

Ploughshare February/March 1994

(Scanned version from the original)

From the Rector

1993: Expanded Horizons

It was the year of being less parochial, of realising that there was life beyond Chesterfield. In March, there was that brilliant, multifaceted presentation, "Bread with nowt taken out" which revealed the breadth of God's missionary challenge across the world. The year ended with a three week visit from the Revd Charity Nyagawa from Tanzania, a new experience for us all - and for him.

We have had other interesting visitors, especially the five lively warm young Christians from India. I have just received a most entertaining letter from one of them, Jacob Kunnath - "My dear Uncle Chris and Aunt Pam", he begins! "Do convey my love to all my brothers and sisters." We have received various folk on placement, having a close look at what goes on here, an experience which makes us feel alternately important and vulnerable.

There has been an increasingly practical concern for the appalling situations in Romania and Bosnia in particular: one of our members actually drove to Romania, with a lorry load of medical supplies. Two of our young members have been in Africa and one has been recommended for training for ordination. There have been special Harvest and Christmas giving projects.

At home, the unemployment dilemma has been keenly felt and is being imaginatively faced. Both **STEP** (St Thomas' Employment Project) and the newly created **Welfare Fund** are almost underway. Folk are invited to give towards the latter, and to inform the staff of genuine hardship for consideration of a small grant. And so, probably, I could go on ...

1994 Going For Growth?

We face a year of challenge. I pray that we may have the heart and the faith to "go for it". When churches are outwardly successful there is a danger of marking time, feeling comfortable and missing out on God's best.

I invite readers to focus their thoughts, and then their prayers, on two things:

Vision Statement:

Going for growth in Christ

We aim under God to grow as we respond, individually and together, to the teaching of Jesus in holiness, worship, prayer, service and witness and as we reach out with the Good News of Jesus.

And our Motto:

Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us. -Ephesians 5:2

It can be quite a year. Yes let's "go for it"!

Christopher Frith

Christmas in the Village (Holymoorside)

I suppose preparations begin in August with our Churches Together stall at the gala to raise funds for the Christmas cards sent to every home in the village. But the real feel for Christmas comes with Advent when we unwrap the nativity figures stored in the loft. We haven't seen them for eleven months and it's like meeting old friends:

"Joseph's nose is peeling and will need a good coat of varnish"

"This shepherd's a bit unsteady on his feet and we'll need help from the ladies to iron the cloths and head-dresses."

Despite the bitter cold, with the help of local farmers, an electrician and lots of hot coffee the stable gradually takes shape in good time for the blessing by Judith. This is followed by the Christingle Service in the United Reformed Church. St Peter's being too small for all the families.

Carol singing in the recreation ground on Christmas Eve led by the Holymoorside band as usual, proves the most popular opportunity for friends and families to join together in anticipation of our Saviour's birthday. Or is it the arrival of Santa Claus with presents in the village hall immediately afterwards?

The Nativity Scene in the centre of the village is enjoyed by many, so it was disappointing for all to find many of our figures badly damaged by young vandals after Christmas. However, as Geoffrey Wilbourne has quoted to us "Where only the sun shines there will be desert." We therefore start the New Year with two challenges, to restore the figures and to respond to our social problems. The figures will be back in all their splendour next year but the cause of the damage will require much greater application.

Adrian Marsden-Jones

Steve Chalke - Who is this man?

Ploughshare readers may well have seen Steve Chalke on GMTV recently. He became an early morning favourite in the run-up to Christmas. During 1994 he will be spearheading a project to get viewers to contribute enough money to build a hospital in India.

The Rev Steve Chalke is one of the most popular speakers on religion in the media today. He is well known for his slot 'Scruples' on GMTV. His other appearances on TV include, 'Chalke Talk', his slot on ITV's 'Sunday Morning' programme. Steve is also frequently featured on radio and in the press.

Steve is national director of the Oasis Trust which is involved in a range of social care, training and evangelism projects. Oasis Social Care projects attempt to alleviate some of the problems most relevant to today's society and include the Elizabeth Baxter walk-in Health Care Centre for London's homeless and 'No.3' - the Oasis hostel - which provides year long accommodation for those who would otherwise be on the streets. Oasis is also involved with 'Christmas Cracker' an initiative which has raised over two million pounds for world relief and development. They also provide training for young people each year through a variety of short and long-term courses.

