

Ploughshare April/May 1995 (Scanned version from the original)

From the Rector

Ten years ago, Pam and I were shown around the parish and we had to consider whether we were being called to serve here.

One attractive feature was the clear imaginative intention to re-order St Thomas' Church. It was something that I looked forward to greatly. Sadly, a decade on there is still nothing of it to be seen. What has happened since 1985?

St. Peter's and St. John's have been given priority - and rightly so. They have both carried through fine building projects, with the full support of St Thomas'. Their growth towards increased responsibility and independence continues.

Work among children at St Thomas' has developed. Summer Club now accommodates nearly 200 of them!

We have two temporary (and the Planning Department stress that they are temporary) portacabins.

The employment project, Touchstone is gathering momentum.

Opportunities beckon for outreach among the elderly and those who live alone (and there are many in our parish), as well as almost unlimited opportunities for youth and children's work.

There is a desire to increase our training and counselling activities.

We are realising that we have precious little storage space, our entrances are incredibly scruffy and so is the Church as a whole with the continual need to move staging, chairs and various items of furniture around. The old pews are collapsing from time to time. Provision for our complex administration needs is barely adequate.

The need for a major development of St Thomas' buildings is evident. The PCC has employed a fine firm of architects and has a Development Committee chaired by Robin Dawson. They now have some exciting proposals to put to the Church.

You are invited to a presentation of St. Thomas' Development Plans and to meet the architects on Sunday 21st of May 1995 in St. Thomas' Church at 4pm.

We need to know what you think. Is God really calling us to launch out in this way? This is an urgent question. My hunch is that He is!

We have discovered in recent years that He can be trusted to provide in almost incredible ways when His people really trust him.

Christopher Frith

Lines from the Lines -Andy and Mandy our Link Missionaries

Mandy, Alex, Zoe and I wish to extend our warm appreciation to everyone for the warm welcome, tremendous hospitality and great patience you showed us on our recent visit to Chesterfield.

We feel that our link with your parish has been strengthened and deepened. We particularly appreciated the chance to get to know you a little better (usually the focus has been almost exclusively on us). We also valued the chance to meet with members of all congregations at St Thomas', St John's and St Peters', formally and informally, a fact born out by their greetings from so many in Safeway on our final morning!

It would be wrong to single out and embarrass individuals for their particular contributions to our stay but we really appreciated the hospitality and practical helpfulness of many individuals.

Now begins the hard part; maintaining the link over time and space, without the aid of personal contact. Please keep up your vital contributions to God's work in Paraguay.

Yours in Our Wonderful Lord and Saviour,

Andy Lines

Andy and Mandy our Link Missionaries -Update

It is now more than a month since the Lines' visit to our Parish, which lasted a whole week but seemed to pass all too quickly.

Friday the 27th January was a very special day. We had lots of snow which delayed their arrival until about 9pm. Andrew, Mandy, Alex and Zoe were exhausted, but a warm house and a good meal soon helped them to relax, and the day finished on a happy note with the whole family building a snowman on the back lawn, courtesy of the security light. At bedtime Alex said his prayers and asked Jesus to make the snow last until and Saturday and it did!

It was good that so many of our parishioners had the opportunity of hearing Andrew preach and to meet Mandy and the children. We feel uplifted by the visit and hope that it will further the interest in S.A.M.S. and overseas mission in general. We look forward to meeting them again at the S.A.M.S. conference at Swanwick in April prior to their return to Paraguay.

Richard and Dorothy Banks

E.F.A.C. Bursar Rev. Musa Elgadi

Musa will be staying in our parish for Holy Week and Easter Weekend. He is married to Samira and four children Amina, Cornilus, Ramzi and Elgadi. He sends us the following information about himself.

I was born in 1960 at Karen, Ethorlatisu village, Moro tribe, Nuba mountains, South Kordfan province, Kadugli in the Sudan. My father, Elgadi Elurdi TuTu, was a pagan before he became a Moslem.

I went to Tabanya primary school in 1969 led by my brother Ibrahim; in 1972 when we came for the long vacation, at our area Karen, one day my sister Hua was reading from John 14:6 which says "*Jesus answered him 'I am the way, the truth and the life, no-one goes to the Father except by me'*". When she interpreted this verse to me I was convinced that Jesus is the way leading us to heaven and I refused to follow my father who is a Moslem. Then I was baptized in June 1972 and confirmed the same day by the late bishop Shukai.

