

# **Journey**



**The continuing story of Carrs Lane Church  
September 2011**

## Contents

Ministers Letter.....	3
Sunday Worship during September .....	4
Preparation Sessions.....	5
National Multicultural Event at Carrs Lane.....	5
Third Sunday Healing Services.....	5
Notices .....	6
About People.....	7
Invitation to Prayer Breakfast at Liberal Democrat Party Conference.....	8
Reform Magazine .....	8
URC Evangelism Conference – July 2011.....	9
Sermon from Sunday 14 August.....	10
Carrs Lane Lectures 2011.....	11
Birmingham Faith Leaders’ Group Press Statement .....	12
What’s so special about the United Reformed Church? .....	13
A reflection – “The servant of the new” .....	13
From Fair to Flourishing .....	15
Morgans, Malvern and Holly Mount URC.....	16
Summer Camps.....	18
Boys’ Brigade and Girls’ Association - Recycling Scheme .....	19
SIFA Fireside’s Latest News .....	20
St Martin’s in the Bullring: Centre for Health and Healing .....	22
THRIVE: Tackling Poverty .....	23
What kind of blessing? .....	24
Commitment for Life.....	25
On this day ... ..	26
Letter to Mr Cameron .....	29
Answers to Brum Quiz in last Journey.....	30
Millennium development Goals.....	30
Room Hire at Carrs Lane.....	31
Carrs Lane Regular Activities.....	32

## Ministers Letter

Dear friends,

It is possible to spend several days in a field in Shropshire, and know nothing of what is happening in the wider world. I did not learn anything about the troubles in English cities until late on the evening of Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August; by the evening of Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August, I had a far clearer picture and made the decision to return to Birmingham early on the morning of 10<sup>th</sup> August. I have no regrets whatsoever about the decision that I made and I am very grateful to those who picked up on my responsibilities at the Synod Youth Camp.

The next few days brought an extraordinary variety of experiences...some welcome, some profoundly unwelcome. Daily acts of worship were established at Carrs Lane, services which were well-supported and which prompted some serious conversations; I hope that worship on the following Sunday was appropriate... I still have no clue as to why the BBC failed to turn up, but in a sense it doesn't matter; I am grateful to friends who contributed in so many ways to the service; I made a point of speaking to Church Centre staff and also to those who live at church ( and who made a decision to stay put for the duration ); I offered what support I could to those involved in retail chaplaincy, precious little given the demands of this ministry during the week – and I met a lot of people whom I had never met before.

A decision to wear a dog collar for much of the week meant that some conversations with those on the patch happened naturally, for instance, those involved with public transport; the provision of acts of worship meant that I met other city centre clergy for the first time, some in 'conventional' posts, others involved in chaplaincies with the various emergency services. It rapidly became clear that much more 'joined-up' thinking needs to be done if the churches ( and others ) are to speak with one voice promptly at critical times; equally, a number of people spoke about the need for theological reflection together when things have calmed down. I was glad to be present at the Peace Rally in Summerfield Park though, candidly and perhaps unfairly, I had hoped that more folk would be present.

Several folk have asked for the text of my fairly brief address on the Sunday; it can be found elsewhere in this magazine and I offer it again for what it is worth. Some issues continue to go round repeatedly in my mind, however: Carrs Lane is a church which made an informed decision to remain in the centre of Birmingham – and recent reflections have acknowledged openly the importance of responding appropriately to the 'rhythms of the city'. It is now essential that we seek to reflect on the effectiveness, the appropriateness of our responses during a particular week in August 2011 – and ask what lessons we need to learn, should we be called upon in demanding situations in the future. Candidly, as I write this, I am not sure how well we have done together, though individuals have exercised remarkable ministries; maybe the passage of time will lead to a more considered and fuller response from me.

Along with many other people in the city, I am impressed by the speed at which 'normality' was reclaimed; we should note – with gratitude – that Traidcraft

volunteers came in as usual throughout the week. Equally, there were those of our number affected directly and adversely by what happened: we continue to pray for them.

These matters will be on the agenda for the next Elders Meeting and the next Church Meeting: please consider carefully how you feel that they should be addressed.

With much love in Christ,

Your friend and pastor,



## Sunday Worship during September

### Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Johnson

### Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Riches

Key passage: Matthew 18.21 – 35

*Worship will be followed by the church AGM and an additional short Church Meeting at noon – all welcome*

2.45pm for 3.00pm Kidz Aloud – A Children's Church

### Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Riches

Key passage: Matthew 20.1 – 16

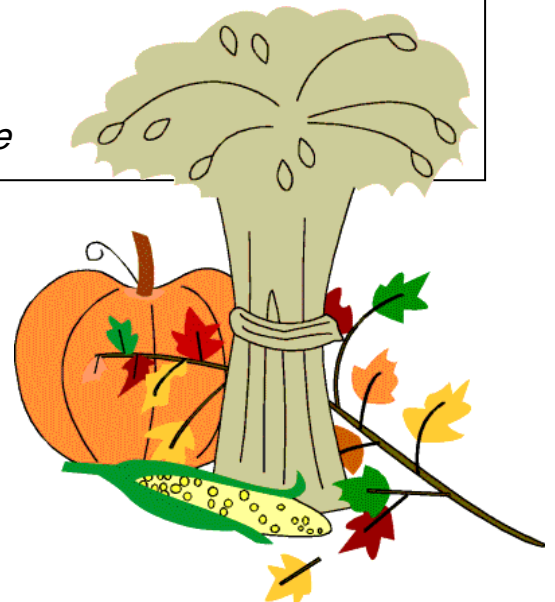
5.00pm (*note – change of time*) Service of Healing and Communion

### Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September - Harvest

10.30am Morning Worship led by Brian Taylor

6.00pm Radical Worship – Open Table

*A full meal will form an integral part of this service*



## Preparation Sessions

**A**s we continue on our ecumenical journey in the city centre, a number of folk have asked for something akin to 'church membership' classes as we prepare for the first Sunday in Advent and the opportunities and challenges which will follow the service then. Preparation Sessions – not a good title, but I can't think of a better one at present – will take place as follows. All welcome!

### **Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November**

7.00pm+ Refreshments

7.30pm – 9.00pm URC Perspectives

### **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November**

7.00pm+ Refreshments

7.30pm – 9.00pm Methodist Perspectives

### **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November**

7.00pm+ Refreshments

7.30pm – 9.00pm Working Together

*Sorry that we couldn't tweak it so everything takes place on the same day of the week!*

## **National Multicultural Event at Carrs Lane Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September**

**D**etails for this have been well publicized in previous issues of Journey and Reform. The main need now is to know who is going to volunteer to help on the day – please let us know if you are able to do this, indicating whether you wish to be involved in the morning or the afternoon. Carrs Lane Players will be taking part, and a major national art competition will also be a part of the focus of the day, judged by Patricia Hubbard and Elizabeth Gray-King. As well as all the presentation in the Church Room, a range of workshops will also form a part of the day.

Neil

## **Third Sunday Healing Services**

**T**he timing of the third Sunday Healing services will change from the September 18<sup>th</sup> service. At present, we meet for tea/biscuits at 4.00pm and start the service at 4.30pm, but there is no caretaker cover until 5.00pm, which has led to some difficulties in the past. In future, those involved in the service will arrive at 4.45pm and the service will start at 5.00pm. We will not be offering tea/biscuits. This will run for a trial period of 6 months and will then be reviewed.

Andrew Veitch for the healing Group.

