

## From The Rector

1980 was a momentous year for the Church of England. The Alternative Service Book was published. Prior to that the language and form of worship had remained unchanged since 1662.

The ASB, as we call it, was never meant to last for generations. Although I believe our experience of it in our parish has been extremely beneficial, it certainly isn't perfect! The world and the Church have changed enormously in those twenty years – although perhaps not quite so much as they had between 1662 and 1980! So, at the end of this year, the ASB will not be authorised for use.

Instead, we are to have **Common Worship**. It takes note of weaknesses in the ASB and tries to improve them. It takes note of cultural changes and tries to address them. It is a natural development and not hugely different. Changes all have a good reason.

The 1662 Book of Common Prayer was characterised by uniformity - *"these bricks, in this order, in every place, every time."* The 1980 ASB was characterised by flexibility - *"mainly these bricks, in roughly this order, in most places, most weeks."* Common Worship is characterised by flexibility and variety - *"bricks (including these) in some order."*

This is just right for the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In Chesterfield we have three large supermarkets to choose from and many smaller ones too. Inside each one, we have a vast array of choice, whether we're looking for bread, cat food, shampoo or whatever. Variety and flexibility are part of life - and therefore rightly part of worship too.

I expect us to enjoy Common Worship and find our corporate worship enriched. St Thomas' was chosen to try out many of the texts (road testing them!) and the response was consistently positive.

Come to Common Worship with an open heart and spirit. Allow time several weeks? - to become acclimatised to changes. Remember what Jesus said; *"God is spirit and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in faith."*

## A Letter from Romania

Sorry for not writing to you for such a long time. As you now, I was on Outreach in India for 5 weeks this summer. Outreach was a challenge for me. We had planned for 6 of us to go to India, but then in the last week before Outreach, two of the leaders were unable to come. So, there we were, four young people without experience taking God's challenge to go to India.

Persecution of Christians is becoming stronger in India. Indian pastors have been martyred for their faith. everyday you can read in newspapers about conflicts between Christians and :Hindus. In Delhi, we met a man whose son was murdered last year after speaking out on the conflicts between Hindus and Christians.

After having been in the northern city of Gorakhpur for four days, our 'home 'during our time in India, a detective came to our house to enquire if our purpose for being there was to convert Hindus to Christianity. Because of the religious persecution in India, open ministry was difficult.

Our main ministry was to visit Christian families to provide encouragement and prayer. As a Romanian team we were able to empathise well with the Indians' lack of religious freedom. Drawing on our experiences under communism, we offered them hope and encouragement.

We were also involved in the practical ministry of painting fences, rooms and furniture.

To live in India is an adventure. Snakes, lizards, and monkeys are a daily reality. We were there during the Monsoon season and the temperatures were at 50°C with humidity 85-90%. Throughout our time in India, we saw God's hand at work, protecting us from all harm and guiding us in our ministry.

We also went to the 'holiest Hindu city' of Varanasi, where we did intercessory prayer walks.

Thank you for being a part in our ministry in India through your financial support and prayers. I pray that God richly bless you for your support.

Now I am in Basarabi working with youth from my church and leading a children's' club every Saturday. From next February I have been invited to work at the school in Sighisoara and I am praying to hear God's voice for the next outreach.

Thanks again for being a blessing for me.

Missing you

Dina Tintean

*Dina was with us at St Thomas' for several months in 1998. Her father is pastor of a church closely linked with Hope for Eastern Europe.*

## Summer Fete 2000

"Lets Get Social" said yet another Welsh wizard as she gathered her untutored team around her to view bold blueprints, deft designs and pencilled plans "but first of all we'll pray!"

Then said Jane "We are not chasing financial goals! - We want (I love the royal "we") a time of enjoyment, not least for members of the congregations but in an outreach to members of the community in the parish of St. Thomas".

### When?

"I reckon Bank Holiday Monday would be the best date for those who are not away and I think we could..."

What followed was an outpouring of ideas, suggestions, problems and some solutions, minor debates, concerns, confidences, constructions.

Faces lit with infectious enthusiasm as theories were converted into propositions, roles defined, resources identified and volunteered and generous offers were catalogued.

In faith we left, minds engaged with commitment, and praying again that Jane would be strengthened to continue with masterminding the programme and preparation of charts, telephone calls, letters, enquiries, soliciting help and recruiting. Preparations proceeded, bunting beckoned, Portacabin space vanished.

Thanks to many who left contributions or signed up; to the advertisers for their generous support; to the designers and printers of a handsome programme.

### Came the day:

Thank you, Lord, for your energetic Church Family, who, young and old, pitched in early and set up harmoniously, supported by Jane's vision, enthusiasm and tireless encouragement.

### 1pm, will they come?

### 4pm, hurrah!

Families, friends, neighbours, strangers streamed through the gates, welcomed, greeted, mingled and explored the many attractions within and without God's House. Numbers grew and helpers invited and cajoled the visitors into a happy interaction.

At about 4.30pm the tired but happy band began clearing, cleaning, restoring. The bouncy castle was deflated, equipment returned.

Thank you; Lord, for all your blessings.

One day, this week, I visited Harold Murkin lying on his bed of pain in the Robinson Ward at Calow. "Tell me" said I, "how did you enjoy the Summer Fete at St. Thomas'?" His eyes sparkled, his face radiated with pleasure.

