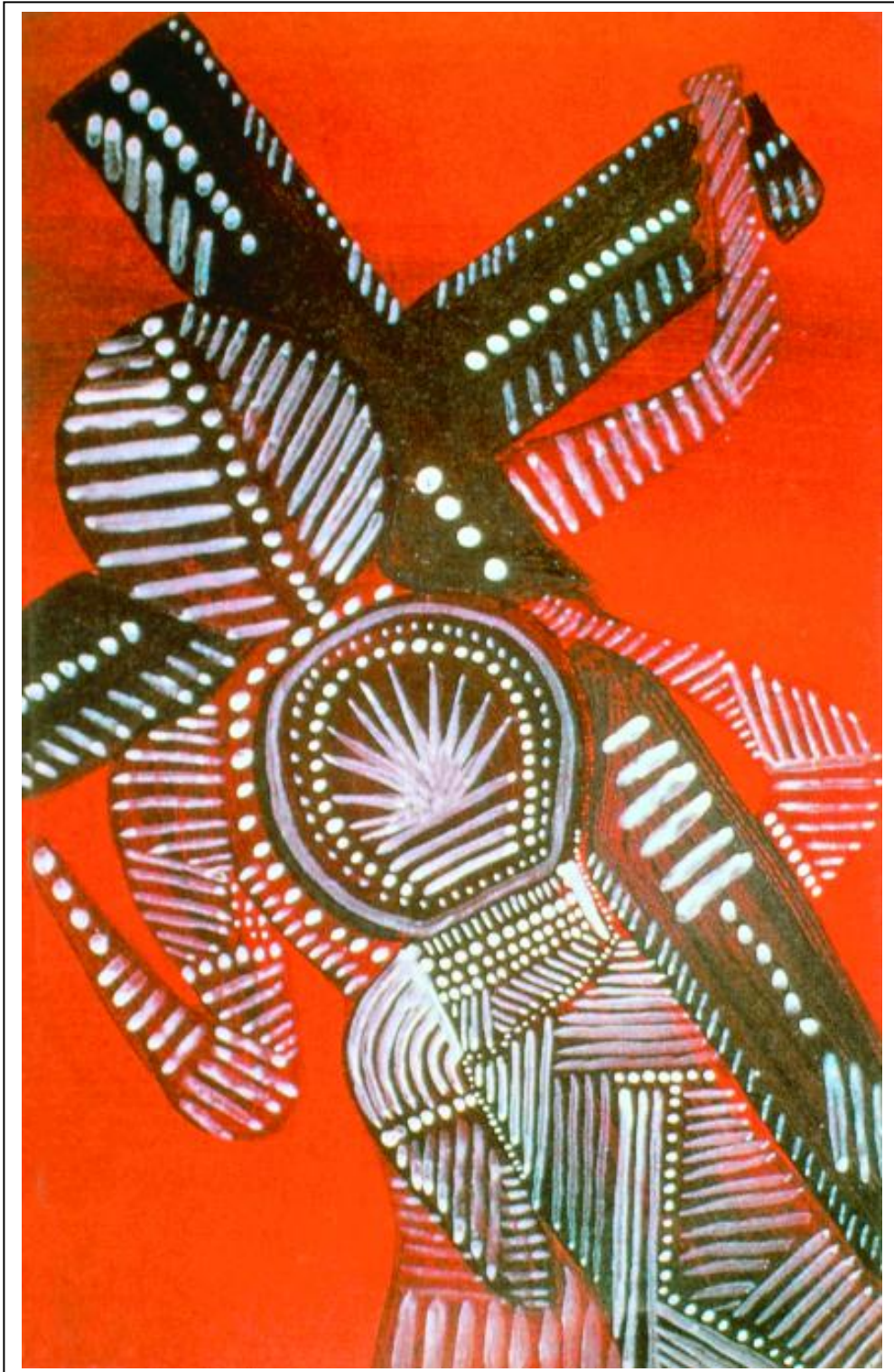


# **Journey**



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

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## Ministers Letter

Dear friends,

I suspect that relatively few of you will have heard of the 'Welcome Campaign' yet – an initiative of the United Reformed Church under the heading of 'Zero Intolerance'. I flag it now, because you will be hearing a great deal about it in the months ahead!

The campaign is about our ability to offer radical welcome – brave welcome – to those who are on a spiritual journey and who may be prepared to engage with a 'church' for the first time ( as opposed to 'recycled' Christians who may have become disenchanted with other Christian communities ). It builds on the acknowledged strengths of the URC – inclusion, a commitment to racial and social justice, its emergence as a truly multicultural community, its passion regarding issues of equality, its ability to hold breadth of belief together and its acknowledgement of the uniqueness of the local church; it grows out of a genuinely informed knowledge of the mission context in which we find ourselves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; it has some hard truths at its core...in particular, a belief that the churches have repeatedly screwed up on many of the things that Jesus represented. It requires that we have a clear understanding of who we are and what we represent as local faith communities, and it presupposes that we wish to grow... not simply we because we are fearful of continued decline, but because we have a heart for growth. It is proactive, not reactive; the campaign has some very hard-hitting questions at its heart and will challenge us about what we do and why we do it.

At present, I am at the stage of 'doing my homework'; there is material to be considered, there are 'forums' in which to share online, there are questions which need to be asked and to which clear answers should be sought. The debate which took place at the recent Synod in Dursley was helpful, but it did not allay all my concerns. Churches need to sign up to the campaign ( rather than opt out of it ), though the 'signing up' is for the training at this stage; for a church to say that it is able to offer a truly radical, unconditional welcome is harder than many of us realize initially and there are senses in which we may need to be 'made ready' for what lies ahead. Overall, I am hopeful – optimistic – even excited, however; I will endeavour to share this hope effectively.

Watch this space!

With much love in Christ,

Your friend and pastor



## Worship during April

### **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April Mothering Sunday**

10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd Diana Cullum-Hall

*This service will be followed by First Sunday Lunch in Lounge – all welcome*

### **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April Passion Sunday**

10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd Neil Johnson

*This service will be followed by a Church Meeting at noon – all welcome*

2.45pm for 3pm Kidz Aloud – A Children's Church - Theme: the events of Holy Week

6.30pm Evening Worship at Broadway URC, Walsall

*Carrs Lane Choir will be joining with friends from Broadway URC in a service of worship centred on Stainer's 'Crucifixion'*

### **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April Palm Sunday**

10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd Neil Riches & members of the Worship Group.

