

*“The Servant Queen, and the King she serves:
a tribute for Her Majesty’s 90th birthday”*

written by Mark Greene & Catherine Butcher

WIC Spring Tea & Fashion Show

April 22, 2017

Speaker: Connie Pfefferle

Last Summer – despairing circumstances of a heated election; state of our country; state of the church in our country; realizing what deep increase of rebellion the American culture and church was in.

****How to be Christ’s Servant Queen to a culture that is in growing rebellion against Him.***

12 Pearls of Wisdom

***Pearl 1:** *Have a simple trust in a Living God.*

The Queen is a woman who has looked in 2 directions for almost her entire life: Upwards to God and outwards towards her people she was to serve.

On Christmas Day 1939, England has been at war with Germany for 3 months, and Elizabeth’s father is to speak to the nation. What do you say to a nation which lost 9 million soldiers in WWI and now will face losing more sons, brothers, husbands, as well as devastating and terrible suffering?

He reads a poem given to him by his 13 year old daughter:

*“I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year
‘Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown’
And he replied, ‘Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way.’”*

The Queen is by any measure a remarkable woman.

She’s the longest reigning monarch in British history.

She never went to university, but she has been the adviser and confidante to twelve British Prime Ministers.

She’s a 90-year-old senior citizen, but still works over 40 hours a week.

She can rebuild the 6-cylinder, K2 Ambulance engine of an Austin.

You will not know the Queen unless you know her relationship with her Lord. We will explain pearls of wisdom.

What is the secret of the Queen's remarkable consistency of character? It's a question she herself answered in 2002.

"I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God ... I draw strength from the message of hope in the Christian gospel."

Many commentators have noted the depth of her trust in God but few have explored it.

We've found it inspiring and hope you do too.

*Pearl 2: *Oil is of more value than solid gold.*

Oil—from God; by God; for God.

Gold—rubbish that does not give power to live life. Thrill on God's holy call a touch on my life to live life in power, love, and self-control.

Elizabeth's Coronation was the most watched event in the history of television at the time.

But the significance of the event is not that a lot of people watched it or enjoyed its grandeur. The significance lies not in the display of symbols and stunning robes. The significance lies in the Queen's understanding of what she was committing herself to do.

Every element of the service pointed in one direction; she was vowing to serve her people as a servant of God.

There was only one moment in the ceremony that was not televised. It was considered too sacred to show.

As Handel's anthem "Zadok the Priest" is sung, the symbols of the Queen's status are removed—the crimson velvet robe, the diamond diadem, the coronation necklace.

And then there she is, in a simple white dress.

She looks like a bride—young, beautiful delicate---except that the dress is far less elaborate than her wedding gown. There is a ring, but there is no groom. Elizabeth is not giving herself to a husband but to a people.

At that point the Archbishop anoints her with holy oil and pours it onto her hands, her chest and her head to show she is being set apart to serve and love her people in all her actions, with all her heart and with all her mind.

When Queen Elizabeth II was crowned in 1953, she found, like her mother before her, an almost sacrificial quality at the heart of the service ... It was the moment when the holy oil was applied to her,

rather than her crowning with St. Edward's crown of solid gold, that was of supreme importance for the Queen. Indeed it was the most solemn and important moment of her entire life.

Her 21st birthday radio address:

"I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong. God help me to make good my vow."

Sixty-one years later, she said this in her 2008 Christmas broadcast:

"Jesus of Nazareth makes it clear that genuine human happiness and satisfaction lie more in giving than receiving; more in serving than in being served. We can surely be grateful that, two thousand years after the birth of Jesus, so many of us are able to draw inspiration from his life and message, and to find in him a source of strength and courage."

*Pearl 3: Show up to do your work with pink lipstick, pearls, and the day's red box.

The Queen works hard. Very hard.

In fact, she has worked more than 50 hours a week for most of working life and still works more than 40 hours, in her 90th year.

She takes her role as Head of State seriously. Every day of the year, except for Christmas and Easter, she reads the red box of papers that are collated from the Prime Minister's office and other key government departments, including the security services. She is referred to as Reader No. 1. Every week she meets the Prime Minister. She does not determine policy but she takes her constitutional right and duty to express her views on government matters very seriously—usually through the use of questions. No one has ever reported the content of these meetings but many of her Prime Ministers have stated publicly how helpful they have found them.

