture enthusiasts and first-time visitors alike. Please note that this tour does not include access to the Cathedral tower.

Saturday 29 August 2026

11:00am - 12:00pm

Admission £10.65 per ticket

[Guided Tour | 29 August 11am](#)



Community Development Manager Wanted

Maybury & Sheerwater Community Trust (MASCOT)

<https://mascotwoking.org.uk/>

is looking for a smooth operator to run our Large Group activities, managing volunteers, liaising with location providers, encouraging community participation, and ensuring that these activities are well run. Initial focus will be on our successful “Let’s Talk” conversation classes.

Are you:

1. Thorough and Passionate about Community Development?
2. Wanting to use your experience to make a real difference in a local community that most needs you?
3. Experienced at managing volunteers and creating strong team spirit?
4. Comfortable working with people of varied backgrounds?
5. Committed to the aims & values of MASCOT? (see our website [About – Mascot Woking](#))
6. Looking to work 2 days a week?

If so, we’d like to hear from you. Please contact Tracey Francis at office@stmichaelssheerwater.or.uk by noon on September 4th.

This role pays £11,310 per year for 15 hours per week.

MASCOT is regulated by the Charity Commission (#1145217) and by Companies House (#7722947). We are currently supported by National Lottery, Surrey Country Council, Woking Borough Council, Woking Rotary and Active Surrey.

Staff may be working with children and vulnerable adults and are subject to screening by UK Government Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS checks). It is also a requirement that the successful applicant will have the right to live and work in the UK.

MASCOT is an equal opportunities organisation that follows Safer Recruitment practices.



Welcome Service

for

Revd Paul Tabraham

Our new Superintendent Minister

Light refreshments will be served before the service



Sunday 6 September 2026

6.00pm

**Knaphill Methodist Church
Broadway, Knaphill, GU21 2DR**

COFFEE MORNING FOR
AL-AHLI HOSPITAL – GAZA
(The oldest and only Christian Hospital)

Thursday 10th September
Coffee and Cakes from 10.30am
at Merrow Methodist Church

Talk by Dr Ang Swee Chai at 11.30am

A Senior Consultant at Barts Hospital. She has worked as a surgeon in both Gaza and Lebanon and has spoken at the United Nations. She is a founder member on the Board of MAP (Medical Aid for Palestinians).



Please come and listen to this wonderful, courageous lady who has worked tirelessly against injustice.

Tea/Coffee *and* Cake

Pay as You Feel

every Saturday, 10.00 - 12.00pm



Addlestone Methodist Church

(Next to Subway on Station Road)

Free Prize Bingo &
Games Mornings

on 1st and 3rd Saturdays
of month!



We always need donations and volunteers to
keep serving the Addlestone community. Please help us!

Play  
Chat. Connect



COFFEE MORNING



IN AID OF

KSSX

AIR AMBULANCE CHARITY
KENT SURREY SUSSEX

Registered Charity No: 1021367

AND SALE

There will be various stalls including:

Cakes, Guess the Weight of the Cake, Raffle, Tombola, Guess the Name of Teddy, Guess How Many Sweets in the Jar, Model Railway, & Bric-a-Brac.

Offers of help and donations of items welcome! Contact Tarina Berry



TEA
COFFEE
BISCUITS
BACON
BUTTIES

Bacon Butties!



To be opened by **Cllr Saj Hussain**

KNAPHILL METHODIST CHURCH HALL

Saturday 5th September 2026

10am to Noon

www.knaphillmethodist.co.uk



STOUGHTON METHODIST CHURCH

(On the corner of Stoughton Road and Grange Road)

COFFEE CORNER

Tuesdays from 10 am – 12 noon



4th August

11th August

18th August

25th August

1st September

8th September

15th September

22nd September

29th September

2026



Enjoy Coffee & a Chat, Coffee & a Game, or Coffee & a Book

The choice is yours!

Everyone welcome – bring a friend!



Saturday 21st November 2026
2pm

At Walton Methodist Church Hall
A maximum of 6 people per team
Refreshments being served at half time.

Email:

waltonmethodistchurchsecretary@virginmedia.com

to book your place!

tearfund.org/quiz

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