

Journey



The continuing story

of

The Church at Carrs Lane

July/August 2014

Minister's Letter

Dear friends,

This is the last time that I will write to you in a 'full-time' capacity! With effect from the beginning of September, I will be moving to a 75% scoping...and I am grateful for your grace and generosity (and to colleagues for their flexibility) in making this move possible. It is a relatively unusual step, not least because the hope is that some of the 'time off' will be taken in significant 'chunks'; this will enable me to spend time away more easily...and will also enable me to consider courses which I may wish to follow. If I simply stated that I was dropping to 75%, I know that it could/would prove difficult to sustain boundaries at times. Whilst I am glad that this move is possible for me...well, I do continue to worry about and pray for church members who, even in supposed 'retirement', find that boundaries are being eroded again and again. We ask too much of some people – and we need to find an effective way of ensuring that it doesn't happen. For me, a number of significant issues have driven forward the decision – issues which have been well-rehearsed in preparation for September – but I think that it is worth adding a further comment at this point. I know that money is not going to be a cause of worry: I have lived on much less than a full stipend for a while (not least as preparation for September!). Christian attitudes towards money continue to challenge – to vex – even, to annoy me periodically. We need to make space to talk about these things.

A move to part-time ministry is not a move to part-time faith, of course; in this sense, the new opportunities of the autumn will bring responsibilities with them. If I return to the classroom to pursue hopes and dreams for 'fine art', what does my faith mean in that context? As I spend more time with family, what impact will – should – faith have in a situation where people of faith and people of no faith share very strong ties? I don't ask this question glibly or lightly. Will it be easier – or harder – to sustain personal devotional life, when I am not 'at work' than it is when I am 'at work'? In these areas and more, many of you have far more experience than I do. Don't be surprised if I come to you with questions!

With much love in Christ,



Sunday Worship during July and August

Sunday 6 July

10.30am Morning Worship led by Neil Johnson
Worship will be followed by First Sunday Lunch – all welcome

Sunday 13 July

10.30am Morning worship led by Neil Riches
Key passage: Matthew 13.1–9, 18–23
Noon Church Meeting (all invited!) Significant business: presentation by Barbara Forbes on 'City of Sanctuary'
2.45pm for 3.00pm Children's Church Theme: River of Life

Sunday 20 July

10.30am Morning worship led by Neil Riches
Key passage: Matthew 13.24–30, 36–43
Children's Church will be supporting the 'Family Fun' event at Earlswood Methodist Church in the afternoon

Sunday 27 July

10.30am Morning Worship led by Sefana Olafunbosun

Sunday 3 August

10.30am Morning worship, including the Lord's Supper, led by Neil Riches
Key passage: Matthew 14.13 – 21
Worship will be followed by First Sunday Lunch – all welcome

Sunday 10 August

10.30am Morning worship led by Ruth Fry

Sunday 17 August

10.30am Morning worship led by Neil Riches
Key passage: Matthew 15.10 – 28

Sunday 24 August

10.30am Morning worship led by Neil Riches
Key passage: Matthew 16.13 – 20
Worship will be followed by lunch 'out' for young (and young-ish!) adults
No Radical Worship in August

Sunday 31 August

10.30am Morning worship led by Revd Mary Shannahan
3.30pm Annual service of rededication for BB/GB leaders, led by Neil Riches
All welcome...both to worship and the afternoon tea which follows worship!

Notices

10 July Citizens UK open meeting at St Andrews Methodist Church 7.30 - 9.00pm. Following the recent assembly we are holding a 'catch-up' open meeting so that we can share what we have learned so far including discussions around various groups - 'Mental Health Care', 'Young People Safety', 'Late Benefit Payments' & 'Living Wage'. Contact: Sue Ball 07854 844691 sue.ball@blueyonder.co.uk <https://twitter.com/CitizensUKBham>

Friday 11 July The Choir with No Name Summer Spectacular 7.30pm MAC Cannon Hill park. Tickets £5 from www.macarts.co.uk. 0121 446 3232. More info - liz@choirwithnoname.org Tel 07794 100938.

Thursday 10 to Saturday 12 July Godspell 7.30pm (2.30 matinee 12th) Sutton Arts Theatre, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1QU. Tickets £12/£8. See www.argosy.me.uk for details.

Saturday 12 July Synod Roadshow at Carrs Lane Much of the time will be spent in small groups looking at some of the areas covered by workshops at the October synod (Finance/TRIO/ Season of Invitation/Back to Church Sunday/Radical Welcome/Fresh Expressions/Local Church Leaders/ Church Growth/How can liberal churches grow? and any other areas that you would like included - so do let me know if there is anything that you want to be covered. Contact Revd Jacky Embrey, 0121 451 1441, email jacky.embrey@gmail.com

Saturday 12 & Sunday 13 July Open Gardens - over 15 gardens in the Parish of Nether Whitacre, from 1.30-5.30 both days, tickets from Nether Whitacre Methodist Church B46 2EH, £5.00 per person, children free, no dogs please. Refreshments and toilets at Methodist Church

13 July Circuit Praise Service at Carrs Lane - Taste and See - an evening service including modern worship songs and hymns, and a time of openness to the Holy Spirit. Doughnuts and drink at 5pm Service start 5.30pm

Tuesday 15 July Open House and Selly Beans are taking part in Ready Steady Bake to raise money for Birmingham St Marys Hospice at Selly Oak Methodist Church 10.00am – 12noon.

Sunday 20 July Birmingham Methodist Circuit Family Fun Day at Earslwood Methodist Church 2.00-5.00pm. Fun and games for all the family.