In intermediate and senior secondary school I faced many problems and difficulties, from my parents and from sickness, but I thank Jesus Christ that he leads me and heals me always. I love reading the Bible very much, especially St Luke's gospel and John, so I went through all these difficulties with the aim that when I complete my education I will be a pastor and a teacher.

In 1982 after sitting for the Sudan school certificate, I was praying to God to show me what I am going to do in the future. After seven days, at night I said, "My question will be answered this month." Suddenly a light from the sky flashed upon me and entered into my heart and I was trembling. Then I heard a voice saying, "*You are going to serve. Go to Bishop Gwynne College*" When I got up early in the morning I opened my Arabic Bible at the book of the prophet Jonah and I read it all. Then I got a new strength, power and my life thoughts were totally changed.

In 1983 when I was teaching Christian education at primary school in Andulu (Karm) the letter came to go and sit the entrance examination for Bishop Gwynne College in Kadguli. I sat the examination and was accepted to study at Bishop Gwynne College, Mundri, (Juba). So after my marriage in the church on 25 March 1983 by Rev. Yagoub Idris KuKu, we went together with my wife Samara to Bishop Gwynne College for theological studies for three years. And during this period I have learned a lot, especially spirituality: and the light of Christ used to appear to me always during prayer and meditation.

In 1988 I was ordained as a deacon and pastor the same year, then as a minister and teacher in the church. I have learned a lot, teaching at Shukai Bible School for three years 1990 - 1993, and also teaching Christian education at evening school. I feel that Jesus Christ leads me by his light and I feel his presence in all my situations.

Rev Musa Eladi Kuku

Book Reviews

Signs of Revival

by Dr Patrick Dixon (Kingsway £7.99)

Have you heard of the "Toronto Blessing" and wondered whether this is a move of God or mass hysteria? What is the biblical basis for "Resting or falling in the Spirit" or are people just pushed? People say it has happened before. Does this make what is happening now unimportant or very significant?

Dr Dixon did not know what to make of these strange happenings in British Churches in 1994 so he decided to find out. This book certainly answered many of my questions and I highly recommend it.

Maximus Mouse

by Brian Ogden (Scripture Union £2.99)

Over 300 children sat captivated as I read them the stories of Maximus Mouse. Each entertaining story makes an important point, is followed by a prayer and is just the right length for a junior assembly. Excellent for reading at home but a must for anyone short of ideas for assemblies.

Haffertees First Easter

by J. & J. Perkins (Lion Publishing £2.25)

At first glance, the Easter Story and the experiences of Haffertee, a toy hamster, would appear to be poles apart! And yet, the two are cleverly drawn together on a parallel, with depth and sensitivity enabling a young child to understand what Easter is all about.

There is more to this little book than meets the eye! It is one of a series of six Haffertee books.

For age 4 upwards.

The Mini Easter Book

(Lion Publishing 99p)

This book combines the story of the first Easter with an activity book of relevant things to do over the Easter holiday. Remarkable value for 99p.

For age 5 upwards.

Pauline Latimer

St Thomas' Sunday Club: Change of Leader

The new leader of Sunday Club is **Julie Madin**. Julie is a primary school teacher who has usually been teaching the 11+ (Pathfinder) section of Sunday Club. She is an imaginative conscientious and prayerful person and needs the prayer support and encouragement of all our members as she starts out on this demanding ministry.

Jim Crowley has led Sunday Club with extraordinary verve, vitality and vision for several years. He loves children and He loves the Lord: both loves have been evident for all to see. Jim now feels that he is being called into new areas of service. These will probably involve helping with planning and leading worship, especially music. Thank you, Jim, for everything.

Christopher Frith

Churchwardens Step Down, Mark Hoare and Adrian Marsden Jones

Mark Hoare has completed his three years as Warden of St Thomas. We owe Mark a debt of gratitude for much hard work, always done with a smile, often when under personal pressure. Thanks are due to Ann as well for her constant support.

Adrian Marsden-Jones is stepping down at St Peter's, as is **Rosemary Reeve** at St John's, after serving with dedication, courtesy and good humour. We thank them most sincerely.

