

Ploughshare October/November 1995

(Scanned version from the original)

From the Rector

Autumn is a good growing time not for our gardens perhaps, but certainly for our churches. Refreshed after a wonderful summer, pleased to see the grass turning green again and relieved to find the temperature more comfortable, we have every incentive to grow.

Our vision statement - in summary, **Going for Growth in Christ** -needs to be owned.

It needs to be worked out in at least three directions.

Outwards: Reaching out with God's love to our parish – and the world beyond.

Inwards: Growth in love for each other shown in fellowship, pastoral care and improved communication.

Upwards: Growth in love for our Lord: shown in worship, prayer, service and giving.

This is what matters. I like to think that, when someone returns like a fond uncle to our parish after being away for a few months, we'll hear him say to us, "My, how you have grown!"

Christopher Frith

Halloween

Are you going to a Halloween party this year? All Hallows Eve (October 31) was the old Celtic New Year, when evil powers were thought to be abroad. Much of our modern Halloween traditions (trick or treat etc) come from America.

But is it all just harmless fun, or can it lead to an unhealthy interest in the occult? All of us can become fascinated by the unknown beyond the physical, yet the Bible clearly speaks of the dangers of doing this.

What does God warn us against?

(See Deuteronomy 18:9-13) How do modern practices fit into this list? -e.g.. horoscopes, fortune telling, ouija boards, supernatural fantasy.

What does God say about these things?

(See Leviticus 20:6,27 and Isaiah 8:19) How do you view such things, however innocent they might appear?

How did Jesus achieve victory over the powers of darkness?

(See Colossians 2:13- 15; 1 John 3:8)

What kind of tactics can we expect the enemy to use against us?

See John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 Peter 5:8)

How should we respond to any involvement in the occult?

(See Acts 19:1 1-20; Ephesians 6:10-18)

Power Party

We are not to be unaware of Satan's schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11), but ready to test everything (1 John 4:1-3). As Christians the power at our disposal is nothing less than the power that raised Jesus from the dead (Ephesians 1:19-20).

So why not make Halloween a special time of celebration this year. The **Rainbow Party** at St Thomas' promises to be enormous fun. It is being held from 6.30-8.30 on Tuesday 31 October. All are welcome.

Operation Christmas Child

Again for the third year in the Chesterfield area, we will hear about the shoebox appeal - Operation Christmas Child's best known, and best supported national appeal. Last year 250,000 shoeboxes were filled for children in many counties, including Bosnia, Croatia, Romania, Russia and Rwanda. We in Chesterfield collected over 6,000 of those, thanks to the generosity of school children, churches and Chesterfield folk in general.

1995 sees a much earlier deadline - **3rd November!** This is a month earlier than usual, but is necessary to ensure the shoeboxes reach the children before Christmas. Last year, with such a huge response, some of the 250,000 shoebox presents were not distributed until January. This year, OCC hope to have all the shoeboxes with their new owners before Christmas -as has always been the intention!

If you would like to send a little 'love in a shoebox', please read on.

1. Firstly decide what age child you would like to send a present to. You also need to decide whether the shoebox is to go to a boy or a girl. Put this information on the shoebox lid to help the distributors know whom your gift is intended for.

2. The shoebox may be covered. Although not essential, it looks more appealing, especially to little children. When covering boxes, please, ensure that the boxes and the lids are wrapped separately. Each box is checked before leaving the country. (An elastic band can be used to secure the contents quite satisfactorily).

3. You now need to fill the box with little gifts suitable for the particular child you have chosen. O.C.C. ask you to include some crayons; colouring book or paper; cuddly toy; at least one new item and some CHOCOLATE! The charity endeavours to include these items in every shoebox, in particular the chocolate. This is such a treat to many children. In Bosnia for example, some children under 5 yrs. old, may never have tasted chocolate!

The rest is up to you and the space you've got left. Basically, the more you can squeeze in the better for the child. Don't forget this will probably be the only present many of these children get all year. (Please avoid sending guns, water pistols and any toys depicting war or violence - they will be removed before leaving the country.)