Sunday 3 August Service of Reflection and Reconciliation to commemorate the Centenary of the First World War 6.00pm at St Chad's Parish Church, Rubery. More info from Ian Ring, Community for Reconciliation. 01562 710231. Email: cfrenquiry@aol.com. website: www.cfrbarnesclose.co.uk



Christian Aid Thanks

Dear Friends

Christian Aid staff would like to thank you for your participation in the Birmingham Sponsored Swim on Sunday 12 January 2014. You helped to raise a total of £5300, which will make a difference in helping to transform the lives of poor communities worldwide.



The Pro-Indigenous Commission of São Paulo (CPI) exists to defend the rights of indigenous peoples and quilombolas in Brazil. Their ancestors, the founders of this quilombola [Portuguese for 'runaway slave'] community, were escaped slaves who ran away from Brazil's early plantations and hid in the rainforest. The future of the quilombolas and their lifestyle in the forest is dependent on them being able to protect their lands against trespassers and profiteers – and on them finding a way to make a sustainable living from the forest. CPI's work in helping the quilombolas gain the legal collective title to their lands, fight off threats, and turn their Brazil nut harvest into a reliable source of income is protecting not just the future of children, but the forest itself too.



Christian Aid has funded CPI since 2008. We should feel proud of our achievements by remembering one of quilambola's leaders' words: *'I want to say thank you to Christian Aid's support of CPI, we would not have legs to walk this far. We know that the main effort is ours, but we still need the support of Christian Aid.'*

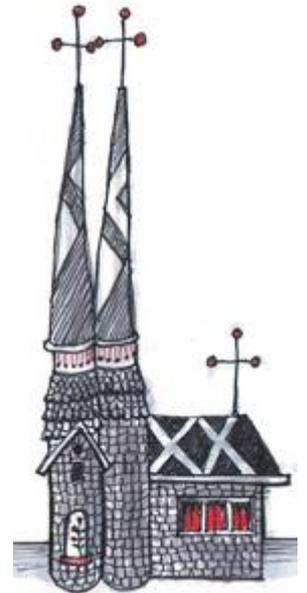
Your support is much appreciated and we hope you will join us again in next year's Sponsored Swim on Sunday 11 January 2015.

Best wishes
Aurora Mela,
Exchange Volunteer

Ongoing conversations...

Not least with and within myself! I continue to grapple with what 'church' could/should look like, and whether the word itself is a help or a hindrance as we seek to move forward within the community of faith. I am not going to rehearse material about what I have written on numerous occasions previously – the institutional v. the relational, the need to move away from statistics which are still Sunday-based, the need to revisit our understanding of church membership, the difficulties of maintaining momentum within something which is overly-structured, the repeated misuse of the term 'fresh expressions'... I could go on! A number of things which have happened recently, however, have suggested to me that the need for informed and – possibly – visionary conversations about these things is more pressing than ever. Why? Several points resonate...

- ⌚ a recent service at Carrs Lane, in which we listened to stories from all manner of places in the life of the church, often from people whom we simply don't and won't see on a Sunday morning; remove any of these stories, and the overall experience of 'church' is diminished
- ⌚ a profound sense that an emerging generation of 'church' (sorry, can't help myself!) leaders will simply not be prepared to do things in the ways which are second nature to many of us; talking for the sake of talking, delight in committees, micro-management of even the smallest decisions...unless and until we take a few steps back and look at ourselves clearly and honestly, we continue to construct 'stumbling blocks' left, right and centre. The Greek word for 'stumbling block' is also the root for our word 'scandal'
- ⌚ Inescapably, no congregation can speak meaningfully of 'church', unless it moves beyond the merely local, single congregation; as I look afresh at the issues facing the Birmingham URC area of churches... well, more and more, we need to be asking, 'what does this (decision) mean for my neighbours?' rather than, 'what does this mean for me?' We have become very preoccupied with self; maybe this is inevitable in challenging times – we develop a kind of fortress mentality, we prioritise self-preservation – but Paul recognised the dangers of this even in the earliest days of anything which we would recognise as Christian 'community', and he reminded people about the importance of a mutual sense of responsibility clearly and consistently

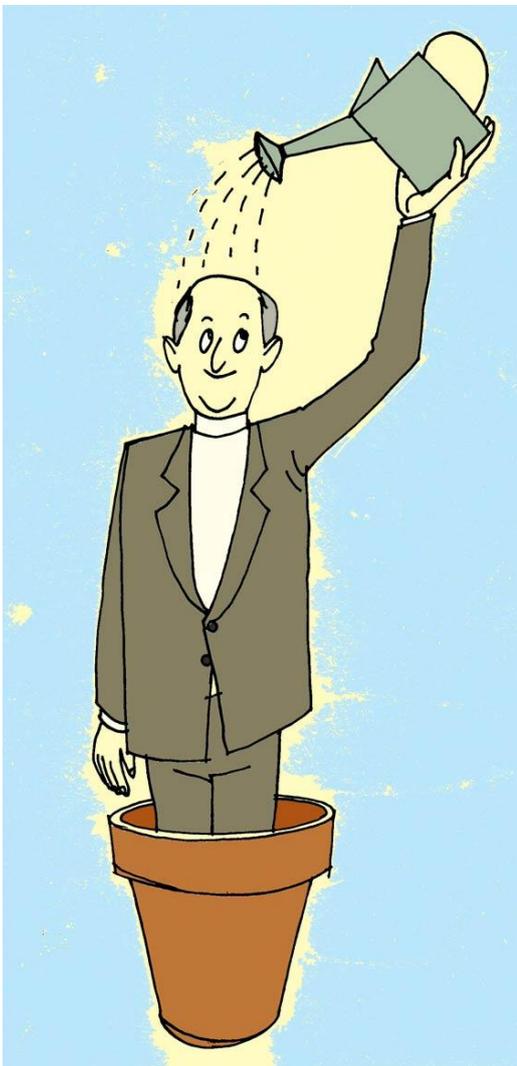


I am writing this before I go this year's URC General Assembly in Cardiff. I hope that I will be proved wrong, but I sense that there will be times when self-interest looms larger than the good of the whole...when the vision of church is actually something that is small and localised and limited. I don't regard God as small and localised and limited.