Apart from that, the Queen deals with hundreds of papers and pieces of correspondence every week. She also has a heavy schedule of visits.

The Queen works hard because she is committed to service.

And that comes from her commitment to follow the ways of Christ. At Christmas in 2012, she said:

"This is the time of year when we remember that God sent His only Son 'to serve, not to be served.' He restored love and service to the center of our lives in the person of Jesus Christ. It is my prayer this Christmas Day that his example and teaching will continue to bring people together to give the best of themselves in the service of others."

The Queen's work is an expression of her desire to serve others. She is not a hired servant who is required to do lots of tasks; she is a Queen who chooses to serve her people.

In 1975, commenting on the celebration of Christ's birth, she said of Jesus:

"His simple message of love has been turning the world upside down ever since. He showed that what people are and what they do, does matter and does make all the difference.

He commanded us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, but what exactly is meant by 'loving ourselves'? I believe it means trying to make the most of the abilities we have been given, it means caring for our talents. It is a matter of making the best of ourselves, not just doing the best for ourselves.

We are all different, but each of us has his own best to offer. The responsibility for the way we live life with all its challenges, sadness and joy is ours alone. If we do this well, it will also be good for our neighbors. If you throw a stone into a pool, the ripples go on spreading outwards."

*Pearl 4: *Feed your own dogs.*

The servant Queen shows love and respect for others by not taking advantage of her entitlements. (For example: returning grocery carts, hang clothes back from dressing rooms, promptness, bathroom cleanliness.)

1986 Christmas broadcast:

"Many will have been inspired by Jesus' simple but powerful teaching: love God and love thy neighbor as thyself—in other words, treat others as you would like them to treat you. His great emphasis was to give spirituality a practical purpose."

We see the deep connection the Queen has with her Christ in the way she goes about her ordinary daily tasks.

She is extraordinarily respectful of other people. She is almost never late for anything or anyone, regardless of their rank. Though she knows others would wait, and perhaps would not be offended, she sees lateness as a mark of disrespect. The only time she was ever late for the Opening of Parliament was when she left her reading glasses behind in the Palace.

This deep respect for others manifests itself in how she treats her staff—they are never 'servants' to her—and she almost never calls any of her staff when they are off-duty in the evenings, at the weekend or on holiday.

She respects their privacy and their family life. Compare the Queen with the endless list of despotic rulers that litter history, or the many over-demanding bosses that sour our workplaces. By contrast, Elizabeth II shows us how power can be used considerately.

*Pearl 5: *Know when to put a scarf over your pill hat and when to linger after your stated departure time.*

I see this same type of wisdom illustrated in Rosario Butterfield's book "The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert" when she, then a left-wing atheist, openly lesbian university professor of queer studies has her first meeting with Ken, a pastor of a conservative Presbyterian church and his wife Floy.

"Pastor Ken invited me to dinner at his house to explore to discuss questions he had posed in a letter he had sent me in response to an article I had written where I criticized the 'Promise Keepers' movement.

I was excited to meet a real born-again Christian and find out why he believed such silly ideas. I really wanted to see how Christians live.

I remember how relieved I was when I learned that Floy made a vegetarian stir-fry for supper. (I tried to maintain a vegetarian diet for health as well as for moral reasons.)

It was a hot July day and I was glad that they didn't use air conditioning (I was concerned about the environment in general and the ozone layer in particular and assumed that they were, too). I share with you these details because they reflect my thinking at the time. I wanted to get to know these people but not at the expense of compromising my moral standards. My lesbian identity and culture and its mattered a lot to me. I came to my culture and its values through life experience but also through much research and deep thinking. I liked Ken and Floy immediately because they seemed sensitive to that. Even though obviously these Christians and I were very different, they seemed to know that I wasn't just a blank slate, that I had values and opinions too, and they talked with me in a way that didn't make me feel erased."

This is the wisdom of conveying value in people while remaining true to authentic Christian convictions.

I love these pictures which show the Queen taking measures not to give offense while still being herself—shawl, not a turban; pill hat, overcoat, gloves, not a hijab; more importantly, she is listening.

The Queen's strong faith in Christ leads her to accord to all people, respect and dignity.

Former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has said:

"Jews have deep respect for the Queen ... something similar, in my experience, is true of the other minority faiths in Britain. They value the Queen because they know she values them."

