

# Journey



**The continuing story of  
Carrs Lane Church  
October 2010**



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# MINISTERS LETTER

Dear Friends!

Let me begin by thanking everyone at Carrs Lane for making Beverley and me so welcome. We relocated the office of the Methodist Central Mission at the end of July and have taken over the former Quiet Room space. This will be our home until after next Easter when we will move into a larger room within the Church Centre.

As I write this Neil Riches and I are putting the finishing touches to the arrangements for the 'Pro:claim' event on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October. This will be an occasion for people to contribute to the on-going conversations about Carrs Lane becoming an ecumenical church shared by both the URC and Methodist denominations. We have before us a God-given opportunity to release resources for City Centre mission and ministry – we must grab it with both hands!

From the time of the first disciples to this very day, the community of Jesus Christ has lived with a certain tension. The good news of Jesus is that God's reign on earth is both here and yet to come, so all that we do in the name of Jesus should be a sign of that tension in time. All that we do as the Christian Church (whether it be worship and fellowship, children's work and chaplaincies, homeless ministry and Traidcraft) must address immediate need and give a taste of things to come. A new ecumenical future for Carrs Lane Church will be a sign of God's kingdom at the centre of our city.

Peace to you all.

Neil (Rev Neil Johnson)

## Thought for the month

### The Pilgrim's Aiding

(for anyone out and about on the road this month....)

God be with thee in every pass,  
Jesus be with thee on every hill,  
Spirit be with thee on every stream,  
Headland and ridge and lawn;

Each sea and land, each moor and meadow,  
Each lying down, each rising up,  
In the trough of the waves, on the crest of the billows,  
Each step of the journey thou goest.

*A Celtic prayer collected by Alexander Carmichael.*



## Sunday Worship during October

### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October

10.30am Informal Morning Worship in the Lounge

1.00pm – 4.00pm PRO:CLAIM - lunch and conversations about the new URC-Methodist Church

### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October

10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd Ernest Cruchley

2.45pm for 3.00pm Kidz Aloud : a Children's Church

### Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October

10.30am Morning Worship led by Revd Pamela Turner

No afternoon service

### Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October

10.30am Morning Worship led by Helen Woodall

6.00pm Radical Worship – 'Why believe in the Church?'

### Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> October

1030am Morning Worship led by Revd Graham Sweeney



## NOTICES

The Edgbaston Creative Textile Group (to which Christine Rowntree belongs) is holding an exhibition of their work in The Coach House Gallery at Winterbourne House and Garden, Edgbaston Park Road from 1 October to 11 November. '*Winterbourne Through the Seasons*' An Exhibition of Embroideries and Textiles inspired by the Gardens at Winterbourne. The gallery is open daily 11am - 4pm and entry is free to Winterbourne House and Gallery. There are admission charges to Winterbourne Gardens.

Talks and Meetings with Ester Leite Lisboa, programme co-ordinator of 'Health & Rights' team of the ecumenical organisation KOINONIA. Ester is training religious leaders in Brazil in health and rights issues and gender relations. Ester has spoken at conferences in Central and North America and Africa about HIV/AIDS prevention. **5 October** – Breakfast and Talk – Anthony Collins Solicitors, 134 Edmund Street, B3 2ES - **talk 8am, questions & discussions 9-10am**. An opportunity for Christians working in the city and local church leaders to meet together for breakfast and hear from Ester Lisboa. Contact Anna 0121 200 2283

**10 October Micah Sunday**  
[www.micahchallenge.org.uk](http://www.micahchallenge.org.uk)

**14 October World Sight Day**  
[www.v2020.org](http://www.v2020.org)

**17 October Healthcare Sunday**  
[www.healthcaresunday.org.uk](http://www.healthcaresunday.org.uk)

**17 to 24 October One World Week**  
[www.oneworldweek.org/v2/](http://www.oneworldweek.org/v2/)

**18 October 7 for 7.30pm**  
Masalla Merchant, Pershore Road, B30 2YT (opposite Stirchley Bowling Alley)  
**Jubilee Debt Campaign** - Meal with a Focus on Bangladesh.  
Come and taste tempting Bangladeshi food at a local restaurant with table top discussion about JDC issues.  
Pamela Jabber will contribute, having just returned from there. Evening costs £10, including gratuities, - poppadums and sauces, main course.  
Further information call Rachel 0121 472 1379 by 11 October.

**Autumn Reflection Days Barnes Close**  
20 October 2010 and 17 November  
'God – our loving Father.'  
Wednesdays 10am – 4pm  
Cost £12 per person per day.

Church Service: '*Impacting Birmingham, Impacting the World.*'  
This service of worship is being promoted to show to the Government the vibrancy and numerical strength of the Christian community in Birmingham. Christian Aid, Cafod, World Vision and Tearfund are sponsoring the Conservative Party Conference Church Service in the **Town Hall on Monday 4 October 2010 at 6.30pm**. (Doors open 6pm for free organ recital by City Organist Thomas Trotter) Music by Witness, Riverside Church and Academy of Gospel Music Choir.

\*This event shows no party political affiliation; it would be promoted to coincide with a similar event by any main political party.

**30 October National Volunteers Day** –  
Look out for special events in your area

**Faiths at Work.** Understanding people of other faiths you meet at work. Handsworth Group will meet 6pm on Mondays **4, 11, 18, October** at Handsworth Fire Station. Contact Ruth Tetlow 0121 449 4892.

ruthtetlow@btinternet.com

Solihull Group will meet 6pm on Wednesdays **6, 13, 20 October** at the Priory, Church Hill Road Contact Barbara Hayes 0121 426 0426, cigb@birmingham.anglican.org.

**1 – 7 November Islamic Awareness Week** [www.iaw.org.uk](http://www.iaw.org.uk)

**Saturday 6 November Quinborne Choir** 7.30pm at Selly Oak Methodist Church, Langleys Road. Music for an Autumn Evening. A selection ranging from Handel to Rodgers and Hammerstein.

Sorry!

We apologise for the lateness of the October Journey. New computers have been installed in the office, and we could not print until teething problems were solved. Ed

## ABOUT PEOPLE

We welcomed **Emmanuel Ijioma** to our Carrs Lane Community in August, when Jo Merrygold left us for pastures new. Emmanuel is currently studying missiology at Birmingham University. He is a volunteer with the Retail Chaplaincy, and is looking forward to leading worship for us during Neil's Sabbatical.

We wish Neil well when he takes his Sabbatical from October to December this year.

Congratulations to Clare and Jon on the birth of their twin daughters Emily and Sophie, also to the proud grandparents, Christine and Simon.

We send our sympathy to the family and friends of Sam Wilson, who died in September.