Neil

Places for growth

I commend three 'chunks' of service to your prayers over the summer (a period in which I don't take any annual leave...way too much going on!). At the end of July, I will be spending time with members of Trinity's BB Company in Hungary, partly as the guests of the Reformed Church in Hungary; among other things, we will be participating in a community project of the Church's choice. As yet, I have no inkling as to what this might be! At the beginning of August, I renew friendships in a youth camp which, one way or another, has appeared in every single one of my 32 years in ministry; after that, I will be spending a full week at the West Midland Synod's Youth Camp which is held near Church Stretton each year. This year, I am pleased to be going as worship leader for the week (and can rely on the very capable support/help of a number of musicians and techies!); this means that I take on responsibility for the leadership of worship on site each morning – and work with a different group of youngsters each day, before the group of young people in turn leads evening worship.



I haven't run out of steam yet...and I am happy to commit a significant piece of time to this work over the summer because, candidly, it is during such residential experiences that I am able to witness significant spiritual growth within young people...and it is deeply rewarding to know that I may have helped with this in some small way. Rightly, I think, it is often said that more can be accomplished during a week away together, than is possible in a whole year of meeting one evening per week.

Spiritual growth is not only for the under-20s! I am delighted that a fair sprinkling of folk from Carrs Lane will be spending a part of the summer (and therefore of their own annual leave) both at Taizé and Spring Harvest. Maybe I will join them when I have a little more 'wriggle room' in the summer! At what points in your year do you prioritise 'spiritual growth'?

Neil

Commitment for Life

Standing Firm *(from a recent update)*

Ne'ama lives under Israeli occupation in a village near Bethlehem in the occupied Palestinian territory. The separation barrier, which is being built on Palestinian land next to Ne'ama's home, cuts her and her family off from their community. They live with the constant threat of their home being demolished by the Israeli authorities and are subjected to aggressive visits by the Israeli defence forces. For the last eight years they have been fighting a legal battle to stay in their home.

They are at serious risk of being forcibly displaced from their home and land.

Christian Aid partner the YMCA Women's Training Programme has supported Ne'ama for several years. She successfully completed their Women's Agricultural Training programme, and then took a loan offered to graduates of the scheme. She now has a successful grape business and grows many vegetables for sale. Being able to use her land has helped her and her family hold on to it, when previously it was at risk because of a policy that says untended land can be confiscated by the state of Israel. She earns enough to send her children to university, to improve her home, and to fight the ongoing legal battle against its demolition.

Ne'ama and others like her are being supported by the YMCA to stay on their land and in their homes. Furthermore, the education that Ne'ama has now been able to pay for has empowered her daughters, and transformed their lives too.

Christian Aid was recently among a group of aid agencies who spoke out about Israeli demolitions of Palestinian homes, which, according to the UN, are now at a 5-year high. The demolitions have meant that aid organisations operating in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem have faced increasing restrictions in responding to the needs of Palestinians and delivering aid.

Neighbourly Love *(from Moving Stories 172)*

The YMCA's Rehabilitation Programme was started in the early days of the first intifada (conflict). During the first year of that conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, over 50,000 Palestinian young men aged between 14 and 18 years old were injured. Nader Abu Amsha, Director of the YMCA Centre in Beit Sahour near Bethlehem in the West Bank, saw the needs of the local people and developed the programme into the success it is today. The programme attempts to integrate people, with both physical and mental disabilities, back into society where they can play a full part.

Shaba's story, told by Nader, illustrates exactly how, through working with her, her family and community she has found independence and a purpose in life.

Shaba was shot in the neck by a soldier, whilst in a car with her husband, as they waited at a checkpoint. The Israeli Defence Force soldier took their papers to examine and then returned them to the car. The husband, thinking all was well, started to move away. However, the soldier had wanted to look in the car boot so when he saw them start to move away he aimed and shot at the car. Unfortunately Shaba sustained injuries to her neck which resulted in permanent paralysis. Her husband, a builder, worked with the YMCA to understand and implement the adaptations needed for their home. The YMCA paid for the materials he needed for the conversions but he did all the work.

Before her accident Shaba used to visit their neighbours every day but following the accident this was impossible and it made her very depressed. Steep steps leading up to their homes made it impossible for her to visit them and be part of the community chatter. Shaba was therefore thrilled when neighbours started to add ramps to their homes so she could visit them all. By giving a little help and much expertise, Shaba's life has been turned around and she and her husband are very grateful for the help and guidance of the YMCA.

Abu Suma's Story *(from Moving Stories 172)*

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God' These are the words that come to mind when standing in the home of Abu Suma and his wife Hanan, in the village of Bet Skaria. Abu Suma's home is one of the thousands of Palestinian homes under a demolition order. In this village alone, there are more than thirty homes, including the minaret of the local mosque and the infant school, under similar orders.

Since 1967, Palestinians need a permit to build on their own land. Not one of the families in Bet Skaria has been given permission since 1967.

Abu Suma and Hanan share their home with their three children. Last year, Abu Suma added a small bathroom and kitchen to his one bedroom cottage and now there is a demolition order on this simple dwelling. Standing there, I try to imagine the ignominy of failing to improve your home for the sake of your children, while a modern, luxurious settlement is being rapidly built on a nearby hillside. I feel a wave of helplessness coming over me. When the demolition team leaves, Abu Suma will receive a bill to pay for the cost of knocking down his home. Christian Aid partner YMCA, is working with the women of the village to set-up co-operative businesses and to record the incidents of violence against the villagers by settlers.

Breaking the Silence *(from Moving Stories 172)*

Avner is Jewish and from Tel Aviv. He is a former soldier in the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). He comes from a Zionist family, knowing, as he grew up, that he was to be a soldier protecting his country and his people.