*We will be joined by friends from Carrs Lane Homes, as responsibility for the Homes is handed over to Yardley Great Trust*

7.00pm Evening Worship for Palm Sunday

*Carrs Lane Choir will be joined by friends from Broadway URC in a service of worship centred on Stainer's 'Crucifixion'*

### **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April**

7.30pm Worship for Holy Week at Trinity URC, Hall Green, led by Revd Mark Fisher

*This is a service of worship organized by the cluster*

### **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April Maundy Thursday**

6.30pm – 8.00pm Through the eyes of Luke - Worship and Food for Maundy

Thursday led by Revd Neil Riches. *Please let us know if you wish to share in this act of worship, since it will incorporate a full meal.*

### **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> April Good Friday**

10.00am Coffee and Hot Cross Buns

10.30am Worship for Good Friday led by Revd Neil Johnson

*It is hoped that we will be able to join the ecumenical city centre walk of witness at the close of this act of worship*

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April Easter Sunday**

9.00am Easter Breakfast – please sign up on the list in the foyer

10.30am Worship for Easter Sunday, led by Neil Johnson and Neil Riches

*Worship will include the Lord's Supper, baptism and reception into church membership*

4.00pm Street Banquet

*Worship, food and fellowship based on the parable of the Great Feast*

6.00pm Radical Worship led by Neil Riches

*This service will take the form of a 'wordless' communion service based on the story of the encounter on the Emmaus Road*

## NOTICES

**Saturday 9 April Faith, Hope and Love**  
– Christian Witness in a Multi Faith Society. 10.00am – 4.30pm at Mount Zion Community Church, Thomas St, B6 4TN. £5 in advance, £8 on day, including buffet lunch. For more details call Revd Ray Gaston 0121 452 2623 or [office@birminghamchurches.org.uk](mailto:office@birminghamchurches.org.uk)

**Tuesday 12 April Inspired by Love and Anger**, 7.00pm at Carrs Lane. You are invited to bring inspirational material eg poetry, songs, music, pictures for a reflective evening. Information from Jubilee Debt Campaign Birmingham 0121 458 6182.

**Tuesday 12 April A Christian Aid prelaunch event** 7.30pm at The Drum, 144 Potters Lane, Aston, Cost £5 (£3) 0121 333 2444, [www.the-drum.org.uk](http://www.the-drum.org.uk).

**Tuesday 19 April Stations of the Cross** 7.30pm at Trinity URC, Hall Green, led by Revd Mark Fisher.

**Saturday 21 May Many Voices 2011**, a multilingual sponsored sing, read and speak, 11.30am to 1.30pm at St Philips cathedral. Details from 0121 236 0069 or [befriend@restore-uk.org](mailto:befriend@restore-uk.org).

**Volunteers wanted.** The next Volunteer Training Programme for Chaplaincy Volunteers at Queen Elizabeth Hospital will be held on six consecutive Thursday evenings 9 June to 14 July, 7.00 – 9.00pm. If interested please contact Revd Susan Shewring or Revd Dr Barry Clark, 0121 371 4574.

**Coming soon – a new website for Birmingham Churches Together:** [www.birminghamchurches.org.uk](http://www.birminghamchurches.org.uk). By the time you read the June edition of BEN the new website will be up and running. It will include a Church Finder for over 700 places of worship and will enable the BCT office to update news and events on a regular basis and send out a regular e-bulletin in between editions of BEN.

**Church Fellowship weekend 2012**  
We have booked Holland House, Cropthorne, Worcestershire for a church weekend 23rd-25th March 2012. This will be part 'working/study' and part leisure - but all fellowship and fun! Cost is expected to be approximately £135 for the weekend - full board. In order to make a definite booking we need to know the level of interest likely. If you think you would be interested in joining us for the weekend, please sign the list on the notice board ASAP - no money yet! It is expected that folk will pay for themselves, though assistance might be available to enable everyone who wants to attend to do so. Holland House is an old house in a beautiful village and riverside setting in the heart of Worcestershire - about 1 hours travelling time from Birmingham. Accommodation is in 18 single rooms and 6 twin rooms. Food is very good! Website: [www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org). Any questions? Ask Ann Parkin

## Tons of Money

*A play by Will Evans and Valentine.  
Adapted by Alan Ayckbourn.*

The play was about a couple who owe tons of money to creditors and were unable to make payments, although the couple appears to be well off with a maid, gardener, cook and a butler as employees. The couple, Martin Stokes and Jane Winder, played the parts of Aubrey and Louise Allington brilliantly. Aubrey could not care less about the financial difficulties in which they find themselves. However, Louise was frantic and worried about their creditors. Luckily for Aubrey, his brother who lived in Alaska died and left them some money. In order to avoid paying their creditors, Louise hatched a plan whereby Aubrey died and came back as the cousin in Mexico to claim the money.

The acting was very good indeed. The script gives all the characters the opportunities to make us laugh at some point or another. Sprules (Bob Cross) frequently shifting between a dodgy brother and respectable butler, is a funny character and was acted perfectly. The stage objectives for him and Simpson played by Ann Parkin, who are colleagues, lovers, and partners in crime, are particularly amusing.

What I find amazing was the fact that during the rehearsals, which I have been fortunate to observe, the actors did not seem prepared, but the finished product told a different story.

I enjoyed the play and cannot wait to see the next production. Well done to Carrs Lane Players.

Amina Whittey



### The Carrs Lane Discussion Group

At their last meeting of 2010, it was decided by the gathered few that the theme for this group through 2011 would be *'Jesus Now?'* That wasn't where we started, but it became apparent from all the potential material we discussed that a definite theme was emerging and it is certainly proving, albeit early on in the year, to have been a good choice.

Sandwiched in the programme between a Bible study in February led by Neil Riches and another to come in May led by Neil Johnson, the focus of the March and April meetings is Marcus Borg, *Telling the Story of Jesus Today...* although sadly not in

person! At the time of writing, I have only the first of the two sessions to draw on but, despite having to listen to a recording - never ideal - I have been impressed with the material and would like to share some of the insights.

### **Jesus is...**

Borg begins by stating that the most important story ever told is the story of Jesus. He describes Jesus as the 'decisive disclosure of God', a phrase he returns to and elaborates into: 'God is Christ-like', rather than getting caught up in debates about whether 'Jesus is God'. From the perspective of North American Christianity which is his context, he outlines the four main ways of identifying and thinking about Jesus: Jesus is Dying Saviour; Superman, a hero; Judge at the Second Coming (apparently 44% of Americans are reported to be certain or think it is likely that Jesus will come again in the next 50 years) and Jesus as Teacher, the 'fall back' position for those who have difficulty with other more overtly divine images, i.e.: Jesus was a good man.

Our sources for finding out about Jesus are the gospels: part memory, reflected in the early layers of narrative recounting what Jesus said and did, and part testimony, revealed in the later interpretative layers which express convictions about Jesus. Borg makes a distinction between the pre- and post-Easter Jesus: the Jesus and the Christ. Jesus (pre-Easter) is a figure of the past, not very different in kind from us although different in degree, whereas Christ (post-Easter) is seen through the mystic experiences of his friends, believed to be the definitive experience of God. This is the Jesus of the developing tradition; the one on whom the doctrine resides. The language describing this post-Easter Jesus (Messiah; Son of God; Lord etc) relates to salvation and is used retrospectively. It is not used by Jesus.