Joan Keight has died after a short illness. We send our sympathy to her family and friends.

### Monday Evenings in November

We are planning a series of four evening meetings on the first, second, fourth and fifth Monday evenings in November on the theme of 'Journey into Advent', using material from a book called "Advent Prayers from Iona". (the third Monday evening is a church visitors' meeting).

We will start with soup and rolls at 6.30pm in Lounge, with the main discussion at 7.00 pm and finish at 8.00pm.

1 November 'Journeying' – using Psalm 139 v 1- 4 and 23 – 24

8 November 'Worrying' – Isaiah 22 v 1 – 7

22 November 'Hoping' - Revelation 22 v 1 – 7

29 November 'Seeing' - John 12 v 20 – 26

The meetings are open to everyone, so please come along.

## PRO:CLAIM

Final thoughts before I embark on my sabbatical...

I lost count of the number of times that I had to increase the catering order: on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 60 portions of roast beef and 60 portions of chicken – along with a vegetarian risotto – were delivered to Carrs Lane. All were eaten...and I know that a few latecomers struggled to get anything akin to a Sunday lunch: my apologies. For me, though, this touches on one of the most encouraging aspects of the day: the high level of interest in what is going on here at Carrs Lane, both from within Methodism and from other churches in the centre of Birmingham. To their goodwill, add an awareness of widespread prayer...this and more will be needed, for whilst the journey ahead is exciting, it would be foolish – irresponsible – to pretend that it will always be easy.

Following the presentation by Neil J and myself, rightly, some searching questions were asked: yes, some issues relating to structures and finances will not be easy – or quick – to resolve. As we tried to explain on the day, we are being well supported by folk with the requisite levels of expertise, both from within our respective denominations and from the ecumenical scene. We also acknowledged that the future will not always be tidy: developing and sustaining Christian communities based on 'relationship' against a backdrop of highly institutional historic denominations is necessarily going to be difficult. As I have said on many occasions, though, Jesus calls us to live life in creative tension: things will not always be as neat and tidy as we would like them to be, because we are dealing with human beings, not cold statistics on a piece of paper.

After presentations and questions, over 15 groups took part in discussion: in time, all their recorded comments will be written up, sorted according to theme and made available to all those interested. Equally, your thoughts relating to the name of the new church will be analysed; safe to say that here, however, folk were not necessarily as creative in their thinking as we hoped that they would be!

Hopefully, these few sentences will be supplemented by many others. For me, they represent an opportunity to say that I am encouraged as I prepare to embark on very different work during the next three months.

Neil

# Ordination and Induction of Kim Plumpton in Cobham

25<sup>th</sup> September 2010

**T**hirty folk travelled to Cobham by coach, with others making their way to the service by car, train... or by staying with relatives in the town over the weekend. The sheer number of folk from Carrs Lane who wished to share in this event was a measure of the love and esteem in which Kim is held; she said very kind things about her time with us during the service...but the response of folk here would surely be equally warm and appreciative and supportive.

It was a good occasion – an encouraging and positive occasion, with many members of Kim’s family present, including her father, and conducted against the backdrop of several weeks’ work already! The genuinely personal was offered alongside the necessarily formal during the worship: Kim’s pilgrimage has not always been an easy one, and there were many grounds for rejoicing on this day. The nature of the pastorate to which she was inducted is in itself a source of encouragement and challenge to others: rather than spread a Methodist minister across Leatherhead and Cobham and a URC minister across Leatherhead and Cobham, the two denominations - and the various congregations involved – had decided that it made far better sense, and far more effective use of limited resources to give the Methodist minister responsibility for the congregations within one community and the URC minister the responsibility for the congregations in another area. So...Kim will look after both Methodists and members of the URC in the Cobham area. Less time spent on travel, and far more opportunities to engage consistently with people on a particular geographical patch. As members of a denomination totally committed to ecumenical co-operation, we should be advocating this kind of ‘set-up’ far more vigorously.



Many folk shared in the day; fellowship was warm and the refreshments top-notch. All returned with a sense that Kim is in the right place...that she and her family will flourish, and that the work of the people of God similarly will flourish.

Neil

## Joshua – ensemble 1685

**T**he historic performance of ‘Joshua’ at Carrs Lane by ensemble 1685 was a notable occasion; I suspect that the appearance of familiar melodies during the evening disguised the fact that this was the first performance outside of London for a very, very long time. A good number of folk gathered to share in the evening, in spite of the fact that we had to charge for the performance; historic instruments and singing that was both robust and sensitive



combined to form a memorable evening. Extensive programme notes – not without humour and a deftness of touch – meant that all were able to share in the evening in the fullest possible way.

Music aside, two things struck me about the evening...one which took me back to the ancient texts, written the best part of three thousand years ago, and one which brought me bang up to date: interestingly, the overlap between the two was considerable. Even allowing for some creative rewriting of the story of Joshua within the Handel oratorio, it is not a pleasant story...aggressive, bloodthirsty, insensitive, populist, one-sided, land-grabbing; it is good to reflect on the many ways in which our understanding of God has developed – and the various things which have prompted, facilitated new insights over the years. Not for the first time, I was left with feelings of distaste during 'Joshua'...distaste over some of the actions of the people of God, and distaste over the apparent expectations of the God whom they worshipped. Even the rousing music could not disguise underlying violence; maybe its triumphalism enhanced it.

Perhaps inescapably, this touched some very contemporary nerves; even as I write this, some aspects of the continued expansion of Jewish settlements in disputed territories continues to grab the headlines. We applaud recent American initiatives, we warm towards public shows of warmth and apparent cordiality, but the issues of land and faith and right – and the means by which these are resolved, peaceful or violent – continue to impact on our hopes and prayers.

Neil

*Dear Neil*

*I'm writing on behalf of all of us at e1685 to thank you, the church elders and all your staff and helpers for allowing us to bring our Joshua production to Carrs Lane on Friday and for all the work at your end that went into the publicity, organisation, washing up, furniture moving, manning the door, serving drinks and so on and so on. We thought the performance went well, thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and we hope you did too.*

*We estimated that audience numbers at both venues were similar to what we had for the Christmas Oratorio, although of course there's no way of knowing whether any potential punters were put off by the cost and replaced by others who felt that having to pay was an indication of quality. It's clear that we still haven't cracked Birmingham from the publicity angle, though.*

*The amount taken was considerably up on last time although still less than one quarter of the overall cost, so we are particularly grateful for your generosity in giving us all this free of charge.*

*With thanks and best wishes*

*Margaret Parker*

*[www.ensemble1685.org.uk](http://www.ensemble1685.org.uk)*

## A Trip to Nigeria

**M**y first impression of Nigeria was heat, noise and bustle. It took an hour to get out of the airport car park; all drivers seem to drive their vehicles with one hand permanently on the horn. Cars veer onto the wrong side of the road to avoid massive potholes. There appear to be far more cars than the road network can cope with.