Today, Avner leads groups around Hebron, King David's first capital city and the location of the graves of the Patriarchs. Before 1997, Hebron was home to the largest population of Palestinians, with more than 150,000 people living and working there. Today, following the policy of dividing the city and closing the Palestinian markets and shops, the centre of Hebron feels like an empty town.

Avner works with a Christian Aid Israeli partner, *Breaking The Silence*, which is attempting to raise awareness amongst Israelis about the illegality of the occupation of the West Bank and the actions that the IDF demand from the sons of Israel, like himself.

Contributed by Wendy Firmin



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

Traidcraft's Handmade Organic Maftoul

Zaytoun's artisan maftoul (cous cous) is sourced from the Deir Ballout women's cooperative located in the district of Salfeet, between the Jordan Valley and Jenin. This labour-intensive product is made from organic wheat, rolled by hand and sun-dried. Deir Ballout is known to be one of the best maftoul making cooperatives and thanks to the skills of their mentor, Um Hikmat, who conducts local maftoul rolling workshops, they produce over 10 tonnes of maftoul annually. Um Hikmat says: "We may not have technological advancements in our village but we can do things with our hands that are superior to anything made by machines. No machine can make this kind of maftoul. It does not work."

Working with several women in her coop to improve their economic condition, Um Hikmat holds a bigger vision for the work that they are doing. She puts aside any personal differences to keep pressing forward with the hope that one day the work of her coop will speak to the world's ears and break down what she refers to as cultural misunderstandings. *"We want our work to communicate to people around the world that we are beautiful and strong women contrary to how we are often portrayed."* Um Hikmat serves as a role model for many young women in her village. Challenging conventional limitations she divorced her husband and moved into her family home where she runs her independent venture as a farmer and a senior member of the Deir Ballout women's coop. After running for elections this year in the Palestine Fair Trade Association, Um Hikmat has become more and more involved in connecting women from different villages together in order to learn from each other ways to improve their lives. While many women find themselves in a position where their husbands cannot find work due to military closures and a challenging economy, Um Hikmat says, "We have to find ways to support ourselves creatively. This is why we are now expanding our work to include more handicrafts and artwork. It is important to show young girls that they are not prisoners to their circumstances and that with hard work and determination, they may not be able to change the whole situation, but they can become more in control of their lives." She continues: "since we started making maftoul for Canaan Fair Trade we have been enjoying the company of each other more. We love life. We want to enjoy it to the fullest; this is why we don't work alone. Rolling maftoul is a great excuse to get together, cook together, and work together. We roll, we chat, and we feel good when we are finished that we accomplished something as a group. These are the beautiful things in life."

Zaytoun is proud to source this product through Canaan Fair Trade which is the Palestinian social enterprise based near Jenin that sources fairly-traded products from networks of farmers who are part of the Palestinian Fair Trade Association.

Maftoul with Squash, Sultanas & Pumpkin Seeds - Serves 4

Ingredients

250g Zaytoun Organic Maftoul	70g Fairtrade sultanas
60g pumpkin seeds	1 medium-sized squash (about 750g)
3-4 tbsp Zaytoun Fairtrade olive oil	1 tsp ground cumin
Flaky sea salt and fresh ground pepper	Water or vegetable stock
1 tbsp apple balsamic or cider vinegar	3 tbsp finely chopped dill
1 handful flat-leafed parsley, finely chopped	

Method

1. Put the sultanas in a bowl, pour over hot water and leave to plump up a bit.
2. Heat the oven to 190C/375F/gas mark 5. Warm a frying pan over a medium heat and toast the pumpkin seeds, until fragrant and toasted. Tip into a bowl and set aside.
3. Peel and halve the squash, remove the seeds and fibres. Cut it into largish chunks of about 3cm and place in a roasting tin. Toss in two tablespoons of the olive oil, sprinkle on cumin, salt and pepper, and toss again. Roast for 30-35 minutes, until soft in the middle and gently charred around the edges.
4. Cook the couscous in water or stock as per the instructions.
5. To assemble, toss the drained sultanas, pumpkin seeds and herbs with the couscous until well combined. Trickle over the remaining oil and vinegar, and toss again. Taste, adjust the seasoning, and toss gently with the squash. Serve hot or cold.

Article taken from Traidcraft Fair Trader's Bulletin.

Zaytoun handmade organic maftoul (cous cous) and their Fairtrade zaytoun olive oil are available from Carrs Lane Fair Trade now.



On This Day ...

Two pieces from 100 years ago relating to young people, some food for thought, and finally something in a lighter vein, not unsuitable for the 'silly season,' but not without its potentially useful item of new information!

From the Carrs Lane Journal July 1914

The Boys' Brigade Camp Holiday

The officers of the Carrs Lane and Digbeth Companies of the Boys Brigade have arranged to have a week's country holiday early in August. A few of the boys' parents – who are mainly very poor people – are, by dint of much self-denial, providing the money for their boys, but as the cost is ten shillings each, only a very small number can do so. The officers, therefore, make an earnest appeal to the generosity of sympathisers to help them to take a larger number of boys than are able to find the necessary means. If the congregation at Carrs Lane would reflect for a moment they would realise what a great boon and pleasure this country holiday is to the boys, and they would at once send along their contributions to Rev. Sidney M. Berry, Rev. William Jones, or any of the officers. If it were not trespassing too much on the space at the editor's disposal, it would be easy to mention the numerous instances in which both physical and moral advantage have resulted from camps in connection with the Boys' Brigade in Birmingham and throughout the country. He, or she, gives twice who gives quickly. Contributions should reach the gentlemen named by the 10th of July to be in time.

