

**Ploughshare June/July 2001**  
(Scanned version of selected articles from the original)

**From The Curate –Petra Owen**

It doesn't seem like two minutes since my first Sunday in June 1998 when I arrived at St. Thomas' to take up the post of training curate.

Three years later and it's time to move on. I move with much sadness and lots of excitement. Any change in life gives us a sense of loss and gain.

Most readers will have heard that my next appointment will be as associate minister in an Anglican church in a place called Federal Way, just outside Seattle, N.W. America. I will be working alongside the Rev. Dorian McGlannan, Rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd. I will do the usual clergy ministry but have special responsibility for discipleship and teaching, and youth and children's work.

Many have asked why the States? How did you get that job?

When you know that you have to move from your first post you start to pray earnestly to find where God wants you. I had felt that I didn't want to become an incumbent straight away, but rather explore discipleship training and continue in Youth and Children's work but also remembering that God had called me to be an ordained minister. At the same time 5000 miles away a church was praying for an ordained minister to join the staff team who would be involved in discipleship, teaching, youth and children and who would be good at drama! (as a bonus!).

This was for them to be a work of God as the church is thought to be too small for a second clergy person to be employed. But they believed that God could take the impossible and make it possible. So they prayed!

In the meantime I was praying too! And God started to answer these prayers.

He gave Angie McGovern four pictures. The first three involved me in the water leaving one shore and swimming to another shore which Jesus was quite clearly calling me to. The fourth involved a completely accurate detailed description of one of the church buildings in Federal Way. It became clear that this was where God wants me to serve Him next.

This was confirmed when I went out for my interview in February and accepted the offer of the new post. Undoubtly it is a big change, a big move, leaving family and friends and going to a different country, culture and church. Sometimes it's overwhelming but most of the time I have a deep sense of peace, purpose and calling because the God who has called us is faithful.

I have undoubtedly learnt so much and grown so much over the last three years at St. Thomas' and I have especially valued your love and friendship, challenge and support as a church family. I shall miss you, but hope to see many of you in Seattle for your holiday!

Our God has a perfect plan for each one of us and we never know quite where He will lead us next - He asks only that we trust in His wisdom, love and provision. He is so worthy to be praised. I finish with one of my favourite verses from the Bible ...

Psalm 63 v 2-3

*"I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live."*

*Lots of love*

Petra Owen

## Moving On –Geoffery Wilbourne

Not only is our Curate, Petra Owen, leaving us. One of our much valued retired clergy, the Revd Geoffrey Wilbourne, is also on the move.

Geoffrey and Eileen are going to be near their sons, David and Jonathan in Yorkshire. They have a new bungalow at Osgodby, near Scarborough. They had sold their bungalow in Chesterfield within two days of it going on the market! "This has been a relief to us, saving us from the usual stress," Geoffrey says.

Most of Geoffrey's ministry while they have been with us, has been at St Peter's. He has taken services and preached on a regular basis and he and Eileen are very dear to St Peter's folk. They will be greatly missed. We pray that God will help them to settle in their new home, give them plenty of new friends and help them to feel comfortable and useful in a new Church.

## The Three Persons of God

Do you ever think how many roles you play in your life? For example, on an average day, I am not only a woman and a Christian, but also a daughter, a mother and a teacher! Although I perform different tasks and behave differently in carrying out these roles, I am still me - the person behind all of these different 'faces' is the same.

This idea can help us to understand the Trinity, that mysterious word we use in the Church for the three persons of God. 'Trinity' means 'threefold' or 'three-in-one' and Christians use this word to describe the three persons which form one God: the Father, the Son - Jesus Christ- and the Holy Spirit. Does this then mean that as Christians we actually believe in three gods, instead of one? Certainly not! Theologians sometimes use the phrase "one substance in three persons" to explain this rather difficult concept of the Trinity, but what does that actually mean to us in reality?

### **Three-in-one**

We can encounter God in three different ways:

1. as the Father, who made us and is over us;
2. as the Son, Jesus Christ, who has saved us by His death on the cross and is always with us;
3. as the Holy Spirit who makes God real to us and is in us, who enables us to do His work through the gifts He gives us.

To us, these three ways of experiencing God can seem like completely separate roles. But the three persons of God are so closely connected, that it is perhaps more helpful to regard the Trinity as different 'masks' of the same God, rather than separate persons ('person' comes from a Latin word meaning 'mask).

