

Ploughshare August/September 1994 (Scanned version from the original)

From the Curate –Judith Henderson

For months we have, as a staff team, been looking at ways to address *'Living a life of love'* in the midst of the moral (ethical) difficulties presented to us in the world around us.

There is so much 'grey' in the area of moral choices. The Bible is not a text book to show us exactly what to do in every circumstance. So I believe we need to engage in the process of serious conversation about ethical issues, so that we can, as Christians, be part of the process of changing and developing public opinion.

We are uniquely placed to seek the Holy Spirits' guidance and the Mind of Jesus as we search the scriptures for the principles which can guide our personal and collective code-making.

The scriptures are a rich source - the only source of God's revealed purposes for us all. In Genesis we have the scene set for our attitude to all life - God-breathed and in his image. We begin to form views about gender and marriage and to discover the nature of our problems as man is cast out from the Garden of Eden.

Exodus and the rest of the Pentateuch - (1st 5 books of the Bible) provide us with law codes and expansions into rules formulated for the people God had chosen to be his own.

Many of the historical books could be said to be accounts of the struggles of the people as they failed to live up to the high calling they had been given.

In the Psalms, Job and Proverbs we have a rich source of thoughts about pain and suffering, jealousy, anger and greed as well as many more positive attitudes. The psalmists very often struggling with deep moral problems point us to trust in God as a way out of trouble. E.g. Psalm 40 *'He lifted me out of the slimy pit he set my feet on a rock many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.'*

In the Gospels Jesus often teaches in parables, sometimes in 'sermons' expressing ideals for living as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. E.g. *'If someone strikes you on the-left cheek, turn to him the other also'.*

Paul's letters often address practical problems, demonstrating his confidence in the Holy Spirit to guide into all truth and to show us the mind of Jesus.

These letters contain some wonderful insights into the way we should 'live a life of love'. (Try reading 1 Corinthians 13 afresh. To be made aware of just how high the standard is). Throughout the scriptures we are aware of the 'sanctity of life'. In our dealings with one another we are encouraged to proclaim forgiveness, reconciliation and compassion. We are all caught up in the consequences of selfishness, pride and disobedience.

Only in Jesus can we find **'the Way, the Truth and the Life'**.

Judith Henderson

March for Jesus

On the morning of Saturday 25 June as we drove down the M1 towards London we passed coach after coach full of excited people of all ages. Banners hung in the coach windows proclaiming their support! No, we were not on our way to a Wembley Cup final but all heading towards the embankment for the start of the London March for Jesus which was part of a global march spanning more than 100 nations. In the United Kingdom marches were simultaneously being held in London, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Drogheda.

We met up with our son Robin and travelled the last few miles into London by train. As we arrived at the embankment there were large notices directing people to the start of the march. We were a little disappointed because there did not appear to be many people leaving the station, but after a short walk along the narrow streets behind the embankment our disappointment turned into joy. Not only could we hear the strains of praise and songs on the public address system, but we also got our first glimpse of hundreds of people holding banners aloft *"Jesus is Lord", "He is my fortress", "God loves you"*.

We purchased a programme providing the words for the songs and prayers to be used as we marched, and then joined a band of people getting ready for the march. Thousands of people spread along the pavement. The weather was a little dull but everyone was smiling and full of joy and eager anticipation. We met the people around us, a young mum and her son from Edinburgh (living in London), a family from Uttoxeter, a group from Humberside.

The public address system announced that we were ready to start and that the traffic had been stopped, so we moved onto the road. We occupied both carriage ways from Charing Cross railway bridge back to Waterloo bridge across the full width of Waterloo bridge and along the South bank to the National Theatre and beyond. There were some 40,000 to 50,000 people with a common purpose to proclaim Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, an emotional moment to be in such a gathering.

We marched to music and prayers which were relayed over a designated radio wave band (plenty of people were carrying their portable radios). The route took us up to Trafalger Square, down Pall Mall, up St James into Piccadilly, to Hyde Park Corner and along Park Lane to enter Hyde Park via Marble Arch. The whole of the central London traffic had been stilled by a two mile plus snake of people singing the Lords praises, proclaiming their faith and enjoying themselves. It was very exciting, especially being able to briefly tell others you passed about Jesus.

