

Mustard Seed

ST. THOMAS' CHURCH BRAMPTON, St. John's Walton, St. Peter's Holymoorside
- going for growth in Christ -

The road to hell is paved with ... ●●● see page 3

Members of the Churches in this parish have been finding out what makes local people tick.

* They are continuing to conduct a survey about what parishioners actually believe. When it is complete - perhaps in a year's time - **MUSTARD SEED** will publish the results.

* They are taking seriously what people say. They won't allow the world around to set their agenda - Jesus has done that - but they do want it to be known that the Christian faith is thoroughly relevant to the pressures and pains of life in 1993.

* They would like to know what readers think of what **MUSTARD SEED** says. Comment to the Church office, please - see back page.



TEN REASONS WHY I NEVER WASH

1. *I was made to wash as a child.*
2. *People who wash are hypocrites - they reckon they are cleaner than other people.*
3. *There are so many different kinds of soap, I could never decide which one is right.*
4. *I used to wash, but it got boring so I stopped.*
5. *I still wash on special occasions like Christmas and Easter.*
6. *None of my friends wash.*
7. *I'm still young. When I'm older and have got a bit dirtier I might start washing.*
8. *I really don't have the time.*
9. *The bathroom's never warm enough.*
10. *People who make soap are only after your money.*



for "wash" read →

Doing something about it

It was 1979 and Roger and Irene Freestone and their five children were slowly coming to terms with the reality of life in the frozen north of England, almost 200 miles from their roots in the south-east.

One question loomed large in their minds over the job relocation which had plucked them away from everything comfortable, secure and familiar in Essex to the distant market town which was now their home - why Chesterfield?

'Christianity was something we never talked about...'

Their first impressions of the town were far from flattering. "Chesterfield was dreadful," Irene declared, recalling the time before the town centre's attractive development was carried out ...and remembering the shock to the system of March 1979's unwelcoming weather.

But that nagging question, why Chesterfield? no longer troubles Roger and Irene as they reflect on 14 years here in north Derbyshire. "Now, we can look back and see what God had in store for us," said Roger.

They met at school and were married at 19, Roger pursuing a career in corporate insurance and Irene, before family commitments, worked in the City as a clerk.

Both readily admit that they were unaware of God in their lives. "There was insistence on going to Sunday School, and sport and other activities kept me in church youth groups until I was 15," said Roger. As for Irene: "There were occasional links with church but now we look back, little made real sense."

Marriage and then life with a growing family scarcely changed the way they saw things. "We both knew there was more to life," Roger explained, "but neither of us chose to do something



Roger and Irene Freestone

about it." "Christianity was something we never talked about," Irene added.

It wasn't until six years after their move to Chesterfield that they took the first steps towards faith in God...and begin an even more momentous journey than the one which had seen them leave the south-east back in 1979.

Irene takes up the story: "It was when I was learning to drive in mid-1985. Everywhere I went there was a hoarding with a picture of Billy Graham or some mention of the Mission England events coming up. I decided I should like to go but I wanted Roger to come too."

"I remembered seeing Billy Graham in the 1950's when he was at Earl's Court," Roger continued. "I was impressed by the man and I wouldn't mind hearing him again. There was a growing curiosity."

The date: 25 June. The venue: Sheffield, Bramhall Lane. "We went on a coach organised by a local church. We had their last two seats," Irene said. "We were still hesitant and wondered what had we done! There was a vast crowd."

Billy Graham preached about the family, children and the Cross of Christ. "I

found myself identifying with everything he was saying," Roger explained. That night both Roger and Irene put their trust in God and made their commitment to Him.

They both realised that they would not get far trying to work out their own faith: they had no church connections and were uncertain where to go. "The Mission organisers put us in touch with a group of people to encourage us to pray and learn more about the Christian faith through the Bible.

"...If only we had given it some thought 40 years ago, ..."

"Without doubt being in a small group of like minded people was of real benefit to us both. But it wasn't easy - there were many other seemingly important priorities but we made every effort".