### **The Indivisible Godhead**

Comparing the Trinity to human roles does, however, have its limitations. Some roles we fulfil for all of our life (being a son or a daughter, for example), but others can come along later (parenthood, jobs), and we can only actively carry out one role at a time (I cannot teach a class and look after my child at the same time). With God it is different. The Bible makes it clear that all three persons in the Godhead exist both eternally and *all* at the same time. In Genesis "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters before the Creation, and in John's Gospel, Jesus told a disbelieving crowd "before Abraham was born, I am.", deliberately using the "I am" phrase used only by God.

In his book *Christian Theology An Introduction*, Alister McGrath explains it like this:

The one indivisible Godhead is common to all three persons of the Trinity. This one Godhead exists simultaneously in three different "modes of being" - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'

### **A Unique Relationship**

It is, perhaps, Jesus himself, however, who gives us the clearest and simplest explanations of this unique relationship, for example:

"I and the Father are one"

"The Father is in me, and I in the Father"

"And with that he breathed on them [the disciples] and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'.

By these words Jesus clearly linked together Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even if we find it hard to understand the Trinity clearly, it is important for us to accept that as human beings some things can never be fully explained. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, however, do give us a privileged glimpse into how Father, Son and Holy Spirit are uniquely and eternally the one true God.

### **Pat Clayton**

*This article was originally written as part of Pat's Reader training.*

## **All Change**

As we welcome Mark Hoare, taking over as Church Warden we thank Geoff Beresforde for his three years of service. Geoff has been ultra reliable, humble, unobtrusive, approachable, entertaining and a thoroughly nice person. In short, Geoff has been a first rate warden.

## **Face to Face with Mark Hoare**

### **Mark, can you tell us a little about yourself?**

I am 47, have been married to Ann for 21 years and have two children, Gemma and Ian who are 18 and 15 respectively. Ann and I came to Chesterfield 18 years ago when the National Coal Board transferred me from Ashby-de-la Zouch, in Leicestershire. I worked as a mining engineer at Arkwright, Markham and Bolsover collieries until being made redundant about eight years ago. Since then I have worked at Birmingham University as a Health and Safety Adviser, a job I thoroughly enjoy although it is a long train journey every day. I reckon I have been the equivalent of around the world 8 times!

### **When did you start coming to St Thomas'?**

Within a couple of weeks of moving to Chesterfield. Gemma was six weeks old at the time. I remember it was an evening service and in those days in the winter the service started at 4pm. I had been to church regularly until I was about twelve and had been confirmed, but had lapsed. (I was even a choirboy, although I think it was to make up the numbers rather than for my singing ability!) Ann had become a Christian at college and we had started to go to church in Ashby. However, it was not until I had re done the confirmation course at St Thomas' in 1988 that I understood what it meant to be a Christian and became one.

**And have you been coming ever since?**

Yes. Church life has been a major part of our lives. Both Gemma and Ian were baptised at St Thomas', and Gemma was confirmed here and Ian at St John's. (In fact Ian's baptism was the first that Christopher did here.) They have both been members of the creche, Sunday Club, Quest, Pathfinders and are now in CYFA.

**What was it that brought you to the decision to offer yourself as Warden this year?**

I have never actually offered to do any jobs at St Thomas! I think God must give my name to other people who then ask me if I had thought of doing a particular task. I remember before I became Warden last time I was washing up after Sunday lunch with Philip Herrick. He suddenly asked me if I would consider being Deputy Warden and then Warden. Before then the thought had not even crossed my mind. This time, apparently, Ann had suggested to Pam Brimelow that she should ask me. After prayer and discussion with the family I agreed.

**Using your imagination, what would you like to see happen at St Thomas' over the next few years?**

I hope we can continue to grow as a united church, both spiritually and numerically. There is the next stage of our development project to get under way. There is outreach to the community to continue. It would be nice not to have to worry about are we going to have enough money but to whom are we going to give our surplus! However, all that we do must be underpinned by prayer. How exciting it would be if the meeting room was too small for our Saturday mornings of prayer!

**Have you a favourite verse of scripture?**

I don't really have a particular favourite verse. However I take great strength and encouragement from a couple of verses and I also have a particular psalm that I try to live up to, Psalm 15. "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt 11:28) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

## **Alison Hawksley Update**

Alison Hawksley is well and continuing her very challenging work in Peru. She spent all January and half February teaching at the summer school for children who are behind with their work. The afternoons, she spent at the Institute, brushing up her Spanish. From that time, until the middle of March, she completed an intensive language course which, despite the hard work, she enjoyed very much. She then returned to school, wearing a yellow and green trouser suit as her school uniform! (green and yellow being the school colours) - let's hope this trend will not be adopted here!