Other items could include such things as: toy cars, dolls; hair decorations; small toys e.g. dinosaurs; jigsaws; paints; plasticine; picture books, balls; bats: hats; T-shirts; gloves; jewellery; bubbles* and so on.

For older children, perhaps more toiletries*, card games; pocket games; pretty scarves: tights; jewellery; make-up; perfume; and so on.

* Please wrap liquid items, such as bubbles and shampoo etc. in plastic bags, in case of spillage.

4. It is always nice to send a letter and photograph. Many people have received letters back, saying thank you for the gifts. This has been the basis of some long lasting friendship. Do include your address if you write. Paper and envelopes will naturally encourage a response.

5. When your shoebox is full, secure the lid with an elastic band if possible.

6. Operation Christmas Child ask for a £1 coin to be stuck on the outside of the shoebox lid to help cover the cost of transporting.

The simple shoebox says so much to those receiving it. The people who think they are forgotten, realise that they are not. They realise that there are friends in other parts of the world - 'their neighbours', who care enough about them to send a gift at Christmas. The shoebox, when all it's contents are gone, is kept by many little: children -empty, yet so full of love and hope!

Just like the ripple in a pond when you throw in a stone. The ripples go on and on. So the love in the shoebox. Although given to one child, the love sent with it touches so many lives. Not only that of the child, but the parents/ brothers/ sisters/ relatives/ friends, neighbours/ teachers and so on and so on. The little shoebox is such a powerful gift.

One very important aspect of Operation Christmas Child's work in this country is that of educating our children. Children realise how nice it can be to give, rather than receiving all the time. Many children have been known to give their favourite cuddly toys, because of how sorry they feel for these children who are far worse off than themselves. They can be taught that things can be done to help. However small they may seem, every little helps, and it is

important not to sit back and pretend that the problem will go away. In the work of Operation Christmas Child children are also shown the love of God, and the importance of showing it to others.

There is no limit to the number of shoeboxes an individual can send. Each shoebox means an extra child will receive a present, so if you would like to send more than one - OCC say 'thank you'.

When your shoebox is ready to send, **please leave it at the back of church, anytime in October.**

If you belong to a group/club or work in a school, or an office and think that people there would be interested, do tell them. Why not suggest the appeal to your child's head teacher? It makes a lovely Harvest appeal for the autumn term.

For more information on any of OCC's appeals or projects, do please speak to Jane Simmonds.

Proverb: We can give without loving, but we can't love without giving

Face to Face with Miss Marjorie Smith

Miss Marjorie Smith, aged 92, is one of St Thomas' longest standing members.

Marjorie, have you belonged to St Thomas' as long as you can remember?

I was 5 when we moved from Glapwell into Walton Road and I have belonged to St Thomas' ever since. My father sang in the choir for a while. I went to Guides up in Walton and also was in St John's choir for a while. In 1931, I moved into Westbourne Grove in Brampton with my mother, sister and brother. I have known six different Rectors.

Which Rectors do you especially remember?

Well... Mr Burnside (1906 - 25) was a very nice man - but he couldn't preach! He prepared me for confirmation; I had lessons on my own in the Rectory. Canon Hooley (1944 - 57) was a very outspoken man, but sincere... much misunderstood. He told us off from the pulpit. He didn't get the support he needed. Mr Daffurn (1957 - 74) gave us the biggest surprise. He announced from the pulpit, soon after he came, "I came as a single man. I am now married!" Everyone was staggered. It had happened secretly on the Thursday before!

What roles have you had at St Thomas'?

I used to deliver magazines for an adult distributor when I was much too young. I started Brownies when I was just 19 and later was Captain of Guides as well. I served on the PCC for many years. Now, of course, I can only pray in my armchair at home.

What does your faith mean to you, Marjorie?

I don't know how people can manage without a faith in our Lord. People used to tell me I went to Church because I was good. I told them that wasn't the case; I went to church because I needed the help I found there. I wish I could still go, but I'm housebound now. I love having communion at home every month.

What is it like, getting older?