The difficulty we have in understanding this, Borg asserts, is that we misinterpret the language. This is not the language of factuality, but that of metaphor, with more-than-literal meaning. Many of the stories recounted by the gospel writers were never meant to be factual; they are the stuff of symbol and should be read as such. He cites the birth stories and the wedding at Cana as examples. There is deeper meaning here than that suggested by the narrative itself. In this I can hear echoes of Dominic Crossan (with whom Borg has collaborated) who talks about such narratives being not *just* stories, but being *at least* stories.

### **Telling the story today**

So, Borg asks, how should we tell this story today? The surface level story of the gospels, the literally-understood, post-Easter description has underpinned the way Christians have been nurtured in their faith over centuries. But what was the pre-Easter Jesus really like? Who was he? And what was his message? A profile of the pre-Easter Jesus reveals a Jewish mystic who had visions, was engaged in contemplative prayer and revealed an intimacy with God that made God an experiential reality; he was a gifted teacher of wisdom, of enlightenment, of whom there have been few in history; a prophet proclaiming the Kingdom of God, in a

political as well as religious sense; a healer, on which his public reputation was based, and a movement-initiator who revitalised an ancient system of faith.

And his message? This Jesus was a proclaimer of the Kingdom of God; he lived God's dream for the world; and he modelled the Way, a path of 'centring on God', a return; a repenting, although not in the sense of forgiveness and a new start, but in the Jewish sense of 'going beyond the mind that you have', symbolic of returning from exile and reconnecting with God. This message made him a religious revolutionary. It was his passion for God's Kingdom on earth and his defiance of the authorities, through his teaching about immediacy of access to God without the need for official mediators, that led to his death.

### **Believing or following?**

Finally, why do we set so much store on beliefs? Is Christian life really about believing or is it about *following* Jesus? Since the early C17th, the word 'believing' has been interpreted in terms of statements of faith, creeds and doctrine. A study of the word by Wilfred Cantwell-Smith shows that, in pre-modern times (pre 1600s), 'believe' meant 'belove', from the old English 'belaven', to commit oneself in loyalty and in relationship. Borg interprets that to mean following, living Jesus' teaching. It's a simple message: centre on God and participate in God's passion for the world...love the world.

If any of this interests you, come and join us on the first Thursday of every month at 10.15am in Lounge, for a cup of coffee and a chew over of issues such as these! And if I've whetted your appetite for Marcus Borg, you may be interested in hearing him...in the flesh!

### ***RECLAIMING THE INHERITANCE OF JESUS*** with Marcus Borg

The advertising blurb says: *'Jesus and Christianity have often been domesticated by Christian theology and cultural accommodation. This conference seeks to reclaim the radical significance of Jesus from its cultural captivity by exploring a historical and metaphorical approach to seeing Jesus, God and Christianity.'*

FRIDAY 11 November 2011: 7.30pm (7.00pm Coffee and Registration)

SATURDAY 12 November 2011: 10.00 am - 4.00 pm (9.15am Coffee and Registration)

at St Marks Church, Broomhill, Sheffield

Bookings are being taken separately for the Friday and Saturday.

Let me know if you're interested in coming!  
Julie Grove

## E100 Bible Reading Challenge



A number of initiatives have grown from this year's celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the so-called King James Bible. One such project is the E100 Bible Reading Challenge, based around 100 carefully selected Bible readings ( 50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament ) designed to give participants a good understanding of the overall Bible story from Genesis to Revelation. The 'E' stands for Essential and each of the Essential 100 readings ranges from a few verses to a few chapters.

It is aimed at Christians and non-Christians alike ( few question the beauty and significance and challenge of the writings of the Bible ). It is far less daunting than a commitment to read through the whole of the Bible and offers something which is remarkably balanced, not least in the way in which the Old Testament is explored. It also redresses some of the limitations of using the lectionary as the basis for Sunday worship (truly significant passages are omitted on a regular basis ).

Leaflets listing the 100 readings are available at the back of church. Additionally, there is companion book available, which prints the 100 readings in full and provides useful background and supporting material. It is called *Essential 100* by Whitney Kuniholm and is printed by Scripture Union. Wesley Owen will certainly stock it, or you can have a word with me.

Neil



### Beyond Retirement.

When I retired from teaching in 2004 Simon and I decided we would have a Gap year. No committees, no additional voluntary work, but travel and thinking time.

At the end of 2005 we went on a Meet the People tour to South Africa. We had been there in the 60's in the apartheid era and were interested in going back to see it post independence. We also

thought it would be interesting to visit Traidcraft projects as we had been supporting the organisation since shortly after its start in 1979. I have told the story of that visit before but what has been interesting is what it has led to me doing since then.

At a debriefing after our visit to South Africa several people indicated that they had been asked to talk about our trip and the Head of the Speaker Scheme at Traidcraft, suggested that we join it as we would then get additional resources about Traidcraft which could be useful for talks. Rather reluctantly I did, but I did not envisage giving many more talks. How wrong could I be?

When filling in the form it asked whether I was prepared to talk to youth groups and schools. No way I thought! I did that for my working life but then I reconsidered, as I knew I could talk to children in small or large groups, because, as well as class teaching I had often given assemblies over the years.

Since 2006 I have been invited to give many talks to a variety of adult groups and to many school groups. Often it was 6<sup>th</sup> form groups but recently I have been asked to talk to primary school groups, sometimes to give assemblies, sometimes to enable workshops and sometimes to talk to individual classes. It has been absolutely fascinating. I have been to places I would never otherwise have gone. I have also given talks to church groups and women's groups

Over the years the talks have changed from focussing just on Traidcraft to talking about Fair Trade in general and spreading the message. I have attended training sessions to update my knowledge and skills. Since the beginning of 2011 I have already done 3 talks to schools and one to a group of elderly people at the Norman Power Centre in Ladywood and another talk is in the pipe line.

The talk to the group at the Norman Power Centre was most interesting. It was to a group of elderly people who come into the day centre. The lady in charge was keen to show these people that they could still be useful members of society and could contribute to it. They were absolutely delightful to talk to and were very interested in what I had to say and keen to buy Fair Trade goods. That was how they could help and I am sure they will. At the beginning of Fair Trade fortnight a stall had been organised and they had gone home with a variety of goods.

30+ years after the start of Traidcraft the idea of Fair trade is becoming mainstream. It is part of the school curriculum but it still needs to be pushed even though supermarkets are now selling Fair Trade goods.

It was Margaret Tonks, wife of our then minister Harold, who got things going at Carrs Lane shortly after the beginning of Traidcraft. I have to thank Margaret for getting me involved initially and leading me into a new life after retirement which has enabled me to spread the message of Fair Trade to the wider community.

Christine Rowntree

## Changing the World one Stitch and one Slurp at a Time

In February supporters of Fair Trade gathered at Lee Abbey Community's Conference Centre on the North Devon coast to hear and see what Traidcraft and other Fair Trade movements are doing about changing the world one step at a time.