Alison was privileged to spend some time with the girls at the local orphanage, sleeping in their dormitory. She found this great fun, despite the heartbreaking stories they shared with her. She describes the girls as 'great kids, very affectionate and well-behaved, which is surprising considering what most of them have been through'. She would like to spend more time at the home, teaching or doing craft activities, so that the products could be sold to raise funds. Alison is particularly concerned that when the children reach 12 or 13 they cannot legally stay in a home with younger children, but must move to another one. This means that they will lose some of their children, unless they can think of somewhere else to place them.

Another major concern is the children who are unable to return to school because their parents cannot afford the monthly fees. One boy's mother had a cow and was using the money earned from selling the milk to pay for her son's education. However, the cow has died, and, if she

cannot find more work, her son will have to go out to work, and miss out on his education. This boy and several other children are very intelligent and it would be a shame to lose them, or indeed any of those who are less able. Therefore, Alison is looking at the possibility of setting up an education support fund, which would address the situation. This would be an 'anonymous' fund rather than to help themselves; parents will be helped through difficulties, until their lives return to normal, rather than allowing them to sit back while the Anglican church pays for their child's education.

The monthly fees for each child are 45 soles (£9). At the beginning of the school year parents need to purchase uniforms and books, which are expensive for poor people to buy all at once. If you would like to support this fund, please contact Patrick Mackie, 4 Croft Rise, Bridgeford, Nottingham, NG13 8PE, designating your gifts for EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FUND SAN LUCAS SCHOOL AREQUIPA PERU. Patrick will forward the funds directly to the school.

Alison was delighted to be able to return home for two weeks at Easter, as her brother was getting married. After some soul searching, she decided that she really wanted to be there. She was given the holiday on the proviso that she planned work for the children whilst she was away. The wedding was a very happy occasion, and she was pleased that she had not missed it. However, she was disappointed not to be able to walk on the North Yorkshire moors because of the Foot and Mouth outbreak. Instead, she enjoyed visiting Filey, a place she had frequented a child.

She will now be back in Peru, carrying out God's work. She sends thanks for all the letters and messages she has received. She is also very aware of and grateful for your prayer support. Please continue to pray regularly for her.

**Yvetta Jacques**

## **Welcome Service for Alex Simpson at St. Peter's**

"Praise the Lord, His people praise Him" - we sang our opening hymn on a lovely spring morning, to celebrate Alex and Pat Simpson's coming to St Peter's. At a very special happy service, we were joined by our friends from the other churches, to bring their good wishes to Alex and Pat.

During the service I realised how very rich in blessings we all are, and that we should remember those less fortunate. When told that we look forward to his ministry, Alex replied - I think with a twinkle in his eye - "You don't know what my ministry will be!" Whatever the ministry we look forward to a new beginning and welcome Alex and Pat with love to St Peter's.

And in remembering others, and especially those who have none to pray for them, we remember the words of St Frances:

"Accept my prayers, dear Father, for those who have no one to love them enough to pray for them. Wherever and whoever they are, give them a share of our blessings, and in thy love let them know that they are not forgotten."

## **Book Review –Mark Torkington**

**-"Listen and Live" Using the Bible in Prayer: author: Colin Urquhart Publisher: Hodder and Stoughton Price: £7.99**

How can I pray more effectively?"

"How can I receive from God the blessings he promises?"

LISTEN AND LIVE is Colin Urquhart's response to these questions - based upon his own personal and pastoral experience, providing a way of praying and reading the bible that is both powerful and effective.

Colin Urquhart has a gift of taking the most difficult of subjects and presenting them in a clear and simple way. It is written in language that is straightforward to follow, and yet the content is potentially very complex.

The author also writes in a very personal sense, as if you alone are the intended recipient of his words. I am sure that most of us will have had this experience when reading the bible, and it can be extremely encouraging.

The book is divided into eight main sections, including themes such as 'fellowship with God', 'your life in Christ', and 'your life in holiness and glory'. The chapters are usually just two or three pages in length, and it is convenient (and advisable) to read this book little bits at a time.

I did find the introduction a little off-putting. It seemed to describe a "method" of praying which I feared might be rigid and legalistic. However I was soon reassured that the book is suitable for people who prefer a very structured approach, as well as for people who are perhaps less disciplined, and choose a more spontaneous way of worship and prayer.

I have used this book personally as an alternative and has taken the best part of a year to read and certainly commend it to Christians, both new and more mature.

**Mark Torkington**