

## Marriage

20 years ago, I was a raw recruit to Christianity. Aside from talking about Jesus, my agenda consisted of only one item: I wanted a wife, which I naturally asked God to provide. I told my new Christian friends I'd put in this request. I also told them that God had said 'yes', and had informed me she'd turn up 3 weeks from Saturday.

By 7 a.m. on that day, I was already strutting my stuff in Plymouth city centre, resplendent in suit and wing collar... I'd even shaved properly. True, I'd only ironed the bit of my shirt that showed, but I was making an effort – and I was making myself freely available for God's Lucky Contestant. By 7 p.m. the mystery lady still hadn't turned up, and I was more than a little miffed. I stomped off home and – as I opened the door – a note dropped to the ground. It was an invitation to go for a 'Crimbo drink', and it was signed 'Paula' (weeks earlier, she'd run a short course I'd attended, but I had no reason to speak to her afterwards).

I 'phoned my Christian mentor: "The wife's turned up!" He replied, "Good - tell her you're a Christian, don't drink....and *don't* try to get her into bed". I was shocked - why *else* would you go on a date? A little later, I broke the news to Paula: "There's something you should know.....I'm a Christian." She was relieved: she apparently thought I was going to tell her I was gay.

Subsequently, Paula came to faith and we were married. At the ceremony, the pastor preached on the evils of divorce, which I guess indicated that he didn't rate our chances. And sure, there have been times when I've thumbed through the yellow pages looking for a ducking-stool operator. I daresay Paula has occasionally wondered about the exact configuration of doctors and police required to certify someone insane...but generally, it's been a wonderful blessing. So when Ray and Annie started running the marriage course, we weren't in a rush to sign up. But when we heard it was about making good marriages *better*, we decided to attend.

It was a fantastic programme. Superb content - really insightful stuff. And of course (as ever at Glanafon) the hospitality was first rate. One of the many things that surprised us on the course were the different 'languages of love'. I'd spent 20 years doing things for Paula – that was my language of love – and she'd been giving me presents....that was hers. But we'd each been expressing our love, how *we'd* like it expressed to *us*.... and neither of us really appreciated what the other was trying to say. So, for example, I'd get up early and scrape the ice off Paula's car, and she'd just think I was saying she was a helpless female. She'd buy me something, and I'd wonder what she'd done wrong *this* time.

The marriage course does what it says on the packet – it makes good marriages better....and you don't need to be Christians to benefit from it. There's another one coming up (details below) and we would strongly recommend it to any couple.

Also coming up is Easter. One of *God's* many languages of love is self-sacrifice, and we see that in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Over this period, I'll be presenting some of the compelling evidence for these events. True, you need to be Christians to actually benefit from *them*, but why not come along and check it out?