It gets harder all the time. But I can't complain. I thank God for good friends. I am well looked after. And I feel God is with me, even when I am lonely. He is a wonderful Person. He really understands me - and I believe He has got something much better waiting for me, when He's ready for me. He's keeping me waiting!

Thank you very much, Marjorie.

You are very welcome. It's nice to know I'm not on the scrapheap yet!

Book Review

Created for Love: understanding and building self-esteem

Authors: John and Agrees Stuart, £6.99

Many people today suffer the consequences of low self-esteem, yet to try to build up self-esteem can seem contrary to Christian teaching - putting self before others. However, this book, which has a sound scriptural base, looks at the issue carefully, dividing it into two parts. Part 1 explains how to understand self-esteem and recognise signs of good and poor self-esteem; and Part 2 concentrates on how to build up self-esteem.

At the end of each section there are reflections and exercises to be done individually or in a small group, but just to read the book quickly, concentrating on those areas that seem relevant, is very informative.

I found the book very interesting and I have learned a lot - time will tell! I particularly liked the creed of self-affirmation which states:

- ◆ I believe that when God created me he did a good job. He looked at me and was very pleased.
- ◆ I believe that I am made in the image of God. That image has been marred by sin, but there is a core of me which reflects God.
- ◆ I believe that Christ died to release me to become the person he created me to be, and that he is at work in my life making this happen.
- ◆ I believe that the things I see as blemishes, the things others may snigger at, God regards as part of my uniqueness.
- ◆ I believe that God loves me and that his love is unconditional, not depending on any virtue I may or may not possess, nor upon anything I have done or achieved.

The Bible calls this **grace**; I call it amazing!

Though I cannot grasp the full extent of God's love for me, I accept it as so, and I rejoice in it. I thank God for myself, for what I am and for what I am becoming. Through Jesus Christ, the Lord, Amen

Lindsay Leteve

Book Review

The Cat's Tale - Jesus at the wedding.

Collins Picture Lions by Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen £3.99

One of the most well known of Jesus' miracles is seen through the eyes of a local cat (who immediately notices something special about Jesus as soon as he spots him arriving in a crowd of wedding guests).

The party is quickly in full swing and everyone is having a great time then, panic stations!!! -the wine runs out!!

The cat is intrigued at Jesus instructions to the bemused servants who nevertheless fill 6 huge stone jars with water. 'Water, what good is water at a wedding?' Well, we all know what happens next! -and everyone parties on.

The cat goes off for his afternoon nap, waking up later when the celebrations are over and wonders if he dreamed it all. But then he sees the pink reflection of the moon shining on the remnants of wine in a stone jar and muses that "They haven't seen the last of Jesus, what an amazing man!"

This is one of our favourite books, the illustrations are terrific and the text could be read by a child aged 6+ but grown ups will enjoy reading it just as much!

There are 3 other books in the "Tale" series, and will appeal to ages 3 upwards.

Pauline Latimer

Fond Farewells

Losing one member of staff is unfortunate. To lose two on the same day seems careless in the extreme! Yet, St Thomas' is used to the coming and going of assistant clergy. We learn to treasure them while they are with us and rejoice with them when they are called to other things.

Brian and Barbara Porter did not have the easiest of five and a half years with us. Both of them had considerable ill health. They had a somewhat unsettled time, moving about from Holymoorside to Walton, from Holy Trinity, Chesterfield to Durai, Sydney, N.S.W.

However, in each situation, there were those who were blessed by Brian and Barbara's ministry together and especially in St Thomas', where the 6.30pm congregation especially appreciated Brian's sensitive leading of worship, Barbara's musical contribution and their prayer ministry together.

They leave many memories and many friends - and we rejoice that Chesterfield is still their home and they hope to return in three years time.

Sheila Pite, now transformed into **Sheila Stevenson** of course, likewise made a considerable mark during her three years with us. It wasn't just the red shoes, the brightly coloured stoles and the bicycle. It was her unique approach to ministry and to life.

It took a while to get to know Sheila but, once we did, we appreciated her. Her ability to get things done without any kind of song and dance (although she quite enjoyed singing and dancing when she gets the chance!), her determination to pursue what is important to her, her "green-ness" (probably she is as consistent and realistic a green person as could be imagined), her ability to befriend and encourage those who really need her, and noticing the unnoticed ...and so we could go on.