## Notices

### **1 September – 4 October Creation**

Time 2011 [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)

### **11 September Racial Justice Sunday**

[www.ctbi.org.uk/551](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/551)

### **18 September Peacemaking Sunday**

### **21 September United Nations International Day of Peace**

**Heritage Open Day at Bull Street  
Quaker Meeting House Sunday 11th  
September.** 1.00 - 5.00pm. The  
current meeting house was built in 1933  
on a site occupied by Quakers since  
1703. There will be an exhibition, books  
and artefacts relating to the history of  
Quakers in the city centre.  
Refreshments available, all welcome

**Church Open Day & 'Let the Needles  
do the Talking' Embroidery Exhibition**  
Bournville URC. A chance to look  
around Bournville URC, founded as  
Bournville Church of Christ in 1905. It  
moved to the present purpose built  
Meeting House in 1914. The church  
retains a number of original features  
including a Baptistry for Believers'  
Baptisms. There will be a display on  
the history of the Church. Heritage  
Open Days Opening Times Saturday  
10th September: 12.00-15.00 Sunday  
11th September: 12.00-15.00 Sunday  
11th September a service: 10.30-11.30.  
Specially for the Heritage Open Days  
weekend only, there will be an  
exhibition entitled 'Let the Needles do  
the Talking.' This is a range of  
meaningful textiles by embroiderer and  
textile artist Pamela Pavitt and  
presented in two groups: i) peace and  
reconciliation, and ii) stewardship of the  
world we live in, creation and the  
environment.

### **Introduction to workplace chaplaincy.**

Short course for anyone interested in  
workplace chaplaincy for themselves or  
as they develop the ministry of others.  
Wednesdays 2.00 – 4.00p.m. 14th  
September – 12th October Church  
House, 175 Harborne Park Road. To  
book call 121 426 0425 or email  
[cigbadmin@birmingham.anglican.org](mailto:cigbadmin@birmingham.anglican.org)

### **Birmingham City Mission 5K/10K Walk/Run/Cycle**

Saturday 17 September  
at Sutton Park (Streetly  
gate entrance) Walk  
starts between 10am -  
12 noon with the run  
starting at 1pm Lots to  
do - bring a picnic. For  
sponsor forms and details contact  
[office@birminghamcitymission.co.uk](mailto:office@birminghamcitymission.co.uk) or  
telephone 0121 766 6603



**Faith Storytelling Event.** An evening of  
inspirational stories. Friday 23  
September 7.45 - 9.00pm Faizul Quran  
Jamia Mosque Lozells. A free event for  
all faith groups. Come and share an  
encouraging story from your personal  
spiritual journey or your Holy Scriptures  
for 5-10 minutes. It could be a  
thanksgiving for an answered prayer or  
blessings, a short story from your Holy  
Books or a spiritual leader who has  
inspired you. Please share freely with  
an open heart while respecting the faith  
of others present. Ladies, please cover  
your heads. Men and women must  
cover their arms, legs and remove their  
shoes in the Mosque. Organised by the  
'Faith in Lozells' group in partnership  
with faith leaders in North Birmingham  
and the Lozells Project. More info from  
Pall Singh 0121 523 8726

**Alternative to violence project.** Give yourself a morning to explore new skills: Saturday 24 September or 8 October. 10am–12.30pm Getting on better with people, free introductory workshops at The Priory Rooms, Quaker Meeting House, Bull Street. To reserve a place or for more information, contact Stephen, Tel 0845 345 7433 or [midlands-wales@avpbritain.org.uk](mailto:midlands-wales@avpbritain.org.uk)

### **Christian Aid**

**Good Will Supper** Wednesday 28 September 7pm Chester Rd Baptist Church, Sutton Coldfield. An evening of entertainment, information and inspiration, with a speaker from Christian Aid & a local solicitor, on what makes a good will. Tickets £8.

**East Africa Food Crisis Appeal** - *Thank you to all who have donated to our ongoing appeal as we continue to respond to a very challenging situation.*

Call 0121 200 2283 or email: [Birmingham@christianaid.org.uk](mailto:Birmingham@christianaid.org.uk).  
Christian Aid, Room 403B, The Big Peg, 120 Vyse St, B18 6NE

**'Who is fleeing persecution & seeking sanctuary?'** Please join Restore, a project of Birmingham Churches Together supporting refugees and asylum seekers, for information sessions on asylum issues and training on befriending

Afternoon course on Thursdays 29 September, 6 & 13 October 2.00pm - 4.00pm at BMS: International Mission Centre 24 Weoley Park Road, Selly Oak, B29 6QX. Evening course on Mondays 3, 10 and 17 October 7.30pm - 9.30pm at St John's Church, High Street, B17 9PT Further details from Jeremy Thompson (Restore Befriending Co-ordinator) – 0121 236 0069 or [befriend@restore-uk.org](mailto:befriend@restore-uk.org)

**Prom Praise** 7.30pm Saturday 8th October at Birmingham Symphony Hall with Noël Tredinnick and the All Souls Orchestra. The soloists include Matthew Little and Kelly Rainford, with Pam Rhodes as the special guest speaker. Previous performances have been sell-outs so book soon, especially group bookings.

### **12 October The People's Bible in Birmingham**

[www.thepeoplesbible.org/come-along/tour-dates-locations](http://www.thepeoplesbible.org/come-along/tour-dates-locations)

### **1 Million Acts of Kindness: Birmingham**

The aim of 1MAK is to share, map and inspire people and community groups with the great stories and acts of kindness that are happening right across our city. 1MAK Birmingham will run initially from Easter 2011 to Easter 2012. This will be a year when we hope people will be inspired to make a difference in their neighbourhoods. You can get involved by visiting the website, logging your act of kindness, reading what others are doing across the city and send news about 1MAK at [www.1makbirmingham.co.uk](http://www.1makbirmingham.co.uk)

### **About People**

Our best wishes for a happy retirement go to Majors Maurice and Lynda Hunt

as they hand over the reins to Majors Stephen and Mandy White at the Salvation Army Citadel. We pray for God's blessing on their ministry to the city.



## Invitation to Prayer Breakfast at Liberal Democrat Party Conference

The Liberal Democrat Christian Forum and the Free Churches Leadership Group cordially invite you (or a representative from your church) to their annual Prayer Breakfast at the Liberal Democrat Party Conference in Birmingham on Tuesday 20 September 2011. Details of this Prayer Breakfast are as follows:

Venue: Birmingham Christian Centre, 65 Parade, Birmingham B1 3QQ. Time: 8.00 - 09.00 am (commencing with a Continental breakfast from 7.45 am)

Chair: Tim Farron MP, Liberal Democrat Party President Speaker: Martin Turner (Chair of the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidates Association and past Chair of the Liberal Democrat Christian Forum)

Topic: Media ethics in the light of the phone hacking scandal

RSVP: It would be helpful if you would kindly confirm your attendance at this prayer breakfast by contacting Wendy Cooper on [wendy.cooper@urc.org.uk](mailto:wendy.cooper@urc.org.uk) (020 7916 8632) by no later than 14 September 2011.



## Reform Magazine

On 28<sup>th</sup> August, I asked members of the congregation to work out how many references to 'Carrs Lane' there were in the September issue of Reform. Nothing about the Lectures in this issue, I know...and, yes, the paragraph about the Multicultural Day was rather too easy to locate; a nice picture of the main entrance featured in the article about Symon Hill's pilgrimage, however, which started at Carrs Lane – you may have followed Symon's progress on Radio 4; he spoke well at the evening 'do' held here prior to the start of his walk. The short article on the National Evangelism Conference held at Birmingham University also contained a photograph of a rather pensive looking minister in red... three references and counting.

