

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

## Dreams

**“The glory and freshness of a dream.”**

*William Wordsworth, Ode: 'Imitations of Immortality'*

In a recent edition of Radio 4's *From our own correspondent*, Nick Bryant, a BBC reporter in the USA, offered us an insight into how New York is coping with the Coronavirus pandemic. At one point, he placed the process of recovery alongside the reaction of New Yorkers to the 9/11 tragedy and described the people of the *Big Apple* as “a congregation of dreams”. No matter what misfortune strikes the people of this city, there will always be hopes and dreams of a better future to sustain them.

Back in 1711, Joseph Addison, writer, dramatist and co-founder of *The Spectator*, wrote in his publication about the behaviour of an esteemed gentleman of his acquaintance at morning worship:

*As Sir Roger is landlord of the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in [the church] besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it, he stands up, and looks about him; and if he sees anybody else nodding, he either wakes them himself or sends his servant to them.*

Have you ever been woken from a sermon-induced reverie by a Sir Rodger or his servant? Might you have been Sir Rodger yourself at some time? (Come on! Be honest!) And what if you're a preacher, and you see your congregation dozing off – or even one poor, sleepy soul?

A congregation asleep is not what you're looking for. But a “congregation of dreams”? That's another story! With the prospect of churches opening up for worship in a couple of months' time, might we be a “congregation of dreams”? As a National Church, with uncertainty and change around us, should we not be a “congregation of dreams”? As we, like New Yorkers, begin to emerge from these unprecedented times, is it not essential for our country to be a “congregation of dreams”?

Close your eyes if you must. Stay awake as you should. But in your congregations of family, church, community and nation, give yourselves completely to “the glory and freshness” of your hopes and dreams.

### **A prayer for today**

*“Your sons and daughter shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.” (Joel 2:28) Can we have more of this, please? Amen*

*An original reflection by @ Tom Gordon Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>*