

Contact

Wesleyan Reform Union
Church Street, Jump, S74 0HZ
01226 891 608
admin@thewru.co.uk
thewru.com
Charity No. 1203983

Becoming Revival Ready: Part 1

Is revival already beginning?
What the latest research says.

For years we've become used to hearing the same story about Christianity in Britain: church attendance is falling, congregations are ageing, and faith is gradually disappearing from public life. It's a narrative that's been repeated so often that many Christians have accepted it as inevitable. It has been the story of our own union of churches. But what if the story is changing?

Over the past year, a growing body of research has suggested that something unexpected is happening. While no one is claiming that nationwide revival has arrived, there are encouraging signs that people are becoming more open to faith than many of us realised. The challenge now isn't simply recognising the opportunity - it's asking whether our churches are ready for it.

The Bible Society's widely discussed Quiet Revival report may have been withdrawn because of problems with some of its data, but the broader picture has not disappeared. Instead, other surveys, church statistics and testimonies continue to point in a similar direction: spiritual curiosity is increasing, especially among younger adults.

One of the biggest surprises is that faith has become more visible in public life. High-profile sports stars, musicians, academics and media personalities are increasingly comfortable

speaking about their Christian faith.

When respected public figures talk naturally about following Jesus, it helps dismantle the idea that Christianity belongs only to a previous generation or a shrinking minority. At the same time, younger Christians appear to be more committed than previous generations. While nominal Christianity continues to decline, those who identify as Christians are much more likely to practise their faith seriously, engage with Scripture and see following Jesus as central to their identity.

Perhaps even more encouraging is the evidence that young adults are searching spiritually. Many are exploring questions about purpose, hope and meaning. They may not immediately turn to church, but they are far from indifferent to spiritual matters. Research suggests significant numbers are interested in learning more about the Bible, while booksellers report rising Bible sales driven largely by younger buyers. Even online, searches for the Bible have overtaken searches for some of popular culture's biggest titles. Churches across several denominations are also reporting increasing numbers of adult conversions. Many of these new believers are young adults with little or no previous church background. Rather than drifting into church through family tradition, they're actively choosing to investigate the Christian faith for themselves.

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Coming up in this Contact Newsletter

Conference
Report 2026

Thought for the
Day - Bible Study

Obituary -
Ken Goreham

Outreach and
Overseas Missions

Events and
Activities

and much
more!

Becoming Revival Ready: Part 1

None of this guarantees revival. There are still significant challenges, and many churches continue to wrestle with declining membership and limited resources. Yet the evidence suggests that the familiar story of inevitable decline no longer tells the whole picture. Perhaps the more important question isn't, "Is revival coming?" but "If people start looking for Jesus, will they find our churches ready to welcome them?"

That may be the conversation our churches need most. Over the next months, we'll pose four challenges that face the church, and questions that we can ask ourselves and our churches so that we can indeed become revival ready.

(Drawing from Quiet Revival: <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/the-quiet-revival> and Finding Jesus: <https://www.eauk.org/resources/our-resources/reports/finding-jesus>, and using ChatGPT to shape the writing)

Lisa Macbeth

Heath End Church



Conference 2026



On arriving at Swanwick the sun is shining. Will it be too hot to sit in those meetings? Into the building and the air con just hits you. All will be well.

As I sat at reception booking people in, I noticed that some familiar names were missing. People that I had seen many times before were not on the lists. Various reasons were given, all valid. Nevertheless, I was disappointed that I would not see them this time. As I continued to look through the names, I saw ones that I didn't recognise. What a privilege to be able to welcome new delegates and visitors, certainly something to smile about. After a lovely lunch we were off to the hall for the start of conference.



George Phillips (Union President) led our opening devotions before we got down to business. In the evening George was thanked for all he had done during his Presidency, (and still does). David Tuckett was inducted as the new Union President, supported by his wife Elaine. May God guide and bless David in his new role of service for Him.

We heard about Churches that had closed and this brought sadness. Some are fellowships that had been there for many years. This drew my thoughts to the witness that these places had been in the past. How many outreach events had been held there? How many preachers had been in that pulpit? How many lives had been changed by God



through the faithful men and women in these churches? Maybe you are one of those people. Maybe you are in leadership today because of their obedience to God. Again we have much to be thankful for.