Neil

## URC Evangelism Conference – July 2011



Well, this was an interesting experience; in some ways, I was surprised to receive an invitation to this symposium / conference, but I was glad that I did and glad that I accepted. Among other things, a group of delegates spent a couple of hours at Carrs Lane, considering Elaine's work in retail chaplaincy and the developing vision for the life of Carrs Lane Church. An extremely diverse group of people attended the conference, reflecting the large and growing ethnic diversity of the URC and the wide range of theological perspectives on what might be termed 'evangelism'. I wasn't comfortable with everything ( and acknowledge readily that faith is not always about comfort zones ), but when I spoke, I felt that people listened to what I had to say; equally, a number of experiences were directly relevant and challenging.

The best bits? The two seminars which I attended: one was entitled 'Gossiping the Gospel', and was led by the Church Related Community Worker who has been working on the Bettws Estate on the edge of Newport in South Wales for the last five years here. No comfort zones or easy answers here, but a profound sense that open conversations, imaginative thinking, sticking power in difficult times and desire to engage with people exactly where they are will bear fruits: time and again, during the three days, length and consistency of commitment was raised as a significant factor – anything akin to 'hit-and-run ministry' is unlikely to enrich the life of the church. The second seminar was led by Elizabeth Gray-King and looked at the creative – more especially, the visual – arts within the context of sharing faith. An enduring challenge here...unsurprising, the need to be more open, more creative in acknowledging the ways in which faith can be shared effectively.

I can't say that I rated the keynote speakers particularly, but worship was helpful, mealtime conversations were stimulated and it was encouraging to discern a surprising amount of common ground with those who find themselves in a very different theological position to myself. I hope that the same will prove to be true of the Human Sexuality Forum at Westminster College in September.

Neil

## Sermon from Sunday 14 August

*What follows represents the substance of what I said at Carrs Lane on 14<sup>th</sup> August; necessarily brief, the sermon built on comments made by others during worship. Readings were taken from Matthew 5 and the end of the third, and the beginning of the fourth chapters of the Letter of James.*

**A**s we reflect on the events of this week, this is not the time or the place for sound-byte solutions or seemingly easy wisdom. Yes... we pledge ourselves to the sometimes costly and painful tasks of standing with those who will continue to suffer for many days; we seek to discern anew what the truly prophetic Christian voice might be in response to a fragmented and unjust society; we remain resolute in refusing to condone or excuse the violence...yet we acknowledge our responsibility to engage with all those involved, perpetrator as well as victim; prayer and practice go hand in hand. We are desperate to avoid the 'blame game': having read much of what has been written during the last few days, Chris Beeley offered the following, somewhat cynical summary yesterday: 'The causes of these riots confirm my prejudices'. So many strands vie for attention; so many possible responses for people of faith. In a sense, though, these strands must come together to form a greater whole: clearly, consistently, effectively we must share the Jesus-vision of true peace for the world. This will trouble the powerful every bit as much as it will challenge those who seek solace in violence and material things.

Birmingham Faith Leaders Group issued a statement on Thursday; voices joined to 'urge all our communities to join together to rebuild a just, harmonious and peaceful city'. As an 'Amen' to this hope continues to resonate, we ask ourselves, 'How?' We have listened to some familiar words from Matthew 5. Frank Kantor notes that, 'It is precisely at a time like this that we need to be reminded of the values of God's just and peaceful rule which Jesus expounds as blessings'. These are challenging words in times of peace and prosperity, however; they must not degenerate into words of holy escapism in times of crisis. They remain pivotal. Why? A lasting answer to rioting takes us on from thoughts on policing and parenting, recession and restraint, cuts and handcuffs. Frank's words again: 'It is about conversion from the delusion that our well-being consists in the abundance of our possessions to the fullness of life which Jesus offers in a life of love and service to others'. Some would say that the mindset of a nation needs to be changed.

This is precisely the vision picked up in the Letter of James: chapter 3 closes with talk of the Jesus-values – peace, gentleness, mercy – values which are contrasted with conflict and dispute at the beginning of chapter 4, a way of life which follows from giving in to inner cravings, whether right or wrong. Recent events pose a direct and sustained challenge to the faith communities...to rediscover and articulate a message which is genuinely counter-cultural: you cannot spend your way to fulfilment any more than you can loot your way to fulfilment. The gospel remains the gospel of radical difference, and many churches may discover that they have aligned themselves too closely with the values of the world. Those of you who worship here regularly will know my views on so-called 'prosperity gospel' and the like... If, as believers, we pray for peace, repair some of the physical damage, cry with the

suffering, put our hands in our pockets, speak out if some of the sentences are too severe, high-light injustice if some of the cuts impact directly on the most vulnerable... well, the sum of all these things may not represent the totality of the Christian vision.

Frances Ackroyd was a minister in Tottenham at the time of the Broadwater Farm riots some years ago. Recent events have led him to reflect on his experiences then – and to consider how they speak to the current situation. This week, he wrote, 'I'd like to encourage church members to get out of their comfort zones, stop being scared of teenagers, and start getting involved in community work and projects'. In other words, an end to fortress church, distant church, disinterested church, irrelevant church... Among our guiding principles here at Carrs Lane, there is a sentence which speaks of, 'responding to the rhythms of the city'. I continue to ponder how effectively we have done this during past days: yes, Elaine and her team of volunteers have worked tirelessly in the area of retail chaplaincy; I know that Journey MCC has provided refreshments for the teams of clean-up volunteers; we have offered physical space for quiet and space for worship, listening ears and supportive arms, prayers and more, practical support for individuals caught up in the thick of things. Yet we may struggle still with a sense of the inadequacy of our responses. All of these things are relational – they involve people directly – and they remind us again that church as institution alone may offer precious little in these days. Jesus calls to discover what it is to be a people at peace with ourselves; only when we know, live and breathe this can we be peace-bringers, peace-makers, peace-givers, intent on a world of peace-lovers.

Neil

## Carrs Lane Lectures 2011

### *Rethinking Christian Theology*

*Thursday evenings in October, from 6.00 – 7.30pm, tickets £5 each.*

**October 6th:** Professor Paul Knitter 'What Is Atonement?'

**October 13th:** Professor Paul Knitter 'Is There Life after Death?'

**October 20th:** Professor Roger Haight 'Who is Jesus?'

**October 27th:** Professor Roger Haight 'What is the Trinity?'

**Paul Knitter** is a former Roman Catholic priest, now a leading theologian of religious pluralism, currently Paul Tillich Professor of Theology, World Religions and Culture at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He is Professor Emeritus of Theology at Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio. His research interests are religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue.

**Roger Haight** is Scholar in Residence at Union Theological Seminary. He is a member of the Society of Jesus and is a Past President of the Catholic Theological Society of America. He has taught at four Jesuit graduate schools of theology in Manila, Chicago, Toronto, and Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has also been a visiting professor in Lima, Nairobi, Paris, and Pune, India.

## Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group Press Statement

*(Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2011, 12.00 noon)*

**A**t this time of disorder and in the wake of the violence that has flooded our streets, we, the members of the Birmingham Faith Leaders Group, urge all our communities to join together to rebuild a just, harmonious and peaceful city.