When I arrived at my future brother in law's home a more lasting impression was created, that of friendship and hospitality. Although the house was full of people, I was made welcome and felt accepted immediately.

As most of you know I was in Nigeria to take part in a traditional engagement. When I first agreed to take part I didn't really think much about it, we had already announced our engagement at home and bought a ring. Although Amina is very westernised she is a proud African and I was happy to go along with it for her sake. As the time approached, I became more aware of the excitement being created in Nigeria and also of how important the ceremony was to Amina.

The tradition required me to pay a dowry or bride price to the head of the family and to proffer certain gifts to prove that I can provide for my future wife. The ceremony starts with me and a small entourage approaching the house to ask for permission to marry. We are allowed to enter after proving our intent by paying a small sum. Once inside we are entertained by the family and offer our gifts. Tradition has it that an alternative girl is brought out with her head covered which we have to reject. This can happen many times but fortunately I was only offered one impostor, I was a bit worried I might have chosen the wrong one if I was offered too many choices. Once I had chosen my bride and the family had given their consent the celebrations began.

The event was truly memorable and the family were genuinely impressed that I had made the journey and was prepared to take part in the ceremony. For myself I feel I now have family in Nigeria, some of whom I hope will make the journey here next year for the wedding, and I know that I will visit again in the future.

Martin Stokes

## Retail Chaplaincy – what is it all about?

**S**ome of the readers of Journey will have been present at the service on 19 September when Elaine Hutchinson and 4 volunteers talked about what we do or hope to do in serving as retail chaplains. The Retail Chaplaincy was set up 3 or 4 years ago as a joint project of Carrs Lane, Methodist Central Mission and the Anglican Church. Elaine became the full time chaplain earlier this year, and following contacts made previously sought permission from the City Council to offer chaplaincy to the markets. This was quite quickly accepted as there is a history of chaplaincy to the markets – some may remember Revd. Shirley Veters from many years ago, a former curate from St Martins.

I joined the team just as this was being finalised and three of us were appointed to serve - Iain Frew to the 'Outdoor', Linda Cooke to the 'Indoor' and me to the 'Rag Market'. I'm not sure we realised what we had let ourselves in for when we agreed, but we soon found out!!

Our purpose was to introduce ourselves to the stall holders – in my case about 200 of them – that's just the stalls – get to know them – which is why we call the organisation 'befriend' and just be there for them if they want to share issues which they might not be able to share with work colleagues or family friends. We do not proselytise in any way, but our key purpose is to be a listening ear.

So how has it worked out?

Market traders are usually busy people – you only have to walk around to see that for most of the day they are either setting up, selling or taking down, so you have to choose your time carefully. I find that for the rag, you can just about catch people between 9.30 and 10.30, after which it gets difficult if it's a busy day, or difficult if it's not busy because they are all grumbling about lack of trade!

What I found out very quickly was that the market trade generally is facing a very hard time and in B'ham this is exacerbated by several other issues – the fact that the Bullring shopping centre now cuts the markets off from the rest of the city centre and also that many of the buses that used to 'drop off' by St Martins do not now do so for various reasons. So you very quickly get used to hearing about how difficult things now are, added to which the recession has hit them twice – many of their 'normal' customers on low incomes have been affected badly and also many high street shops are selling so cheaply they are undercutting the market traders – so it's very difficult for them. Many complain that their takings can be less than the rent they pay – which is collected daily.

We have been very warmly welcomed by all the traders, although some still wonder why someone who could be at home with his feet up is spending time wandering around and chatting to them! In amongst the casual chatter, some have shared at quite deep levels about various family/health issues which makes you realise that there is a need for this service. I am fortunate in being able to say to those who would appreciate it, that the Wednesday lunchtime service congregation will pray for their situation, which the traders really do appreciate.

When I first started in the market, it was quite foreign to me and seemed noisy and brash, a hotch-potch of all sorts of stalls and people from many ethnic and faith / non-faith backgrounds – it was a bit scary – how was I going to be able to start conversations – I would have felt more at home in M & S. The reality is that the markets are full of real people who care about each other – a great sense of community, which is very rewarding to be part of. It may be that doing the same job in M&S or the Bullring, may be a harder challenge.

Andrew Veitch.

## News from Bungie....

Dear friends at Carrs Lane

Today marks 25 years since I was ordained at Carrs Lane on 5th October 1985! Please pass my greetings to everyone. It's been a great journey so far and I look forward to new adventures in ministry. It seems like only yesterday that I was burning the midnight oil in the office/studio in the flat at Carrs Lane! Getting married at Carrs Lane was a high point and in a couple of years Mandy and I will mark that silver jubilee as well.

My time in Birmingham has been a great foundation for all that has followed. It prepared me for city centre ministry in Edinburgh and even recently it prepared me for looking after a small URC/Methodist Church in North Edinburgh – bringing to mind the inspiration of Lesslie Newbigin and the role I took up in Nechells. My involvement in the Desmond Tutu visit was a sober grounding for the two and a half years I have spent as part of the team preparing for the Edinburgh 2010 World Mission conference that recently took place in Edinburgh.

I remain in regular contact with Murdoch Mackenzie and David Coleman.

Wishing you God's blessing on your own adventures of faith

Bungie (Revd Mitchell Bunting)

### ..... from Emma

Emma Irvine (nee Grove) has been appointed as a Youth Worker on a part time basis to work with young people in Dursley Tabernacle URC and in the wider community. Her new post is for three years. One of her first tasks will be taking a group of young people on an activity based weekend residential to Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre in the Forest of Dean.

Simon Helme, minister of the church, says: *'Emma is full of ideas and enthusiasm. She will be a great asset in our work with young people. This is an exciting development for our church which I hope we will also make a positive difference for the young people in our town.'*



Church members are funding the appointment with help from a grant received from the West Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church.

## ..... and news from Carrs Lane Fair Trade

We are pleased to tell you that we now have a great deal of new stock which includes beautiful craft products as well as new foods. For more information please see Traidcraft's new autumn range on this website or visit [www.traidcraft.co.uk](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk)

Way back in 1999 the Traidcraft Geobar was introduced. It was the first fair trade product to be composed of a variety of fairly traded ingredients thus benefiting more producers. It was so successful in supermarkets that it helped to make fair trade more mainstream.

