

Ploughshare December 1993/January 1994

(Scanned version from the original)

From the Rector

A baby is born and we ask what he or she is going to be called. Parents spend many hours before the birth (and after it in some cases!) choosing a name. For Mary and Joseph, however, it was all decided for them. "*You shall call him Jesus,*" the angel said.

We choose names for all sorts of reasons, mostly because we like the sound, there are special associations, the child is to be named after someone or a family name is to be continued. Just occasionally it will be because of what the name means - and that was the case here. The angel spelt it out. "You shall call him 'Jesus', for he will save his people from their sins."

He came unmistakably as a Saviour.

As I write, the news is telling us loud and clear that the human race still needs rescuing. Unbelievable massacres in Ulster, mass starvation caused by civil war in Angola, HIV, blood scares, quantities of Manchester United fans kicked out of Turkey, 11 year old boys on trial for murder....and the seeds of these ugly things are to be found in all of us.

If our greatest need had been education, God would have sent us an educator.

If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist.

If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist.

But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a **Saviour.**"

Christopher Frith

Welcome to the Rev Charity Nyagawaour

E. F.A. C Bursar

Who is he? What is an E.F.A.C Bursar? No doubt many other questions come to mind and I will try to answer some of them.

Who is he?

Charity Nyagawa comes from Tanzania. He was ordained deacon in 1989 and priest in September 1990. He then married Sarah in December 1990. He is now 32.

What is an E.F.A.C Bursar?

E.F.A.C stands for the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion. A bursar is an ordained minister from Africa, Asia or South America who is selected by their bishop to send for further training in Britain. The money comes from parishes, who also offer hospitality during the college holidays. St Thomas' World Mission Committee suggested the church gave to the E.F.A.C. bursary scheme, so now we welcome Charity for the Christmas vacation.

What is Charity doing now?

He is in the second year of a three year degree course in Theology and Pastoral Studies at Oak Hill College in North London. He was able to go home both last Christmas and in the summer, so this will be his first Christmas in Britain. He went to Skegness for Spring Harvest and has visited a parish near Reading.

What has he done before?

Charity grew up in Christian family and went to a Lutheran church. He joined the Christian Union during his last few years at secondary school and accepted Jesus as his personal saviour. He went for two years to a teacher training college, where he joined the Anglican Church and then had a year compulsory military service before he offered for ordination. Another two years at theological college and then he has been a curate and vicar in Iringa.

What is he like?

I met Charity at Oak Hill and we chatted for about an hour. He is short (5'3"), enjoys boxing and watching other sport e.g. football, snooker. He likes children and another important fact -he has a daughter Beatrice who was born on the 5th October 1991. He is coping well with English since unlike the Kenyans and Ugandans I have known, all his education so far has been in Swahili. He is looking forward to coming to Chesterfield and then you will be able to find out what he is like.

Other facts

Charity is due to arrive on Saturday December 18th and stay until Thursday 6th January. If you want to be involved with his visit please contact me.

Sheila Pite

What is the Future of the family?

On Wednesday 20th October 1993 about 25 of us met to discuss questions about families and relationships and the role of the church and government in these areas. We began with a multichoice quiz which revealed our ignorance about marriages and households in Britain today. Did you know that 48% of couples who marry in the U.K. live together before marriage and that the most likely time for a divorce to occur is from 5 - 9 years? Figures about households are interesting though averages hide regional variations. Do you realise that in Britain 27% of all households contain only one person, 6% are lone parents with dependent children and only 25% are married or cohabiting couples with dependent children? Also 15% of adults in the U.K. are carers, looking after an elderly or disabled person.

We then went into groups to answer the various questions posed by the General Synod Board for Social Responsibility. The following is a short summary of a lively discussion which formed our response to the Board for Social Responsibility.

There was agreement that relationships work well when there is respect, commitment, communication and honesty, time for each other and forgiveness. The lack of these things damages relationships along with financial worries, illness, violence, alcohol and other abuses.

The church can encourage members to help others in their relationships, to welcome people in all circumstances, to provide counselling support to those experiencing difficulties and care for those with broken relationships. Church life can be more inclusive and teaching on relationships, about mutual submission and respect, could occur, along with teaching and example on caring and supporting each other. Many ideas about what the Government could do to support families were put forward. These ranged from a flexible housing policy and flexible working patterns to comprehensive health care with more resources for education on the way.

