



# Lifelines

*Sane Meditations for a Mad World*

*Geraint. D. Fielder*



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## Preface

He lived in South Wales. He was usually up before 6.30am. This particular morning he got up intending to leave his wife for another woman. He put the radio on while shaving. It was 6.25 am. *Prayer for the Day* was going out and he heard the story of Joseph resisting the temptation of an affair. It so arrested him that he contacted the broadcaster. The eventual result was the reconciliation of husband and wife.

*Response to 'A Social Worker's Nightmare' (p. 7)*

An Oxfordshire couple had given up on their marriage and were living in separate parts of the house, waiting for their divorce to go through. The man found himself listening to the Sunday Morning Service. It spoke of how Christ could bring down walls between people in the home. He began to cry and went to tell his wife about the broadcast. She was listening to the same programme and weeping herself. They cancelled their solicitors and made a new start.

*Response to 'Love Never Fails' (p. 40)*

"My husband died after four years of fighting against a kidney disease...I have really tried to thank God for my blessings around me. Yet through it all I have been so lost and alone...for years I have only touched lightly on the truth. I think I have been like Thomas, so doubting all the time. Life too had lost its meaning for me. Now I wish to tell you that yesterday's service gave me the strength I've needed. What I will do now is to reread my New Testament and then I shall get nearer and nearer to a real living Jesus."

*Response to 'Incline Your Ear' (p. 181)*





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"I was driving around in my car looking for cut price petrol, and turning on the radio, found your programme which was worth the whole year's license fee. We are a firm...whose task is to persuade management and employees to work in harmony to solve specific problems. So your sermon on harmony was of special significance. I would very much like to quote it during my forthcoming lectures."

*Response to 'Harmony' (p. 173)*

Responses like these persuaded me to turn my broadcasts into a book. Having heard them, many had asked for them in more permanent form. The talks were given over many years and in many kinds of Christian broadcasting slots on BBC radio and television. I have organized them under five fundamental themes of the Christian faith and life. They are, however, all still self-contained and you can dip in at any point, or settle down for a longer read. For those of you who heard them on air, they may reinforce the message.

The broadcasts and television transmissions from church congregations were joyous and exciting events—you may have been there—one among many Christians who sought to pass on to millions their faith in the Risen Christ as Saviour and Lord. Sunday programmes like Radio 4's Sunday Morning Service, or Radio Wales' Celebration can be an uplifting experience and I recall with gratitude to God the congregations of Whitefield Presbyterian Church, Abergavenny; Highfields Free Church, Cardiff; Glenwood Community Church, Cardiff; Moriah Baptist Chapel, Risca; The University of Wales Medical School Christian Fellowship; and the choir and choir master of St Asaph's Cathedral, North Wales. The broadcasts are over, but the book has come. The swiftly moving flow of all those past events have now been captured and put within our hands, available for study and meditation and providing, I hope, an enjoyable read.

Rendering the spoken word into written material is a subtle work and requires editorial skills. I thank Philip Ross for his help in turning broadcasts into a book.

I dedicate this book to the delights of my life—Mary, Martyn, Robert, David and Cherry—all of whom have encouraged me, and each other, in Christ.





## Acknowledgements

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# Our Flawed Life









# 1

## Conversion and the Real World

The word 'conversion' constantly comes up in daily conversation—converting our holiday currency; converting a house into student flats; someone converting a try in rugby; converting, or not, to the Euro.

Conversion is also a great Christian word. But surely it's useless in the real world that hits us each Monday morning.

Can Christian conversion affect the real world out there? Hard. Cynical. Disillusioned. Cut-throat, rat-race, treadmill-driven; at once violent and indulgent, unforgiving and sometimes, oh so lonely. It makes you long for more signs of human warmth, real appreciation. In other words, the real world needs a change of heart, doesn't it? A change for the better—a conversion no less.

To put it bluntly, the real world could do with a dose of healthy four letter words—words like care, hope, help, love. A world of kind, good, true people, where children are safe—safe to walk home alone from school—and where adults are pure in motive and action.

Is it vain to work for such a change of heart, a change for the better in such a world? I believe conversion to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, is the precondition that makes such a change possible. I am persuaded of that. A world on the mend requires converted people, a people who turn to God. Without that, standards will continue to slide.





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Whoever we are, city financier or the girl at the checkout, the sleepless mum or the absentee dad, the stressed out teacher or her overcrowded class, the unwell or the fighting fit, the sexexploiter on the Internet or the cult leader, the kinky cleric or just ordinary flawed you and me, all of us, any of us—we can all do with a radical rescue and a deep down renewing. Many find that renewing, in practice, in a turn round to Christ as Lord and an openness to all that is true and good in him.

Without that source of those virtues and values, care, love and help runs dry in our real world, but given the right conditions, they are still available to us. They flourish in what Jesus shows to be the real world—the kingdom of God. And to belong there, he reminds us, requires conversion.