Geobar has just been relaunched. It is better quality, the tastes of the four varieties have been improved and the fat content has been reduced, but the price at the Fairtrader's has stayed the same. In addition, they have new packaging with a great deal of information about their producers.

"Change the world one bite at a time" - as the Geobar packet says.

Joan Davies



### Write to the FTSE 4

Currently poor nations are missing out on an estimated \$160bn in tax revenue because unscrupulous corporations can hide their financial transactions. This money could be spent on essential services like health and education.

At the start of the summer we asked you to call on members of the FTSE 100 to respond to a survey which helped us gauge opinion on tackling tax dodging. Thanks to your support 63 FTSE 100 companies replied.

We are now in a new stage of our Trace the Tax campaign focussing on four FTSE listed companies: Vodafone, Unilever, TUI Travel and Intercontinental Hotel Group. We want them to support our call for greater financial transparency because this will help end tax dodging. We need you to take action now. Sign the letters online at [christianaid.org.uk](http://christianaid.org.uk)

Alasdair Roxburgh  
Trace the Tax Campaigns Officer, Christian Aid

## Charity's Last Plea For Help

**A** Birmingham charity that helps hundreds of children with dyslexia is set to close before Christmas if new funding is not found.

Dyslexia Association Birmingham director Denny Manning today issued the stark warning, saying the charity's cash sources had dried up. Mrs Manning said the charity was doing all it could to stay afloat, but could not see its way clear beyond another couple of months.

'There is no funding for us at all,' she said. 'We have always accessed funding from other charities and trusts and, up until four years ago, we used to receive funding from Birmingham City Council. But everyone we have applied to has come back saying they just can't provide any funding at the moment.'

The charity, created when organisations from the north and south of the city came together in 1999, has monthly running costs of £2,500. It maintains an office at Carrs Lane Church Centre, has two part-time staff, a helpline and a team of volunteers.

Together they provide information and support to parents who believe their children have dyslexia and to adults, many of whom have spent decades undiagnosed. And its services are used by families from across the city.

'We receive about 50 calls a week,' said Mrs Manning. 'On top of that we run a screening programme for children and adults. Who are these people going to turn to if we close?'

For Mrs Manning it is a cause close to her heart as she, her husband Ian and her children, 25-year-old Laura and 21-year-old Ben, have all been diagnosed with forms of dyslexia. 'We have heard so many heartbreaking stories,' she said. 'Mums call us crying on the phone and I know of two teenagers who considered suicide because of their dyslexia. It isn't just about not being able to spell.'

To support DAB call 0121 643 3737, email [dabham@btconnect.com](mailto:dabham@btconnect.com) or visit [www.dabham.org](http://www.dabham.org) and [www.justgiving.com/dyslexiabirmingham](http://www.justgiving.com/dyslexiabirmingham).

Diane Parkes  
Birmingham Mail  
13 September.

## On this day ...

From the Carrs Lane Missionary Chronicle – October 1910

To the Editor, Carrs Lane Journal.

Dear Sir,

**M**ay I be permitted to call public attention to the want of thorough ventilation of the Chapel from Sunday to Sunday. On every Sunday I attend a feeling of lassitude, nausea and headache attack me immediately, and in spite of reading, hymns and sermon, I have the greatest difficulty in keeping my eyes open. This, I am certain, is due to the stagnant air which evidently remains in the chapel week after week. It is very evident that the windows, even though fully open, are not sufficient for the proper ventilation of the place.

I have lately spent a short holiday in the heart of Worcestershire, and have visited some four or five of the village churches. There I found a device which, if considered necessary in the free open country, how much more is it necessary in the dense city, and with the immense concourse of people which congregate every Sunday in our Chapel. The device is as follows: - On either side of the Churches is placed a door, made of iron or wooden latticing, which allows a free current of air to pass through the edifice all day long and all the week long.

Could not such a device be adopted for our own place? I know the argument of “dust” will be raised, but surely the necessity for a full and perfect ventilation is of much greater consequence than the extra dusting entailed. Health, interest and attention alike demand this thorough ventilation.

Yours faithfully

SEATHOLDER

*September 12<sup>th</sup> 1910*

*I felt this letter was an interesting insight into a ‘health and safety’ issue of a hundred years ago. The contrast with our own time is suggested in the large number of people attending (This is the era of Carrs Lane’s maximum numerical membership) and the reference to “Sunday to Sunday”, implying little use of the Chapel at other times. One is reminded that the ventilation of a large building is not always easy, especially, as is possible in this case, during a hot summer, without electric fans or air-conditioning. I am left with two questions: who would do the extra dusting, and are we seeing described here the perfect explanation for falling asleep during worship?!!*

From the Carrs Lane Journal – October 1960

*Extracts from Philip Lee-Woolf’s Vestry Letter, and from the report of the Church Meeting on September 1<sup>st</sup>.*

a) At the time of the Every Person canvass a number of people said that they wanted to become Church Members. I am planning to hold a number of meetings, four or five, to

discuss Christian faith and discipleship as a preparation for Church Membership, and anyone who wants to join such a group will be welcome.

This was the first Church Meeting at which the new experiment in Group discussions was put into effect. For this purpose four Groups have been set up to deal with the following aspects of Church life –

- (1) The Church Community (Membership and Fellowship)
- (2) Mission and Service (the Message and its implications)
- (3) The Church and other Churches (within the Denomination and outside)
- (4) Church business

b) The Registrar of the University has written to the Church about the great difficulties of finding accommodation for students. The Faculties of Art and Law, which up till now have been housed in the old buildings at Edmund Street, have this year moved to Edgbaston, and the University as a whole has welcomed the demand that more young people should be able to go to universities. But as a result more places for them to live in are needed. Dr Templeman writes: “Many widows and others with houses larger than they need find that giving a home to a student brings a new interest and satisfaction into their lives. Many young men and women from all parts of the world will be requiring a bed and a quiet room for study, with or without board or attendance, for the session beginning in October. I should be grateful if anyone interested and able to help would communicate with the Lodgings Warden.”

*a) As we consider the results of the Monday evening discussions in July and look forward to the outcome of the Pro-Claim event, I thought it might be worthwhile reminding ourselves of the discussions that were taking place among the Carrs Lane congregation fifty years ago.*

*b) The item on student accommodation is an interesting glimpse of the situation of the time, which is, I suspect, different in much of its detail from today. It is particularly meaningful for me because it was in October 1960 that my sister began her studies at Birmingham University, during which she always had to travel on three buses to and from her lodgings. That process would no doubt have been simplified if her course had still been based in Edmund Street.*

Contributed by Wendy Firmin

## Commitment for Life (*extracts from Moving Stories 129*)

A brighter future

“My future will be better. I can contribute to my own future now.”