OPINION

I'm tired of bad news. There's so much of it around these days. Bad news used to happen on the other side of the world. Now it happens in Bosnia to people with cars and fridges. People quite a lot like us.

It goes on happening and nothing seems to be able to stop the lying, the destruction of friendships and homes, the injuries and the deaths.

We're powerless. We wring our hands. We say we shouldn't get involved, it might never work and would cost us too much. We take well-publicised token actions to assuage our consciences.

What a mess! But was it ever any different? It's just the human race in action again. Is there any hope?

What does God think about it all? Wipe the lot out and start again? Or get involved?

God got involved. Jesus Christ also seemed powerless in the face of evil. He got involved and ended up nailed to a bit of wood until he died. A politically expedient execution on a trumped up charge. Not much hope there.

Now looking back over 8 years, has there been a change. Roger first: "A relationship with God has taken the 'me' out of my life and replaced it with something else. It has made a world of difference. I am not perfect but I am less quick tempered and more tolerant than I used to be!" And Irene: "It switched my perspective on life - I realised that I just didn't have the right attitude to some things."

But there were other changes in their lives that prompted questions from their family. They are now encouraged to see 3 of their children also committed to Christianity.

But in their exciting time, has there been any sadness? Roger speaking for them both said "Yes. If only we had given it some thought 40 years ago, how much better life might have been."

by Disgruntled of Brampton

Nor was there until three days after with the empty tomb, the incredulous disciples, Jesus standing there the holes in his hands, saying "Peace be with you".

If our God involved himself with us, took all that evil could throw at him and triumphed there must be hope, mustn't there?

The only problem is that he seems to expect us to get involved with him, just as he did with us. But then, is that a problem?

ENQUIRIES

The administration of our churches is based in St. Thomas' Church Office and general enquiries should be made there. It is staffed, Monday to Friday, from 9.00am until midday. Office telephone: 558461

If you want to enquire about a wedding or baptism, or just have a word with one of the clergy, please come to the office on a Monday between 6.30pm and 7.15pm (through the door opposite Church View, not the tower end).

...good excuses

If there's something you don't want to do, you may well invent an excuse. Most of us are well practised at the art of excuse making. Often the end result is so plausible that we almost believe it ourselves. **MUSTARD SEED** has been collecting the reasons people give for not coming to Church.

People in Walton - and Ashgate, Somersall, Boythorpe, Holymoorside and Brampton - tend to say one or more of these about church services.

■ **It's not relevant.** It seems to have nothing to do with the real world. Church goers are so heavenly minded they are no earthly use.

■ **It's boring.** It's always the same, monotonous and tedious.

■ **It's not like it used to be** when I used to go. All this modern language doesn't seem right, let alone the guitars, drums, flutes, violins and keyboards.

■ **I'm waiting till I'm old.** Church is for elderly people.

■ **Church these days is just for young people.** They aren't concerned about the elderly.

■ **I don't like the minister.**

■ **No one speaks to you.** Church is unfriendly.

■ **I'm not sure if I believe what they preach.** And it doesn't seem as though those who go to church believe it either.

How much truth is there in these statements? There's only one way to check them out - give it a try, come along and judge first hand. Church members, and the Ministers in particular, really want to know. Please let them know your reaction.

What do Church Services offer?

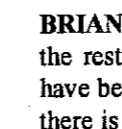
- *A chance to get in touch with God.*
- *Encouragement for those seeking to follow Jesus Christ - it's not easy!*
- *Deep friendship and fellowship.*
- *The stimulus to think about important issues of life and death - and to ask questions and discuss afterwards.*

Come along and check out your local Church.

Parish staff



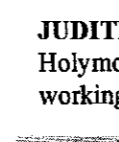
CHRISTOPHER FRITH has been Rector, for eight years and this September marks 25 years in the ordained ministry. He oversees all three churches, concentrating on St. Thomas'. He is particularly concerned with outreach, teaching and housegroups. Tel. 232717.