There have been several applications for ministry within our churches. Men and women seeking God's will for their lives. There are plans too for more regional ministries, giving smaller fellowships guidance, encouragement, and support. May we pray that God will guide both those who will be conducting the interviews and those that have applied. Again this was another area of encouragement.

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We were updated on the work in Latvia by Ian Sykes. This has been our Union project for the last two years. What a joy to hear how God is using His faithful servants in the work amongst the street children there. Ian was able to see first-hand the work that had been done on the premises and also to give some practical help too. Thanks were expressed for the financial support given by our Union of Churches. We must continue to pray for this work. Again, what an encouragement to us.

Next years Overseas Mission Project will be the work of Flame International. I must confess that I knew very little about it, other than Ian Fall working with them.

He was able to share with us some of the work that is being done in Ukraine. Our support this year will help train men who will be ministering to those on the frontline. Our prayerful and financial support is greatly needed.

We received good teaching from our Conference speaker, John Russell. Being the afternoon speaker is not always an easy time.....having all had a good lunch and being relaxed! However, John was able to keep our attention as he shared with us what God had laid on his heart. There is always more to learn from Him. The notes we were given mean we can study further and maybe see something anew that we missed!

So, to sum up Conference for me;

- It was a real blessing to spend time with old friends and new ones.
- To share fellowship together again, to encourage and to be encouraged.
- We are all very different in experience, upbringing, and personality but we all serve the same Saviour.

What a faithful God we share.
"The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it"
1 Thes. 5 v 24

"Faithful God"

Sue Norton

Bozeat



Shadowlands: The Extraordinary C. S. Lewis Story

Following on from our joint study with the parish church we had a joint trip to London to see Shadowlands. In total 13 of us went and 13 of us were reduced to tears. I am sorry to extol a play when it is too late for you to see it but if it ever comes back or you can find the film we would strongly recommend a watch. The story of Shadowlands is the meeting between C. S. Lewis (played by Hugh Bonneville) and Joy Davidman, an American divorcee with two children, played by Maggie Siff. Their friendship blossoms into love and ultimately marriage. But Joy is diagnosed with cancer and dies within a few years. Lewis has to deal with the testing of his faith as he struggles with her illness and ultimately her death. His raw grief is heart- wrenching to watch but the play is not a total tear fest.

One of my favourite lines came when Joy met some of his fellow Oxford dons who were less than impressed with her; after one comment her response was (approximately) "I'm sorry, I'm new here are you trying to be offensive, or just stupid?"

Another memorable moment, for me, was when Joy asked how he had reconciled his proposal with her divorced status, with his belief that marriage is ordained by God and indissoluble as "I know that really wanting it would not be enough" (If you're interested her husband had been married before therefore the marriage was never valid).

The play opens with Lewis delivering a lecture saying that we are like blocks of stone and our creator uses pain to shape us into the perfection he plans for us. He delivers it smoothly and convincingly. The play ends with him saying the words again after Joy's death when he himself is torn apart with grief.

Was it enjoyable? That's probably not the word - it was riveting, challenging and incredibly moving. We were so glad we went - even if we all cried.

Cathy Corns

Syresham



He Needs Our Prayers

It seems incredible that on the 20th July Andy Burnham became our 7th Prime Minister in a decade. As the CESA Committee (Christian Ethics and Social Action) we often discuss issues which affect the nation; an example is the Assisted Dying Bill (or to give it the correct title 'Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill') which has returned to Parliament and will be debated and voted on again in forthcoming sittings. Have you contacted your MP and given your thoughts? This is one way in which we can, and should be, involved in politics.

There is another way too – we should be praying for those in authority. In 1 Timothy chapter 2 we read this, 'I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.' No matter what our political leanings we should be praying for Andy Burnham. Pray that he will have wisdom and discernment, and that he will act with integrity and justice, and for good relations with other world leaders. Pray too for his cabinet – and don't forget his family as he lives his life in the public spotlight.

May God use him for His glory - and let us pray that we might live 'peaceful and quiet lives, in godliness and holiness.'



Phil Hearson

CESA Committee

Thought for the Day

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2: 9)

We come to our final look at this verse from 1 Peter showing how special we are as Christians. In previous editions we have seen a Christian's Dynasty (A Chosen People), A Christian's Dignity (a Royal Priesthood), and a Christian's Duty (a Holy Nation). Now we come to our final study.