We arrived in the Park to be told that the march still stretched back to Waterloo Bridge. The rally in the park emphasised joy and unity as we sang praises with many people dancing, and yet at times of prayer everywhere was still.

Each nation had been twinned with another, England with Bangladesh. We got into small groups to pray for the people, Government and needs of Bangladesh, just as they were doing for us. We stood arms aloft and faced east to pray for those countries to the east of us and then turned to the west to pray for those countries, knowing that all over the world Christians in every country were doing the same, it was a wonderful experience just to have been part of it.

The Freestone Family

Link Missionaries –Andy and Mandy Lines

1994 will be an unusual year for the Lines family. We often forget that as we are enjoying warm, sunny weather they are in the middle of the South American winter, and as they will be on furlough in the U.K. from November 1994 to April 1995 they will experience the British winter. They will visit our churches from 27th January to 2nd February 1995 when we look forward to renewing our friendship with them.

Alex and Zoe have birthdays in August and it would be good to send them cards. (Alex is 5 on the 10th and Zoe is 2 on the 12th)

Richard & Dorothy Banks.

Hope for Romania

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to our last appeal, because it was a true answer to prayer.

£2,000 was eventually raised to help build a hospital for thousands of cancer victims, lepers and gangrene sufferers, for whom there is no state aid. By helping build that hospital we will build 'HOPE' and that is something the Romanian people are desperately short of.

The next trip to Romania is now planned for 12th August 1994. We are being led to Constanta on the Russian border of the Black sea. My husband Les, my son Matthew, my nephew Ian Charlesworth and myself from St. Thomas' church will be linking up with John Devine from Turnditch church and Marella and Richard Kuzniarz from New Life Church Alfreton.

Marella is a Romanian young lady married to Richard. We will be staying with her family and friends whilst visiting the country.

We are still urgently appealing for medical supplies for the leper colony which we will be visiting in Tichilesti approximately two hundred miles from Constanta. There are forty six people in the leper community all over fifty years of age. We will be preparing a parcel for each leper personally, to be delivered on the Sunday when visitors are allowed in. Marella's mum has visited the community to find out what their needs are; and they have asked if we can supply with a mobile blood testing unit and an industrial spin dryer.

If you can donate any medical supplies or help financially for the specialized equipment we would love to hear from you.

Please pray for the work and for our journey remembering the words of our Lord Jesus - *'It is more blessed to give than to receive'*.

May God bless you all.

Pam Gratton

9.09 Service

Many of you reading this article may be wondering what 9.09 is all about, while for those of us who have stepped out in faith, although we have some ideas for 9.09 we wait to see what God will show us next. We would like to share with you something of our vision for this new service.

Early in our discussions we recognised the importance of creating a sense of community and of enabling greater participation by everyone in all aspects of our worship. This is not only for Sundays but also for the rest of our lives, thus we are looking for a strong degree of commitment from people both to each other as we form the new congregation, and essentially to God. Only in this way will the foundations of 9.09 be secure.

9.09 involves young and old - it's not just for families with young children. Indeed one of the joys when we have met together has been the mixing of people of different ages and from different backgrounds.

Creating a new congregation is challenging and exciting though it also

creates uncertainty and fear as we move out from the familiar into something new. God promises to go before us and to guide us if we seek to follow him.

Written for the 9.09 Team by Sheila Pite

What does it Mean?

Kath Steer continues her series investigating what lies behind well-known Bible concepts.

The Coat of Many Colours.

"And he (Jacob) made him a coat of colours"

In these days of 'Technicolour' the above act on the part of Jacob, is far from being understood. We will examine it.

According to Genesis 29, we find that Jacob worked seven years in order to obtain Rachel, the 'damsel' he loved. Having been deceived and given Leah, the eldest daughter instead. Jacob then worked a further seven years in order to obtain the wife of his choice. He then waited many years for Rachel's first son, and named him Joseph which means 'Increase' considering him as his son and heir - the privilege of the eldest son. Some 300 years later the law was given to Israel concerning this practice. See Deuteronomy 21: 15 - 17. Thus this theory is supported.