Sheila, too, leaves behind an abundance of memories and friends.

Our love, gratitude and prayers are with Brian and Barbara and Sheila and Don as they face new challenges.

Link Mission Partners, Andy and Mandy Lines

For anyone who has not heard the news, baby **Elizabeth Hannah Lines** arrived on 10th July (just too late for the last edition of Ploughshare), and by the time we go to press the whole family will be back in Paraguay picking up where they left off before their furlough in the U.K.

Please pray for them, for health, commitment and spiritual strength at this time of re-adjustment.

Richard and Dorothy Banks

Home from Uganda -Jonty Frith

It's good to be back where I belong after ten months in 'darkest Africa', although as the sky turns grey and I pull on another sweater, I almost wish I were on the plane today with the Coulsons, heading back to where it's warm all year. (The Coulson family are CMS mission partners in Kampala, with whom I worked until they came home in February for six months' leave and I moved into their house.)

Kampala is the capital city of Uganda, on the Equator in East Africa. Famous for its years of terror under Amin and Obote in the 70s and 80s, everywhere there are reminders of those dreadful days in the form of bullet holes (one friend showed me the hole in his landing floor where his dad had been killed) and pot holes. The wrecked roads are a striking symbol of the prosperity that was once there, eroded by thirty years of neglect and disorder and one by one being smartly resurfaced as the wounded nation pulls itself back together. President Museveni's National Resistance

movement has brought stability and a promise of democracy soon. There's an air of optimism, but Ugandans seem to be hurtling from one disaster into another.

Exodus 12:30 - "... *there was not a house without someone dead.*" - will now for me always be a reminder of the impact of AIDS on those families I encountered in 1994 - 95. It has been estimated that in the areas in which I worked, 80% of people were HIV+, and most people die within five years of contracting the virus. Some children are orphaned four or five times, and left with no-one to take them in or, still less likely, pay their school fees.

Before last summer I had attended one funeral; since then it has been more than one per month. But, seeing death can do you some good, and the church has arisen to make a prophetic challenge to Uganda's sexual immorality, as well as preaching the name of Jesus for forgiveness and the only source of power for right living.

What did I do, apart from praying with dying or bereaved people?

1. **Preaching** in Namirembe Cathedral and its daughter churches in slums around the bottom of Namirembe Hill, about 3 times a month, (sometimes 3 times in one Sunday), often with translation into Luganda.

2. **Reading** the bible on a weekly one-to-one basis with four young men.

3. **Speaking** in school assemblies, Scripture Unions and Bible classes, around 3 times a week in term time.

4. **Loitering** around a market place which led to :

learning more Luganda expressions and proverbs such as "*Linda ki ggwe eyo affurnita mu kiira*", - if you keep waiting for the animal to come nearer, when you do throw the spear you'll only catch its tail - In other words, why don't you hurry up and get married? Twenty two? I had three kids by the time I was 22. Here my sister is very beautiful...

holding impromptu seminars on, say, the divinity of Christ with a crowd of Moslems

praying with people who asked, out in the open

day tripping with some timber merchants, to see the head of my clan, Kyeyune e Mirembe

Leading youth group bible studies and the Bulange Youth Bonanza, incorporating films, egg races, Christian teaching drama, singing, silly games, etc., all to keep the teenagers off the streets in the school holidays.

Also:

- **digging** to restore a disused swimming pool, which led to

- **swimming** in the gunky water.

6. **Visiting** five times a week, dozens of homes (which ranged from dark little comfortable huts to big posh awkward houses) in three different areas called Katwe2, Bulange and Ndeeba, always with a lay reader from the appropriate church.

This wide range of experiences was obviously more than I could have expected from a church placement in England, which was the alternative for my year before 'vicar factory'.

I want to say a big thank you to all who have supported me financially (the whole thing cost over £3000) in prayer and with encouraging letters.

