

Ploughshare April/May 2002
(Scanned version of selected articles)

Minister's Letter

Be Proud of the Church of England

The Church of England is a very large organisation. It employs about ten thousand clergymen and women plus many other people to run its affairs. The vast majority of these clergy are employed in Parish ministry.

Parish ministry is what the C of E is committed to. What that means is that the C of E aims to be available to every person in England because everyone in England is in a Parish which has an ordained person responsible for it.

No other church or organisation is able to do this. Only the C of E has the will and the means to be available to the whole country, and it has been like this for many, many years.

Men and women are selected by the Church for their suitability to be Parish workers, and they are trained with this work in mind. Every Bishop that I know, and every Archdeacon, have all worked in a parish as Curates and Vicars.

An important aspect of the Church's selection of people to be Vicars is that the C of E tries its best to be classless. Many clergy are from ordinary working backgrounds and training is free.

At its root, the C of E is based on the Book of Common Prayer, which stresses the authority of scripture and the need for people to be saved. At its root, I see the C of E as an evangelical church.

Now you may look around at some C of E churches you know and you may not like them or feel at one with them, but they are only part of the whole. It is important again to remember how big the C of E is, and remember the Parishes serving all the people. We should also remember that there is no Gospel without a church and that without the C of E a great many places would not have any church at all, and many prisons and hospitals no chaplain.

Over many years the Church of England has been a great blessing to millions of people. It is a blessing to millions today, and it will continue being that as long as it is supported with prayer and money and the contribution of people's gifts and ministries.

You are asked to do two important things as members of the Church of England: pray for it, for its leaders, for its ministry and its future. Also give gladly to it, and remember, that while we are aware that it needs us and also remember that we very much need it.

Without the Church of England I would not be a Christian. I would not have been blessed by being trained for a ministry. I was born and lived in the East End of London where the free churches had had to close because their members had moved away. Only the C of E stayed, being supported by the church at large, and through this C of E church, poor in terms of money, I became a Christian, and later through this same church, my children became Christians also.

Be proud of the Church of England.

Alex Simpson.
Non Stipendiary Minister at St Peter's Holymoorside.

Mission and Ministry Team Leader Karen Herrick, Children and Young People

Help God! Don't I do enough already? I can't do that. I'm committed enough. How can I lead the youth and children's team and be a member of the team? I *definitely* do not want to do this God. These are just a few of the thoughts that passed through my mind on being told that the appointment team had selected me as a possible team leader. I have to confess that I was not a willing contender for the job, and I, like Moses, was well able to think of every possible excuse why I should not be chosen for the task. However, presented with the prayerful choice of others, I was forced to return to God in prayer myself to consider the options. With only 2 days to make a definite decision one way or the other, even in prayer I felt unanswered and uneasy. Then, in the midst of reading a book called "Landmarks" by Margaret Silf (which incidentally I would highly recommend) a story leapt off the page as if God was saying directly to me "This is for you. It is time to move on - to encourage and be there for others on the team in their journey with God. Help them fulfil their personal roles in ministry, just as in the past others have encouraged you in your journey and ministry."

So here I am. A reluctant team leader but well aware that my appointment is God initiated and therefore right for the moment. That role will undoubtedly change in time, for we have to move on with God not remain static and comfortable in our faith and ministry.

I see my role as mainly pastoral: to minister and to support those on my team enabling them to fulfil their ministry and grow in their personal relationship with God. Inevitably, in any leadership role there are administrative duties and meetings and if I am honest, these are the parts to my new role that I struggle with because I am an ideas and a creative, practical person. So, in your prayers please pray that in my M&M leadership role I may convey what God wants of me, not necessarily what others would expect, even if this means being controversial.

Karen Herrick

Alison Hawksley

A very Happy New Year!

Alison would like to thank all those who sent her beautiful Christmas cards, letters and presents.

In the busyness of the Christmas term, her school somehow found the time to learn, practice and polish three songs (including Silent Night in English), enter three competitions, one of which entailed a fourteen hour bus journey to Lima with seventeen of the children, and coming first twice and then third! The first competition was at a regional level, where they competed with schools in Arequipa. In the second, they competed with schools from the south of Peru, and in the third with schools from all over Peru, where they gained the third place. The latter was televised and gave the children and staff of the school a great confidence boost.

Alison flew to Lima to spend Christmas with Bishop Bill Godfrey and his family. It was a lovely English Christmas. Shortly afterwards, she travelled to Arica in Chile with Hannah, a SAMS volunteer who needed to renew her visa (by going out of the country and coming back in again!). They spent four days on the beach, reading, relaxing and turning rather red!

There is no summer school in Arequipa this year, so that construction work on the school can be completed. Alison is now spending her time preparing the English course and finishing the Sunday school course. She asks for prayer that she might use her time wisely and be able to focus clearly, particularly on the English course.