As people of faith we call on you to pray for peace, to pray for those affected by destruction and greed and to pray for those, including the police, working round the clock to maintain the rule of law, care for the distressed and rebuild damaged businesses.

At the same time we ask everyone of goodwill to take urgent practical steps to ensure the flourishing of the city, the safety of our streets and the restoring of relationships that have been damaged over the last few days. Together we need to be grasped by a vision for the future of the city of Birmingham and ensure it comes to fruition. We encourage those who have direct responsibility for young people in insisting that all those who are growing up in our city have a framework of values and disciplines with which to build their lives.

We will continue to work for communities that live together, connected by trusting relationships, mutual respect and joint enterprise.

We commit ourselves to reduce social inequality that becomes a breeding ground for resentment, greed and spite.

We send our deepest sympathy to those who are recently bereaved in Winson Green and thank them for their example of restraint and dignity as they face their loss with courage and resolve.

We are grateful for those who have already begun the work of reconciliation, the practical tasks of clearing up the city and the unseen endeavours to be good neighbours.

Let us all, like them, do whatever we can to build the common good, to bring hope onto our streets and to chase away the darkness of evil with the light of our faithful good works and prayers.

## What's so special about the United Reformed Church?

In the midst of all the troubles in Birmingham, I took some advice from Church House about how to deal with the media. Interesting. Among the information passed on, came eleven points (to be used selectively) intended to give a clear and positive 'picture' of the denomination. We are not always good at 'knowing' ourselves or 'sharing' ourselves, and you may find the following helpful; I share in the form of words which I received!

- ✚ We are part of God's great world church – an energetic, passionate part
- ✚ Passionate about justice and peace
- ✚ Passionate about combating racism
- ✚ Passionate about relieving poverty
- ✚ Proud that we were the first denomination to ordain women
- ✚ Eager to hear the God who still speaks to us
- ✚ We believe in the Trinity; there is nothing wacky about us
- ✚ We believe God can use us all. We take most big decisions locally; every church member can have a say
- ✚ We have roots in history. We were part of the great reform movement which spread worldwide, but we want God to use us today
- ✚ We have a hundred thousand people in 1600 congregations across England, Scotland and Wales, bringing together former Presbyterians, Congregationalists and members of the Churches of Christ
- ✚ And we long for unity with Christians of other traditions too



I guess that this represents how Church House would like us to feel about ourselves. Does it feel about right?

Neil

### A reflection – “The servant of the new” - from the Christian Aid August prayer diary

From the time he called Peter and Andrew, Jesus intentionally built a common life with a small group of companions. This group played an essential part in everything that Jesus did, and it is clear that their training was a major focus of

his life and ministry. As a leader, Jesus was a teacher, but not in the sense we often think as teaching – that is, by telling people the answers. They learned by doing, and then by reflecting on what they had learned.

In his life with his disciples, Jesus acted as a midwife, nurturing this new community of hope into being. Giving birth is a transformation, literally a change of shape. A woman's body is irrevocably changed by child-bearing. But out of that change new life is born. Something of the same kind of transformation happens in all sorts of creative activity: a poem, a painting, a play, a piece of music and a garden all share the same process of conception, gestation, hard labour and delivery. The struggle for justice, the making of peace, costly discipleship and discovering community all equally require of us a spiritual transformation and the willingness to sacrifice something of what we have been in order to bring the new into being. Parenting, prayer and social engagement for the common good are all ways in which we are invited to be co-creators with the divine Spirit. But in this process, the midwife, the servant of the new, is a crucial role.

The midwife – male or female – who for the sake of the new life to come, encourages, explains, asks questions, gives clear assistance, reassures and goes on doing it when the father worries and the mother grows faint and the child is slow in coming; who will take the strain when the moment is near and draw the child triumphantly into life. As a church we live in between the no-longer and the not-yet, and to be the midwife is to be the servant of that difficult yet exciting time, cherishing the earth, supporting its weary people, taking the risks of peace upon ourselves, making the sacrifices required of us to offer fullness of life to all, not just for some, taking the strain through humble service.

To be a midwife is to be an empowerer. This is an important part of Christian Aid's task. It is listening for the heartbeat of the community, asking questions; seeking to discern what the community is thinking, hoping and dreaming; where it is moving, struggling to come to birth; to hear what kind of assistance it most needs and how to respond. In so doing, the midwife is not attempting to impose any blue-print or outcome on the process, but rather to encourage and support the community in taking control of its own future. The child whose face we do not yet know is the child of us all, and most of all of God.”

This reflection would have been penned 3 months or so ago, but seems very relevant to recent issues of community breakdown, and also for our deliberations about our new church. It seems to me to be a valid response in many respects in how we might/should relate to the community of the city centre as part of our working out of our mission to the city centre. However, as a church, rather than an aid agency, we must also find a way of sharing the Good News of the love of God is for everyone – not such an easy task, but one we must find ways of achieving.

Andrew Veitch

## From Fair to Flourishing

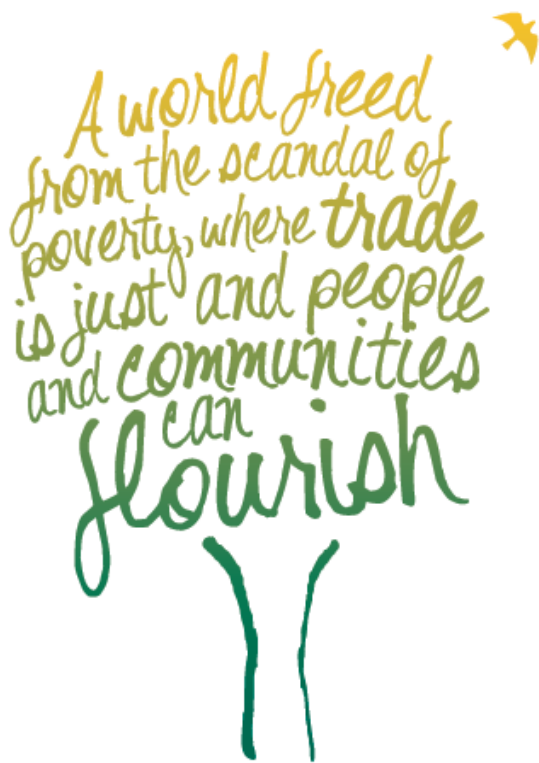


**TRAIDCRAFT**  
Fighting poverty through trade

*On Saturday 18 August a group of volunteers from Carrs Lane Fair Trade attended the Midlands launch of the new Autumn/Christmas 2011 Traidcraft catalogue. We were able to view the wide range of crafts, clothing and non-food items, and there were talks on the work of Traidcraft.*

*We were introduced to the targets and plans set out for 2011-2014 in the light of the recent strategic review. The following piece is quoted from the pamphlet 'From fair to flourishing'.*

Having helped establish fair trade as a significant force in the marketplace we will expand our focus to ensure our work helps people and their communities – not just to earn more money, but to flourish.



What might a flourishing community mean? Producers getting more income, certainly. But surely something more. Flourishing is something about hopefulness. Something about fruitfulness – things growing, cups running over. And something too, about justice – the world put to rights. So that everyone can share in the knowledge that things are well – there's food at home, security, and hope.

Time and time again, producers have told us about the difference our work makes to them. They say things like I am proud to be working, and Now, I can provide a better future for my children.