Ten shillings – 50p – for a week at camp! Sounds nothing, until I remember that my parents only paid £6 for a full week at camp for me, when I went on my first BB camp (to Dawlish in 1970). A hundred years on, and we still need to 'subsidise' youngsters from needy backgrounds, so that they can share in the benefits and opportunities of a full week away. The BB was the movement to popularise camping among young people in the 1880s – and when Baden Powell organised his first 'experimental' camp on Brownsea Island in the early years of the twentieth century, some of those who took part were lads from local BB companies. The 'holiday' (with more home comforts) is probably as popular as the traditional 'camp' these days, but plenty of folk still spend time under canvass – including me, in 2014. It is a salutary thought... when I add things up, I have spent over a year of my life in a tent! Neil

Carrs Lane Sunday Schools Anniversary (by A.S.G.)

Sunday June 14th 1914

At 9.45 am on the above Sunday, five or six men presented themselves at Door A, and entering the Town Hall began to make what arrangements were necessary for the comfort and convenience of the audience. With only one exception, I think, Carrs Lane Church has been favoured with fine weather for its Anniversary Sunday during the last twenty-four years; and this year proved only too well how much we have to thank a kindly Providence, for the whole day was gloriously fine. Soon after ten the children of the choir began to arrive, and the stewards became busy. Then the

Digbeth Band was heard marshalling its contingent up New Street, and soon the doors opened and admitted a vast throng of gaily-dressed boys and girls, who quickly took their places in the orchestra and galleries.

Excellent congregations both at the morning and evening services filled the Hall, and we had two splendid addresses from our pastor. His talk to the children in the morning was based on the text, "She hath done what she could," and two capital stories – the women of Japan giving their hair to make a rope, and the old monk, Brother Amicus – were told in inimitable style.

Mr. Berry's text for the evening's discourse was "The love of Christ constraineth us." The singing calls for special mention. About 500 scholars formed the choir, and with their teachers and the church choir sang the hymns splendidly. The little tots had one all to themselves, "Golden apples I must grow," which was sweetly rendered; and the voice of the soloist in the hymn, "O Friend divine and tender," was a revelation to all. We congratulate our Digbeth friends on having such a chorister as Eveline Butcher, and sincerely hope her voice will be taken care of.

From a financial standpoint, these anniversaries are dismal failures, the collection in the morning being £25 10s 2d, and the evening £13 19s 1d. Considering everything – the time in preparing the children, the time and forethought necessary in making the arrangements, and the anxieties connected with the day – is it worthwhile? Well, from our pastor – to whom we owe much – the organist, choirmasters, conductor, stewards, and other minor officials, we all say emphatically, Yes! It is worthwhile!!

From the Carrs Lane Journal August 1914

Light: a Meditation

We are privileged to publish a condensed report of a paper on this subject which was read recently before the Young Men's Morning Bible Class by Mr. A. H. Ross.

"When I first set out to write this paper I was under the impression that one might safely assume as axiomatic certain mental implications involved in the use of the term light in its application to the mental and spiritual worlds. I soon found, however, that my own thought was anything but clear upon these axiomatic questions, and it became necessary to state them in the interests of lucidity.

Now for our first axiom we shall have to go back to one of the earliest philosophic puzzles and state a very obvious but somewhat neglected truth, I mean the fact that you cannot talk about light at all – that is, you cannot talk *profitably* about *light* – without bringing into the discussion its opposite and antithetic term *darkness*. I am not now referring to the fact that by the constitution of the human mind the *idea* of light varies by association with the *idea* of darkness. The truth is deeper than that. I mean that in the very nature of things themselves, in the indissoluble wedlock of the duality of Nature, light cannot be thought of except as super-imposed upon a background of darkness. Darkness is a fundamental condition of light. Light gains its meaning only by reason of the darkness in which it shines. There is a widespread conception that *light*, or a state of considerable illumination, is the normal condition of the cosmos, and that darkness is a sort of periodic concession by Nature to our weakness – a kindly happening specially designed to assist our recuperative powers. You have only to go out on a starlit winter's night to realise the fact that the one thing that is really characteristic of the universe is not light but darkness. It is this

predominance of darkness in the cosmos which led Thomas Carlyle to make one of his characteristic replies. He was walking with a friend by starlight across the Scottish moors, and looking up at the myriad host above, his friend exclaimed, 'Isn't it magnificent?'

'Magnificent!' ejaculated Carlyle, 'Man, it is *awful*.'

I suspect that it was not the fact merely of physical immensity which awed Carlyle. It was the darkness and all that it *concealed*. It was not what he could see, but the sense of what remained hidden – the suppressed factor – which appealed so strongly to his imagination. As he looked out upon the chill darkness of the eternal spaces, he saw that these things were but the symbol of a like condition in the intellectual and spiritual worlds. It is as though a man who had never seen the sea were to go down upon a dark and stormy night to some rocky creek, and by the aid of lighted match were to watch the waters swirling and fretting against the reef. With the thunder of the great deep in his ears he could hardly fail to realise that the things he saw were but a fragment of the vaster fact which he did not and could not see. But suppose his other senses were limited to the range of that lighted match, that sound as well as sight ceased where its feeble glow flickered into the darkness, would he still guess the truth, think you? Would his imagination picture for him a great deep, now driving in great rollers across the main, now gently lapping some tree-girt shore, now lashing into fury at the granite base of some mighty cliff? And yet we are very much as that man, peering out from the promontory of our little lives upon a scene full of turmoil and activity, but quickly fading into the deep mystery of a silent and impenetrable Beyond.

What is the meaning of that silence? Does it really mean death and desolation, or is it but the veil which shields us from something which only a larger vision can endure? I confess that I have sought long and earnestly for a figure which shall express adequately this deeper truth. Perhaps the best that we can say is that we are born physically, intellectually and spiritually *into a darkened room*, upon which the blinds are closely drawn, and from which certain things which might be inconvenient to our development are purposely and designedly withheld. It is a very imperfect figure, and yet I believe it holds for us a very profound truth.