**E**ighteen year old Soyed has a brighter future since coming to Christian Aid partner the YMCA in Beit Sahour to learn a trade. As part of a family of five, Soyed spent his early life in a refugee camp in Tulkarum. As a child he sustained a back injury in a car accident which left him unable to find suitable employment. And as a young teenager he spent a year in prison.

However help was at hand when he was noticed by YMCA field workers. Travelling each day to the olive wood workshop in Beit Sahour was out of the question as poor roads, long journeys caused by closures and checkpoints aggravated his injury. So it was decided he would live nearer the centre and be part of the vocational training, learning woodworking skills. Soyed is excited about the opportunity to earn money but says being trained means so much more,

“I am training to help my father when he gets older and can’t work. Being at the Centre has helped my confidence. I felt lonely but now I have a different feeling.”

The rehabilitation programme in Beit Sahour was originally set up to help victims of violence from the first intifada but expanded to include those young people living with physical difficulties. The programme aims to integrate the young people back into the community so they can play a full part by working not only with the young person but also their families. Soyed has been able to benefit from their residential centre and receive vocational training and life skills. The YMCA put special emphasis on high quality counselling and education. Many of the young people they help have spent time in prison. Soyed explained how he felt trapped because as a Palestinian he can’t travel from one place to another without many difficulties. “It causes us suffering,” he explained.

Constant reminders of the occupation, which probably was the cause of their imprisonment in the first place, make it hard to readjust to life for young Palestinian men coming out of Israeli prisons. The YMCA knows it is important that these issues are worked through, so the young people can become full members of their communities again.

©Commitment for Life. This story, with image can be found at [www.cforl.org.uk](http://www.cforl.org.uk)

Hebron: God's Justice, Even for the Shops “And the shops of the city will clap their hands!”

That’s what those radical biblical prophets would be singing if they were here in occupied Hebron, tramping thru the streets of the Old City, seeing the overwhelming number of Palestinian shops that have been shut down by the Israeli forces. Long time ago, these courageous truth-telling Jews, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, went around

proclaiming to the oppressed that God was coming to bring justice to all things. Not only people, but everything would receive God's peace, so that according to the prophetic imagination, even "the trees will clap their hands" (Is. 55:12). And if trees clap, why not Palestinian shops?

The prophets dreamt of a world with jubilant trees because the trees were one of the chief victims of ancient imperial politics. They had been clear-cut by empire after empire in order to satisfy a variety of violent and extravagant purposes; thousands of military chariots, fleets of naval war ships, opulent palace residences and temples. "But there is hope for the trees!" shout the prophets. One day they will clap their hands because God will come at last to rescue them from the death-dealing ways of the empire. One day the trees will clap because the powers of this earth will finally stop abusing them, stop taking more than they really need, and never again cut them down for purposes of war.

Today, in the streets of Hebron's Old City, I can hear those old prophets singing that familiar tune once again, yet remixing the powerful words to speak hope and challenge into this particular situation. "And the shops of the city will clap their hands."

Over the past decade, more than five hundred Palestinian shops have been welded shut and well over a thousand more closed due to Israeli imperial politics. That's about 75 % of the shops in this place, and the impact of such oppression, as you can well imagine, has been devastating. Once the hub of trade, giving life to the entire community, today's Old City struggles simply to survive. And the violence against the shops continues. This past month, we have witnessed Israeli soldiers arbitrarily breaking open the doors of three more shops, and welding shut three others. It is outrageous. And the prophetic tradition won't stand idly by. So if you and I have ears to hear, let us hear those ancient Palestinian activists singing a subversive song in today's Palestine, crying out to God and to us and against the Israeli Empire, "And the shops of the city will clap their hands."

One day, God will restore all things; not just Israeli and Palestinian, but even trees, and yes, even the shops of Hebron. Until that day, let us boldly sing the song of our elder prophets, and perhaps we will hear a little clapping, even today.

© Steve Heinrichs is part of the Christian Peacemaking Team in Hebron

Event (for prayer): Palestine: whose land is it anyway? Is there an answer?  
On Saturday November 27th Sarum Concern for Israel/Palestine will tackle some of the burning issues around land ownership in Israel/Palestine in a one day conference from 9.30 to 4.30 at Salisbury Methodist Church, St Edmund's Church Street. For more information or to make a booking, cost £20, please contact Barbara on 01722 349740 or e-mail: [thehick@btinternet.com](mailto:thehick@btinternet.com))

*Contributed by Wendy Firmin*

## In the Name of God

I received this week a message from the Morden Mosque about Rev Terry Jones' call for an international burn the Qur'an day to be celebrated on the anniversary of 9.11. A more stupid, ignorant and offensive act you can hardly imagine and I naturally replied in that vein. It was as offensive as the church in Connecticut who recently picketed a mosque screaming "Jesus hates Moslems".

With this in mind, and not forgetting, 9.11 itself, this seems a good morning to talk about religiously motivated hate. Hate in the name of God. It seems so obvious, doesn't it, that we should never use *religion* and *hate* in the same breath? And yet again and again our world is disfigured by hatred much of which comes out of a warped understanding of God.

9/11 and the July bombings in London come immediately to mind. But there is so much more. The hotel bombings in Bombay. Christians persecuted in Iraq and Pakistan. Mosque bombings in Pakistan. Religious murder in Nigeria. Evangelical ministers proposing that AIDS was God's punishment for gay people. Attacks on Jewish synagogues – how shameful it is that every Jewish synagogue in this country has to take security precautions against attack. Catholic-Protestant tensions in Northern Ireland. Over and over again people are using the name of God to justify hatred and even murder. How does this happen? How does religious faith lead to people hating and killing in the name of God?

The answer to bad things being done in the name of God is not to throw religion out the window; but to look for a better religion and a more informed faith. So it would be good if religious believers of whatever kind would reflect critically on their faith to see how hate comes and root out the causes of it. And so what I would suggest today are three thoughts:

First and foremost consider this . . . one of the most important theological principles you can ever engage is the *principle of self-criticism*. I don't mean criticism in the sense that you put your own religion down, I mean that you are honest enough and secure enough to bring critical thinking to your faith. I'm talking about having enough Christian honesty to be self-critical of *our* understanding of God, *our* understanding of the Bible, *our* understanding of faith.

What's the most frightening thing you ever come across in religion? For me it's when you meet the person who is totally certain they are right. And therefore totally certain that everyone else is wrong. You can't argue with them, you can't reason with them, nothing you say could change their mind. Once you are convinced that you know the whole truth and everything you believe is the will of God you are a danger to the human race. As Rabbi Tony Bayfield, the head of Reform Judaism who is preaching here in November put it, "It is not only arrogance to the point of madness but potentially bad to the point of evil". By contrast I am so proud I grew up in a church where we used to sing...