All in all it was an interesting evening but in 2 hours these huge issues can only be briefly mentioned. The challenge now is to consider how we in this parish support people in differing circumstances and how by our example and teaching we encourage loving, stable relationships.

Indian Christians Visit Derbyshire

Nine young Indians - as part of the Church Missionary Society's Youth Exchange programme - spent three weeks in Derbyshire in September. They stayed with families. The whole group was in Doveridge and Littleover before dividing to stay in Belper and Chesterfield.

Reena, Mary, Jacob, Sam and Deepak quickly made themselves at home at St Thomas'. They enjoyed meeting people, visiting schools and sharing in services during their short stay with us in September. They returned safely to India shortly before the tragic earthquake.

Jacob Kunnath from Kerala, who came to Chesterfield, has written:

We came with almost an equal balance of fears and expectations. Experiences were varied from learning how to use different types of showers without being burnt or frozen to taking part in a parish visitation programme. We found a country where people are so free, frank and open, ready to give and accept love. Even the clergy never placed themselves above others. It was lovely to see them mixing with the congregation, cracking jokes (and being the butt of them too!)

Wherever we went, we found people almost apologetic about the youngsters. But we find them exciting - frank and confident. We sense that many are seeking God's truth. Those who have found the answer are so enthusiastic in spreading the good news. They have realised that following God is not to shut themselves up in some dark,

stone-walled church, bound by now lifeless traditions and customs. For some it was all shouting, singing, clapping and rejoicing. That's life Keep it up!

We wish we could convey to our hosts our deepest feelings. We never felt any homesickness. We called you "Uncles" and "Aunts" but in our hearts we call you "Dads" and "Mums".

England is the place from which the torch of the Gospel was taken to various parts of our land. Our visit reminded us of the work of the missionaries and we pay homage to them. We are happy that England still values its ties with the Indian churches. We assure that the work you started in us will go forward.

We will pray for you, pray for us, pray for India

Jacob Kunnath

Church Family Weekend, Willersley Castle

We started off the weekend in real holiday spirit, collecting Sue and Jenny Ward en route. The sun was shining and I felt very positive that this was going to be a good Church Family Weekend. Having had a hard week at work, I was glad the journey to Willersley Castle wasn't too long the thought of driving a distance like that to Scargill would have been very daunting.

When we arrived, we 'checked in' at the reception and were allocated our room which was very comfortable indeed. At first I was disappointed with the view from our window. Some rooms will have looked out over the valley in front of Willersley and the facing rocks - very impressive - while ours looked out on the pathway to the annex - and onto the "wheelie bins"! However, we had the benefit of entertainment provided by a squirrel's antics while he was scavenging around the bins -better than TV any day

The weekend was split into various sessions, allowing time for group worship, prayer groups, fun and games - and sessions led by our guest speaker, Cyril Ashton. The children meantime were enjoying their own activities as 'The Troggs'.

The main subject that Cyril spoke about was **love** - the sort of love that supports and strengthens a church, its leaders, members and its work. We must let this love - the Love of Christ, and the fact that He died for us - right through ourselves and into the edges of our lives, where we don't want even Jesus to venture. As someone who has never really got the hang of loving myself, I found Cyril's talks incredibly instructive. He gave me a new viewpoint from which to look at myself and my relationships with others in my family and in the church. He taught me in a weekend what I had spent a lot of money trying to learn previously through psychotherapy - that I was lovable and that God loves me! One thing Cyril said that has stayed in my mind ever since, and it's this:

God loves me as though I am the only person on earth - and what's more, He loves everyone like that!!

Powerful stuff, and there was lots like that! Another thing that I think all of us who were at Willersley will remember is that Cyril could remember everyone's names - just in the short time he knew us. Wow, what a gift!

The weekend at Willersley will stick in my memory for many reasons - the joy of fellowship among the church group, the venue itself (the food was wonderful too), the fact that Catherine and Jenny so obviously enjoyed themselves together, the inner peace that both Tim and I found there, and the knowledge that Cyril Ashton was able to give us in his teaching.

Now when are we going on the next Church Family Weekend?