The journey there by car was adventurous - there were diversions due to the weather - a lorry blown over on a bridge and a flood across the road at another point. The sheep were huddled together in the fields, seeking shelter from the slanting hedges bent over by the wind. The glimpse of the sea at Lynton with white horses riding the waves suggested that a walk on the beach might be short.

Once inside the Centre we were warmly greeted by folk with helping hands for our luggage, and subsequently a welcome cuppa and cakes. There were around fifty members of our group as we gathered in the beautiful octagonal room for the introductory session after a delicious meal. Christ in Quiet followed, in the simple chapel upstairs - a haven of peace in which to gather our thoughts and prepare for the weekend's deliberations.

The talks, workshops and activities of the conference encouraged us to think about how we are linked to people across the world by the products that we buy here in the UK. One particular focus was tea - and bees. Larry Bush, from Traidcraft shared some inspiring stories from a tea producer in Kenya. Through diversifying to keeping bees and selling the honey tea growers can improve the lives of their families and communities. As we drink 165 million cups of tea a day in the UK the 10% of us who use Fair Trade tea are a part of their success.

Another session focussed on the cotton growing in Gujarat, India, which has been the main source of income for centuries. Through the help and advice of Agorocel lives have been transformed and production increased by 20%. The premium earned, as well as the guaranteed minimum price for the products, have enabled people to dig an area for a lake to save the walk for fresh water to the nearest river 5km away. They proudly boast too of their solar powered street light in the village.

There were fairtraders from local businesses running stalls for us to purchase goods, and a fashion show was enjoyed by the conference members, and others spending the weekend there, as well as the resident community of eighty people of all ages at Lee Abbey. On Saturday afternoon some of us braved the elements and had a short tour around the estate, with steeply wooded areas, sheep grazing in the fields and the rocky beach, with a chapel inside one of the old lime kilns there.

The service on Sunday morning reflected on the ways in which we are all connected as worshipping communities in the one family of God. After a lamb lunch (reared on the estate!) Joan and I took a brief walk down to the beach before saying our farewells and heading back across Exmoor and home. It was a truly inspiring and invigorating weekend.

Pat Davies

## News from Christian Aid

**F**or the people of Jinotega, Nicaragua, coffee isn't just a caffeine kick – it's a means of transforming the lives of entire communities. By getting involved in Christian Aid Week, you can help to make this transformation possible.

Five years ago, Eladio Simeón Pineda's community was a group of poor farm labourers. Then Christian Aid partner Soppexcca (pronounced so-pecks-ka) offered them credit to establish themselves as coffee farmers and supported them to work together as a cooperative. Eladio and the other members of the La Paz del Tuma cooperative now hope that together they will transform their own community. Even though the coffee farmers of La Paz del Tuma have only been working with Soppexcca for a short time, their lives are already changing for the better. The credit which Soppexcca gave to Eladio and the other farmers has been vital in getting them started. The cooperative has a community fund that will be used to achieve the dreams which Eladio and his fellow farmers once thought were out of their reach.

'I hope one day we will have a school on this land, clean water and latrines,' says Eladio. Eladio knows that transformation is possible. He is driven by the example of a nearby community, where Gustavo Adolfo Talavera and the members of the Los Alpes cooperative have been supported by Soppexcca for 12 years. In that time, they have successfully worked to establish a school and a health centre for their community. The hopes of the people of La Paz del Tuma are hopes held for the whole community. Eladio works every day towards his dream of a purpose-built school, clean water and latrines for all the farming families of La Paz del Tuma. Soppexcca's support for coffee cooperatives like La Paz del Tuma and Los Alpes allows communities to see a bigger picture, full of possibilities for the future.

Gustavo, an illiterate coffee farmer, had few prospects until Soppexcca gave him a loan, allowing him to expand his farm and build a small and environmentally sound processing plant. He had a dream of his children being able to read and write, and be educated. His dream became a reality when Soppexcca helped members of the community get enough resources together, and a group of parents built a school themselves.

Ten years ago, education would have seemed an impossible dream for Gustavo. But Soppexcca is enabling his community to dream dreams – and then to do what seems to be impossible.

The Christian life sets us within a story that speaks of transformation where it seems to be impossible; where life is brought to the world. And the gospel stories are clear that life is about more than just survival. The life that Jesus speaks of is abundant life, rich with possibility and hope and promise. For people in Gustavo's community, it's about education and prospects.

Cooperative living is about this abundant life. It's about seeing something achievable beyond oneself and working together to make life better for everyone. Fátima Ismael, Soppexcca's director, says: 'We're not just about bread for today, but also for

tomorrow. But we don't just want bread, we want bread and honey and milk.' People like Eladio and Gustavo are seeing the bigger picture – going beyond what seems initially achievable and working together to make it a reality.

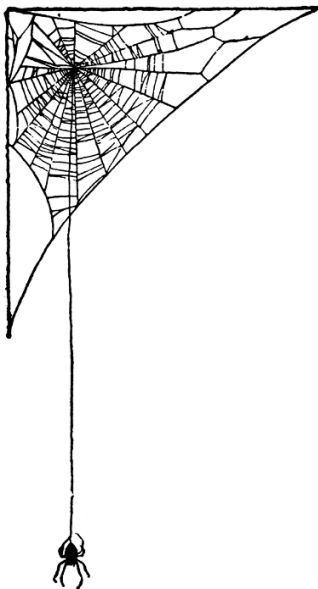
The good news is that we can be a part of this bigger picture too. When we give our time, money and energy this Christian Aid Week, we are looking beyond ourselves and enabling others to do what seems impossible. This bigger picture is the world as it could look if we allowed the kingdom of God to be a reality if we really believed in abundant life for all. It's the world that Jesus showed us in his life and ministry: a world where we stop living for ourselves and start living for others, a world where we don't put limits on love and justice, a world where the concept of our neighbour is startlingly redefined.

It's a bigger world and it's an unsettling world. But it's a world that allows for transformation in ways that we may never have imagined, to dream dreams and to do what people tell us is impossible. Of course it's about transformation for people like Gustavo. But it's also a world that offers huge transformation to ourselves and to our churches, as we place ourselves in the frame of a bigger picture where the power of love has no limits.

Christian Aid Week is a time to celebrate transformation, and an opportunity to put ourselves in the frame of God's kingdom. Help people in poverty out of poverty

From Christian Aid (by email)

### **Journey on the Web**



Thank you so much for your card from Lee Abbey. I was very excited to receive it - and what a lovely picture of the house as it used to look. Isn't it in a beautiful place! I'm very glad that you had the chance to go there, and that you enjoyed the Fair Trade conference.

I have just looked at your Carrs Lane magazine and am extremely impressed. What a lot of interesting articles there are there. I must go back and have a better look at some of them. I was so pleased to see the picture of your old Bible that my parents gave you, and to read your article about your Bibles over the years. (I'd love to read a page or two from the Cockney Bible. Maybe it's on the internet.) What beautiful photos of S. America, and of a stained glass window later on.