“We limit not the truth of God to our poor reach of mind,  
By notions of our sect, crude, partial and confined,  
No let a new and better hope within our hearts be stirred  
The Lord has yet more light and truth  
to break forth from his word”

Whatever it is we believe we need to be clear that none of us have the whole truth, that new ideas may change what we believe, and some of the things we believe are certain to be wrong and therefore in need of correction. In theological terms this is called the criterion of self-criticism; in daily life it is called *humility*. Think how much religious hatred and violence could have been avoided had religious people exercised a little humility over what they believed.

When there is no self-criticism of one's faith, you get things like war in the name of God. You get things like abuse in the name of God. You get things like hatred in the name of God. Religion should make the world a safer place, a saner place; religion should make the world a better place, but it can't happen without a healthy dose of humility.

I hear some Christian ministers preaching and teaching and telling everyone who is going to heaven and who is going to hell, and whom God loves and whom God does not love, and I remember some words of Oliver Cromwell, “I beseech you in the name of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken”. Have you ever considered that you might be wrong? Have you ever thought that there might be another way of thinking about God? Without the self-critical principle religion always gets absolutized, and when religion is absolutized someone is almost always clobbered in the name of God.

There's a second thought I want to share . . . it is that when we *connect God with the exercise of power*, we make religion a very dangerous thing. But when we *connect God to love*, we make religion a very good thing. What do I mean by that? If you see yourself as here to exercise power in God's name then you can do anything. You can start a crusade. You can burn witches at the stake. You can fly a plane into the World Trade Centre. You can shoot down a doctor going into an abortion clinic. You can do anything when you equate God with power. A God of power doesn't just inspire faith; a God of power stirs-up fanaticism, and I'm not sure there is anything scarier in this world than religious fanaticism.

On the other hand, if you connect God with love, then love means respect for others. Love means listening and learning, as well as talking and explaining. Love means helping and lifting people up, not destroying people or cities because they don't believe as you do. Love means humility.

In that reading from I Timothy there's a wonderful verse, he's concerned about some of the meaningless religious teaching that's going on, and he says, “The aim of such instruction is love that comes from a good heart”. It could not be simpler but it could not be more profound. The point of religion is to get people loving one another. The

trouble with people who are completely convinced of their religious rightness is that they most often connect God to power, and it's the equating God and power that makes the world a dangerous place.

And then one other point. Living in London today the whole world has come on our doorstep and with it has come all the world's religions. In London we have Europe's largest mosque in Morden. In Neasden we have Europe's largest Hindu temple. You can find Sikhs, Jews, Buddhists. You name it we have it. Now you may like this diversity. You may not like this diversity. But whether you like it or not it is not going to change. Religiously pluralism is now our context.

What does this mean? It means we have to find a way to hold our Christian faith with some respect and humility and openness to others. Because if we don't find a way to do that, religion will tear us apart as a people and there will be tragedy after tragedy. If we don't find a way to hold our faith in a diverse world, my fear is that people will just throw faith away, and then all you have left are fundamentalist-absolutists who think they are right and everyone else is wrong. Surely we don't have to let it come to that? Surely this is why London needs open-minded, inclusive, progressive churches like Trinity.

Already in this church we've had Rabbi Sybil Sheridan to preach and Imam Ajmal Masroor to talk. When we celebrated the renewal of our building we had representatives of the Morden Mosque here. When we've celebrated Commitment for Life we've tried to work with partners in Israel and Palestine and our Junior Church reminded of the effect of the wall on Palestinian life. Now I'm delighted that the head Rabbi for Reform Judaism, Rabbi Tony Bayfield, has agreed to come and preach in November. It's so important that every single Christian Church does this. As ever let me quote you Hans Kung: "No peace among the nations without peace among the religions. No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions". Did you know how we made our link with the Morden Mosque? Because someone from the mosque passing by saw that!

My faith is at the centre of my life, but I love it enough to bring an honest dose of humility to it; I love it enough not to make it absolute but to open always to new light and truth; and I love it enough to be willing to be as close as I can to people of other faiths in a diverse world. And what is the core of my faith – a Christ who gave his life for others. A gospel that tells me that where love is, God is. Therefore, let's love one another. After all, it's the most powerful thing we can ever do in the name of God. Amen.

Martin Camroux

## Talk on MDGs by Bhai Dr Mohinder Singh

*Launch of the national multifaith project - Jubilee Debt Campaign within the first national interfaith week in UK.*

*Birmingham continuing to lead the way in interfaith cooperation on issues of global, social concern.*

**D**ear brothers and sisters, global citizens, travellers in life's journey on this mother planet. A very good evening to all.

The year 2000, was a year of jubilation not only for the Christians, but for all humanity. The human race had entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the unique third millennium. Unique because of the communication and information technology revolution. We Sikhs, desirous of participating in the jubilations, sought audience with the Holy Pontiff, His Holiness Pope John Paul II, and presented His Holiness with a Kirpan of peace. We Sikhs had previously participated in UK's Act of Reflection and Commitment, stating (I quote):...

*In a world scarred by the evils of war, racism, injustice and poverty, we offer this joint Act of Commitment as we look to our shared future.*

*We commit ourselves  
as people of many faiths,  
to work together  
for the common good,  
uniting to build a better society,  
grounded in the values and ideals we share:*

*community,  
personal integrity,  
a sense of right and wrong,  
learning, wisdom, love and truth,  
care and compassion,  
justice and peace,  
respect for one another,  
for the earth and its creatures.*

*We commit ourselves,  
in a spirit of friendship and co-operation,  
to work together  
alongside all who share our values and ideals,  
to help bring about a better world  
now and for generations to come.*

This will remain a historical noble act of reflection and commitment for which we people of all faiths and none can be rightly proud of.

Of course humanity was then faced with 9/11, extremism, and counter-extremism or retaliation, which is another serious form of extremism.

We also got invited to the Assisi Peace Prayer event, the conclusions of which were (I quote:):...