Our second axiom may be stated thus: that throughout Nature there exists an instinctive and subtle connection between light and the *processes of growth*. That this is profoundly true upon the physical and organic plane will be recognised by everyone who has seriously studied the nature and origin of life. The part played by sunlight, for example (to take but one instance) in building up the primitive bases of life, is one of the most fascinating chapters in modern biological study.

But it is less true upon the intellectual and psychological plane. One of the most surprising results from a searching analysis of the materials of one's own thinking is the extraordinary number of our mental images which are the gift of light.

We have thus arrived at two somewhat significant conclusions:

1. That darkness, which we have seen to be the predominant condition of the cosmos, may be, and probably is, only *knowledge withheld* with a view to our development – a chamber, as it were, darkened for a specific and definite end.
2. The light, the complement of darkness, is connected in a most vital manner with the secret processes of mental and spiritual growth.

Compressing the whole truth into a sentence, we may say that while we are sojourners in the darkness we are in literal fact the children of the light. We dwell

temporarily in the shadows but we are really begotten of that which casts the shadow in which we dwell.

Says a contemporary writer: 'The future is in the hands of youth. It is not enough to wander upon the lower slopes and weave garlands from the bowers that others have sown. To attain, it must go on climbing; it must take risks, experiment, suffer innumerable set-backs, and agonise itself in vain attempts upon the seemingly inaccessible peaks, remembering always that to cherish one tiny spark of the divine fire is greater than to blaze with the dazzling brilliance of any reflected glory.'

And yet to do any of these things we need light:

The light of insight, to reveal our true capacity and our relation to the world.

The light of imagination, to touch our thinking with a sense of deeper things.

The light of learning and history, to inform and direct our judgment.

The light of grace and revelation, to encourage the growth and development of the soul."

From the Carrs Lane Journal July 1964

Conference: Truth (2) Sunday, May 10th

How can an honest man believe? (by F. Greaves)

The Rev. John Gibbs, Principal Designate of Norwich City Training College, gave the address at the second evening conference on truth.

Many people, he said, see conflict as a preliminary to belief in the religious realm, and think that it can only be held by closing the mind, or after performing mental gymnastics. To accept the religious tenets puts normal belief under strain. The "Honest to God" debate revealed that many were on the point of giving up Christianity and this supported the fact that there can be no such thing as dishonest belief. Any belief we hold must be our own. It must be accepted, or it is not belief. Doubts are not evidence of poor faith. We must face them and battle our way through to a position of belief – this is the way inferred by Jesus in his teaching. We sometimes think that Christians in past years had no doubts, that these perplexities are typical of today, but this is not so. If we are to have any hope of helping others in their doubts, the questions they raise must first have been asked by ourselves. We need to see clearly. What many have rejected as Christian, we would not recognise as such. What they reject, Christians would want to reject too. There is an appalling ignorance of Christianity. Christian truth also suffers a setback in some minds because of the rapid advance of science. "Science has transformed our situation" is now so well accepted that it is hardly worth repeating. The scientific revolution is one of the attitudes to life: no landmark in history since Christ is so significant. It appears that man has taken his destiny into his own hands. People agree with Thomas Hardy's taunt, "Why doesn't Christianity give up?" and feel that God is now connected only with prayer and religion – which are just the concerns of churches.

Mr. Gibbs said that this is the picture we give to people outside the churches, but it is a captivity from which Dr. Robinson and Dietrich Bonhoeffer have tried to escape. Against the modern heresy that the only valid evidence is what can be scientifically proved, Christians have to find some way of assuring people on non-biblical grounds

of the truth of the existence of God. We must aim at showing that God is real, not by building a superstructure of doctrines which will be rejected but by helping men to recognise God in his church, revealing himself in love through its members. The world hungers for the life-giving love of Christ. "We need to re-interpret our picture language," says Bultmann, in order to remove what has caused so much difficulty in the past. We must repent that the church is not good enough as a vehicle for the Christian message.

Most of all we must carry the truth that God is real into our personal relationships. True Christian love, expressed in everyday situations, is the most hopeful way of helping people to understand Christian truth.

Conference: Truth (3) Sunday, May 24th

Psychology and religious truth (by Dorothy Rumsby)

Dr. David Millard, Senior Registrar in the Department of Psychiatry at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, was the third speaker.

Many people, he said, think psychology is opposed to religion, that by it all religious beliefs can be explained away. Psychology certainly examines man's motives for being religious, why he needs to worship and pray, but it takes no account of Christian ethics. The Christian explains his behaviour by his understanding of God: the opponents of Christianity say it can be explained without bringing God into it. Psychology is not necessarily opposed to religion, but it is difficult to explain, for the language of these different realms of thought is not the same: there are no words in psychology for some religious experiences. A psychologist can analyse the reasons and emotions which cause a man to make some assertion about religion, such as "God is gracious", but he is powerless to prove the statement itself is true or false. Freud may regard it as a wish fulfilment, but that does not prove the belief wrong. Further psychological objections to religion concern the personality of the man making the assertion: there is no religion without man, and our upbringing, our inheritance and environment, determine how religious we are. One can "catch" religion. The neurotic person who is religious has conceived in childhood an exaggerated idea of the perfection of adults. He projects this on to God and feels a compulsion to try to be good. This is bad, and it may therefore be argued that religion should be abandoned.

But the argument used to explain away religious beliefs can also explain unbelief. The unbeliever may simply be a man who refutes his own father and hence God, the father figure; again, psychology cannot prove the belief itself true or false.

The religious person believes in free will, that he can choose, whereas some psychologists, like Freud, believe in predeterminism, that Man is under a powerful compulsion to act as he does. For example, belief in an after-life may be due to an exaggerated fear of dying, but, as there is nothing in psychology to prove that there is or is not a life after death, so it cannot prove that to hold this belief is necessarily a sign of mental illness; for fear of dying does not always make a person religious – it may be the result of free choice. Though psychologists can trace meaningful connections between our actions, we know that at certain points there are alternatives we could have taken. We can also change our minds.