Steve is a frequent speaker at events and conferences both nationally and internationally. He also heads up the leadership team of Haddon Hall - a growing Baptist Church in inner London.

After training for the Baptist Ministry at Spurgeon's College in South London, Steve went to work as Assistant Minister at Tonbridge Baptist Church in Kent. In 1985 the Oasis Trust was established to support his vision of a relevant and effective Christian charitable organisation.

Steve is married to Cornelia, They live in South East London with their four children Emily, Darnel, Abigail and Joshua.

With the Oasis Team, he will be leading **CHALLENGE CHESTERFIELD**. He is speaking at St Thomas' on **Mothering Sunday, 13 March** at 10.30. Make sure you can come.

Reflections on a PCC Away Day, 20th November 1993

What is a PCC. Away day? An all expenses paid trip to Blackpool! A day at the Races! A Lunch at the Savoy! A normal PCC Meeting, but somewhere away? No, it is none of these, but rather a chance for the PCC to spend some time together to think and to pray and have an opportunity to get to know each other better, in a relaxed and informal environment. Perhaps Sheila Pite had the right idea having arrived with her favourite slippers. The plan was to spend a November Saturday at Eyam Church in their new Church Centre and be guided through our programme by Trevor and Mary Beedel (who St Thomas folk will remember warmly from the Stewardship Campaign of several years ago).

The programme included:

- ◆ listening to each other as we listen to God
- ◆ some worship and prayer
- ◆ some group work thinking about 'Going for Growth in Christ' as we looked at Belonging to the Body
- ◆ nurturing one another and
- ◆ developing Church Premises.

We began by getting to know each other better as we listened to each other, which we did in pairs with the aid of a Tree Diagram. We had to tell our partner where we saw ourselves on the tree (if the tree represented the P.C.C.). Very interesting and revealing and not a little humorous when we shared our discoveries afterwards. After coffee, a time of worship and an opportunity to pray for our tree-person partner, which was very heartening and after lunch we had chance to consider our vision statement: **Going for Growth in Christ**.

In groups of five or six we discussed the three themes mentioned earlier. There was also time for meditative silence, a chance to listen to God and a final period of worship.

If this all sounds a bit heavy and dry then I can assure you no-one found that to be so, good humour and warmth abounded. Much constructive feedback was forthcoming and the Beedels noted plenty of helpful comment.

The programme listed at 12.15pm - Lunch and an opportunity for **exercise**. Most members took a packed lunch, except for two or three who sneaked off to the Miners Arms, and after eating there was chance of a breath of air.

Some strolled round the village or church yard and the more energetic (a group including two Readers, one Church Warden and a Curate) had a quick hike up the hill beyond the youth hostel and enjoyed a panoramic view of the area and a visit to Mompessons Well. This party was in danger of being late back and the vision of half a dozen responsible peers of the Church jogging at uncontrolled and ever increasing speed down the hillside back to Eyam was a sight to behold! Sheila, with her coat fanned out like a hang glider and red-booted legs going ten to the dozen looked most impressive.

With the benefit of hindsight though, perhaps the best memory was spending the day, including travelling, in the company of that lovely old gentleman **Sam Martin** who died suddenly only four days later. Sam was in great form, and what a privilege and blessing to so many of us the day had proved to be.

Alan Sheldon

Link Missionaries –Andy and Mandy Lines

After several set-backs in 1993 the latter months were happier for Andrew, Mandy and the children. Andrew's classes were completed, he has been busy with speaking and preaching engagements, and the visit of the team from their home church was a real high-light. Visits have been made to Brazil, Chile and Andrew has also been to Argentina in December. Christmas must have been a wonderful time for them to relax with the family and focus on the King of All who came to die.

1994 will be an important year for them, and after they return from their holiday in early February their thoughts will turn to the decision to be made about their future. Please pray that whatever decision is reached it will be the right one.