4. THE CHRISTIAN'S DESTINY (A people belonging to God)

Destiny: "The purpose or end to which any person is destined or appointed". That is a good definition to keep in mind as we study this title. Peter brings his description of a Christian to a close with this final phrase. He calls us a "people belonging to God." There are two strands of truth woven into this title.

a. There is a selection we cannot fathom

The Amplified Bible translates this phrase as "God's own special purchased people". What a strange thing - we were born under God's judgment, yet we have become one of his own special purchased people. Joanna-Ruth Dobschinger was a 15-year-old Jew when Hitler invaded Poland in 1940. During those turbulent years, she became a Christian and she later recalled her story in a book called "Selected to live". The title was meant to refer to the Nazi war machine, but it was also a perfect description of her spiritual salvation.

A Christian has been selected to live Essentially in Christ, Effectively for Christ, and Eternally with Christ.

That is a selection we cannot fathom.

b. There is a security that cannot fail

"A people belonging to God". Not a passing phase or experience - but a destiny. For the Christian, that means the assurance of spending eternity in heaven. God has selected us not only to engage in his earthly programme, but to enjoy his eternal presence and we should realise that each day takes us nearer that end.

I am going to finish with two quotations, each from a person whose writings have been read by millions, each writing about his own personal expectations for the future, beyond death.

Quote 1: "There is darkness without and when I die there will be darkness within. There is no splendour, no vastness anywhere; only triviality for a moment, and then nothing!"

Quote 2: "I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the past nor the future, nor any powers; neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

The first quote is from Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) - a Peer of the realm, philosopher, scientist, mathematician, political theorist and

Nobel prize winner. The second was by the apostle Paul - a truly special person.

And you and I are just as special in God's sight. We are: "A chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" And as such, we have every reason (as the verse concludes): "To declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light".

Colin Braithwaite



Obituary – Rev. Ken Goreham



Ken was the beloved pastor of the Church on the Rock for many years. He was well-known and loved by people in many churches across the Union and preached in many of them. He had been a member of the General Committee, serving faithfully. Through his life from birth he suffered significant health issues. As a child the options for him were pronounced as limited – but this was not counting what God can do in a life and the warm personality that Ken was blessed with. After a heart attack he was told that he would not have much of a life and only live for a few years, but by God's grace he was kept alive, and he had a double portion of life – when there was no hope on many occasions, God gave him more days.

In 1981 Ken had four callings on his life – at his funeral service Jackie Clarke outlined these – he held onto them and was obedient to God:
He was called to be a child of God
He was called to worship
He was called to be a pastor and a preacher
He was called to pray.



Ken was part of a large family – he and Dorin were married in 1966 and went on to have four children – Andrew, Ann, Ruth and Rachel, along with 14 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. We offer our thoughts, prayers and support to them all.

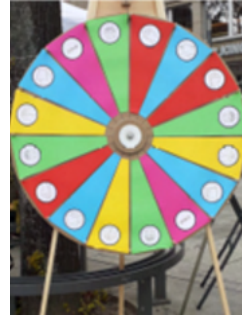
His service was attended by many, with memories being shared of a man of God who was well-loved and served his Lord faithfully. The verse that sums up Ken that was shared was, 'Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.' (Romans 12 v 12).

Free Woman!

In May of this year Mrs Dorothy "Dot" Dunkley became the first person ever to receive the title of honorary free woman of Syresham. Local councils have the power to award this title to individuals who have given exceptional service to their community; providing a meaningful way to recognise those who have gone above and beyond for the place they call home.

The title doesn't come with financial rewards, regalia or gifts. What it does come with is something far more valuable; the heartfelt gratitude of the parish for the countless hours someone has freely given in service to the community. This honour is part of the sincere thank you for everything she has done and continues to do for the Village.





My Outreach Experience •————→

Following my experience in the Hebrides last summer with Operation Mobilisation (OM), I came to the conclusion that I'm not too old (yet!) for the Great Commission. So when I saw an outreach opportunity in Mannheim, Germany, I promptly signed up. I normally prepare well for any trips or holidays, but some family problems suddenly popped up so my attention was diverted and I forgot to do any planning. Panic set in but I refused to back out.

