

2nd June 2023

Commitment

“Once the commitment is clear, you do what you can, not what you can’t.”

Bible, 1 *Corinthians 8 (The Message)*

When I entered the ministry fifty years ago, there were two periods in the year which were busy with weddings. One was the end of June/beginning of July, coinciding with Edinburgh’s “Trades Fortnight”, a traditional two-week holiday period for many, when a honeymoon would conveniently fit the holiday break. The other was at the end of March, before the new “Tax Year” at the beginning of April, allowing a working man (it was only men back then) to claim a full year’s tax rebate, the threshold for taxable income being a good deal higher for a married man than a single one.

A wedding to fit a holiday period or facilitate a tax rebate ... there was always pressure on dates for marriages around these times. One year, back in the 1970s, I conducted three weddings in two days. Thankfully, I was able to remember all the names of the people getting married. No funny stories about mistakes being made, I’m afraid ... But whether a wedding is in May or June, March or April, or at any other time, there surely has to be more that underpins it than a convenient holiday time or a financial benefit. For any marriage to work, it has to be firmly built on commitment, and that commitment has to be worked at.

In the movie, *The Fifth Estate*, a fictional portrayal of Julian Assange (founder of *WikiLeaks*, and played by Benedict Cumberbatch), Josh Singer, the writer of the screenplay, has Assange say this:

It takes two things to change the world, and you'd be surprised how many people have good ideas, but – commitment? True commitment? That's the hard one.”

Whatever we make of Assange, Josh Singer touches on an important issue. Of course, commitment is hard, and no one doubts this in any enterprise, more so in a marriage. But if it’s a “good idea” to be married, if that idea is only about convenience, such as a holiday or a tax rebate, and nothing else, how successful is the marriage likely to be, I wonder?

Let us celebrate and give thanks for “true commitment”, wherever we find it. And if that helps us focus on a commitment which matters to us, let’s make sure it continues to change our lives, the life of someone we love, and maybe even the world as well.

A prayer for today

Lord, your commitment to me never changes. So now I can do what I can for you. Amen