



Pastor's Page

"Keeping up appearances"



A number of years ago I went to a concert featuring groups made famous in the 1960s. There were some big stars on; The Troggs, Wayne Fontana and the Mindbenders, Freddie and the Dreamers and Peter Noone (What do you mean you haven't heard of any of them?!) As we arrived at the venue, there were a few people milling around in the hallway where a small (very bald) elderly man was selling Freddie and the Dreamers CDs. Believe it or not I was very tempted to buy one! You see nostalgia was really kicking in now for me as I remembered that in 1963 the first record I ever bought priced 6s & 6d was "I'm telling you now" by this very band! However, I resisted! Well the concert began and the Troggs and the Mindbenders entertained us splendidly, then, following a short interval, the Dreamers burst onto stage. I could hardly contain myself! They then played the opening chords to one of their biggest hits as the elderly man who'd been selling Freddie and the Dreamers CDs in the foyer ran on from the wings! Was it some kind of joke?! He then leapt into the air and shouted one of Freddie's famous catchphrases.... "Just a minute!" before ripping into the number. Slowly it dawned on me, the little old bald man who had been selling CDs in the foyer was in fact Freddie! I was completely dumbstruck (for once!) Well I hadn't seen him since 1967 and back then he had thick black curly hair!!

Not recognising a pensioned Pop Star may be mildly embarrassing but not recognising the Son of God can be absolutely tragic. I often wonder why people didn't initially recognise Jesus after he had risen from the dead. Was it simply that he was the last person they were expecting to see, or was it that there was something fundamentally different about him? Perhaps both were true. Mary Magdalene didn't realise it was Jesus when she first encountered him in the garden (John 20:14) and Luke tells us that Cleopas and his travelling companion were kept from recognising him on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:16) Peter had to be told by John that it was the Lord when he appeared on the shore of Galilee early one morning (John 21:7) And as the eleven gathered on a Galilean Mountain with Jesus, Matthew records that some worshipped him whilst others doubted. (Matthew 28:17) Appearing in the upper room Jesus asked the frightened disciples; "Why are you troubled and doubts rise in your mind?" (Luke 24:36-38) There was something wonderfully disturbing about the resurrection appearances, as the disciples tried to make sense of these extraordinary happenings. And as they pondered, Jesus continued to show up in different places at different times to different people, assuring them that he had risen. He talked with them, walked with them, ate with them and cared for them. And the reason for these personal appearances was in order that the disciples might believe in him and be true witnesses to his resurrection. That's why Thomas needed to know. He could so easily have gone along with the gang, keeping up appearances as an apostle, acknowledging the truth of the resurrection without having met the risen Christ himself. But Jesus knew that Thomas wanted to be real about his faith and so he returned to the upper room just for him. So what about us? Are we real about our faith? Do we truly know the risen Lord Jesus in our lives or are we just keeping up appearances?