Christopher Frith

Bishop Peter, the Bishop of Derby is to Retire on 31 July 2005

Announcing his retirement, Bishop Peter writes to the Diocese:

"All clergy appointed to a post after 1976 must resign on or before their 70th birthday. Clergy pensions are only available from the age of 65. Somewhere in this five year period the decision to retire has to be made. I do not think I can say anything else than that, after a good deal of thought and prayer, it seems the right time.

Put another way, there is no particular outside factor pushing me into this decision. I am glad to say that I am in good health; I am certainly not cynical or disillusioned, and I believe that I am still on top of the work.

It will be a great wrench to retire. My wife and I came to the Derby Diocese and Derbyshire hardly knowing either well. We have been made very welcome, and the ties for our part have become very close.

Clergy retiring in good health have the privilege, not usually open to others, of continuing the ministry for which they were ordained. In most parts of the country, including Derbyshire, there is scope for retired clergy to help without holding any official office.

Meanwhile, there are still six months to go and, while I start to consider all that goes with retirement and moving house, I intend to seek to fulfil the commission given to me at my Consecration during this time.

The search for my successor begins immediately. The most important way in which everyone can participate is to make this a matter of constant prayer."

Peter Derby

C.N.I Derbyshire Churches Partnership, India 1995

In August 1994 the Derbyshire Churches welcomed 11 young people from the Church of North India. In July/August 1995, 11 young people from Derbyshire have been invited to make a return visit.

Chris Amner from St Thomas' has been selected along with Rachel Willett and Liz Brailsford from Saint Augustine's. Jay Macleod the curate at St Augustine's is going as the leader so this makes a strong Chesterfield link.

Chris writes "we will be visiting many rural villages and seeing Indian life from all aspects. It will be excellent and a most valuable experience. I hope to gain an insight into how other cultures worship the Lord and to be able to share something of what I learn with you in September. Having survived the selection process I now have the more daunting task of raising the necessary money. I plan to go on a long distance/ endurance walk, probably in June so I am already training for that. So if you see a tall lad jogging the streets just humour me on!"

Details for sponsorship for Chris will be available nearer the time. It is exciting that a member of St Thomas' CYFA is taking part in this visit to the Church of North India and can thus help us to develop our involvement with the CNI/Derbyshire Churches Partnership.

On The Third Day He Rose Again

*"We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again..."*

I say those words in church each Sunday, as part of the Creed, but do I really believe that on the third day Jesus rose from the dead? I know that people who have died do not come back to life, and yet. it seems to me that the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that Jesus of Nazareth did exactly that. What is this evidence? Let me give you a taste of some of it, and perhaps if it whets your appetite you will want to look into it more thoroughly.

1. The Existence of the New Testament.

It is a fact that the New Testament exists, and has done so for centuries. It is difficult to explain how the New Testament came into being, unless we accept that the central event - the Resurrection of Jesus -actually took place.

2. The Gospels

The gospels give four largely independent accounts of the Resurrection of Jesus, and were in circulation within the lifetime of eye-witnesses. The Gospel writers were all in a position to have a good knowledge of the real facts of the case, either as eye-witnesses or by using information obtained from those who were.

3. The New Testament Letters

The letters of Paul, Peter and John, some written before the gospels, also affirm the Resurrection of Jesus. Their writers were in an excellent position to check the authenticity of their claims. Peter and John were eye-witnesses to many of the events described in the gospels.

4. The Early Preaching

About seven weeks after Jesus had been crucified in Jerusalem, and buried there, some of his followers began to declare publicly in the same city that Jesus had been raised from the dead and was alive again. If the Resurrection of Jesus did not happen those who were asserting that it had could scarcely have chosen a worse place to begin their preaching. If the claim that Jesus rose from the dead was not true it would have been so easy to disprove it there and then. With many in Jerusalem bitterly hostile to the new Christian faith, and the Resurrection claim on which it was founded, it is inconceivable that the preaching of the resurrection could have survived for any length of time, far less made the progress it did, unless it were based on solid historical truth.

5. The Existence of the Christian Church

The church is an undeniable fact and its existence cannot be reasonably explained unless the belief in the Resurrection of Jesus, which brought it into existence, is also based on fact.