*'Common Commitment to Peace' – A Single Goal and Shared Intention.*

*Gathered here in Assisi, we have reflected together on peace, a gift of God and a common good of all mankind. Although we belong to different religious traditions, we affirm that building peace requires loving one's neighbour in obedience to the Golden Rule: Do to others what you would have them do to you.*

*With this conviction, we will work tirelessly in the great enterprise of building peace. Therefore:*

- 1. We commit ourselves to proclaiming our firm conviction that **violence and terrorism** are incompatible with the authentic spirit of religion and, as we condemn every recourse to violence and war in the name of God or of religion, we commit ourselves to doing everything possible to eliminate the root cause of terrorism.*
- 2. We commit ourselves to educating people to **mutual respect and esteem**, in order to help bring about a peaceful and fraternal coexistence between people of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions*
- 3. We commit ourselves to **fostering the culture of dialogue**, so that there will be an increase of understanding and mutual trust between individuals and among people, for these are the premise of authentic peace.*
- 4. We commit ourselves to defending the right of everyone to live a **decent life** in accordance with their own cultural identity, and to form freely a family of his own.*
- 5. We commit ourselves to **frank and patient dialogue**, refusing to consider our differences as an insurmountable behavior, but recognizing instead that to encounter the diversity of others can become an opportunity for greater reciprocal understanding.*
- 6. We commit ourselves to **forgiving one another** for the past and present errors and prejudices, and to supporting one another in a common effort both to overcome selfishness and arrogance, hatred and violence, and to learn from the past that peace without prejudice is no peace.*
- 7. We commit ourselves to **taking the side of the poor and the helpless**, to speaking out for those who have no voice and to working effectively to change these situations, out of the conviction that no one can be happy alone.*

8. *We commit ourselves to taking up the cry of those who refuse to be resigned to violence and evil, and we desire to make every effort possible to offer the men and women of our time real hope for **justice and peace**.*
9. *We commit ourselves to encouraging all efforts to **promote friendship between peoples**, for we are convinced that, in the absence of solidarity and understanding between peoples, technological progress exposes the world to a growing risk of destruction and death.*
10. *We commit ourselves to urging leaders of nations to make every effort to **create and consolidate, on the national and international levels, a world of solidarity and peace based on justice.***

*We, as persons of different religious traditions, will tirelessly proclaim that peace and justice are inseparable, and that peace in justice is the only path which humanity can take towards a future of hope. In a world with ever more open borders, shrinking distances and better relations as a result of a broad network of communications, we are convinced that security, freedom and peace will never be guaranteed by force but by mutual trust.*

*May God bless these our resolutions and grant justice and peace to the world.*

*Concluding words of Pope John Paul II:*

*Violence never again.*

*War never again*

*Terrorism never again*

*In the name of God, may every religion bring upon the earth*

*Justice and peace*

*Forgiveness and life*

*Love.*

These commitments are very important, but how many people at grass roots level know about these commitments? That is the issue. In the global village that we live in, we have a shared responsibility. Whether they are people of faith, or people of values, it doesn't matter – we have a shared responsibility. It is becoming important, progressively, that everyone gets involved in these global issues.

If we look at the Millennium Development Goals, a lot of people don't know what they are. They are 8 MDGs which were signed up to by 189 Governments in the year 2000. They are a blueprint for humanity. What are the MDGs?

### *1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*

*To halve by 2015 the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger as compared to 1990.*

### *2. Achieve universal primary education*

*To ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education*

### *3. Promote gender equality and empower women*

*To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable.*

### *4. Reduce child mortality*

*To reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds of their current rates.*

### *5. Improve maternal health*

*To have reduced maternal mortality by three-quarters of their current rates.*

### *6. Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases*

*To have, by 2015, halted and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases that afflict humanity.*

### *7. Ensure environmental sustainability*

*We must spare no effort to free all of humanity, and above all our children and grandchildren, from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities and whose resources would no longer be sufficient for their needs.*

*By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers as proposed in the Cities Without Slums initiative. To halve by 2015 the proportion of the world's people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.*

### *8. Develop a global partnership for development*

*To take special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa including debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced Official Development Assistance and increased flows of Foreign Direct Investment, as well as transfers of technology. To develop strong partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organisations in pursuit of development and poverty eradication. To develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.*

How can we try and inform people of these goals? It is the responsibility of the government, the responsibility of the media and so on, otherwise we can keep trying but we won't get far.

One also has to reflect upon spiritual poverty: when you have no compassion, when you are not truthful, when you have no contentment, when you are arrogant and

have no humility, you do not render selfless service, you do not exercise love for human beings, you are not benevolent and generous. This is spiritual poverty. People of faith cannot afford to suffer from spiritual poverty. They must exercise all these things to make a difference. And they must also appreciate that service is very important. My faith is very explicit. If I serve and I don't pray, I become arrogant; and if I pray but I don't serve, I also become arrogant. One must serve with their body, mind and soul – all three things.

Our first Guru served hungry people, and he called it 'Sacha Sauda' – true business. This started the tradition of Langar in Gurudwaras. If you go to any Gurudwara, at any time, no matter what number of you, you will be served food. Service is very very important.

On the other hand, exploitation of man by man, or humans by humans is a very sophisticated form of cannibalism. You are eating up people – it is exploitation. Globalisation should be for the common good.

My faith is also very explicit that all human beings are in fact one large family on this mother planet. We are all brothers and sisters. There is only one Heavenly Father; and therefore we are all related. We must feel pain for others. In legal terms there is a quote; 'justice delayed is justice denied.' Each time there is delay, we are denying people something. If we don't feel the pain, there is something wrong with us faith people.

And as I said before – it is a shared responsibility. Whether you are a person of faith or none, if you live on this mother planet, you have a shared responsibility.

Globalisation for the Common Good means the promotion of ethical, moral and spiritual values – which are shared by all religions – in the areas of economics, commerce, trade and international relations. It emphasizes personal and societal virtues. It calls for understanding and collaborative action – on the part of civil society, private enterprise, the public sector, governments, and national and international institutions – to address major global issues. Globalisation for the common good is predicated on a global economy of sharing and community, grounded in an economic value system whose aim is generosity and the promotion of a just distribution of the world's goods, which are divine gifts.

Globalisation for the Common Good, by addressing the crises that face us all, empowers us with humanity, spirituality and love. It engages people of different races, cultures and languages, from a wide variety of backgrounds, all committed to bringing about a world in which there is more solidarity and greater harmony. This spiritual ground for hope at this time of wanton destruction of our world, can help us to recall the ultimate purpose of life and of our journey in this world.

There is an international interfaith event in Melbourne from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009. The theme is; what can make a world of difference? How can we change things in this century? I am convinced we need a new consciousness in this century. We have got to have a new mindset and overhaul our minds.

The initial 8 MDGs have not yet been combated, but already others need adding to it such as: the global financial crisis, global extremism, and the degradation of human, ethical, moral, and spiritual values. The amount of money that is spent on the manufacture of arms, that are created to kill, and the amount of suffering it brings to people, is enormous. The eradication of the manufacture of arms should also be made one of the goals.