That's quite an undertaking to be editing a magazine like that. I expect it takes a lot of time. Carrs Lane certainly is a good church. Neil sounds a good bloke.

Greetings from Jamal and Elizabeth,  
Amman, Jordan (by email)

## Intellectually Challenging Activity

Question: *What is the most intellectually challenging activity I have undertaken recently?*

Answer: *Attending a two-day symposium with nineteen presentations given by people from three continents!*

Through Dr Sharada Sugirtharajah, who was one of the Hindu contributors to our 'Dialogues in Faith' last October, Julie Grove and I learnt that she was organising a symposium in honour of Professor John Hick this March. We expressed interest in attending and publicising it to others.

We duly attended on 10 and 11 March at the Selly Oak Campus of the University of Birmingham, along with about 120 others from all over the world.



It was tightly organised, with 30-minute presentations followed by short periods of questions, and contributors came from Britain, China, Germany and the US. It was flattering to note the five of the speakers had contributed to our October Lectures, and one will do so this autumn. To be honest, several of the presentations passed several feet over my head without leaving a mark (and, at times, stretched my reasonable vocabulary beyond its limits!), some seemed concerned with narrow academic definitions concerning the theology and philosophy of religion, but others were engaging and challenging. What was clear was that there were an alarming number of high-powered brains in the room, but it was good to be able to discover that my own still worked!

In addition, to the presentations, there was an hour-long question and answer session with John on the second day. For someone in his 90<sup>th</sup> year, he showed a daunting ability to engage with and respond to the questioners in an open and honest way. What was also most evident was the enormous affection and respect in which he is held, not least by the numerous past research students present.

Whatever one's views on John's work, it is clear that we have amongst us one of the outstanding thinkers of our time, who is also a very charming and ironical person. We have been privileged to have had him as a member of Carrs Lane and, from Julie's and my point of view, to have his continuing wise advice and support in planning the Lecture series since its inception – it is fair to say that we would never have got some of most eminent speakers without John's help and vast range of contacts.

Simon Rowntree

## Religious Pluralism and the Modern World: An ongoing philosophical engagement with John Hick

This was the title of a unique event held to honour a remarkable man, described as a 'true guru' with his mixture of formidable scholarship and deep humanity; a prolific writer, now into his ninetieth year, whose output of publications continues to be challenging and original; a profound thinker but also an activist who has always been passionate in his support of the marginalised, especially those persecuted because of their race or religion; a man who discusses issues that interest people, at the heart of which is the need to find meaning in the mysteries of life and death; someone whose writing has inspired admiration and criticism in almost equal measure but, above all, has made people *think*...and all with a quiet dignity, serenity and warmth.

For a bear of little brain, it has always been a wonder to 'sit at the feet of this guru' and it was a privilege to be able to attend this event at the university. It was a clear measure of the regard in which John Hick is held by his academic peers, some of them former students, that so many travelled to Birmingham from far and wide to share in and, for many, to make contributions to the symposium. The plan is for the papers to be published as a *Festschrift* honouring John, to coincide with his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in January 2012. It was fitting that the welcome included the announcement that the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion has established the John Hick Centre for Philosophy of Religion, dedicated to fostering excellence in teaching and research in the subject from a global perspective. As I said to John's son, Peter, over coffee, you must be so proud of him!



The programme was full and daunting! Over two richly word-saturated days, papers were presented on various aspects of John's work, some lauding it and building on it, some challenging it, although always recognising his enormous contribution to scholarship in these academic disciplines. There was pure philosophy of religion, theology, (predictably radical) and examples of applications of his work in a variety of

other fields such as therapy and religious education...in China as well as here! Contributors pondered whether John is a theologian or a philosopher; whether his is religious pluralism or global theology and, later in the day, whether it is possible to talk of 'interreligious theology'. His search for religious truth was discussed alongside Gandhi, and then Paul Tillich, who was described as being on the threshold of becoming a pluralist. John is recognised as being unusual amongst theologians because, although writing as a Christian, his approach is not confessional nor does he claim supremacy for Christianity; instead he analyses its truth as a philosopher of religion, a secular pursuit. He is nevertheless a committed believer, holding to his personal, critically informed faith.

With just a short break for a siesta in the afternoons, John listened with interest throughout, commenting on individual papers sagely and often with good humour. In the session in which he took centre stage, taking questions posed first by present students and then from the floor, he showed an undiminished grasp of his subject, along with a humility that allowed him to say at times he just didn't know the answer.

In all the discussions about John's work, it was this session which I felt revealed the man. He talked about his 'theology-in-action' in Birmingham in the 1970s when he delivered furniture to immigrant families in Handsworth in his camper van. His fight against racism led him to produce an exposé of the 'new Nazism' of the National Front and he talked about the refusal of the churches in the city to endorse it. He felt sure their reaction would be different today!

Responding to one of the first students whose question dealt with how John would like his legacy to be followed up, he said that, at a practical level, he would like people of different faiths to work together collaboratively and, at an academic level, he would hope that theoretical problems thrown up by the symposium would continue to be pondered and rigorously discussed.

In answer to the huge variety of questions that followed, he spoke variously of his beliefs that we are all connected at a deeply unconscious level; that the reality of religion is in religious experience, not in systems or organisations...that its essence is mystical, an element in all major faiths; that all religion is the cultural response to spiritual experience; that the Real, the Ultimate, is always there but we are not ready for it...if we were all aware of God all the time, our free response to God would be undermined; that there has to be value in diversity of religious traditions because, leaving aside the accident of birth, different people have different needs and find expression of their faith in different things: social action, ritual, mystical experience; that the great world faiths have different perceptions of and responses to the Ultimate, quoting a Muslim Sufi who said: 'The lamps are different, but the light is the same', and they are all about transformation from self-centredness to Reality-centredness; that everyone would do well to learn to meditate; that the universe is ambiguous and can be interpreted in different ways but it sets us at a distance from the Ultimate Reality by our inability to have clear knowledge of it; that we all see the same things differently, according to our experience and, quoting Thomas Aquinas, 'Things known are in the knower in the mode of the knower'.

Lie down in a darkened room... and think about it. I still am!

Julie Grove

## Climate Change

Supporters of the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition are arranging lobby meetings across England and Wales to make sure their MPs represent their climate concerns and understand the need to take firm action on climate change.



Now is a crucial time to make sure our leaders deliver the Climate Change Act, strengthen the Energy Bill, and show leadership internationally. With your help we can ensure the UK makes good on its promise to reduce carbon emissions and demands that the World Bank stop investing in fossil fuels.