Joseph was about 17 years of age when Jacob made it known to the other ten sons, all older than Joseph, that he regarded Joseph as his heir. To confirm this, he made him a 'coloured' coat which no doubt was very good to look at, although 'technicolour' is out of the question as men in the east mainly wore brown, fawn etc. His brothers would be wearing a coarse shepherd's coat made almost of one piece, while Joseph's would be 'made to measure'. One thing, however, is not commonly known: Joseph's brothers were not so jealous of the coat but of the **long sleeves** attached

to the undergarment, which was only worn by the chief and his heir. This meant that his brothers would have to obey Joseph as they obeyed their father. Joseph from henceforth was an overseer and this made his brothers angry. Both the Good News and the New English Version Bibles, name this as 'the coat with long sleeves'. L. T. Pearson writes "The Sheik, or Chief, wears a long Kamise which is a shirt with long sleeves and the heir is also distinguished by a similar garment. It was this shirt as well as the coat which Jacob gave to Joseph, hence the jealousy of his brothers".

Another interesting point concerning the long sleeves is that when giving a signal for action, the long sleeves would be knotted together and then thrown around the back of the neck; this was known as 'Making bare the arm'. In Isaiah 52: 10 we read "The Lord has made bare His holy arm" alluding to the custom of the long sleeves. We remind ourselves of the modern song which makes mention of this custom "**O Lord make bare your arm**" ! If we mean what we sing, then we must be prepared to obey and to do for that's **the outcome** of the Baring of the Arm of the chief and his heir.

We conclude: there came a day when Joseph did in fact 'Make bare his arm', for as Governor of Egypt and having turned every other person out of the room. he declared in Hebrew "I am Joseph". Hitherto, having disguised his voice and talked to them through an interpreter, they were terrified to hear their own language, but the exalted one was their friend and kin.

This depicts a wonderful picture of Jesus, and quoting C. H. Macintosh "Joseph presents himself to his brothers as one sent by the Father: they reject him and put him in the place of death. God took him up from there and raised him to a position of highest dignity. When his brothers were thoroughly broken and prostrate before him, he made himself known to them and brought them into blessing".

We read in Zechariah "His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives" and "They shall look on Him whom they pierced and shall mourn because of Him". In that day, Jesus, like Joseph of old, with bared arm, will raise His pierced hands and say "**I AM JESUS**".

Touchstone Community Enterprise (Chesterfield)

This is the new name for the Chesterfield Churches' Employment Project - also known as STEP - (subject to final confirmation by the Registrar of Companies). The Committee chose this because it is a little more catchy: it signifies our purpose a little better; and it indicates more clearly that it is accessible to all. We shall, however, retain our Christian. origin by having 'sponsored by Chesterfield Churches' on all our documents.

By the time of publication we hope to be close to registration as a nonprofit company limited by guarantee with objects which are partly charitable and wholly for community benefit. Because the company will be making charitable provision and providing services for people with a pricing structure which reflects their ability to pay it will need to continue raising funds through normal means for the foreseeable future. However, it is the long term intention to generate as much income through community enterprises as possible, in order to become self-financing overall. It is not possible at this early stage to give a time scale for this.

Objects

Our objects remain essentially unchanged. As a reminder these are:

- ◆ To involve and support unemployed people
- ◆ To create jobs through running community enterprises and supporting small business initiatives
- ◆ To involve and serve the community
- ◆ To support and collaborate with others working for the same objects.

Unique Features

We have discussed the needs of unemployed people and existing provision for them over a long period with the other agencies concerned. We believe that our Enterprise will offer the following unique features:

- CARE for individuals and families over a sustained period - counselling and support being provided for the WHOLE person, not just the 'worker'.
- OPEN to any unemployed person, whatever the cause and length of unemployment (except, at present those disabled people for whom specialist facilities would be required).

- DEMOCRATIC APPROACH with involvement of unemployed people in the management.
- FLEXIBILITY and INFORMALITY which can fill gaps for people BETWEEN JOBS and BETWEEN SCHEMES.
- MUTUAL and VOLUNTARY support
- CRUCIBLE for new business ideas and a safe, informal non-threatening context in which to test them
- WIDE RANGE of vocationally relevant taster skills and activities
- CONTINUITY - can see people right through from entry to jobs or business start-up without complicated bureaucratic requirements
- MOBILISATION of community resources to socially and environmentally beneficial economic regeneration
- PROVISION OF LINKS between social needs at grass roots and funding sources
- PIONEER of community enterprise in the developing community where business activity is directed towards social objectives and 'profit' is not extracted for distribution to shareholders.