Our vision of helping communities to flourish extends to the whole of the Traidcraft community. As our staff and supporters work together for trade justice and further strengthen the connection with our producers our own sense of fulfilment will grow. At the heart of all that we do are our Christian principles. We believe that God made everyone in his image, so everyone is important and deserves to be treated well and to be given the opportunity to flourish regardless of their faith or beliefs. And we have a responsibility for the world God has created, so respect for the environment is of growing importance in our work.

As we continue our journey from fair to flourishing we will:

- 1 Help more people improve their lives
- 2 Pioneer new areas of fair *and* ethical trade
- 3 Challenge the rules of trade
- 4 Build support for trade justice

## Morgans, Malvern and Holly Mount URC.

Around 20 of us set out on a damp drizzly day – some by train and others by car from various point of the compass. Our train broke down at Worcester which slightly delayed the factory visit where we joined around 30 others to view the workings of this 100 year old business. The cars these days are a combination of modern engineering technology for the engines, transmissions and chassis etc., but good old hammer, chisel, plane and sandpaper for much of the bodywork and internal finishes.



The side panel of a car is being trimmed to shape

The workforce of 180 make around 700 cars a year – all of them made to order and about 70% for export! There is quite a large model range from a 1950s looking two-seater three wheeler which can achieve over 100 mph, costing around £30,000, to very sleek looking 'aero' model with V6 engine, costing around £140,000. Before you place an order you need to be prepared to pay the non-returnable deposit of around 20%. The cars are a real work of art and although some old fashioned looking parts are retained, like the radiator grill, the cars are built to a modern specification.

After the visit we walked up to Holly Mount URC (where Cicely Coleman's daughter and son-in-law are members) We were treated to a superb buffet lunch after which Andrew Webb gave a short presentation about the church's Jesse Tree Garden and the work they do with local schools – well worth a visit just to see what they are doing.

The garden was developed a few years ago as part of a mission/worship strategy to develop the garden of Holly Mount URC Malvern for the purposes of education, relaxation and prayer;

- to tell the Bible story through artwork and planting;
- to provide a facility for use by the whole community;
- to develop curriculum-based RE educational resources.

Looking round the Jesse tree garden



A few of us then braved the elements to walk up to Worcester beacon – a short way but very steep, but a wonderful view despite the cloudy conditions

At the top



It was interesting to reflect on what we had seen and experienced – the thriving family business where individuals' skills and ability was a vital ingredient of success (no sign of recession in that factory); the sense of vision at Holly Mount, firstly in the transformation of wilderness into something beautiful, but secondly the way they then used the garden to take the gospel message to children in local schools; the wonder of creation and the vastness of the earth. Thank you God for your provision!

A few people could not come so watch this space for a further visit

Andrew

## Summer Camps

What snippets to share as a result of time spent at two (very different) youth camps during the summer, one in North Wales and one in Shropshire? It wasn't easy to return home partway through the Shropshire Camp, to engage with the complexities of life in the centre of Birmingham in the middle of August, but I shared in the life of the camp for long enough to know that it would be a happy and affirming experience for the young people present.



Rather than any narrative of the events of the camps, I confine myself to a brief comment on two very different aspects of camp life. At the first camp, no mobiles, no electronic gadgets et al. were allowed for the young people during the week: whether you agree with this or not, it did make for an experience which was noticeably different to the rest of their lives. To compensate for this, something entitled 'Fakebook' (sic.) ran throughout the week... great rolls of lining paper were attached to the wall of the building used for eating, and all those present at the camp were encouraged to use it for comments / observations / groups and so on. Something of a commentary on the life of the camp developed – often very immediate and surprisingly telling – and the issues raised in this way were then picked up and used in devotional periods. For me, this is one of the great joys of any residential work; so often in church, our corporate worship fails to address some of our most pressing and immediate concerns (though, at best, our shared prayers are very much 'of the moment' ) – we must become more adept at 'scratching where it itches'. That is probably not the best phrase to use, but you know what I mean. On the Sunday after rioting in Birmingham, I believe that our corporate worship did grow out of, and reflect some of the concerns of the week; this probably doesn't happen as often as it might, however, and it meant that the worship which had been prepared carefully before it went to camp had to be put to one side. In a number of senses, it was no longer 'fit for purpose'.

A second comment relates to the camp in Shropshire. In addition to the usual daily staff meetings – effectively compulsory for all adult leaders who shared in the camp – a voluntary 'forum' was also offered; this was not compulsory, but allowed adults a daily opportunity to talk through how any challenging issues had been handled during the day, and whether lessons could be learned from this and help provided for those who had any unresolved questions. For most, if not all, people, this was valuable time; it called for a high degree of trust and was possible only because people were comfortable working together and felt that they had nothing to fear from anybody else. We are not always as good at 'sharing' as we might be in faith communities, even within leadership teams responsible for the development of strategic thinking. It is not simply a question of natural reserve or anything like that; it may be that we have not communicated as clearly as we might the fact that the gospel teaches the empowerment of all and the absence of threat when things are shared openly within a loving Christian community.

Neil

## Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association - Recycling Scheme

**T**he Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association in Birmingham are a movement with a mission to give every child and young person an opportunity to develop a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Engaging with children and young people, building up relationships with our members and providing a Christian environment in which we can deliver our four fully resourced programmes all costs money. Funders are withdrawing grants as financial restraints take their toll; however we are determined to create more opportunities for young people, including creating jobs for some of the 25% of 18-25 year olds that are currently unemployed in our city.

In 2009 we opened our first charity shop, the Anchor Shop in Central Shopping Square, off Erdington High Street. Initially this was mainly a bookshop run by a team of volunteers. After 12 months we had made a good contribution to our costs and have been able to take on a permanent lease for the shop, offer employment opportunities through the Future Jobs Fund, and begin selling clothing.

And that's not all! The good news is that recycling not only creates jobs here but in Africa too. It pays a wholesaler who employs market stall holders, ironing assistants, a tailor to make alterations and drivers to deliver around the villages. Our social enterprise aims to create opportunities and jobs for young people in Birmingham and contribute to developing jobs in the Third World.

But we need your help! We are encouraging churches to hold a 'Caring & Sharing Sunday'. What's this you might ask? We will provide each of your church congregation with a black bag, together with some of the information about our project, a week before the arranged collection date.

Then on the following Sunday morning, 'Caring & Sharing Sunday', we will come and pick up all the filled bags which have been collected. We can show you a video clip of how your items can build a new life for young people and give you some astounding facts and figures showing why it's so important to recycle. If you would like any more information about this exciting project, please contact Ann Reaney on 0121 333 5873 or email [ann.reaney@bb-birmingham.org.uk](mailto:ann.reaney@bb-birmingham.org.uk).



## **SIFA Fireside's Latest News**

### **Completion of our new building**

The building in Allcock St Digbeth is making rapid progress and we're expecting handover shortly. A big thank you to CRASH (the construction industry charity supporting homelessness projects) for supplying us with carpets and to the Eveson Trust for a £15,000 grant towards our relocation costs.

### **Urgent Appeal**

We urgently need to replenish our stock of the following specific food items so that we can provide balanced, nutritional food parcels to those in need – tinned fish, tinned pasta (spaghetti, ravioli etc), tinned meats, tinned casseroles/stews, tinned vegetables (not tomatoes), rice, pasta, noodles. You can drop donations off at 122 Pershore St weekdays between 10am and 1pm. Please call first on 0121 666 7023 so we can make sure someone is available to receive the goods.

### **'Learning for Health' project**

SIFA Fireside has been successful in gaining £45,500 from the Skills Funding Agency through the Adult & Community Learning Fund (administered by NIACE) to run a seven month 'Learning for Health' project starting on September 1st.

