

'Three of my favourite hats'

I have a variety of hats some of which I love to wear and some I not so keen on. These hats range in age from 40 years old to merely 8 days but I treasure them all.

My first hat is my 'Once upon a time hat'. This is my straw trilby from the time I went to Israel 40 years ago; it actually predates my knowing Gilli!! I went with two of her cousins for a fortnight exploring the sights and sounds of Israel using the 'Rough Guide to Israel' and our Bible knowledge as to where we went. We spent a week in the south and a week in the north seeing many of the places we associate with Jesus. We found Jerusalem to be a busy and noisy little city where we explored Hezekiah's tunnel, the Via Dolorosa, Gordon's calvary and the church of the Holy Sepulchre, then to Bethlehem, the church of the Nativity, down to the Dead Sea and Masada, and many other places too.

My first hat is important because it reminds us that we live in the midst of an immense story where God is both the narrator as well as the key character, but where we are all given a key role to play. In this story we find our meaning, our value, our place and our very life itself all wrapped up in Jesus as the Son of God. The story of the Bible gives our lives perspective whether in terms of things are never as bad as we might feel them to be, or a learned humility in terms of our place in this story or the worth which God gives to each of us.

My second hat is my Father Christmas hat which has my moniker 'The Rev' on it. It is amazing but Baptists haven't got a clue as to why we ordain people, apart from the fact that everyone else does it!! In a Baptist church we don't think that some people are more important than others, with the church being divided between 'clergy' and 'laity'. We know that everyone is equally important and valuable, but we also choose to set people apart for a purpose, and so we ordain them, though we soon forget why.

My ordination is something I treasure immensely. It is one of the days of my life which I remember very clearly – like my wedding day, my baptism day, the days I became a dad and a GrAndy. At my ordination I was reminded that my life from now on was to be shaped by the twin call to love Jesus and to love his church as described in Jesus' conversation with Peter in John 21. This echoes some of the earliest advice I was given when I was exploring my call to ministry and it is something which I seek to live out day by day. But this is something which is not unique to me, it is something we as a church are to live out and it is expressed very clearly in

our '3 E's' of 'Engaging Deeper with Jesus', 'Enabling all to meet Jesus' and 'Enriching our Community'. All of this is summarised by the strap line on our website as a church and on all our stationery of 'Sharing God's love' and this is something I find highly motivating in my life.

My third hat is my brand-new pork pie hat given to me on Christmas Day. As Gilli has heard again and again and again, I do love my hat and apart from my fellow ukulele players I've not seen anyone else in Dronfield wear one which you may say is for a very good reason!! The reason why I wear my pork pie hat is because of why I used to wear my Dr Marten's beanie – I do get a very cold head, but I do so prefer to wear my pork pie hat because it has a certain style which I like a lot. When I see my silhouette, I hope it's not only vanity that I feel, (and I do!!), and the silhouette of my hat, I remind myself that I am loved warts and all. I remind myself that I am loved by my family and by my friends and that I am loved by God with a love which is beyond all measure and scope. I find this love to be amazing and I want to know this love more and more and more. I want this love more and more and more in my life. I want this love more and more and more in your lives. I want this love more and more and more in this wonderful town, in the schools I volunteer in, in The Green and the Callywhite we play our ukes and I lead services in, how I connect with our Council, in the Awesome Assemblies I record with Ryan and in Dronfield 2gether. Though I may not feel all this all at once when I see the shadow of my pork pie hat I do feel some of it – as well as the sense that I do love my hat!!

We are command to dress well in the Bible such as when we are called to 'put on...' We are called to put on 'Jesus Christ' in Romans 13 verse 14 and Galatians 3 verse 27; the 'new self' in Ephesians 3 verse 24 and Colossians 3 verse 10 as well as putting off the old self in Colossians 3 verse 9 and finally of putting on the armour of God in Ephesians 6 verse 11. As this old year ends let us choose to no longer live according to how we used to live, but instead with an eye to Thursday may we choose to dress and live in style, not with a pork pie hat perhaps, but in wearing Jesus day by day.