BRIAN PORTER is curate with responsibility for St. John's, Walton. For the rest of this year, he is being loaned to Holy Trinity, Chesterfield, who have been without a Minister for rather a long time. We stress, however, that there is no fee involved! And we look forward to having Brian back.



SHEILA PITE is the Curate whose job is to oversee the busy work among children and young people. She will be increasingly involved in St. John's for the next few months, alongside her Social Responsibilities and World Mission concerns. Tel. 231089.



JUDITH HENDERSON is a non-stipendiary minister. She lives in Holymoorside and has special responsibility for St. Peter's as well as working among the elderly. She gets involved in most things! Tel. 569106.



PHILIP HERRICK is the lay member of the team, the Co-ordinator. His work is based in St. Thomas' Church Office and he co-ordinates the complex and wide ranging activities in the parish. He aims to have our Church members serving in the most appropriate way. Tel. 558461 (Church Office).

WORSHIP

There's a God shaped hole in everyone. It's as natural to worship as to wash - and every bit as necessary.

What is worship? The Christian answer, and there are many others, is taking Jesus Christ seriously. And that is not just an hour or so on Sunday; it's twenty four hours a day.

Young children make ingenious excuses to get out of washing. When it comes to worship, adults are even better at making excuses - and they call them reasons!



Give it a go!

We challenge any reader who is prepared to put excuses on one side to take any or all of four courses of action.

1

READ A BOOK

We offer at under half price three books which have helped many to feel their way towards faith.

- "You must be joking" by Michael Green tackles popular excuses for avoiding Jesus Christ, such as 'I'm not the religious sort', 'All religions lead to God' and 'When you're dead, you're dead'! 156 pages. Usual price £3.99, our offer £1.99.
- "Why believe" by Norman Warren is a neat, concise, attractively illustrated pocket book. 48 pages. Usual price £1.35, our offer 60p.
- The Gospel according to St John claims to have been written to help people believe and so to find true life. Many thousands of people, reading it with an open mind, have been profoundly moved. 48 pages. Usual price £1.00, our offer 50p.

Any reader who would like one of these books, and guarantees to read it, should complete the reply slip below - or ring the church office (tel. 558461).

2

COME TO CHURCH

We invite readers to come along and see what it's really like for themselves. Check out the excuses mentioned on page 3. If you find the complaints really are true, please let us know.

We believe that God makes Himself known as we come to worship Him - and as the Bible is read and explained.

3

JOIN A 'CHRISTIANS FOR LIFE' COURSE

This is an informal Christian Basics course, similar to those which have been popular for the last two years. There are no strings attached, no obligation except to be committed to the course.

4

PRAY A PRAYER

You may not even be sure about whether God is real, or whether prayer works. Try praying, in all sincerity, a prayer like this: "God, if you really exist, please make yourself known to me and then help me to put my trust in you."

We believe God will take that seriously - as He has many, many seekers after Him down the centuries.

HARVEST SERVICES

Harvest services focus on God's goodness in creation and give the opportunity to give towards famine relief. Everyone is most welcome.



ST THOMAS' CHATS- WORTH ROAD

Sunday, 10 October
8.00am. Holy Communion
10.30am. Family Service
6.30pm. Holy Communion

ST JOHN'S WALTON BACK LANE

Sunday, 10 October
9.00am. Holy Communion
10.30am. Family Service

ST PETER'S HOLYMOORSIDE

Sunday, 26 September
9.30am. Holy Communion
6.00pm. Evening Prayer

CUT HERE

REPLY SLIP

Please complete this and return it to: Philip Herrick, St. Thomas' Church Office, Chatsworth Road, Chesterfield, Derbys., S40 3AW.

I would like to buy, at under half price, the book indicated and I will read it. Please deliver it to me.

- "You must be joking", by Michael Green
- "Why believe?", by Norman Warren
- The Gospel according to St John

I would like to receive information about:

- Christians for Life Courses
- Times of Church Services
- Children's/Youth activities

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ TEL _____