New Officers

John Gant has withdrawn from the chairmanship and Adrian Marsden Jones as Vice-Chairman. We have a new Chairman, Brian Davies from St Mary's and All Saints; and a new Vice-Chairman, Revd Dr Ian Mitchell, Curate at St John's Newbold

Temporary Offices

Temporary offices have been established in the No 2 Portacabin, St Thomas' Churchyard from which the administration of the Enterprise and the Community Gardening Service will be run.

Community Gardening Service

Ray Fletcher is now starting up the Community Gardening Service as a volunteer Manager. The Gardening Service now has two sites: the West Ward Leisure Garden, Brampton: and three allotments and associated training facilities at Stand Road, Newbold. In the first phase these will be used for horticultural training for unemployed volunteers and for the growth of produce for the needy and for sale at Enterprise fund-raising events. When a small competent team of gardeners has developed, a gardening service will be offered to the needy and others in the locality. In the longer term it is planned to develop a financially self-sufficient gardening service with growth potential, capable of sustaining a paid manager and an increasing workforce as growth allows.

Ray has been very grateful for the support of a small, dedicated group of volunteers who have helped with the allotments.

Future Plans

At the time of writing it is our intention to appoint, at the earliest opportunity, a person full-time to launch and develop the first year of the Enterprise.

As a priority we wish to open the Support and Opportunities Centre which will be the engine room of the Enterprise but progress on this depends on being offered premises at little or no rent and the necessary funds.

Funds

We have been granted £15,000 from the Bishop of Derby's Urban Fund and have raised nearly £5,000 from donations from local people and fund-raising events. We need about £20,000 to support the Manager of the Enterprise and set up the Support and Opportunities Centre for the first year. We had an encouraging meeting with Borough representatives but there are no resources available at present. We will continue to seek funds from other churches and grant-making bodies and to organise our own fund-raising events. We shall be grateful for your support for these activities and for any donations in cash or kind you feel able to give.

Membership

We now have a membership scheme which you are invited to join if you would like to further the interests of the venture. (Individual membership: £5; unwaged: free; organisations: donation of choice). Please contact Pam Brimelow for details if you would be interested in being a member.

Remember: James 2:17 and Mathew 5:16

Jill Gant Coordinator

Living Churchyards Project

Three members of our Parish were able to attend this very interesting Training Day, coming away with a wealth of ideas on various subjects relating to the improvement of our own churchyards.

The morning programme was divided into four sessions. After watching slides about "Wildlife in churchyards", there was a talk on "The care of trees". The next session gave advice and information on "Involving people - opportunities and grants", and the final talk of the morning was about "The care of churchyards and the law".

We were well supplied with tea and coffee by the ladies of Old Brampton W.I who also provided the packed lunches. Their hard work was very much appreciated by everyone.

After the lunch break, the Old Brampton churchyard was explored and discussed in small groups returning to the hall for an open forum.

This brief summary of the day can't begin to give any idea of the wide range of subjects discussed - geology, lichens, flora and fauna, local history, safety in churchyards, the responsibilities of the P.C.C., to name but a few. Different churchyards produce different problems, and it was helpful to share ideas and expertise with other people.

A delicate balance must be achieved between the encouragement of wildlife interests, and the needs of the people of the parish who may wish to visit family graves.

The first step towards this ideal is a survey of the whole area to establish what is needed to improve the site, taking expert advice if necessary from the Wildlife Trust, or other groups.

The final crunch, of course, is actually organizing and carrying out the work, with the approval of the P.C.C. and other interested parties!

Reflections on Three Short Months

Christopher Frith's Sabbatical, April to July 1994

It has been good to have a change. Life has been slower and the pressure much less. I've been the same person (I think) - still a husband, father, friend, neighbour and I have enjoyed being these without being Rector as well. I've been able to be "me", with my life less shaped by the expectations and demands of others. I realise how fortunate I have been; probably "blessed" is a better word, only it sounds pious!