For more information, including briefings on climate issues and advice on lobbying your MP, visit the Christian Aid website, [christianaid.org.uk](http://christianaid.org.uk) or [www.stopclimatechaos.org/the-big-connection](http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/the-big-connection)

Clare Groves  
Climate Change Campaigns Officer  
Christian Aid

*In view of the current disaster in Japan re nuclear powered fuel supplies we invite you to write to us about the issues raised. Ed*



This coming year promises to be an exciting one for Operation Noah. As part of our Carbon Exodus campaign we are forming a new theology development group to help us unpack all the biblical teaching that relates to our care of creation. Look out for helpful and challenging bible studies, sermon outlines and other materials on our website.

The last few months have brought some dramatic weather conditions around the world with harrowing repercussions for thousands. Board member, Professor Michael Northcott, provides a fascinating overview of the response. He looks into the meteorological science behind the UK's arctic conditions and gives a stark analysis of the media response. Read his article on our website, [www.operationnoah.org](http://www.operationnoah.org). We would be very interested in your responses.

Chris Brice  
Chair of Operation Noah

## Half a Dozen Popular Errors

*...taken from Carrs Lane Monthly for January 1864. I know that I have used a variety of material from the past in this issue of 'Journey', but the following tickled me greatly!*

1. That the Morning Service at Carrs Lane begins at twenty-five minutes before Eleven.
2. That the Chapel is not open at all on Sunday Evenings.
3. That Strangers worshipping with us are so well acquainted with the hymns we sing, that it would be an impertinence to offer them a book (*the editor did go on to say that this error was disappearing rapidly!*).
4. That the Pews at Carrs Lane are so wide that it is perfectly convenient for late comers to have to push by three or four persons already seated, in order to reach the end of the pew farthest from the door; and that strangers, especially, rather like the little excitement involving struggling over hassocks, and forcing their way through other impediments, to the top of the pew.
5. That a proper feeling of respect for the Choir requires that the congregation should sing at least half a note behind them.
6. That it greatly enriches and indeed perfects the general effect of our Congregational Psalmody, for every man who is told by his friends that he sings a 'beautiful tenor', or a 'capital bass', totally to disregard the arrangement of the parts in the Tune Book used by the congregation, and to sing a tenor or bass of his own. This novel application of the principles of Voluntaryism and Independency is so admired by some persons, that they would like it to be adopted by the chorus at the next Birmingham Festival; and they are particularly anxious that its admirable effect should be illustrated in Handel's Messiah.

*So...debates regard time, commitment, welcome and music are nothing new! I am mightily relieved to encounter such a strong sense of humour among our forebears.*

Neil

## A Long Memory...

**C**an you remember the key points of any sermons which were preached over forty years ago? If you are like me, the answer is likely to be, 'Not very many'. Not everybody is the same, however...witness an encounter which I had in Hall Green recently.

I was attending the Lenten bread and soup lunch organized by the local support group for the Bible Society. Whilst I recognize some 'local' faces, many are still unfamiliar to me, but on this occasion I sat down next to a man whom I had met for the first time at the cluster service for Ash Wednesday, which had been held at Christ Church, Solihull, during the previous week. We had only spoken briefly on that first occasion, but at least we knew each other by sight. We talked of a number of things whilst we enjoyed our bread, soup and some very good homemade cakes ( not

particularly 'Lenten', I know, but they were good! ); eventually, we came to talk about the opening of the new – as in current – Carrs Lane buildings.



This gentleman had been present at the official opening – and could remember clearly the substance of the 'teaching' given on that occasion. Reference was made to the steel cross outside the front of the building ( a cross which remains, I believe, the largest freestanding metal cross in England ) and the manner of its arrival in the centre of building; in particular, comment was made on the

description attached to it – 'abnormal load' – and this picture, metaphor, served as the inspiration at the heart of the teaching.

I listened with interest to what he said, and have continued to mull over the thought at the heart of the conversation: during this time of Lent, is there still value in thinking about the cross of Jesus as an 'abnormal load'? To be honest, it is not a straightforward picture and it works at a number of levels; you may find it completely unhelpful... but then again, you might find it an idea worth examining further.

Neil

## Commitment for Life

Extracts from Moving Stories 135. *Responding to the crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories: March 2011. Non-violent resistance and repairing the world: some thoughts on 'Sumud' and 'Tikkun Olam'*

### Sumud

Steadfastness takes many forms. For refugees forced to flee their homes and live in other lands, it's that deep yearning for the land in which they grew up, and to which they would love to return. Many still have the keys to their homes. The key is the symbol of the 'right of return' – which is enshrined in international law, but consistently ruled out by successive Israeli governments.

For those who live in Palestine, but who daily face the humiliation of checkpoints, road closures, restrictions on travel, limited employment possibilities, house demolitions, arrest without due process of law (the list is endless) it's above all the decision to stay put. You may remember one of the first KEs, when I had met Fariel Abu Haikel in her home on Tel Rumeida. Following yet another attack by settlers a not unkindly Israeli policeman had suggested that it was – perhaps – time to move. To which she had replied – and it was her way of saying 'I'm staying put': 'What should I tell the almond trees? What should I tell the Tel Rumeida moon?' That's sumud.

When our friend Atta rebuilt his house for the third time, after two had been demolished by the Israeli army; that's sumud.

When our neighbours here in the Old City keep alive their humanity – and respect

the humanity of others -in the face of real poverty, shortage of water, and sons and husbands in prison and 'administrative detention'; that's sumud. Sumud is a 'third way' – Shehadeh's phrase – between passivity and violence. Violence against the occupation is a no-brainer; it simply breeds more violence, and Israel with its military might can crush most armed uprisings. The essence of sumud is non-violent resistance, but resistance it certainly is. Palestinians are no 'push-over'.

If 'sumud' inspires many a Palestinian, 'Tikkun Olam' inspires at least some Israelis. In a recent article in the Independent, Donald Macintyre wrote about Arik Ascherman. Arik is a rabbi, with a congregation in Jerusalem. He is also Director of Rabbis for Human Rights. He and his colleagues have been very busy during the olive harvest, working alongside Palestinians, and often – as I have seen for myself – bearing the brunt of settler and Israeli military violence.

In his interview with Macintyre, Arik spoke of the importance of Tikkun Olam, which, being roughly translated, means 'repairing the world'. It's an ancient Jewish concept, and takes many forms. Both the 'left' and the 'right' of Israeli religion and politics espouse it, but from what I have seen of Arik and his colleagues his idea of 'repairing the world' derives from a reading of the Hebrew Bible which majors on the themes of social and economic justice, compassion, non-violent resistance to oppressive structures (and people!) and human rights – and the willingness to pay the cost of confrontation with the powers-that-be.

I seem to remember that another rather famous Jew followed a similar path.

*Contributed by Wendy Firmin*

## **A Prayer for Jerusalem**

God of Justice - Our thoughts are not your thoughts, but we sense your deep sadness that three world faiths struggle to sustain a hold on Jerusalem, your holy city. We feel your grief as discrimination.

and oppression are part of daily life for many citizens, and that Palestinian homes are being bulldozed in the Eastern suburbs. We pray that today's political conflict will give way to the transformation of Jerusalem, into a city where all people of good will are welcome.