6. The Empty Tomb

From the outset, the empty tomb was accepted by friend and foe alike. When the preaching about the Resurrection began, the opposition did not bring it to an abrupt halt by pointing to Jesus' grave (only a short stroll away) and his body lying in it. If they had been able to do that, they surely would have done it.

7. The Changed Disciples

On the evening of Good Friday the disciples were crushed and broken. Their Master, from whom they had expected so much was dead. They had lost him for ever and clearly he had not been the Messiah. No wonder they were disillusioned and in despair; hiding behind locked doors, fearful of sharing the same fate. No wonder they were only waiting for the Sabbath to be over, and its travelling restrictions ended, so that they might leave the city and return to Galilee. Over the weekend something occurred that totally changed them.

Their gloom became gladness, their despair changed to hope, their fear was replaced with courage. Before long they were back on the streets of that same city boldly preaching about Jesus and his Resurrection.

8. The Appearance of Jesus

The disciples claimed to have seen Jesus, touched him and talked with him after the Resurrection. Jesus was seen, amongst others, by Mary Magdalene, Peter, the Eleven, a group by the lakeside, and on one occasion by over 500 disciples. Could they all have been misled?

9. The conversion of the opposition

Many who began by being passionately hostile and fiercely sceptical, came to accept the truth of the Resurrection and to embrace the new faith which that event had sparked off. In the very earliest days a number of the priests became Christians. They must have been about the most unlikely people in all history to be persuaded that the Resurrection of Jesus was historically true -unless it was.

A few years later one of the most eminent intellectuals of all time became a believer. Saul of Tarsus, who previously had hated, ridiculed and attacked the Resurrection claim, became firmly convinced that it was true. Saul had access to all the available evidence, was acquainted with all the arguments against the Resurrection and, in addition, was a man of outstanding learning and intelligence. He was not to be easily taken in. Add to this his intense prejudice against what seemed to him initially a blasphemous claim, then it is clear that he only could and would have been persuaded to change from disbelief to belief if the evidence for the Resurrection was, despite himself, irrefutable and irresistible.

Finally, because Jesus rose again, and is alive today, we can know him, and experience his love and power in our lives.

Keith Chappell

Who's Who in the Parish -Sue Ward

Sue, you're a children's librarian in Chesterfield. What do you enjoy most about that?

I think it's helping a huge range of people, both background and age, to acquire information that they need. That's why I like being in a public library.

What other sorts of library have you served in?

I've mostly worked in public libraries as a community librarian in inner city Manchester. Before that in a commercial library and a University library.

What training did you do?

I studied History at Oxford then librarianship in Sheffield.

How long have you had a Christian, faith?

I've been a Christian as long as I can remember. But my faith has become more real to me in recent years.

Why?

Going through personal difficulties seem to have helped my faith somehow to flourish. I've been shutting God out less, if I could put it that way, and growing in Him, for instance, I now seem to find myself coming out spontaneously with Christian songs and I even talk about my faith to non-Christians. A few years ago I would never have done that!

Do you enjoy editing Ploughshare?

Yes and no. It's a mixture of challenges and frustrations

Such as?

I guess it's mainly busy people finding deadlines hard to meet. So the production of the magazine is far more rushed than I would like.

What are you trying to achieve through Ploughshare?

To convey something of the depth and variety of Christian experience within our Churches and beyond. To include people in the faith who may not, be directly involved in other ways. And a number of other things, of course

Jonty Frith: Letter from Uganda -an Extract

I am disheartened by a polarisation in Ugandan Christianity between older fellowships with solid teaching, perceived as "sound asleep", and on the other hand, noisy meetings that attract young people, have the appearance of liveliness, but lack substance. Thousands flock to "Apostle Deo" who claims to be "blasting AIDS with the power of proven prayer performance", and it appears that God is blessing some, amidst much confusion. 'JESUS IS LORD', their banners say. Amen! May the Saviour be given more attention! Christian young people tend to be shallow. As a

young whippersnapper trying to be serious about digging deep into God's word, I'm quite unusual. Steve's ministry had done much to bring together the positives of orthodoxy and liveliness.

Please ask God to take his people deeper into knowledge of him.

Jonty Frith