Lindsay, Tim and Catherine Leteve

Book Reviews

Church on the Threshold: Renewing the Local Church

Cyril Ashton, published by Daybreak, £7.95

Renewal? What's that? What's it got to do with St Thomas Brampton?

Cyril Ashton writes that renewal is "essentially a movement of the Holy Spirit to restore and re-invigorate the whole Church." But I said what's it got to do with St Thomas Brampton? He elaborates: "The Holy Spirit is not static. Having moved in, He moves on, expecting the whole Church to move with Him. The church is either on the way, or in the way."

In what must be the most balanced and helpful book I've ever encountered on the subject, Cyril Ashton sensitively imparts a compelling vision of a church filled with the Holy Spirit and fulfilling its mission in the world.

But how? This is a practical book and especially so, as Cyril draws on immense personal experience at the forefront of renewal in the Church of England. He shows how by rediscovering a proper role for the laity in the church, where leadership is shared and all the gifts of the Spirit are operating in liberty, the church can be renewed and move on to recapture its apostolic nature, vision and power.

Doesn't sound anything like St Thomas? It certainly doesn't. But that's a church on the threshold says Cyril: "Many believe that the Church's spiritual poverty has brought it to the threshold of new things." Caught the vision? If you still can't see that it matters to St Thomas then read the book. If you can, then read the book and let it happen.

Paul Uden

Threshold God

Cyril Ashton, Daybreak DLT £7.95

The subtitle of this, Cyril's second book is 'Discovering Christ in the Margins of life.' In it he argues that 'the cross symbolizes for all time that God meets us in the place of shame and failure, turning defeat into life and growth.' A moment later he writes 'God turns things inside out. With him the shadowy margins of life become the threshold through which we move into greater wholeness.'

For him a threshold is a place of growth, where you take risks and step out from the known to the unknown.

By using bible passages, Christian writers and stories from his personal experience Cyril gently encourages us on our own pilgrimages, to cross our individual thresholds and so to grow as Christians. Some of the chapter headings may give you a flavour of this book. 'The Search for God' and 'A ridiculous Love' discusses our seeking for God and God's amazing love for us. 'Strength and Weakness' where, I quote again 'The truly strong are those who are prepared to face up to the inner reality and stay with it as the Holy Spirit brings transformation and wholeness.' 'The void of loneliness' with a discussion of the importance of solitude and silence leads into the chapter 'The Journey into God.' Then there is 'Defeating Giants' - how to move from fear to faith and 'Sexuality and Spirituality' with the recognition of the vital importance of this area of our lives.

The final chapter 'The Song of Ascents' challenges us to continue on our pilgrimage.

The book can be read quickly and then reread, and read again. The stories are real and illustrate the text. There are many gems and it is a book which I will give to friends this Christmas and return to frequently.

Sheila Pite.

Link Missionaries Andy and Mandy Lines

The SAMS evening at St. John's Church centre on 6th October focused on Paraguay, and we were happy to meet Claire Toplis, the new N.W. Secretary of the Society. Claire gave us an insight into life in that country with the aid of slides, and spoke of the changing roll of missionaries over the years.

We listened to a tape from Andrew and Mandy in which they mentioned a decision they will soon have to make regarding their future. Please pray that they will be guided by the Holy Spirit so that whatever they do will be acceptable to the Lord.

We phoned them on 4th October to get a news update and we were pleased to hear that Zoe is now walking (it happened only the day before we rang!) Andrew and Mandy enjoyed speaking to both of us and Mandy stressed how much they appreciated the letters from St. Thomas', and we feel sure that they will receive many more from us between now and Christmas.

Richard and Dorothy Banks

St Thomas' Employment Project STEP

A Progress Report

It seems a long time since Unemployment Sunday (21.2.93) when **STEP** was launched. This issue of Ploughshare is an ideal opportunity to present an end of year report.

THE VISION

In March, a group of committed people met and formulated a plan. The vision is to provide services to meet the needs of unemployed people of any status. These services include friendship, counselling, advice, skills education and training, practical and social support and production of goods for sale. All these are to lead to job creation, by setting up a business to employ local people producing goods to meet local community needs. This is to be a long-term project of perhaps ten years or more, matching a long-term need.