God of Peace - Our thoughts are not your thoughts, but we believe that you long for the day when fear and suspicion between faith communities gives way to mutual respect. We pray that wise negotiators will hear and feel the experience of loss in each culture, and that reparation will be made to those whose lives have been devastated in living memory. We pray that in the new Jerusalem, resources will be shared and the political future reshaped.

God of Love - Our thoughts are not your thoughts, but we long for Jerusalem to be a place where every child is known to be a child of God, and where, like Jesus, they may grow up in wisdom and grace, and in the full knowledge of the God of Abraham. Amen.

From the WWPPPI leaflet

## On this day ...

From the Carrs Lane Missionary Chronicle April 1911

*Extracts concerning the departure of Dr. and Mrs. Jowett, reflecting the attitudes of the time. One is from the Editorial, one from the report by a Deacon present at the final leave-taking on board the "Mauretania" at Liverpool, and one from a message of sympathy sent on behalf of Victoria Street Congregational Church, Derby, who were also losing their Pastor at this time.*

1. The Church has never before been so much in the public eye, or previously received such ardent and devoted attention from the Press as within the last few weeks. Dailies and weeklies have vied with each other in giving news of Carrs Lane, inspired and otherwise, authentic and --- *journalistic*, not to give it too fine a point! Notwithstanding much eagerness and lack of restraint in the earlier stages of our "crisis," they certainly treated us well in connection with the public farewell meeting in the Town Hall. Excellent accounts appeared in the leading papers of the following day, and *The British Congregationalist* and *The Christian World* each gave an admirable summary of the proceedings. One note may be added to these. During the afternoon a beautiful handbag was presented to Mrs. Jowett on behalf of the members and workers of the Girls' Gymnasium Club of Digbeth Institute.

2. We were able to inspect the cabin provided for their use on the voyage, and found their quarters both comfortable and luxurious. For the next hour and a half we were able to have occasional chats with them, and watched with much interest while our late Pastor was waited upon by deputations, worried by reporters, and bombarded with telegrams of good wishes. About 5 o'clock we had to say a few words of final farewell, leave the vessel, and then watch from the Landing Stage while she quietly and swiftly passed down the river. We waved our last adieus, and received our friends' answer as long as they were in sight; and so we left them in good hope, but with hearts sad and sore at parting.

3. In all love and sympathy we commend you to the comfort and guidance of the Great Head of the Church, praying that He may manifest to you such an increasing realisation of His own presence when you meet together, that you may be uplifted and comforted, so that you may in the midst of your regrets recognise the goodness and lovingkindness of the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, and under His unfailing care the vacant place may be so filled in due time, that you may be enabled to realise, with gratitude, that "He doeth all things well."

From the Carrs Lane Journal – April 1961

*These two pieces may have been written fifty or more years ago, but they reflect human attitudes that are relevant to any time. They inspire our own thoughts about such aspects of the timeless Easter story as greed, arrogance, selfishness and cruelty, countermanded by justice, faithfulness, thankfulness, love and compassion.*

## The Passion Play, by Rosemary Dow

Last summer, my mother and I realised a great ambition, for we went to Oberammergau to see the Passion Play. As is generally known, this play is produced by the villagers of Oberammergau approximately every tenth year, in thanksgiving to God for the way the village was saved from a terrible plague in 1633. Today there is still a spirit of dedication at Oberammergau, and the villagers have great pride in the vow which their forefathers took.

Preparations for this production began over two years ago. The parts naturally are very carefully chosen, so that the players really live what they are acting. It is the custom that no married women take part. No make-up is used. The men and boys grow their hair to resemble the Jews of 2,000 years ago.

We arrived one evening, two of 5,000 guests at the village of 5,000 inhabitants. We were enchanted with the village and its beautifully kept houses, and full of admiration for our hard-working German hostess.

The next morning we were called early and simply followed the crowd silently streaming towards the Passion Play House. Although the play lasted all day, we were not weary for it really seemed that we had gone back 2,000 years and were experiencing the last event of Christ's life.

Clearly it was the Pharisees in all their self-righteousness who killed Jesus. They were afraid of losing their authority. Judas was portrayed as an irresponsible boy, who did not understand Jesus's work. His remorse was terrible to behold and one longed for him to accept complete forgiveness. The picture of Pilate was of a more upright man than one finds in the Gospels. He denounced vehemently the blind jealousy of the Sanhedrin.

The scene when the mob gathered outside Pilate's house shouting "Crucify Christ; free Barabbas," and screaming hysterically, was frightening, for it reminded us that even today crowds can get similarly excited.

The Pharisees had gone to all quarters of Jerusalem where Jesus was not known. There each of them wildly incited the people and together they drew them to the centre of Jerusalem to form one mad, surging mob.

The crucifixion scene was sensitively performed, showing sufficient to help one realise how it must have happened. When Jesus died a great peace descended. His enemies left and his friends slowly and lovingly took Jesus down from the Cross.

The last scene of the Resurrection for me went too quickly. We had seen so much of Jesus's suffering and had little time to pause and realise the significance of His rising again that we might live.

The Sandals, reprinted from the Times by permission of the author, Kirkland Bridge.

The dice clattered on the upturned shield – a nine, a three, a seven, a pair of fives – then, last soldier to throw with ten to beat. Brutus rattled the dice-cup – and threw an eleven.

He had won the sandals, the last poor remnant of a pitiful bundle: as he felt the scarred leather and bent the worn soles, his eyes rested on the pierced, bleeding feet on the middle Cross, and he flushed and started to swear, *“Why, by Jupiter, the poor -----,”* when a sharp command rang out, *“On your feet, men”*; and half-leaning on his lance, his stomach churning inside him, Brutus stood and watched the dreadful sky turning blacker every minute, with a cold, dry wind blowing the sand into a man’s teeth; and always his eyes came back to the three black crosses, which pointed like accusing fingers to the menacing sky; and, all about him, the people murmured and mourned, muttered and mocked among themselves.

*“They say the Governor’s wife’s been in a dead faint since last night”* – *“Thirty pieces of silver and the fool took the money back”*; a whitefaced maid servant whispered, *“I know ‘e were one o’ them, big man ‘e were wi’ a red beard – fisherman, I ‘eard say”*; a sharp-nosed money changer snarled, *“I spat on him; yeh and I’d do it again.”* He shook his fist, *“The wicked man, it were sundown before I got my silver to rights the day he came into the Temple.”* Slowly Brutus walked among the crowd, paused beside a white-bearded fanatic in priestly robes – *“Ah, thou,”* he spat on the ground, *“Save thyself if thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross,”* and spat again. A sudden fury overcame Brutus, and he crashed the heel of his lance on the sandalled foot of the mocking priest.