Importantly, the Queen does not pretend that she believes that all religions are the same—she is a devoted Christian. Indeed, it is this combination of integrity and generous hospitality that makes her so popular among people of other faiths and none.

Punctuality, said Louis XVIII of France, is the politeness of kings. Royalty arrives on time and leaves on time. So it is with Her Majesty the Queen, with one memorable exception.

The day was 27 January 2005, the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and the place, St. James' Palace. The Queen was meeting a group of Holocaust survivors.

When the time came for her to leave, she stayed. And stayed. One of her attendants said he had never known her to linger so long after her scheduled departure time. She gave each survivor—it was a large group—her focused, unhurried attention. She stood with each until they had finished telling her personal story.

It was an act of kindness that almost had me in tears ... It brought a kind of blessed closure into deeply lacerated lives.

**Pearl 6: Taking your critic on a car ride is more effective than a bumper sticker.*

Example: from “The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert” Rosaria Butterfield. *“Our conversation was lively and fun. If Floy was a ‘submissive wife’ she was also gifted, smart, perceptive, well-read, and a great cook! If Ken was the ‘Bible-thumping’ pastor, he was also a good listener, a balanced interpreter, a lover of good poetry, a reader of culture and politics, and a husband who clearly adored, relied upon, and valued highly his wife’s counsel. These people simply didn’t fit the stereotype and I simply didn’t know what to do with this. Like his letter, Ken wouldn’t be filed away easily so that I could just go on with my life.”*

The Prince & the Chauffeur

Part of her job is to entertain State visitors. In 1998, Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia was visiting the Queen at Balmoral. After lunch Her Majesty asked the Prince if he would like a tour of the estate. He agreed and, in due course, was guided to the front seat of a Land Rover, with his interpreter behind him.

In Saudi Arabia, the government prevents women from driving, so the Prince was perhaps unprepared to see the Queen getting into the driving seat next to him, setting off at speed along the narrow estate roads, and talking constantly. The ruffled Abdullah pleaded with the Queen through his interpreter to slow down and keep her eyes on the road. It is not clear that she took any notice.

**Pearl 7: A yearly Christmas broadcast is better than a minute by minute twitter following.*

It is perfectly fine if others don’t know my personal opinion about a great many things—but about Jesus, I will be uncharacteristically open.

Over the years, many topics recur—the importance of family, her concern for the lonely, for the poor, for the welfare of children, for the armed forces, and for the people of the Commonwealth. Similarly, there are themes she comes back to again and again, themes that are central to the way she follows the one whose birth Christmas celebrates. Two of the most frequent are forgiveness and loving your neighbor.

She is open to sharing something of herself, but at the same time she, as she put it, “I might not be able to give you a full answer.”

There are a great many things which we don't know about the Queen. She met with Margaret Thatcher every week for 11 years but no one really knows what she thought of her. Or of Tony Blair. In an age when we are besieged by armies of celebrities telling us about almost every aspect of their lives in a variety of media, the Queen has kept most of her thoughts to herself. She may have a great many strongly held, well-considered personal opinions about a great many matters but we don't know what they are.

Curiously, that is not the case about her faith in Jesus.

About Jesus she has been remarkable, one might say, uncharacteristically open about what she believes.

And this is made most clear in her annual Christmas broadcasts where she speaks of Jesus Christ as "an inspiration," a "role model" and "an anchor" in her life; where she makes reference to the circumstances of his birth, to his death and to his resurrection. And for her, all of this is grounded in historical fact. In the millennial celebratory year she said:

"Christmas Day is the traditional, if not the actual, birthday of a man who was destined to change the course of our history. And today we are celebrating the fact that Jesus Christ was born two thousand years ago; this is the true Millennium anniversary.

The simple facts of Jesus' life give us little clue as to the influence he was to have on the world. As a boy he learnt his father's trade as a carpenter. He then became a preacher, recruiting twelve supporters to help him. But his ministry only lasted a few years and he himself never wrote anything down. In his early thirties he was arrested, tortured and crucified with two criminals. His death might have been the end of the story, but then came the resurrection and with it the foundation of the Christian faith."

Christians have the compelling example of the life and teaching of Christ and, for myself I would like nothing more than that my grandchildren should hold dear him and his ideals which have helped and inspired so many previous generations. (The Queen, 1978)

The tradition of Christmas broadcasts stretches back to 1932 and the Queen has been doing it almost every year since her accession to the throne.

