



# Clear vision

Georgina Byrne *reflects on* Acts 1:6-14 and John 17:1-11

Jesus leaves his disciples not once but twice. The first time is the crucifixion. Although he has forewarned them that the end is coming, they scatter in fear, unbelief and grief. After the resurrection, as we have recalled in the last weeks, Jesus spends time with his disciples once more, teaching and encouraging them, only to leave them for a second time at the ascension. On this occasion, they are baffled, but not afraid and not bereft. He has told them to wait for God's promised Holy Spirit and they know that they have his work to do. In John's Gospel Jesus prays to God the Father for his friends' protection as they will be "in the world".

In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus makes clear what that means, as he speaks directly to the disciples and gives them a mission. They are to continue his ministry and share his wide vision for the whole world – from Jerusalem, through Judea and Samaria and away to the ends of the earth. It is important to note that Jesus does not give detailed instructions of how they are to do this. There is no one-size-fits-all method for sharing God's love – as the rest of the accounts in the Acts of the Apostles bear witness.

We learn three things from Jesus from today's readings: that he loves his followers and prays to the Father for us; that he longs for the whole world to know the love of God; and that he calls on his followers to carry on that vision. 🙏

Show us today, Lord God, how you are calling us to carry on your vision. Inspire us through the stories of those who heard your calling two thousand years ago, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## John and Charles Wesley

by Caroline Hodgson

The Wesley brothers are commemorated in the *Common Worship* lectionary on Wednesday this week.

It started at Oxford University in 1729 with the formation of the Holy Club. The older brother John (1703-1791), is known for his itinerant preaching and tireless work forming and organising Christian groups, known as societies. He appointed evangelists – both women and men – to spread the word. Under his direction, Methodists became

leaders in many social issues of the day, including the abolition of slavery and prison reform.

His brother Charles (1707-1788) was a prolific hymn writer, whose powerful imagery and beautiful poetry can be heard in chapels, churches and cathedrals around the world.

For me, the really astonishing thing about these extraordinary, dynamic brothers is that, despite rocking the boat, they are responsible for shaping so much of our worship today, and their influence can be felt at the very heart of the established Church. 🙏

“ He left His Father's throne above, / So free, so infinite His grace; / Emptied Himself of all but love, / And bled for Adam's helpless race; / 'Tis mercy all, immense and free; / For, O my God, it found out me!”

Charles Wesley (1707-1788), leader of the Methodist movement and hymn writer

## Science and faith

### Part 3 – healing and medicine

by Caroline Hodgson

The history of Western medical science is tightly interwoven with the history of the Christian faith. Indeed, for centuries no distinction was made between theology and science. To study the physical universe and everything in it, was to study God and divine creation. It's not by any means an easy relationship. Christianity and medicine have often clashed over ethical issues, particularly where the sanctity of life is concerned.

In obedience to Christ's command to cure the sick, many Christians have been involved in the physical welfare of their fellow human beings. Many modern healthcare, teaching and research institutions have Christian origins, particularly those founded by religious orders. The Christian contribution to medicine is huge, and advances in all branches of medicine have been made by Christians. Inventions ranging from the stethoscope to the cochlear implant have improved the quality of life and saved the lives of countless people. 🙏