During the online briefing, a week before departure, I was hoping that there would be somebody on the same flight I could latch on to. Nope, I was on my own! So on Sunday I asked my church to pray that I wouldn't get lost (it happens a lot to me with my poor sense of direction). Two days later, one of the participants from Ireland messaged me to say she would wait for me at Frankfurt airport and travel with me to the base. I was totally gobsmacked as I hadn't asked! Here was this total stranger willing to wait for three hours at Frankfurt airport for my flight's arrival. Not only that, but she had also been an exchange student in Germany, so spoke fluent German. Needless to say, I accepted her offer! She was an angel sent by God to guide me there safely!

The church that hosted us is an evangelical church, outside the city centre. It was the first time the churches in Mannheim got together to organise an outreach, so it was an exciting venture for them too. It was well organised. They booked the whole floor of the Youth Hostel, the catering team were participants who volunteered, the food was good, and the whole atmosphere was fantastic and supportive. There were people who had travelled from other cities in Germany, from South Africa, from Norway, four of us from UK, a large group of young people from France, and Iranian Christians who had fled persecution and settled in Europe. The praise and worship each evening was uplifting in spite of the language barriers. The translations which were streamed through our mobile phones via software/Google Translate were terrible, but we managed somehow. The praise and prayer were spontaneous, and as God is multi-lingual, it didn't matter which languages were used.

The outreach took place in various parts of the city centre. I went to only two areas and was really impressed by the creativity and activities on offer by the different teams. There was balloon sculpting, art and crafts, henna hand painting, roller board balancing, giant Jenga blocks, mini soccer, etc. All the activities were aimed at engaging passers-by into conversations.

The Mannheim Outreach was a real eye opener for me, and I learnt so much just by observing how the different teams worked. I was especially encouraged by the number of young people actively engaged in evangelism! It's a sight that I've not experienced at Alderman's Green since I joined, so it's a lovely reminder that God is not just worshipped by the old, but that elsewhere there are still lots of energetic young people passionate about reaching out for Jesus.

The message is the same; we just need to be creative and let God do the rest.

Joanne Wong

Aldermans Green



Overseas Missions - New Project Launch 2026 to 2027

Flame International



Thank you to everyone for your support for our 2024 to 2026 project Hope for Children in Latvia. We are delighted to announce that the final total we have now sent is £29,300!

Our new project for 2026 to 2027 is different to anything we have ever done before, but we step out in faith for God's provision. We are supporting Flame International which was established over 20 years ago. Flame reaches out with God's love to those affected by war, poverty, and injustice. Ian Fall, a member of our Heath End Church, works for this amazing organisation as their Outreach and Training Officer.

We will be supporting two of Flame's missions over the next 12 months. The first one will be this October in Ukraine, so we literally need to hit the ground running with this please when it comes to our fund-raising efforts. The second mission has yet to be finalised but we will let you know more about this later in the year. In Ukraine, Flame will be supporting volunteer military chaplains (and their spouses) by providing teaching, prayer, healing, and restoration, thus equipping them as they minister on the front line, lead in their own churches and serve in war torn communities.

Your church should have been emailed a link that will enable you to download a secure video that has been made specifically for the WRU churches. In this short film you will be introduced to some of the people who have been directly affected by the conflict and ministered to by Flame.

Your church should also already have (or shortly receive) some booklets that tell you more about how Flame International is ministering to people in Ukraine and give you an idea of the costs involved in the mission to Ukraine. It would be most helpful if individual gifts that are eligible for Gift Aid are given directly to Flame using the details on the leaflet and please put the reference WRU UKRAINE. All other gifts can either be given directly to Flame with the same reference or paid to the Wesleyan Reform Union account and allocated to this project with the reference FLAME UKRAINE.

To put the costs into perspective £128 (plus Gift Aid claimed) is enough to pay for 5 days food and accommodation for one person. In the UK it could cost that much for just one night's food and accommodation! If you have not received the leaflets or require more copies please email me, annemariewilcock@gmail.com with details of the quantity required and a postal address to send them to.

Anne-Marie Wilcock

Wesleyan Reform Union
Overseas Mission Team

Articles for "Contact". We welcome inspirational stories, devotional and encouraging articles, news and events from the churches, enabling us to be inspired and to keep in touch with each other.