Yet not all of them had murder in their hearts that black day: there was the tragic little group of the three Marys and faithful John, their hearts breaking, silently weeping, standing apart; and others too, were scattered about the crowd – a widow – *“He raised my only son from the dead, at the very hour of his burying”*; a father spoke, *“And the children adored Him – no getting them to bed when He came to supper”* – *“My wife had been bedridden for twenty years, Sir, and then – He came”* – *“But I tell you I was there – fed five thousand of us from five loaves and two fishes He did – and may I drop down dead this minute if I’m telling a lie”*: and there was a pale girl with raven-black hair, eyes swollen red with crying: *“He had the kindest eyes I ever saw; and when He smiled,”* she sobbed, *“you knew He understood and that you could never be the same again.”*

The Centurion gave a curt order, the Guard came swiftly to attention, turned to march down the hill, when suddenly Brutus strode across to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and as he placed the sandals in her trembling hands, his deep, gruff voice softened, *“You might like to keep these, Ma’am.”*

Contributed by Wendy Firrnin

## Changing times...

**A**s we move through Lent, with its emphasis on discipline and spiritual growth, a number of things have caused me to wonder at how much attitudes have changed over the years. On my desk, in front of me, I have a copy of the manual for members of Carrs Lane in 1855: strong words and severe injunctions abound! In the section headed, 'Bye Laws of the Church', the following can be found...

*If any member shall absent himself from the Lord's Table six successive times of the administration of the Lord's Supper, without satisfactory explanation, he shall be thereby excluded ( i.e. removed from the membership list ).*

This kind of provision was common in 19<sup>th</sup> century congregations, but I suspect that the following – also in the Carrs Lane manual – was more unusual:

*If any member of the church shall become a bankrupt, or shall compound with his creditors for the payment of a less sum than his whole debt, a deputation of two members shall be appointed to inquire whether his conduct has been such as to bring any reproach upon his Christian confession, and make their report as early as convenient, that the church may know whether it is called upon for the exercise of its authority in a way of discipline, or of its affections in a way of sympathy.*

I suspect that this would elicit a wide variety of responses today, not least in the current financial climate!

I couldn't resist a sneaky look at the section entitled, 'Duties ( of church members ) due to the Pastor'. I have no problem with, '*Provision for his temporal comfort*' – this is an area in which Carrs Lane and the denomination excel! The following is rather more puzzling, however:

*Constant, punctual and devout attendance on his ministrations, not neglecting him for others, not led by curiosity to indulge a rambling taste for novelty.*

Curious wording indeed! You will be pleased to know that I don't often discern a 'rambling taste for novelty', for novelty's sake; it does make you wonder what was going on in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Neil

## Carrs Lane Homes – Handover Party

A very happy event took place on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March to celebrate the handover from the Carrs Lane Homes Trust (CLH) to Yardley Great Trust (YGT) when the residents of CLH invited present and past trustees of CLH, solicitors from Anthony Collins, Accord Housing Association and trustees and staff from YGT.

We were treated to a very tasty buffet, while the final handover documents were signed by the two sets of trustees.

A welcome to everyone was extended by Len Coleman, chairman of the CLH social committee, and Andrew Veitch responded on behalf of the trustees giving thanks to everyone who had been involved in the lengthy handover process, staff at Accord represented by Islyn Philips-Martin, the housing officer responsible for CLH. He particularly paid tribute to the CLH Scheme Managers - Sylvia White and Lesley Moore, who had had to cope with a very difficult situation during 2010, when they were very uncertain whether they would be able to keep their jobs due to the vagaries of the Supporting People grant issue. Floral arrangements were presented to them both and in her absence to Hayley Benson, the cleaner, all of whom will continue to be employed by YGT.

Andrew also paid tribute to the CLH residents who had responded positively to the handover plans and who had trusted the CLH trustees to make the right decisions – with some valuable involvement from themselves. Iris Aylin, chair of the trustees of YGT gave a very warm welcome to everyone involved in CLH to the fold of YGT and assured all the residents and staff of the care they would be given by the staff at YGT.

The evening continued with music provided by Eddie Ibble, a CLH resident and his colleague Jason who are part of a traditional Caribbean steel band. Many of those at the party joined in with informal dancing! Another welcome party has already been planned by YGT at their main site in Stechford, where 22 CLH residents have already signed up to attend – a sign of things to come.

Please remember all concerned with CLH in your prayers in the coming weeks that the physical handover will go smoothly and hopefully many will be able to attend the celebratory service on 17 April at Carrs Lane Church.

Andrew Veitch

## Notes from the Organ Bench

**S**urely one of the highlights of events during March was the performance of Bach's St Matthew Passion, by ensemble 1685. I felt privileged to be asked to sing in this, and whilst I silently cursed Bach for writing such fiendishly difficult music (from a technical point-of-view), his genius in portraying the passion of Christ through this work is nothing short of extraordinary: yes, parts of it are demanding on the ears, but as you begin to understand the score - carefully working through the details over several weeks, as I and the rest of ensemble 1685 did - you begin to marvel at the imagination and intellect of Bach. Richard Jeffcoat, the director of the ensemble 1685, was keen to perform this as authentically as possible, and I'm confident that Bach, if he were here today, would have been at least reasonably pleased with our attempt.

Continuing on the theme of Christ's passion, John Stainer's Crucifixion will be performed here on 17<sup>th</sup> April, by the combined choirs of Carrs Lane and Broadway URC (Walsall) - and we'll be performing it on the 10<sup>th</sup> April at Broadway. I hope you will think about coming to this event, which will take the form of a service in the evening.

Looking ahead, sign-up sheets will shortly be available for the African Drumming workshop on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Keep an eye out for more information on this!

Tim Batty  
Church Musician

### Millennium Development Goals



Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

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).



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## Carrs Lane Regular Activities

### SUNDAYS

#### Morning Worship

Every Sunday at 10.30am  
with Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month

#### Afternoon Worship and Healing Service

Third Sunday at 4.30pm

#### Children's Church

Second Sunday at 2.30pm

#### Radical Worship

Fourth Sunday at 6.00pm

#### First Sunday Lunch

First Sunday each month at 12.30pm

#### Church Meeting

Second Sunday at 12 noon

#### Singing Group

Third Sunday 9.45 – 10.15am

### WEEK DAYS

#### Lunchtime Healing Service

Every Wednesday 1.15pm

#### Prayer Group

First Wednesday at 7.00 pm

#### Discussion Group

First Thursday at 10.15 am

#### Carrs Lane Players (drama group)

Fridays at 7.45 pm

#### Charity Knitting Circle

First Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

#### Carrs Lane Fair Trade Shop

First and Third Sunday after morning worship  
and Tuesday - Friday 10.30 am - 2.30 pm

#### Counselling Centre

Monday - Friday 11.00 am - 1.30 pm  
and Monday to Wednesday evenings 7.00 - 9.00 pm

Contact details for Carrs Lane Church  
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