### **Irish Foreign Minister support**

Cath Gilliver, Chief Executive, and Sister Sabina Staff MBE, Senior Volunteer Fund Raiser, were delighted to be invited to a reception at the Irish Embassy in London on July 15th and even more pleased when Mr Eamon Gilmore T.D, the Irish Foreign Minister, announced £6.3 million funding to agencies in England working with Irish people, particularly those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged. SIFA Fireside will get £40,000 to continue its Irish Resettlement Project for a further 12 months.

### **Five Ways to Well Being**

SIFA Fireside, working jointly with the Kilbride Smith Partnership, has won a tender to design Mental Health Awareness training based on the New Economics Foundation's Five Ways to Well Being and to deliver it to Birmingham's Community Development Workers; they will then roll it out across the city. More information from [www.neweconomics.org/projects/five-ways-well-being](http://www.neweconomics.org/projects/five-ways-well-being)

### **Calling all Eggheads**

Do you have what it takes to be the ultimate quiz team? Do you want to test your general knowledge and help raise funds for SIFA Fireside? If so, you could be one of the teams battling it out, at the Charity Quiz Night in Birmingham, on the 4th October. Full details will be released soon. If you would like to sponsor the event, donate a prize or enter a team please email [simonhackett@sifafireside.co.uk](mailto:simonhackett@sifafireside.co.uk)

### **13.1 miles and counting!**

Some of SIFA Fireside's staff, including our Chief Executive, are in training for the Bupa Great Birmingham Run on October 23rd. We'd love supporters to run with us or sponsor us, and every penny raised will be used to fund the practical help we offer in our City Centre 'drop in' sessions seven days a week. If you would like to

contribute, or to sponsor one of our staff members, please go to our Just Giving page [www.justgiving.com/sifafireside](http://www.justgiving.com/sifafireside), or email us on [office@sifafireside.co.uk](mailto:office@sifafireside.co.uk)

### **Flying high**

SIFA Fireside staff are increasingly looking to imaginative and exciting ways to raise funds to support the work of SIFA Fireside. Marie Dennehy (Project Worker) and Ryan Stanley (Assistant Finance Administrator) are paving the way with a sponsored skydive in September. SIFA Fireside are looking to find a sponsor to cover the £450 cost of the skydive. If you are interested please contact Sifa Fireside Development Manager Simon Hackett on 0121 666 7023 or email [simonhackett@sifafireside.co.uk](mailto:simonhackett@sifafireside.co.uk). If you wish to sponsor Marie and Ryan please email: [mariedenney@sifafireside.co.uk](mailto:mariedenney@sifafireside.co.uk)

### **SIFA Fireside Gala Dinner**

SIFA Fireside will be holding a Fundraising Gala Dinner, on Friday 23rd March 2012, at the Lord Knights Suite at Tally Ho Conference and Banqueting Centre, Birmingham. The evening will include a three course dinner, entertainment and dancing and a guest speaker. Tickets will be on sale in September.

### **Volunteer Development Programme**

We have been successfully running our structured Volunteer Development Programme for service users over the last 2 years. The aim of the programme is to instil work ethics in clients and equip them with vocational experience whilst contributing to society. The clients have the opportunity to take part in various volunteering opportunities within the organisation and hopefully make the transition into employment, training or education. So far to date, we have had five service user volunteers who have found sustainable paid employment, while all have found the experience enriching and have boosted their softer skills including self-confidence. The next cohort of service user volunteers are due to commence their 6 months programme in September and we wish them well on their journey.

### **ChangeKitchen supports Espirito Brum**

**Espirito Brum** is the UK edition of Espirito Mundo, a cross cultural celebration bringing together musicians from Brazil and the Midlands, in a three day festival that forms the first stage in an ongoing global exchange. This is the first time this touring festival has come to the UK and we're bringing it to Birmingham. There is a vast array of musical styles, live performances, art, workshops, films, food and talks. ChangeKitchen will be catering and supporting this exciting event

### **'Healthy Eating on a Budget'**

ChangeKitchen is now putting on the first 'Healthy Eating on a Budget' cookery class for the general public in September: 'Nutritious and Delicious' cookery class on the 21st September 2011, from 6 to 9pm at 122 Pershore Street. See here for details <http://www.learnsomethingnew.org.uk/search/search&keywords=healthy%20eating/>

Kerry Slowey  
Communications Administrator SIFA Fireside



## St Martin's in the Bullring: Centre for Health and Healing

*What good is it my brother, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes or daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead. James 2:14-17*

**D**iscovering the Heart of God in the Heart of The City - Situated in the heart of the city at St Martin's in the Bullring, next to one of the busiest thoroughfares in Birmingham between the Bullring shopping centre and the market, St Martin's Centre for Health and Healing is an expression of Christian compassion and care where the whole person is what matters. Through our Help Desk and Counselling service we support some of the most vulnerable and excluded people in our city. Our policy is to help everyone who comes in from the street seeking help at St Martin's.

The majority of people who use our services come to us having nowhere else to turn. Most experience multiple disadvantage and are often some of the most 'damaged' people in our community. Those whose lives are blighted by a combination of issues such as: homelessness, mental health problems, physical health needs, problems with addiction, domestic violence, abuse, family breakdown and poverty, have no aspirations and little hope.

The Centre comprises of a linked social care Help Desk and Counselling service that are designed to offer a comprehensive, integrated range of services. These services are unique in providing open access to everyone who needs them. Over the last year our team of six staff and 60 volunteers worked with 2700 people – over 24000 interventions, providing advice, counselling, practical help, advocacy, a listening service, befriending and onward referral. Clients were provided with access to a range of specialist workers, to help with housing problems, mental health issues, addiction, and personal finance.

Clearly we cannot resolve every issue that people come to us with and regularly refer clients for specialist support. We work in partnership with many organisations across the city and spend a great deal of time maintaining these close working relationships.

An extract from an interview with a client who has been using the Help Desk: "I was homeless and I was living on the street, I wanted some help, I was living in a broken car, sleeping in a car, in a scrap yard, it was somewhere to keep warm in the rain. I turned to crime, prison was my option. I was fourteen when I started drinking, my dad was an alcoholic, I used to steal his whisky, go to school and get expelled, I'm forty now so it's been a few years I've been drinking".

Over a period of a few months we helped him with accommodation, sorted out his benefit entitlement and referred him for support for his addiction. Commenting on the help he received from the Centre for Health and Healing, he said; "I think it's fantastic man, done a good job, I'd be lost without you lot man, I've got nothing bad to say

about that, everybody is polite, they're respectful and they really help you, and that's why I'm here right now, I wouldn't be here otherwise".

This is an example of the work undertaken by the Centre for Health and Healing. Whilst based at St Martin's, we are tackling problems that are the responsibility of all of us who live in the city of Birmingham; people come to us from across Birmingham and beyond. Funding our work in the current economic climate is a challenge. The Centre is an extremely cost effective service, our budget for providing over 24,000 interventions for vulnerable people is under £150,000 per annum.

If we are to continue to support those that live on the margins of society we need the support of Birmingham's Christian community in terms of a) financial support, b) offers of voluntary work and c) fundraising assistance. If you require any additional information or wish to make a donation please contact: Jen Wallace, Administrator. St Martin's Centre for Health and Healing, St Martin in the Bullring, Birmingham. B5 5BB Tel: 0121 600 6025 or Email: [jen@bullring.org](mailto:jen@bullring.org)

## THRIVE: Tackling Poverty

**C**ome along to a free open exhibition event offering tools and resources that you or your church can use to tackle the issues of poverty in your local neighbourhoods.