She doesn't have to stage a children's Christmas party in the Buckingham Palace stables hoping it "helps to bring the traditional story alive" but she does. And she does not actually have to mention Jesus in her Christmas addresses to the nation and the Commonwealth. It would be easy to reduce the birth of the incarnate Son of God to a gift-giving festival. But she does mention Jesus Christ.

And always as the climax of the broadcast.

So grateful to have a church that helps me participate in an enduring Christmas presence. (Music—Messiah, midnight candle service, collecting for gifts to help the Christmas story hit home with children of White Swan Indian Reservation and children at transitional housing of Naomi, Ruth, & Boaz.)

*Pearl 8: *Side doors and private priorities tell the measure of Christ's influence.*

You can hear the car crunch to a halt from inside the old building.

The driver is reputedly rather firm on the brakes. A minute or so later a 5 foot 4 inch woman comes through the small side door and sits down in a pew. It is the Queen coming unannounced to join the local congregation of Sandringham Church for the Sunday service, as she often does when she is in residence on the Sandringham Estate. There's no chauffeur, no ceremony, no fuss. She often doesn't even sit in the special seat that only she can occupy but simply sits in one of the pews at the front. She comes in the side door because she doesn't want to draw attention to herself. But she does want to go to church. Not because she is expected to, not because she needs to be seen, but because she wants to be there.

Her trust in Jesus Christ is central to her.

And you can see it in so many ways. She doesn't have to invite a different church minister every weekend of her Balmoral holiday to spend time with her family but she does.

She doesn't have to find out which children have won prizes at the Sandringham Estate Sunday school, then pay for and present the books to them, but she does.

She doesn't have to go to church every week but she does.

And on the day of Princess Diana's death she didn't have to take her two grieving grandsons to their local church in Balmoral, but she did. In fact, some people criticized her for it.

*Pearl 9: *The Queen does not get to be the hero of her life, her King does.*

The Queen has seen tough times. She saw her father take on a job he would rather not have done, grow ill under the strain of work and die young at 56. Most recently she suffered the deaths of her mother and her sister in the same year. Those events were made all the harder not only because she cared for them so very much but because family life has always been so important to the Queen. In 2007, she said:

"In my experience, the positive value of a happy family is one of the factors of human existence that has not changed. The immediate family of grandparents, parents and children, together with their extended family, is still the core of a thriving community. When Prince Philip and I celebrated our Diamond Wedding last month, we were much aware of the affection and support of our own family as they gathered round us for the occasion."

But, as for so many of us, family life doesn't always go the way we would hope. Prince Philip infidelity. Famously, in November 1992, the Queen gave a speech at the Guildhall in the City of London:

“1992 is not a year on which I shall look back with undiluted pleasure. Indeed, I suspect that there are very few people or institutions unaffected by these last months of worldwide turmoil and uncertainty.”

Here is the Queen at her understated best. Certainly, she would go on to mention the fire in Windsor Castle that had occurred only a few days before, but it was typical of her not to dwell on the detail of her own troubles but rather show sympathy for the challenges that others had faced.

The reality is that during that year Prince Andrew announced his separation from his wife: Princess Anne, divorced her husband; the Princess of Wales’ biography “Diana, Her True Story” revealed the unhappiness of her marriage to Charles; Diana’s affair with James Gilbey was confirmed in the press, as indeed was Charles’ affair with Camilla. Apart from the terrible anguish of the sudden death or serious sickness of a child few of us are likely to experience such a high level of family distress in one year, and very few of us will ever have the added pressure of seeing it all made globally public.

Christ gets to be the hero when sin and its consequence mar our lives. Queen consequences may be her own sin or sins of culture.

1. Marriage to a less devout man than herself.
2. Adopting a parenting style that distances her from her children, decreasing her influence upon their beliefs.
3. The Queen is the supreme governor of the Church of England. Every 5 years she opens the General Synod and “any law passed by it has to be given royal assent.”

The archbishops and bishops are appointed by the monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister, who in turn considers the names selected by a church commission.

I wonder what, if any, real power the Queen actually has over church matters.

During her watch, many sad developments have happened in the Church of England.