Jonty Frith

Summer Events

Gains 3 -1995

Fifty five young people from England and Wales took part in Gains 3, a Pathfinder Venture near Worcester. The theme of the week was telling friends about God.

We went to Gains anticipating a week's Bible study; youth worship and fun. We were not disappointed. Activities such as roller skating, go-karting, canoeing and wide games were planned. Unfortunately (!) our busy schedule of football, tennis (Jonathan won the tennis tournament), eating, sleeping and listening to music did not allow much time for such riveting activities.

We made time for daily Bible study in our dormitory groups. We studied the work of John and Paul and were encouraged to further study John's Gospel in more detail when we returned home. All groups joined in the lively evening worship sessions accompanied by a variety of musical instruments and voices.

On Tuesday and Thursday, outings were organised. In two short days we managed to cram in ten pin bowling, a safari park, a theme park, shopping, not mention the museum depicting Worcestershire life through the ages.

We soon got to know the other lads in our dorm, and even our Irish, duck farming, dorm leader, Bill, proved to be a good laugh (even though he left the room looking like a pigsty, ruined one of Jonathan's new tee-shirts and hospitalised him for several hours, and failed to buy the dorm a promised pizza).

So, in a few words, there was fun, food, fellowship and God.

Greenbelt

I decided in mid July that I would like to attend this year's Greenbelt festival at Deene Park near Corby, having heard good reports of last year's festival from Steve and Alice Lawrence. Helen Green gave me a leaflet and I arranged tickets for myself and my two children Paul, 8, and Ellen, 7. On the Thursday the children and I set off, arriving at Deene Park about 2pm.

'Officially' Greenbelt ran from Fri-Mon, but there were a few activities on the Thursday evening. Greenbelt passes firmly pinned on we set off about 8pm to look round the festival village. We queued to get into the tent where the ceilidh was being held, but came out almost straight away as it was hot and crowded and Ellen didn't like the noise. We finished off at Greenbelt's 24 hour venue, the Action Cafe where we had a sit down and a drink. I later found out that the rest of the venues you have to sit on the ground! After that when I went anywhere I usually carried a folding chair around with me!

The 4 main days of Greenbelt passed very fast -too fast. There was an amazing mix of worship services, seminars, discussions, plays (even an opera), dance, music, children's activities, fringe activities even including a football tournament.

Ellen made friends with the Franciscans who were at the festival and we were invited to lunch with them on the Sunday -a 'help yourself' style picnic around their camp kitchen. Ellen's special friend was a lady called Jackie (I didn't even know there were any lady Franciscans). That evening I went to their 9pm Compline service and due to bad weather we all crowded into the shelter of the tent holding a lighted candle each. The service was followed by mugs of hot chocolate.

The next evening I took Paul and Ellen to the service and we were able to sit outside the tent on groundsheets. Inside the tent a cross was propped up on a white cloth and surrounded by candles a very special sight. The service was again followed by hot chocolate and Paul and Ellen helped to blow out all the candles.

I also went to two of the Wild Goose (Iona Community) late evening (11pm) worship services. The one on Sunday evening was a healing service where everyone attending had the chance to light a candle to place on the stage and also to be prayed for. With regard to the seminars, sadly I didn't get to as many as I would have liked and didn't manage to see Philip Yancie at all.

We were frequent visitors to the CMS tent called 'The Bone', as Ellen kept wanting to go round their 'Mission Maze' which took you on a journey to parts of the world where they are active Romania, Sudan and Pakistan. We were also frequent visitors to the Christian Aid tent where we were able to sample fair traded Clipper teas and since our return have been able to buy it at Safeway. One afternoon Ellen did the craft workshop at the Christian Aid tent.

On the Monday afternoon Ellen went abseiling on the abseiling tower being run by 'Youth with a Mission'. She's certainly braver than I am! I wouldn't even have climbed up the steps to the top let alone abseiled down! In the end she was more lowered down than actually abseiled but she got a round of applause when she reached the bottom!

For me the most memorable and moving part of Greenbelt was the open air worship and communion service on Sunday morning. There were many crosses sited round the ground, all of the different -one made out of a television, aerial and a satellite dish, one wood draped with lace, one made from tree branches, another one made from canes and fishing nets. It was a very moving sight seeing all these different crosses being carried around the area.