Also meet existing projects and find out about practical ways you can support these projects to continue their work.

Open Resource Exhibition:Tackling Poverty - St John's and St Peter's Church  
Darnley Road, Ladywood, Sat October 22, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, Admission: FREE

Attend a 30 minute workshop seminar:

10.30 or 14.00 Housing Justice setting up a winter night

11.00 or 14.30 Trussell Trust setting up a foodbank

11.30 or 15.00 Jericho Foundation setting up a job club

12.00 or 15.30 Community Money Advice setting up a debt advice centre

12.30 or 16.00 Christians Against Poverty setting up a CAP debt counselling centre

Exhibiting organisations on the day also include Restore, Worth Unlimited, Lighthouse group, Karis Neighbour Scheme, Church Urban Fund...and others

Pre-register for the event online and receive a free cupcake on the day. Visit:

<http://tacklingpovertyevent/eventbrite.com>. For more information email:  
[info@thrivewestmidlands.org](mailto:info@thrivewestmidlands.org) or call: 0121 426 0442.

The Tackling Poverty event is a Thrive West Midlands and Faith to Engage partnership. Thrive West Midlands was formed in 2010 by the Anglican Diocese of Birmingham and Church Urban Fund to support churches, Christian organisations and individuals in Birmingham & West Midlands to engage effectively with their local neighbourhoods

## What kind of blessing?

I experienced two firsts in one morning recently. On the way into town on the 50 bus, a young man came upstairs as we were passing the former Highgate Fire Station and proceeded to deliver what can best be described as a full sermon, finishing with a blessing as the bus pulled up outside M&S. Nobody heckled or interrupted – possibly surprising on what is normally a very ‘lively’ bus route – but, equally, there was no indication that anybody engaged with what he was saying. People buried themselves in the Metro, listened more attentively than usual to their music or looked out of the window ostentatiously. A captive audience / congregation. Now, I don’t have any problems with people sharing faith outside the security of church buildings, but it did seem a little unfair that the confines of the bus and the constraints of a journey into town meant that people didn’t have any choice over what was happening; in all probability, some folk may have felt that suspicions about ‘religion’ were confirmed. Conversation may have worked better than monologue; some sense of permission is required before people are exposed to preaching. Whilst I admired the faith and confidence of the young man, I didn’t enter Carrs Lane with any sense of having received a blessing.



I had only been in the building for a short while, however, when I was called to the foyer...would I be prepared to bless a pair of wedding rings? A young(ish) couple had got married some months previously, at a time when they couldn’t afford gold rings; they had made do with brass rings until they could afford to buy the ‘real thing’. They didn’t simply want to swap rings and move on the day as though nothing significant had happened...so, they came into Carrs Lane and wondered if the moment could be marked in some way. I explained the symbolism which goes along with the use of rings within marriage, offered a prayer over the rings and a further prayer when the rings were placed on fingers; we talked a little about their marriage and prayed for a sense of God’s presence in their journey together. I hope that it went well...certainly, there was a sense of togetherness and purpose which had been wholly absent on the top deck of the 50 bus! They asked whether there was a fee involved; having said ‘No’, I was left wondering what impression the church gives if folk feel that they have to ask whether there is a fee involved in the blessing of rings.



Neil

## Commitment for Life

*(Extracts from Moving Stories 139)*

### Felt Doves

It's sometimes said that Scots are mean with their money. But in May 2011 people attending the Church of Scotland's General Assembly were queuing up to spend money. They were buying little felt doves, sometimes by the dozen. Very quickly, 1250 were sold. The Hadeel Fairtrade Palestinian craft shop in Edinburgh also had a run on the doves. Such has been the interest that Hadeel has placed an order for another thousand.



What's so special about these little doves, cute as they are? Well, they come from Bethlehem, and are made from felted wool from local sheep. There's something special about a dove from Bethlehem, the birthplace of the Prince of Peace. A dove made from wool from animals quite possibly descended from the sheep we read about in the Christmas story.

And the people who make them are special too. They work in the Ma'an lil-Hayat workshop, a project of Bethlehem's L'Arche community. The workshop provides employment for people with significant learning disabilities. It gives them opportunities to build their skills, social and practical, to do meaningful work, and to grow in confidence and self-esteem. The kinds of opportunity that L'Arche provides worldwide are so important, and nowhere more so than in Bethlehem.

### Ashraf

One of the people who attends Ma'an lil-Hayat is Ashraf. He's 23 years old, but with the intellectual capacity of a four year old. He lives with his family in Al-Khader, near Bethlehem.

On the evening of Tuesday 24 May 2011 Ashraf was just fifty yards or so from his home, spending time with a local shopkeeper. Three Israeli army jeeps appeared. It seems possible that the soldiers were looking for boys they thought had thrown stones at them. Terrified at the sight of the jeeps, Ashraf ran towards his home. As Ashraf ran, a soldier fired a shot in the air. Soldiers pursued Ashraf and caught up with him as he reached his home and was trying to open the door. A Ma'an News Agency report quotes his mother as saying, 'They grabbed him, tackled him to the ground and started beating him mercilessly. They trod him with their military shoes. I tried by all means to tell them he was disabled. I tried to speak to them in English, but all they did was order me to go inside. Then they cuffed Ashraf's hands and legs, blindfolded him and took him to the jeep. I brought a medical report to show it to the soldiers, but they did not even look at it.' Eventually a neighbour managed to explain the situation and after an hour, Ashraf was released, clearly distraught.

Each day many, many Palestinians suffer terribly from the illegal Israeli occupation. Some of them are my friends. But, though I've never met him, this evening it's Ashraf that I can't help thinking about, Ashraf handcuffed, shackled, and blindfolded, and in terrible distress.

I don't know what part, if any, Ashraf played in making the dove that is sitting on my table. But, as I look at it, I hope that he'll soon have recovered enough to be back working again. After all, he and his colleagues have another thousand doves to make. If you would like to buy a dove, or any other items from the wide range of Palestinian crafts available, visit [www.hadeel.org](http://www.hadeel.org).

*A prayer for unity:*

Reaching peace and unity can often seem impossible: the conflict too entrenched, the politics too complicated, and the divisions too intractable.

Yes, peace can seem impossible, until we remember whom we follow.

And so we think of Jesus, whose feet trod the streets of Jerusalem, and the country roads of the Holy land.

He met with Samaritans, talked with women, and touched the lepers.

He challenged social barriers, hatred and prejudice.

So we pray for the Spirit of God that dwelled in Jesus,  
to flow into Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory,  
To bring healing where the pain seems too great,  
To bring reconciliation where the barriers appear insurmountable,  
And to bring unity where there have been generations of hatred.  
Father, we believe and trust in your power to transform the Holy Land,  
and we hear your call for us to be makers of peace, and workers for justice.  
Be at work in us, and in those for whom we pray, in Jesus name.  
Amen

*Contributed by Wendy Firmin*

### **On this day ...**

From the Carrs Lane Missionary Chronicle September 1911

*This positively worded article is inspired by the work of George Muller in aid of orphans, Christian schools and missionaries. Its title is a question which is timeless for all Christians, and it describes a strong belief that in answer to prayer God will provide, but for me it also raises issues about communication, motivation and timing.*

Do we really believe in Prayer?