We felt that a priority target group was the long term unemployed, whose special needs were not wholly met by statutory provision, and who for health, education or other reasons were disadvantaged in the job market. Centrally sited premises are needed to contain fully equipped offices, social areas, counselling rooms, workshops and training facilities. Staffing is to include a full-time paid Project Manager, paid trainers and volunteers.

RESEARCH

Much research has been undertaken. First, to discover what successful projects have been mounted by other churches. Second, to find the numbers of unemployed in the area. Third, to find and get costings for suitable premises. Fourth, to find funding sources available, mostly from statutory agencies. This seems a short list, but it represents an immense expenditure of time and energy.

ACTION

Our research revealed many successful church based projects elsewhere in the country. These have given us encouragement and ideas. Perhaps the most surprising result came from St Thomas' own local unemployment survey. This revealed that only four people among the respondents were unemployed, yet we know from our own research there were over 450 unemployed in the parish. This survey also resulted in kind pledges of money enabling two separate and distinct funds to be set up: one a Parish Welfare Fund to be operated by the P.C.C. and a second for S.T.E.P. administration to be run by STEP.

More research revealed more than 3,400 unemployed in the Brampton area (May 1993). This seemed too large a number for STEP to cope with alone. Other churches were approached to see if they were prepared to participate in the project. Sufficient interest and support was demonstrated to warrant a change of name to Chesterfield Churches Employment Project - still to be known as STEP.

More Churches are being approached, and STEP is giving a presentation to 'Churches Together in Chesterfield' on 3rd December 1993. This is to elicit support to cover the areas of most need in the South-West quadrant of Chesterfield. The Diocesan Officer for Social Responsibility is also more than supportive.

PREMISES

Preliminary searches have unearthed some suitable premises but we have no funds to pay for them at present. We do have Plot 17 in the West Ward Leisure Gardens which will be the base for APT(Euro) Ltd (an accredited training provider for TEC) to run a Horticultural Training and Community Garden Scheme. We have been offered the use of a portacabin at St Thomas' as the administrative base for the scheme. Volunteers have already cleared the plot. We must acknowledge the enthusiastic support of the committee of the West Ward Leisure Gardens.

FUNDING

Seeking statutory funding has been frustrating and perplexing. There is a minefield of mandatory conditions which a project must meet in order to be funded. While our projects' vision, with its emphasis on long-term caring for and empowering of the unemployed fills a gap in statutory provision, it has difficulty in wholly meeting the statutory funding requirements.

Nevertheless such funding sources are being actively chased as a contribution to our financial requirements. APT (Euro) Ltd, is in the process of constructing, with us, a bid for TEC funding for horticultural training and community gardening on STEP leisure garden, a construction workshop and a city farm, phase one scheduled to start in Spring 1994. Even if this were successful it would not fund the heart of our project, a Project Centre with staff, equipment and facilities, for all unemployed people in the area.

APPEAL

Brian Ruddock, Sheffield Diocesan Unemployment officer, advised that it was essential for a church project, aiming at individual long-term support, self-esteem and self-empowerment, to be financially and practically independent of statutory funding and constraints.

The STEP Management Committee decided to raise its own funds, to set up the Project Centre. The initial target will be £100,000 to be raised as quickly as possible to enable the Project Centre to open at the earliest opportunity. The fund raising drive will be aimed at local churches, industry, commerce, charitable trusts and other organisations concerned with employment in the community.

We shall be looking for assistance in kind (training, equipment, premises etc.) as well as finance.

Grateful thanks are given to all who have worked so hard to keep the project afloat.

John Gant (Chairman)

'Jim Challenge '94'

The Vision

Hundreds of churches, throughout Britain, working together to present the gospel to our nation in February and March 1994.

The Media

Jim Challenge '94 is based around a national media teaser advertising campaign. The idea is to get the nation asking "Who's Jim?" and this will open the door for Christians to share the gospel through their personal testimony of how Jesus makes a difference to them.

Our Town

A number of churches in Chesterfield are working towards a special week of united evangelism in the town, using this national advertising, under the banner "**Challenge Chesterfield**". This week, 12-20 March 1994 will be led by the international Evangelist Steve Chalke, who currently appears in 'Sunday Morning' on ITV. Our Church is committed to participate fully in this exciting event.

Our Prayers

More information will appear in the next issue. In the mean time pray about all the arrangements. Pray for Chesterfield. Pray about how you might be involved.

Keith Chappel