Psychology can, in fact, help religion by making a positive contribution to man's progress. The Christian Church will benefit by having exposed the motives behind

fake religious feeling and wrong actions. For instance, to raise anxiety as some preachers do is a poor long-term motivation. You can't frighten teen-agers into chastity, stop a murderer by the gallows, or the Russians by nuclear weapons. The best way to attract more people to the Church is to show you love God, not to harp on their sins.

The Church can also benefit by an improved knowledge of the relationship between people. Churches are shy of fellowship, and a large church encourages isolation. It may perhaps be better to meet more often in small groups, such as the house church.

Psychology, therefore, far from working against religion, can in fact help by contributing to our understanding of religious truth.

Answering the many questions prompted by his talk, Dr. Millard agreed that the people needing psychological help far outnumbered those trained to give it. Ministers should receive some training in psychotherapy; sometimes patients need the help of a doctor, psychotherapist and minister.

From the Carrs Lane Journal August 1964

Bits and Pieces (by S. H. Oldham)

August – the silly season – is here, when the Loch Ness Monster arouses the expectations of lovers of the uncanny to the benefit of the canny Scots; but June has its marine surprises too. I read in the paper that a number of jellyfish, known as Portuguese men-of-war appeared off the Kent coast. I don't know the collective noun for jellyfish, never having collected them, but in this case "flotilla" surely would be appropriate; or would "squadron" be a better word? I would assent to a squad of squids for cuttle-fish; but when it comes to jellyfish I am not so happy.

I quite enjoy the misleading names of some of these denizens of the deep, such as Bombay Duck and Portuguese Man-of-war. In my native county, Cheshire, the locals speak of a Lady Hen when referring to the fish known to zoologists as the two-spotted goby; but then we Cestrians are notably genteel in our language. We should never think of describing a clothes-horse by any other name than a maiden.

The quaint description of how creatures got their names is found in Genesis chapter 2: "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air: and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature that was the name thereof. And the man gave the names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field."

This might satisfy a fundamentalist, but to me Portuguese Man-of-war and Bombay Duck are definitely post-Adam.

So much for that bit, and now let us pass to another subject.

The other day I was perusing the University Honours Lists in the hope of finding the name of a student who is not unknown to Carrs Lane (and in this I was successful) when my attention was arrested by the heading at the top of the list, which was Cambridge Mathematical Tripos. In school days and since, Cambridge Tripos has been a familiar term which I have dismissed with but little thought, except that I imagined that it had no connection with tripe. In this I was correct.

I have looked it up and find that Tripos is a singular noun and has a plural – Triposes. I then jumped to the conclusion that it meant three positions, Classes I, II and III. Upon consulting the Oxford Dictionary I found it was nothing of the kind: any more than a Portuguese Man-of-war is a naval vessel.

“Tripos is called after the tripod or three-legged stool upon which the M.A. sat to deliver satirical speech at Commencement.”

Silly, is it not? Yes, it’s all silly, but then it’s August.

Contributed by Wendy Firmin

At the bottom of the drive...

...you never know *quite* what you are going to find! For instance, in the very next road to where I live, there is a parcel at the end of one of the drives; it has been there for at least a week. It is the size of a picture, say, or a large box of chocolates; it is wrapped in a black bin liner and masking tape...and, curiously, bears the legend, ‘Danger’. So far as I can tell, nobody has touched it, or even looked carefully at it; vans scour the local streets on an almost-daily basis, but this package has not been added to the daily ‘trawl.’

Take another street – one I often walk on my way to swimming at the university. On Sunday afternoon, a garden wall supported a beautifully constructed pyramid of tins of baked beans, along with a note which said, ‘Help yourself!’ The academic year had come to a close and one thoughtful student had emptied what was left in the kitchen cupboard on to the street. I appreciated the gesture, but declined the invitation.

Fly-tipping seems to increase in prevalence. I feel sorry for the folk who live in one quiet road near to the manse; a couple of weeks ago, a fridge was dumped at the end of their drive; no sooner had it disappeared, than a large fridge-freezer took its place. To the best of my knowledge, it is still there.

This is not intended to be a cautionary tale...or a comment on contemporary society... or a plea for better rubbish collection...or even some carefully veiled theological comment! I simply offer it to you as a (small!) window into my life...but, PS., it might be worth reading Nehemiah 4.10 and the verses which surround it: the presence of rubbish caused a great deal of frustration, because it hindered the construction of a wall for the new Temple. I get riled by fly-tipping and the like, but wonder what the spiritual equivalent might be in my life. Hm.

Neil

It's Summer – time to look for flowers, but they aren't all in season!

6,7; 6,7

Two flowers from the darkest time of the year: one might be expected to have an evergreen fruit, and gives promise of the spring; the other (ach so, it belongs to me!) loses its green summer leaves but brings December sunshine with its yellow flowers.

8; 5

A hand-warmer for a chicken stealer; and woolly gatherings in magenta, white and mauve

6; 6-2-3; 10

A reminder of a lass from Liverpool; a reminder to remember; and a touch of sky in the golden harvest field

7; 5,10

A Scottish symbol whose prickles contrast with the soft passing of its purple crown; and a poisonous plant less deadly than its better-known cousin

9; 6

Flowers like drinking vessels, one to hold the golden product of the dairy, the other to hold a light that glows yellow or mauve or purple in the spring sunshine

8; 8; 4,7; 10,4

Ringling the changes: one for an animal that goes mad in spring; one for a carpet from the spring sky; one for a covering for the moors; one for England's principal cathedral.