1. Attendance has halved to 800,000 over the last 40 years. Barely 8% of those who attend church regularly are young men. Prince William & Prince Henry only attend at official functions.
2. In 2017 the General Synod, after rejecting the motion to define marriage as between a man and a woman, the Archbishop of Canterbury and York called for a “radical new Christian inclusion that is based on good healthy flourishing relationships and in a proper 21st century understanding of being human and of being sexual.”
3. A 2014 survey showed about 1/3 of the Church of England clergy doubt or disbelieves in the physical resurrection—and believe an allegorical interpretation of the virgin birth.
4. Also showed 16% of clergy are unclear about God and 2% think God is a human constrict.

The Servant Queen calls out to her hero, to save her, to forgive her, to help her amend her life to his love, his call on her life, she humbles herself, she prays, she pray in public. This is her faith in action.

**Pearl 10: Accepts forgiveness, compassion and support when it is the most humbling time to receive it.*

A rose from a well-wisher, as crowds gather to pay respects to Diana, Princess of Wales.

Still, in times of pressure, tragic loss, or death, if you are a believer in a living God, it is precisely to him and to fellow believers, that you turn for strength and comfort, perspective and prayer.

In 2011 the Queen said:

“Although we are capable of great acts of kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves—from our recklessness or our greed. God sent into the world a unique person—neither a philosopher nor a general (important though they are)—but a Savior, with the power to forgive.

Forgiveness lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God’s love.”

And this is a conviction that the Queen has clearly tried to live out in her own life.

Have to accept:

- Support & forgiveness
- Death of child
- Husband
- New direction or change of life
- Threatening illness
- End marriage
- Pain of a wayward child
- Besetting sin
- Times of God’s severe mercy on your life.

I have been so very blessed to see.

*Pearl 11: *And these 3 remain—Faith, Hope, and Love.*

The Queen’s response was to express gratitude for the support of the prayers of others:

“You, my Lord Mayor, and all those whose prayers—fervent, I hope, but not too frequent—have sustained me through all these years, are friends indeed. Prince Philip and I give you all, wherever you may be, our most humble thanks.”

In a secular age, it is perhaps surprising to hear a leading international figure who is not a member of the clergy talk of prayer in the middle of a major public speech. The Queen didn’t have to do so. She chose to do so. Perhaps simply because when times are tough, the knowledge that other people are praying to God on your behalf, is wonderfully heartening.

In 2013, she put it this way:

“For Christians, as for all people of faith, reflection, meditation and prayer help us to renew ourselves in God’s love, as we strive daily to become better people. The Christmas message shows us that this love is for everyone. There is no one beyond its reach.”

Prayer—talking and listening to God—brings perspective and strength. Prayer leads to a renewed sense of God’s love and care, to a renewed sense of security and worth.

And just as the Queen appreciates other people’s prayers for her, so she prays for others, and for us. In 2011 she said:

*“In the last verse of this beautiful carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem, there’s a prayer:
O Holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us we pray.
Cast out our sin
And enter in,
Be born in us today.*

It is my prayer that on this Christmas Day we might all find room in our lives for the message of the angels and for the love of God through Faith, Hope, and Love, Christ our Lord.”

*Pearl 12: *Walk the halls of the palace escorted by James Bond and 4 corgis.*

Be a personal example of what the impact of Christ’s gospel can have on a human life.

Yes, she has worked hard, but she has also taken care to enjoy life, to pursue her enthusiasms to spend time with family and friends.

She loves the countryside, her dogs and her horses. She still rides and is hugely respected by the racing community, and apparently adored by the Household Cavalry. World leaders say that there is something about her, a calm authority, a kind of peace perhaps, that marks her out. She has preserved the dignity of the role she has been asked to play but has known when to engage more informally. Indeed, she was “delighted” to make her film debut in the “Bond”—themed cameo at the opening of the 2012 Olympic Games. Certainly there is much more to Elizabeth than her faith in Christ but you cannot understand her without understanding her devotion to Him. It shapes everything she does. As broadcaster Jeremy Paxman put it, her religious beliefs are “quietly held”, “authentic and well-known”.

Clear conscience – Peace – Hope – Joy.

Hold this life lightly, believe in the life to come.

Don’t live mostly in the basement of life. Yes, regularly bring all your burdens to your King—burdens of your sin, the consequences of your sin, as well as the brokenness and wounds of this life and rebellious culture on your life—but take the stairs of real faith and live most of your hours upstairs in the joy of reconciliation to your Christ and King and pursue his purposed call on your life.

Live life experiencing how a clean conscience brings power—love—self-control—joy—peace, purpose, hope.