Richard and Dorothy Banks

The Rev Charity E Nyagawa – from Tanzania

My stay at St Thomas'

(Dec 18th 1993- Jan 6th 1994)

Every one can accept that arriving at a certain place for the first time can be difficult, can be a culture shock for any new comers, because there is a tension of home sickness in his mind. Just imagine, he has left his family; friends, relatives and his own country and he has gone to stay with unfamiliar people, it is very difficult.

That happened to me. I was very worried, but I thank God for many blessings which I received during my stay at this parish. I came here just to have parish experience and to meet with different people informally. However it is good for you, the people of this parish to learn a little about the person you are supporting and to learn something about the Church in another part of the world.

During my stay in Chesterfield I have been staying with different church members and I learned a lot from that. Also I visited the countryside I enjoyed the good view of this county. Also I enjoyed singing carols in various old people's homes.

Everyone has been very friendly and helpful; and they helped me to understand the way the parish works. I am sure that the experience which I got here will be helpful in my ministry back home in Tanzania, because of the way things are done, organising parish meetings, Sunday school, we do have all these but not in the same way.

Therefore I would like to share with you some important issues concerning the Church in Tanzania, particularly my Diocese of Ruatia -IRINGA. The Diocese of Ruatia is an Outreach Diocese. There is a big emphasis on Evangelism. Pastors and Evangelists have continued to work in the outreach field, this brought big results - because, new congregations were opened, new parishes and sub-parishes.

Most of our Christians are those who were born from Christian families but there are also some from non-Christian backgrounds as a result of Evangelism - especially in Muslim areas we need them to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal saviour.

Problems: There are many problems which slow down our ability (In my parish - St Luke's Anglican Church) These are as follows

- ◆ Economic problems/difficulties
- ◆ Natural calamities e.g. drought, floods.
- ◆ Tropical diseases e.g. malaria
- ◆ Poor communications - (means of transport)
- ◆ But the most important is the lack of preaching facilities. These could help Evangelistic programmes in my parish.

Hence I would like to thank the Parish Authority and all the people who are showing me such good hospitality. I enjoyed my stay because every one was free to help me one way or another.

Therefore pray for my Bishop the Rt. Rev. Donald Mtetemela who is totally involved in Diocesan Evangelistic programme, let God give him more vision and courage that he may preach and teach people peacefully. I do remember your motto *"live a life of love just as Christ loved us"* Eph. 5:2 So I love you.

Finally you can be part of us, through prayer; sure we need your prayers in facing this difficult pioneer work, we will value your prayers.

The Rev. Charity E. Nyagawa

What Does It Mean?

Kath Steer begins a series investigating what lies behind well-known Bible concepts. Kath has been studying the Bible for many years. She has acquired a great deal of fascinating background information.

The series starts with:

Water In Bible Times

There are at least three sources of water supply in the Bible.

1. From the Water Carrier

Isaiah 55:1 pictures a Water Carrier, or the Sakkah. To understand this Bible character, I quote from the Rev Samual Schorr, a Christian Jew of the last century. "Water has often to be brought from a distance, for no water supply exists in most eastern cities. It has to be carried in skin bottles. These are made from goatskin holding some 30 to 50 gallons! The Sakkah would fill barrels and jars for payment. He would cry as he walked 'Ho! ye thirsty ones, come and drink'.

Such was the cry that Isaiah refers to, but there in Isaiah 55:1 it implies Free Water. The Sakkah is not taking money today as it has already been paid for by a man wishing to perform a charity - so the water carrier cries 'Ho! Ye thirsty ones, come and drink today for nothing: FOR NOTHING!'

2. From Local Cisterns

The prophet Jeremiah exclaims "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of Living Waters - and - they have hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer 2:13) In this I seek to explain from Thompson's 'The Land and the Book' - again of the last century. He writes that the best cisterns (water pits) are formed from solid rock, but even they are liable to crack and are a most unreliable source of supply. However, constant care preserves them - but the water collected in these pits comes from clay roofs or muddy soil and is the colour of weak soapsuds, with the taste of earth or the stable; it is filthy and full of worms.

"Who would exchange the sweet, wholesome well-water for such nasty, verminous cistern water?" The Lord often uses everyday things to explain profound truth; here, it is that instead of seeking the Lord, they had found other ways and means.