4; 9; 6

A flower which gives its name to the kind of process by which its petals are so beautifully shaped; one with uneven petals which should perhaps be sweet enough to take from a baby; and one, officially classified *achillea millefolium*, can be called milfoil or thousand weed because its leaves consist of large numbers of tiny leaf-lets

7; 10,5

Two plants, one not as tattered as it might seem, the other angelically related, whose sweet and gallant gold arrays of flowers cheer the shortening days of autumn

7, 9; 8

The poor man's weather-glass may be sought here, there and everywhere, but its beautiful vermilion companion is happy wherever it grows – but – um – there can be a form of anger!

5; 2-3, 5

Sometimes thought of as the silver among God's floral jewels, and well-known for opening to the returning sun, this flower has a cousin with a bovine connection

Contributed by Wendy Firmin

Summer Sudoku

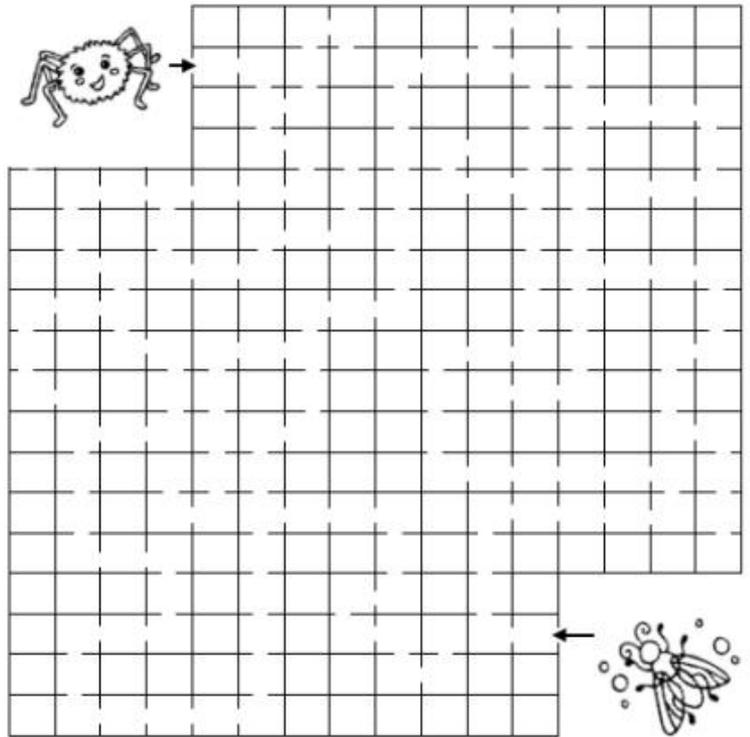
Every row, column and mini-grid must contain the letters B U C K E T.
Don't guess - use logic



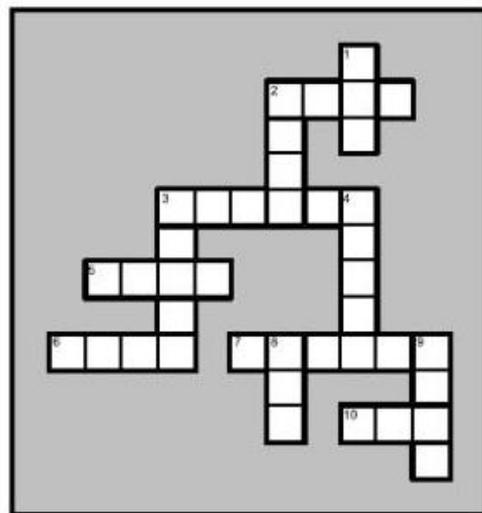
	T			K	
	U	K	B	C	
T					U
K					C
	B	E	C	T	
	K			U	

Insect Friends Maze

These two little insect friends want to meet up, but first they have to find a route through this very tricky maze. Can you help them?



Seaside Crossword



Across

- It may have a sail or oars
- Perhaps you could collect water in this?
- Watch him scurry down his hole
- They swim in the sea and have scales and fins
- She sells sea _____ on the sea-shore
- I hope this is out for your holiday

Down

- Carry your beach things in this
- A good read!
- The strip of sand along the sea shore
- Dry yourself with this
- Wear one of these to keep the sun off your head!
- It feels funny under your toes

Volunteers

Volunteers aren't paid – it's not because they're worthless - but because they are priceless.

I thank you Lord as a volunteer
for the chance to serve another year.
And to give of myself in some small way,
to those not blessed as I each day.

My thanks for health and mind and soul,
to aid me ever toward my goal.
For eyes to see the good in all,
a hand to extend before a fall.

For legs to go where the need is great,
learning to love – forgetting to hate.
For ears to hear and heart to care,
when someone's cross is hard to bear.

A smile to show my affection true,
with energy aplenty – the task to do.
And all I ask, dear Lord, if I may,
is to serve you better day by day.



Answers to puzzle on page 20
Winter aconite; winter jasmine
Foxglove; phlox
Scylla; forget-me-not; cornflower
Thistle; woody nightshade
Buttercup; crocus
Harebell; bluebell; bell heather; Canterbury bell
Pink; candytuft; yarrow
Ragwort; Michaelmas daisy
Scarlet pimpernel; geranium
Daisy; ox-eye daisy

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.

Room Hire at Carrs Lane

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The Church at Carrs Lane Regular Activities

SUNDAYS

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

Carrs Lane Lived Community meet for Prayers -

Monday to Friday 7.30am and 7.00pm, all are welcome to join them

Lunchtime Healing Service Every Wednesday 1.15pm

Prayer Group First Wednesday at 7.00 pm

Thinking Allowed First Thursday at 10.15 am

Harborne House Group Fourth Tuesdays 2.00pm (various locations)

Central House Group at Carrs Lane Third Wednesdays at 6.30pm

Carrs Lane Choir Practice Fridays at 7.00pm

Carrs Lane Players (drama group) Fridays at 7.45 pm

Charity Knitting Circle First Tuesday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

Carrs Lane Walking Group usually meets monthly, see notice board

Fair Trade Shop First and Third Sunday after morning worship
and Tuesday - Saturday 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

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