There have been four main elements.

1. Domestic Life

Pam and I started with a wonderful holiday, celebrating our silver wedding, my 50th birthday and 25 years in the ordained ministry. We went to Antigua (as everyone seems to have heard!) and, yes, I was there when Brian Lara scored his historic 375 runs. He is a good batsman; if only he were English!

Another highlight for us was attending Ruth and Jonty's graduation ceremonies. Like their father, neither of them looks entirely comfortable in robes, gowns, hoods and such like encumbrances!

Sabbaticals give the opportunity to learn a new skill. Mine seems to have been supermarket shopping and operating the washing machine! Pam has had to continue struggling with her chronic post-viral fatigue, which started back in September during the Church Family Weekend, and it has been providential that I've been around more than usual. As I write, Pam's health seems to be improving slowly but steadily, thank God.

The artistic ingredient has been fun. I've done a bit of sketching and Pam and I have had some water-colour lessons. We're slow learners and are still beginners!

2. Study

First, I'll come clean: I didn't work as hard as I thought I would. I found I couldn't study from 9 to 5 and I didn't find it easy.

Having said that, however, I can say that I have loved my time in John's Gospel. I've listened to tapes of it being read when driving, unless there was a Test Match or Wimbledon to rival it. I've had four commentaries, chosen from literally hundreds which have been written. I've had a stimulating supervisor, Dr Mark Stibbe in Sheffield. I am still only scratching the surface of a profound, majestic book, but it has really been worth while.

Two quotations have influenced my approach:

"The mystery of Jesus Christ is the theme of this Gospel; always beyond us, yet always summoning us to explore it more fully." Bruce Milne

"Ought we not to curb our self-interested desire to interrogate the text, and instead let the text interrogate us?" Stephen Barton

The author of the Gospel gives his statement of purpose near the end. "These are written that you may BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have LIFE in his name" (John 20:31). I have sought to pursue these two fundamental concepts of **belief** and the **life** which results from it. Before long, I hope to preach a series of sermons on these.

3. Work Shadowing

I gave a week to seeing what life was like at work for various church members. I had nearly twenty invitations but could only accept seven. I sought to find out what gave them satisfaction, what particular pressures they felt and of what kind of support they felt in need.

Each one was doing an impressively conscientious professional job and I find I have an increased respect for them all. Nearly all are required to work too hard -a sign of the times when people either have no job or that of at least 1/2 people. There is an unhealthy "over-competitiveness" about. Finance looms large for most.

I have written a fuller report and would gladly show it to anyone interested.

4. Worship

I have been able to attend 13 churches of various denominations and have found this stimulating. Most Sunday evenings I have worshipped with the same congregation - Christ Church, Fulwood, Sheffield - and the best thing about that has been to hear the Bible so well and clearly expounded. That above all is the key to Fulwood being such a large church, reaching out to so many and sending a huge number of mission partners all over the world.

In each church which I attended, I looked for two dimensions in the worship, asking how real and how newcomer-friendly it was. In addition, I noted particular features and evidence of on-going church life.

I now look forward to worshipping God in our own churches again. On my visits, I rarely heard the Scriptures read as well as they are at home; neither were there as many lay people involved in leading and contributing to services.

I went on a quiet retreat at Launde Abbey in Leicestershire. The beautiful surroundings and glorious weather made the experience a delight although the corporate worship was uninspiring.

I have not found that prayer has become any easier. Undoubtedly, the biggest problem is not that of finding time to pray. Why am I so reluctant to pray when I find it such a blessing? There is more to this than meets the eye. Talk of spiritual battles and "his infernal majesty" makes more sense than it used to.

Before the sabbatical, the Diocesan In-Service Training Advisor wrote to me saying "I hope you will give God a chance to reach you in all of this". Looking back over 13 short weeks, I think he has refreshed and renewed me. I am profoundly grateful to Him for that.

Many, many thanks are also due to my colleagues Sheila, Brian, Judith and Philip who have covered so many extra responsibilities, to Julia who has dealt with all the correspondence, to the whole Church family who have given me the space I have needed and never pestered me and especially to my own family; Pam, Sarah and Daniel have answered all the phone calls and saved me from getting sucked into the old routine. I am grateful.