3. From The Well

The Bible is full of the term 'Living Water' the most famous being from the Lord Jesus, found in John 7:37-39. What did He mean? The people listening to Him would have understood well enough, as may be they had paid for water that day, or drunk from the 'broken cisterns'. Jesus was speaking of running water, or that which springs up from the well, a never-ending supply except maybe in drought. They were however puzzled by its spiritual meaning - "Come to Me and drink ... out of his inner-most being shall flow rivers of living water". They were unaware that shortly the day would dawn when, fulfilling Joel 2:28, the Ascended Christ would "pour out of His Spirit on all flesh" and, according to Psalm 68:18, He would bestow gifts upon mankind.

How very glad we are that, this side of Christ's death and resurrection, we have understanding together with experience. So, we joyfully join in the song of Numbers 21:17-18 "Spring up O well". So we observe - Christ is the springing well of living water, we are the channels through which it will flow, bringing life to others; but we must keep them clean.

Kath Steer

"By Chance"

How many people do we meet, sometimes on a frequent basis, but never really get past talking about mundane things such as the weather?

Recently I spent a week in Argentina on business and met the Managing Director of a company with whom I have had contact over a number of years. I have also spent time with him during his visits to the U.K. In the past we have become acquainted but not really got to know a great deal about each other. However, as we talked in his office we found we had much more in common than mere business. He was able to share with me his experiences within his church life and the way in which the church has taken responsibility for a children's home **Hogar El Alba**.

I would ask that we remember the work being carried on by fellow Christians and hope that the following article written by Juan Cliffe will provide a basis of our prayer.

David Jarvis

A Brief History of Hogar El Alba

Hogar "El Alba" is a children's home, located on a farm of 80 acres, 30 miles from Buenos Aires. The legal entity to which it belongs is called "ESCUELAS E INSTITUTOS FILANTROPICOS ARGENTINOS", a non-profit organisation duly recognised by the Government. This entity was founded by the Rev. William C. Morris from the Church of England in Argentina.

This is how it all began.

William Morris was born in Soham, Cambridge in 1864 into a very pious family. But very soon his mother died when he was only 4 years old.

As life was difficult in those days, his father decided to try his fortune emigrating to Paraguay with his three boys and a daughter. There they tried to raise some sheep. His father would teach them to read and write from the Bible and a few books from English poets. Soon this venture failed, as the land was very poor and they had to emigrate to Argentina, where they started farming once again.

William was a solitary character, his Bible and books his best companions. Eventually in 1886 he landed in Buenos Aires and while working for an English merchant he decided to do something for the abandoned children of one of the poorest areas of the town, "La Boca". He rented a small room, bought a few benches, a blackboard and chalk and started looking for the young boys in the streets. He not only had to teach them to read and write but also feed them.

As his work grew, he had to leave his job as he had to spend many hours asking for funds to the British Community. He was also ordained preacher by the Methodist Church in 1891 but later, in 1897 was accepted as minister by the Anglican Church.

Gradually his work became accepted even by the Government Authorities; he befriended presidents and legislators and was given grants. His schools attended at its peak 7200 pupils.

But in 1931 he was taken seriously ill, suffering from a weak heart and decided to go back to Soham, England, where he eventually died in 1932 dreaming of his beloved children (he had none of his own) and his adopted land, Argentina.

As part of his work, the farm "Hogar El Alba" was bought to provide fresh milk and vegetables for his schools. When the Peronist regime came to power, all his schools were expropriated except the farm.

At present we are transforming what used to be an institutionalised orphanage into separate substitute homes, where one couple looks after 12 children in separate facilities. To this end we are recycling our old buildings with a budget of £200,000.

Present capacity is of 30 children (boys and girls) and once our development plan is finished we shall be able to house a maximum of 100.

The children are sent to government schools and trained to become useful citizens once they leave, but most important of all they are given the Word of God.

The director is a full-time missionary and as a rule the staff have to be committed Christians as well as Committee members. Our current budget is of £8000 per month and we rely on government grants and church individual offerings.

Even today, William Morris is considered the father of Evangelical Schools, and his work is remembered by Argentine Society as the work of a pioneer and patriot.

Please pray for us!
Juan Cliffe