As Sikhs we are taught that family life is important, and that family values are important. Within this new consciousness we need to introduce values. Without values we will be lost. The UNICEF report of 2007 states that we have a failed generation in England. What has happened? We have schools and Universities, but even in the government, in Parliament we find that there are problems. It is dishonesty. This new consciousness of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century demands that we have values.

Faith traditions are a part of our shared heritage of wisdom and expertise which can help in establishing faith solidarity. People should be able to do common good when they have respect for diversity. When there is unity in diversity, there is strength.

Faith people and others must try to deliver the MDGs. The Jubilee Debt Campaign, in the global context, is the passionate promoter of the very first MDG, where governments are urged to alleviate abject poverty; the basic scourge and curse of the myriad of humanity's ills.

The visionary pioneers of this campaign need to be saluted and supported by one and all of us. May all humanity be blessed and may all people support Jubilee Debt Campaign.

Thank you.

Bhai Sahib Dr Mohinder Singh

Chairman, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (Birmingham) UK

## Thoughts on October Dates

**M**y first memory of attaching significance to a date in October was in my early days of learning French, when we were taught that the 1<sup>st</sup> of October was the date of “la Rentrée des classes”, when the French children returned to school after a summer break that was longer than we had in this country. Much later, this month became associated with returning to my university studies, and, later still, with a particularly busy time as a member of support staff, helping new and returning students.

It was also in October that I moved into my current home. Because the lifts were so busy in the early days, I made a number of journeys on foot up the 200-odd stairs. It was in October that I was received into membership here, and that paved the way for later memories of preparing for elders elections, the Lectures, and One World Week and Commitment for Life.

What of events of wider significance in October? For a start, the tenth month of our calendar has seen some of the most significant and well-known happenings in military and political history: the battles of Hastings, Agincourt, Trafalgar and El Alamein; the decision by the Third Reich to postpone the planned invasion of these islands after the Battle of Britain; the charge of the Light Brigade. The British surrender at Yorktown was a turning point in the development of the USA. October 1905 and October 1917 are important dates in the Russian Revolution which was to have such a wide-ranging influence on the history of the twentieth century.

October has also seen positive and beneficial achievements and innovations. One obvious example from our point of view is the formation of the United Reformed Church in October 1972; also notable is the printing in October 1535 of the first Bible in English, signifying an important step in the development of Christianity. Other events from Octobers past which may be cited are the founding of the Boys' Brigade and the suffragette movement; the erection of the first statue to honour a woman other than royalty (Sister Dora, a nun who spent many years in Walsall, looking after the poor and sick), and the first women students admitted to the University of Oxford; the first Labour MP in our parliament, seeking to represent the interests of working people, and the first official street collections for charity.

In the world of the media and entertainment, I was interested to discover that October has seen the first editions of the Sunday Times and the News of the World, the first appearances of those fictional bears Pooh and Paddington, and the debuts of Sherlock Holmes, the Beatles and Monty Python.

Something completely different (in the best Python tradition!), and even more interesting because of their early date are two events cited as the inauguration of the world's first railway and the first plastic surgery in Britain. The former refers to the Wollaton Wagonway in Nottinghamshire, dated at 1604. This was a two-mile track of wooden rails along which coal was carried, using, of course, literal horsepower. The latter, dated 1814, refers to a nose reconstruction using living flaps of the patient's own skin. This technique was apparently learned from Indian medical science, and its successful

transfer to this country must surely be one of the positive aspects of the complex relationship between Britain and India.

And what of October 2010? As we await the outcome of this country's Comprehensive Spending Review, let us remember those adversely affected by the cuts in public expenditure here and in many other countries. There are some special dates this month for Christian prayer and action:

1<sup>st</sup> October: United Nations International Day of Older Persons: the late Pope John Paul II called upon the elderly to rejoice in their age and experience

10<sup>th</sup> October: Micah Sunday: a focus of prayer and commitment to a life that remembers those in poverty

14<sup>th</sup> October: WHO World Sight Day: a focus on awareness of blindness, visual impairment and rehabilitation

17<sup>th</sup> October: Healthcare Sunday: celebrating Christians at work in healthcare

17<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> October: One World Week: there are many sad and distressing divisions in the world. As part of our recognition of One World Week, we prepare to make our annual financial contribution to the work of our Commitment for Life partners in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Our support is very much needed, especially because the peace process, with its hopes for justice and an end to violence, is under threat.

Wendy Firmin

## JOY

### Who is the last person you pray for?

A murderer, a Palestinian bomber.  
Hitler – if you pray for the dead.

A vicar, an elder, a priest, the Pope,  
A minister, a leader in your church.

The person you sit next to in church  
A person who smells. The congregation.

The Queen, any member of the royal family  
The Government, the people who ruin the country.

Sadam Hussain, a Muslim, A Buddhist,  
A Sikh, a Hindu or Jew, or Christian.

The living, the dead – past, present or future  
Anyone at all in the world.

A tramp, a Big Issue seller, a tinker  
A mobile fair person – anyone who sleeps rough.

A Catholic, a Protestant, URC, Methodist  
Anyone in the Cluster, C of E.

A smoker, a drinker, a person with cancer  
Anyone who does not look after their own health.

The family – dad, mum, the kids, auntie  
Uncle, nephews, nieces, grand parents,  
Great grandparents.

A footballer a fisherman, a hockey player  
A rugby player – any sport at all.

A person who watches TV a lot,  
a couch potato, an idle person.

Someone who is Gay, a lesbian, a cross dresser  
A heterosexual, a trans-sexual, a bi-sexual, an amthromorphic

A gardener, anyone who works outside  
A grave digger, a door to door salesman

The old, the house bound, the infirm  
Those in a home, those in hospital

The young, the children, the toddler  
The newborn, the not born

Anyone who works in the media  
An agent, anyone who reads the news

Who is the last person you pray for?  
The answer is always yourself.

Jesus  
Others  
Yourself

Spells JOY

**David Stackhouse**

Please send your contribution for next month's Journey to the Editor,  
Mrs. Pat Davies, Carrs Lane URC, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX  
or email [office@carrslane.co.uk](mailto:office@carrslane.co.uk) by 22 October.  
It may not be possible to include articles received after this date.

# Wesley Owen

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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 in conjunction with Methodist Central Mission

Fourth Sunday at 6.00pm

### Church Meeting

Second Sunday at 12 noon

### Singing Group

Third Sunday 9.45 – 10.15am

## WEEK DAYS

### Food4Thought: informal worship and food for young adults

Speak to Neil for details

### Healing Group

First Wednesday at 7.30 pm

### Prayer Group

Third Wednesday at 7.30 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

Our two house groups meet regularly, in the Harborne and Hall Green areas.

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)