She is hoping to have her own classroom this year. This would mean that the children could go to Alison, rather than Alison sprinting from class to class every day. She would also have space for her materials and books, and be able to display children's work. She is also hoping that the school will be connected to the Internet this year so that children could actually contact link schools in England (hopefully, mine will be one of them!) She has recently received extra funding from SAMS and would like to use it for chairs and tables for her classroom, as these are the extra things, which the school budget is unable to meet.

The bishop has asked Alison to say THANK YOU so much to all who have supported the school this year. She recently went to a budget meeting where she discovered that the monthly fees paid by parents do not even cover the staff salaries. In fact, the school depends upon outside giving to cover all its basic expenses - light, water etc. This year, the school actually managed to cover all its expenses, with just a little to spare. She praises God for his goodness and his provision through you all.

Yvetta Jacques

Christian Solidarity Worldwide "A Voice For The Voiceless"

Christian Solidarity Worldwide works for the religious liberty of persecuted Christians, helping others suffering repression, children in need and victims of disaster throughout the world.

On 12th May [2002] we are pleased to be able to welcome Rev Stuart Windsor, National Director of CSW, to St Thomas' Church - he will be speaking about the work of CSW at the services, and you are most welcome to come along to hear him at 9am, 11am or 6.30pm.

We can easily take freedom for granted - but for millions of Christians across the world, freedom is only a hope. At this moment, many thousands are suffering - imprisoned for practicing their faith, tortured for preaching the gospel, punished for speaking out against injustice.

The way Christian Solidarity Worldwide works is through

- Campaigning - supporters write letters
- Lobbying - taking up cases
- Being there - fact finding missions
- Spreading the news - raising awareness

YOU can help by:

- Coming to St Thomas' on 12th May to hear Rev Stuart Windsor speak
- Supporting the work of CSW (you can find out more from the Church Office or via the Internet: www.csw.org.uk)
- Praying for the work of CSW - "prayer paves the way for all CSW's work. Those we've helped testify to the power of prayer in bringing comfort, swaying decisions and empowering action."

Bible Landmarks

Do you take your Bible for granted? How many copies of the Bible do you have in your home? When you come to church, do you use the Church Bible to follow the readings and the sermon? This first article explores how the Bible came to be translated into English. In the next issue a second part will explore how the Bible Society is working to make the bible heard in the UK and throughout the world in 2002.

Glyn Botham has kindly undertaken some research on what he **calls "Bible Landmarks 1384 - 1611"**.

Until the work of William Tyndale in the 16th century there were no printed versions of any part of the Bible in English. Tyndale's translation of the New Testament and its printing in Germany was an important landmark. Copies of the work **began to arrive** in England in 1525 where they were seized and **destroyed by the church** authorities. By 1536, however, conditions had changed in this country and the text was being printed here and became widely available.

The first great work of printing was the Gutenberg Bible of 1446. That version was in Latin and it was some time before anyone attempted translation into a modern European language. A much earlier attempt to translate the whole Bible into the native tongue had been carried out under the guidance of John Wycliffe between 1380 and 1384, and had been used by travelling preachers. Their activities and Wycliffe's preaching at Oxford were banned at the time of the Peasant's revolt in 1381.

The first complete printed translation of the Bible into English was the work of Miles Coverdale. It was printed in Zurich in 1535 and began to be imported into England. Coverdale himself had to spend three periods of his life in exile on the continent. After the appointment of Thomas Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533, and the ensuing reformation of the English Church, conditions became more favourable for the general acceptance of English versions of the Bible. This led in 1538 to an injunction which commanded that an English Bible be set up in every parish church - a revolutionary step given that only a few years previously public reading from a vernacular Bible had been forbidden.

During the reign of Elizabeth 1, the so called "Geneva Bible" was printed. This first appeared in 1561 and became, in the words of F. F Bruce "the household Bible of English speaking Protestants". All this led up to what many people consider to be the greatest of the English translations, the Authorised King James' version of 1611. The great strengths of this Bible, besides the faithfulness of the translation, are the directness and vigour of its idioms, still owing much; it is said, to the earlier work of Tyndale.

Landmarks:

1384 The first whole translation of the Bible into English

1446 The Gutenberg Bible

1525 Tyndale's New Testament

1535 Coverdale's Bible printed English language

1538 Bible's ordered to be placed in each parish church

1561 The Geneva Bible printed

1611 The King James Authorised Version

Glyn Botham

The Bible in 50 Words

God made
Adam bit
Noah arked
Abraham split
Joseph ruled
Jacob fooled
Bush talked
Moses balked
Pharaoh plagued
People walked
Sea divided
Tablets guided
Promise landed
Saul freaked
David peeked
Prophets warned
Jesus born
God walked
Love talked
Anger crucified
Hope died
Love rose
Spirit flamed
Word spread
God remained