A very enjoyable and friendly week. I asked if they'd enjoyed Greenbelt. They both said they had. I then asked them if they wanted to return next year. Paul said he did and Ellen said that she wanted to go every year!

A Very Special Day

"It was a marvellous day!" "I didn't realise what a blessing it would be." "Please can we have another one soon?"

And what was this about? On Saturday 29th July 1995 we had a Day of Prayer and Fasting. We met in St. Thomas' Meeting Room from 9am to 5pm, some staying the whole time, some coming for several hours, some for an hour or so. We had drinks during a very hot day, but not food.

And why? There is a real desire amongst many Church members in the parish to become more committed to Our Lord, more diligently to seek His Will, and to come together in openness to hear His voice and receive a fresh awareness of his vision for us. We long to see Christ working in and among his people in increasing power, and we know that we need to spend time together in His presence if He is to renew and revitalise us. We had remembered the early Church -"While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said"

So it was that over the day 33 of us read from the Bible, worshipped, prayed and listened. The day was beautifully and sensitively led by the Rev. Judith Henderson. We were aware too that some, unable to be with us at St. Thomas', participated at home or on holiday.

We sought anew the Holy Spirit for ourselves, in repentance, for Christ's Church, and for this land. "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

By the time this is published, a second Day of Prayer and Fasting will have taken place, and **a third is scheduled for Saturday 25th November.**

Hope for Romania

The journey was a challenge for us all. We found ourselves in all kinds of unexpected and difficult circumstances which we came through with prayer. Looking back now, it is amazing to see the power in God's love working through each situation as the problems unfolded.

To begin with, the lorry was delayed in setting off as the necessary confirmation had not come through from Romania, and it was a last minute decision for Pam, Matthew, Carleton and myself to fly out ahead on Monday 14th August. From then on we were faced with a number of problems not only getting the lorry into Romania but also in releasing the much needed supplies at their destination in Constanta. It took 10 days in all before the lorry was finally opened. Meanwhile, the drivers, Ian, John and Kevin had suffered another setback just outside Lille in France, when the wheel bearings failed on the lorry. Help was immediately at hand in finding accommodation for the night at a Baptist Christian Centre where they waited for new parts to arrive from Daventry.

There were several frustrating days waiting for the lorry, but the time was in no way wasted. We met Tanta whose home was progressing well since Pam's journey last year. Tanta is a lovely lady, full of joy and gratitude for all the support that has come her way through the people in Chesterfield. A further £750 is needed to see the family safely housed before another Romanian winter (temperatures below zero).

We also visited the Orthopaedic hospital on the outskirts of Constanta run by Dr Nikolei, a very dedicated man in desperate need of medical supplies and hospital equipment without which the hospital may be forced to close. We were greatly shocked by the appalling conditions there. It is difficult to believe that specialist treatment can be provided in such circumstances. Our next journey intends that supplies here will be a priority.

Once the lorry had been unloaded, most of the contents were distributed amongst very poor families within seven churches in and around Constanta. We were very grateful for help given by the Romanian team in sorting the boxes and directing them to their destination. The remaining supplies were transported by a team of American and Canadian missionaries who kindly offered their help for us to reach the leper colony at Tichilesti. These people live in poor conditions and are in great need, especially for more specialist footwear to ease their discomfort. They have been promised a special place in the next trip when it hoped that each of the 44 lepers will receive their own "personal" parcel.

There were many situations of great poverty and need that we encountered on our journey this time but we have come home greatly encouraged by the will and enthusiasm of the Romanian people themselves to improve conditions in their country. They are full of gratitude for the help we have sent them and full of hope that through God's love we may be able to maintain that support into the future.

The **next journey is planned for 28th October** to reach the Orthopaedic hospital and the leper community.

Pam Gratton

The Non-Religious Man

I'd spoken to him, very gently, about Jesus Christ.

He listened, just for a moment, waved a paintbrush in my face, shook his head and said:

"I'm not religious -I'm Church of England!"