“Why, certainly,” the bulk of professing Christians would answer. And I do not deny

that intellectually we assent to it as a dogma, but in practice, I fear, there is overwhelming evidence that we do not.

There are hundreds of benevolent institutions in this country founded on Christian, or so-called Christian, principles, as commonly understood and practised. I do not question the sincerity and integrity of the founders and managers of those institutions, but their faith is largely mixed with the leaven of shrewd, calculating, commercial speculation. The Christian public do not expect a man, or men, to construe Scripture teaching too precisely. This is the opinion I have formed, at any rate, after careful observation.

I know of one great institution, however, and only one, in Great Britain, conceived in absolute faith and dependence on God, according to scriptural teaching, for all its needs and supplies, without making a single personal appeal, direct or indirect, to any human being. To read its historical record is more like reading a romance, or a fairy tale than actual history. When I first heard of it, I had to visit it before I could give full credence to what I had been told. My visit fully confirmed all that I had heard.

Since the institution was commenced Mr. Muller and his two successors have received upwards of a million and a half pounds in answer to systematic, believing, daily prayer. Sums varying from a penny to £1,000, and more, are forwarded, and they come from nearly all parts of the world. Many of the letters accompanying the donations re extremely interesting, as they indicate the spiritual experience or motive of the donors, and afford conclusive testimony that God is a prayer-hearing and answering God. Indeed, they cannot fail to inspire and cheer and comfort every believer who reads them.

Any reader of this article who may wish to become better acquainted with the life and work of the mightiest man of prayer and faith of his age can do so by purchasing a little volume such as I bought a few weeks ago in the City Arcade for a 1/2, bearing the title, "George Muller, the Modern Apostle of Faith." There are larger and more expensive works to be had, which the writer has acquired, but they can be had later. The writer of this article has no other motive to serve than that of trying to do a good turn to his fellow-worshippers at Carrs Lane Church out of gratitude to God and Dr. Jowett, who was a great admirer of George Muller. B.

From the Carrs Lane Journal – September 1961

*A return to two topics touched on earlier in 1961 and thus in Journey 2011: world government, and nuclear disarmament and Communism. They reflect the concerns of their time, but the underlying issues are still important for our world today.*

Declaration on World Government (adopted "nem con" by the Carrs Lane Church Meeting, 29/6/61)

"We believe the Fatherhood of God implies the brotherhood of man, and we are deeply distressed at the sufferings of millions of God's people owing to the denial in practice of our essential brotherhood.

“We believe that God has provided sufficient material resources to meet the human needs of all His family, and that it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that these resources are adequately developed and equitably distributed.

“We believe that this can be done, and the curse of war and want finally removed, only under a system of world government; we realise that the final goal is not attainable while sovereign states retain their own armed forces beyond those necessary for internal police requirements.

We therefore affirm our belief in the urgent necessity for a supra-national authority, under the control of the United Nations Organisation to organise simultaneously and control:

- a) disarmament by agreement
- b) a permanent world police force

We invite support in this effort to increase the existing wide demand for world government as a natural and urgent development of the United Nations Organisation.”

Letter to the Editor (from Herbert Tedstone)

Madam,

Commenting on Rosemary Dow’s letter re Aldermaston in the June issue, the March is sponsored by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament – a mainly Christian body – and not the Communists. Many Communists have as much concern for the future of their children and fellow men as have some Christians and who are we to stop them marching with us – if so moved.

As an argument for keeping the bomb I cannot agree that Spiritual Darkness inevitably follows in the wake of Communism. I have worshipped in a full Church in a Communist Country, Professor Hromadka of the Czechoslovak Church has made more pronouncements for Peace and abolition of Nuclear Warfare than any other Christian leader in the world, and this year an All Christian Peace Conference is being held in Prague – in a Communist Country, supported, I believe, officially by the Russian Church, but not by the Church of England.

I am certainly not exploited by the Communists, but happily, neither am I exploited by the propaganda of the West.

I agree that we must present to the Communists and non-Communists a God-controlled Society but please – not Bomb-Controlled.

Contributed by Wendy Firrnin



## Answers to Brum Quiz in last Journey

1. b) The City Workhouse
2. c) Illegal Bookmaker
3. a) Sir Thomas Holte
4. a) 1927
5. c) Chelmsley Wood
6. c) The Midland
7. b) Queen Victoria
8. a) The Moody Blues
9. c) Diana Princess of Wales
10. a) Jazz
11. b) Forward
12. a) Holloway Head



## Millennium development Goals



### Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources

Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

Please send your contribution for next month's Journey to the Editor, Mrs. Pat Davies, Carrs Lane URC, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX or by email to [office@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:office@carrslane.co.uk).

## Room Hire at Carrs Lane

Carrs Lane Church Centre is in Birmingham city centre and within a few minutes walk of New Street and Moor Street train Stations and the National Express Coach Station. Public car parking and bus stops are also nearby.

The Conference Rooms on offer at Carrs Lane are of several sizes and situated on three floors. We can support most types of events. Rooms can accommodate from 6 up to 350 delegates. You will find that our prices are very competitive. Our staff will be pleased to discuss ideas for your event with you and advise on the suitability of our facilities.

Hot and cold drinks can be supplied in the meeting rooms as often as required. Buffet meals can be pre-ordered. These range from a simple sandwich menu to a full buffet

Full details and prices are available on our website, [www.carrslane.co.uk](http://www.carrslane.co.uk)., or you may call the conference team on 0121 643 6151 if you have any questions or email [booking@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:booking@carrslane.co.uk).



Carrs Lane  
FAIR TRADE SHOP

Open here in the city at  
Carrs Lane Church Centre  
Tuesday to Friday 10.30am - 2.30pm  
and after morning worship on first and third Sundays  
Visit us for your Fair Trade needs  
- *Traidcraft foods, gifts and much else* -  
0121 643 6151 [fair-trade@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:fair-trade@carrslane.co.uk)  
[www.carrslane.co.uk](http://www.carrslane.co.uk)



**TRAIDCRAFT**  
Fighting poverty through trade

## Carrs Lane Regular Activities

### SUNDAYS

<b>Morning Worship</b>	Every Sunday at 10.30am with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month
<b>Afternoon Worship and Healing Service</b>	Third Sunday at 4.30pm
<b>Children's Church</b>	Second Sunday at 2.30pm
<b>Radical Worship</b>	Fourth Sunday at 6.00pm
<b>First Sunday Lunch</b>	First Sunday each month at 12.30pm
<b>Church Meeting</b>	Second Sunday at 12 noon
<b>Singing Group</b>	Third Sunday 9.45 – 10.15am

### WEEK DAYS

<b>Lunchtime Healing Service</b>	Every Wednesday 1.15pm
<b>Prayer Group</b>	First Wednesday at 7.00 pm
<b>Discussion Group</b>	First Thursday at 10.15 am
<b>Carrs Lane Players (drama group)</b>	Fridays at 7.45 pm
<b>Charity Knitting Circle</b>	First Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm
<b>Carrs Lane Fair Trade Shop</b>	First and Third Sunday after morning worship and Tuesday - Friday 10.30 am - 2.30 pm
<b>Counselling Centre</b>	Monday - Friday 11.00 am - 1.30 pm and Monday to Wednesday evenings 7.00 - 9.00 pm

Contact details for Carrs Lane Church  
Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX  
Telephone 0121 643 6151  
Fax 0121 631 2118  
[www.carrslane.co.uk](http://www.carrslane.co.uk)