Some rules to remember:

- Articles must arrive before the deadline
- If possible, a picture or a photograph should accompany the article
 - Make sure that pictures/articles you send have no copyrights, or you have permission to use them
- Word count per article should not exceed 750. Shorter articles are preferred.

Articles for the November and December issue must be received by 15th October. Articles may be sent by email to admin@thewru.co.uk, or by post to the address on the first page.



The Second “Shine” Breakfast

Well, I want to tell you about the ladies at Heath End Church in Nuneaton led by Lisa Macbeth, together with Sandra Fall. The Lord has given them the vision of holding a series of Saturday “SHINE” breakfasts. My friend and I travelled over to share it on May 9th.

It is a fact that men seem to have had the monopoly on Saturday morning breakfast meetings, complete with full fry-ups and a Christian speaker. Also, I must add, starting at some ridiculously early hour. 9.30am is a much more civilized time, and this was the second such event.

A delicious array of croissants, Danish pastries, and fresh fruit together with the aroma of freshly brewed coffee greeted us and as we ate, we moved around the room chatting to friends. There was a real feeling of expectation and anticipation and there were ladies from many different fellowships there.

It was a real delight to have Ian Fall lead a time of worship and then we were introduced to the speaker, Sam Percival, and what a powerful speaker she was! Her subject was “Coming to Jesus”. There is a beautiful wooden cross on the platform at the church, and she invited us literally to come to the cross and touch it. It was quite an emotional experience. Sam went on to speak about not living off yesterday’s experience of the Lord. She repeated “Don’t drink yesterday’s water”. She urged her audience to be rooted in a living relationship with the Lord and so much more. I took lots of notes.

As the meeting closed, ladies were invited to seek a closer walk with the Lord and many ladies responded, “Hallelujah.” The Holy Spirit certainly blessed everyone present.

Daphne Hodgkinson

Griffydam

A 90th Birthday Celebration

Recently at Bedworth we celebrated the 90th birthday of our organist Colin Johnson. We had a wonderful fellowship lunch and it was good that we'd invited David Tuckett to preach that day, and he brought his wife Elaine and also Margaret Kay, who Colin knows well, to join in the celebration. Colin gave a little thank you speech and the church members presented him with £90 in garden centre vouchers. He will enjoy spending them!





Working Together

Elaine and I had a lovely holiday at the end of May – our first visit to the Isles of Scilly. After a lovely walk and lunch on St Agnes, the furthest south and west of the islands, we returned to the quay for the boat that would take us back to St Mary's, the main island. As we walked towards the quay the lifeboat from St Mary's arrived, then the yellow NHS ambulance boat, and on the quay was the island's ambulance buggy with a small boat alongside. Sadly someone on the boat had fallen and was injured, hence the rescue vessels. Eventually they lifted the casualty into the ambulance buggy and then drove them carefully up the slipway so the air ambulance could pick them up and fly them to Truro hospital, with the island's fire buggy there just in case.

Like most of the people on the Islands, the rescuers all had a number of other jobs – farming, running cafes and honesty shops, ferrying people between the five inhabited islands. What an example of people working together as a team! Watching this made me think how much we need to work together in church. It can be difficult as we're often small in numbers, so we may have to multitask and at times be out of our "comfort zone."

Paul wrote in Romans 12:4-8 *"For just as each of us has one body with many members, so each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith. If it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give*

encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."

David Tuckett

Hampden View, Sheffield



Blast from the Past (with New Problems)



Some of you may remember that some, well a lot of, years ago the Union facilitated a twinning arrangement between our individual churches and small churches in India to provide wells in the village that would be freely available. Our chapel continued its association with a church in New Basti for some years, setting up a sewing room, providing a bicycle for the pastor and winter blanket and clothing drives. Sadly when the small charity was taken over by a larger one the link was broken and we lost touch.



Then a couple of weeks ago Keith, who had set up the original charity, reached out to us via our parish council (our chapel is not online) with dreadful news. The village had been raided by Hindu extremists and the home of three of the church members had been burnt to the ground. Could we help?



Could we help - of course we could! Syresham and Fritwell chapels combined to send funds over to provide the basic necessities to help the families start again.

