

May 2007

## CONSEQUENCES

Many towns in Spain name one of their streets “Second of May” to celebrate the day in 1808 when the insurrection against Napoleonic occupation started. As the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the uprising is remembered it is worth recalling its consequences, the bloody reprisals captured by Goya in his famous painting, “The Third of May”.



Now consequences normally follow an event: rather like the Third of May follows the Second. But can a **future** event have consequences? In a recent book, *Surprised by Hope* (SPCK, 2007), the Bishop of Durham, Tom Wright, attempts to correct some of the misconceptions about what happens when we die. The Bible and early Christians did not think that death is the end. Nor did they hold that we are reincarnated so that we come back again for another go. They did not even think that our souls live for ever in heaven. The faith of the Bible and early Church is in the resurrection of Jesus as the guarantee of our own future bodily resurrection on the day of judgement.

Jesus' resurrection, which we have recently celebrated at Easter, is the first step in God's new creation. Its culmination is our resurrection and the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth. And this **future** event has consequences. If we look forward to eternal life as a disembodied soul the present world is relatively unimportant. If we look for resurrection, and see that what we do now is an anticipation and sign of God's new creation, our mission will look very different.

And that has consequences for us all.

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### For Prayer

- For us all to focus on the resurrected Jesus and work for His kingdom
- For students to register for the new course, Understanding Christianity
- For the Hilary as she leads the Women's Group at church

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