Pastor Ram shared how when the families needed help the most, people had stood with them and the affected families experienced love, care and encouragement during one of the most difficult moments of their lives. He wrote that this support had been a great encouragement, not only for the affected families but also for the entire fellowship of believers. During a time of sorrow, fear and uncertainty, after the fire tragedy, the love and generosity shown through this help reminded the believers that God had not forgotten them. He said they were deeply touched, and truly grateful.

Cathy Corns

Syresham

A Good Idea!

As a family we've always enjoyed camping. For the last 13 years we've had a motorhome which is just a form of comfortable camping for the more mature person. Anyway, late last year, you may have seen that a new stage play was being performed in Stratford on Avon, "The BFG" from Roald Dahl's book.

Getting two tickets for this proved impossible but I had my first brilliant idea, find where the play was going next and get tickets early. The list of venues was short, Chichester or Singapore so within an hour I had perfect tickets for the Festival Theatre, Chichester in mid-March.

Then I had my second brilliant idea, we'll take the motorhome. An hour later I had booked a camp site pitch. As the weeks passed by, Marjorie noted we're not getting any younger and March is going to be cold. Normally we wouldn't dream of going away before Easter.

We'll be fine!! The date came and we arrived at our campsite. As expected, it got dark before 6.00pm and with it the temperature dropped like a stone. We were in bed by 9.00pm in more clothes than we wore during the day, plus a 'hoodie'. More blankets, clothes and socks were added. Marjorie was right, we're certainly not getting any younger for such brilliant ideas; hopefully, I won't have another.

Incidentally, it was absolutely brilliant, which made it all worthwhile but the best bit was getting home to a central heating system.



Pete Nicholls

New Swannington



HE ONCE TOLD A STORY ABOUT A FATHER WHO HAD TWO SONS.

A black and white line drawing of a man's face and upper torso. He has a thick, dark beard and mustache. His nose is very large and prominent. He has dark hair and is looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a simple, light-colored shirt. The drawing is done in a sketchy, expressive style with bold lines.

....BUT THEN HE CHANGED HIS MIND AND WENT AND HELPED.

THE FATHER THEN WENT TO HIS YOUNGER SON AND ASKED HIM TO HELP IN THE VINEYARD TOO.

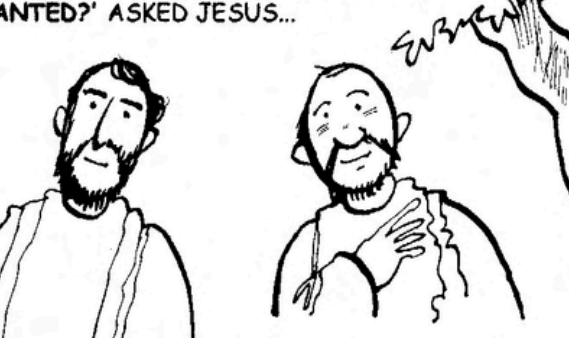


'OF COURSE I WILL!' SAID THE YOUNGER SON. BUT HE PROMPTLY FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT....

...AND DIDN'T DO A STROKE OF WORK!

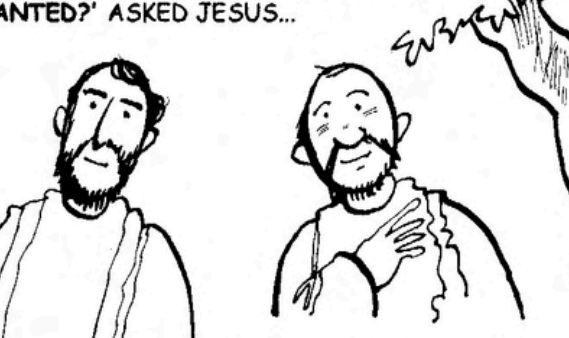
A black and white cartoon illustration. A man is shown in silhouette, sleeping peacefully under the shade of a large, leafy tree. He is lying on his side, and his feet are resting on a large, round clock face. The clock face is integrated into the ground, showing numbers and hands. In the background, there are rolling hills and a small, simple house with a chimney. The overall scene suggests a man who has been sleeping all day and is now realizing the consequences of his inactivity.

'WHICH ONE DID WHAT HIS FATHER WANTED?' ASKED JESUS...



'WHICH DO YOU THINK IT WAS?

'WHICH ONE DID WHAT HIS FATHER WANTED?' ASKED JESUS...



'WHICH DO YOU THINK IT WAS?