"It was great," he said. "We thoroughly enjoyed all the attractions: the stalls were fantastic and what bargains there were: the puppeteers had their audiences entranced: there were a lot of games and side-shows. I thought I was going

to win that car guessing the number of balloons. After the appetising aromas from the barbecues we enjoyed the tasty cream teas served by those lovely ladies in the Meeting Room. The playing of the Youth Band was brilliant too!"

"Do you know," he continued, "the event brought in so many people from round about and best of all we had time to talk to everyone. Often after Sunday worship people have to dash to sort things out or get away."

I got up to leave. A voice from the bed; "By the way, did it make any money?"  
"Yes, Harold, but the event fulfilled its main objectives too!"

"Good, I hope there's another one next year. I might have my face painted".  
**(Hasty departure!)**

Thanks to all who were involved for contributions, support and energies in the preparation and clearing away after a memorable afternoon.

**Doug Price**

## I was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me

There has been much talk in the media recently about asylum seekers, most of it couched in negative terms. What should be the attitude of Christians and what can we do practically?

### **Asylum Seekers - refugees or economic migrants?**

First, let us arrive at an understanding of the term "asylum seeker". A genuine asylum seeker is a refugee. The UN Convention on Refugees defines refugees as those who have a "well founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion". Between 30% and 40% of those who apply for asylum are recognised as refugees under the Convention. Others are given "temporary leave to remain for humanitarian reasons". The remainder come into the category of "economic migrants" who are forced to seek a new life because of economic crises which are often the result of economic and foreign policies of countries such as ours. We need to remember that most refugees don't want to be here. They would prefer to be living in their own countries!

### **Where should Christians stand?**

That Jesus Christ had a particular love and concern for the poor and the outcast is indisputable. It is therefore an essential part of the Church's mission and ministry to reach out to the marginalised and persecuted, and to stand in solidarity with them in their struggles, suffering and hopes. In so doing we also stand in solidarity with Jesus Christ. *"Truly, I say to you, as you did to one of the least of these, you did it to me"* (Matthew 25:10). As the Archbishop of Canterbury makes clear, "When we welcome the stranger, the outcast, the refugee we welcome Jesus himself. My hope is that our country which has had a great tradition of hospitality to the stranger will continue to be as open and as generous as possible."

### **What is the current situation?**

The Archbishop's use of the past tense is accurate and worrying. "Our country which has had a great tradition of hospitality". The Immigration and Asylum Act of 1999 treats asylum seekers more harshly than ever before. After being dispersed throughout the country they are given no choice as to where they will live and can find themselves in isolation from their natural support groups. Accommodation is very often in poor bed and breakfast establishments. Asylum seekers are unable to claim social security benefits - they are given vouchers for food and a small amount of cash. More are being held in detention, and the rights of appeal against refusal of asylum have been reduced. Because these new arrangements are making life even more difficult for those cling asylum, churches and individual Christians will find they are increasingly drawn into supporting asylum seekers through personal encounters on the streets, at the church door; or through local action.

### **So what can Christians do?**

We can:

- Pray for peace and seek to understand the causes of conflict and persecution;
- Speak out against those who would "demonise" refugees and asylum seekers as 'bogus' and 'scroungers' etc., especially those in Parliament and the media who negatively stereotype refugees;

- Remind ourselves that asylum seekers need not always be seen as adding to the problems of society; they can be part of the solution by helping to create a prosperous and just community (one group learning English at Mackworth College includes a pharmacist, a teacher of Arabic, a primary school teacher, an accountant, a mechanic and several undergraduates and in relation to the problems facing the health service it is surely absurd that we already have at our disposal large numbers of immigrant doctors, midwives and nurses who are debarred from working);
- Find out about arrangements locally for the reception of asylum seekers and how churches can be involved in offering welcome and support.

**Tony Chesterman**

## **Salute to two Archbishops**

*In recent months the Church of England has lost, as far as this world goes, two distinguished Archbishops of Canterbury. We do well to honour their memory, for in their very different ways they both served our Church exceedingly well in the last quarter of the twentieth century.*

### **Donald Coggan**

Donald Coggan ordained me as a deacon in 1976 and as a priest in 1977 and I have a special affection for him for that reason. He accepted that his six years at Canterbury, after a spell as Archbishop of York, were as a "caretaker" archbishop, but delighted in the title, for it meant he was to take care of the Church.

He had a passion for mission and evangelism and a desire to communicate the faith and he was a brilliant theological teacher, especially expounding the scriptures. He was not altogether happy as a national leader, but his ministry as archbishop should not be under-rated. Above all he was a good man, a pastor and an encourager. I certainly experienced him as all of these.

Though he had lived into his tenth decade, Winchester Cathedral was packed for his memorial service that I attended in June, such was the deep affection in which he was held.

Thank God for Donald Coggan.

### **Robert Runcie**

Robert Runcie succeeded Donald Coggan at Canterbury in 1980 and I remember his enthronement there, at which I was privileged to be present. He has been called the "reluctant archbishop" and there was certainly no burning ambition in him.

He had humour, a remarkable capacity for friendship, a sense of proportion and a wonderful self-deprecating manner. Sometimes he was thought to sit too much on the fence, but the fence is quite a good position from which to run the Church a good deal of the time. He could come off the fence and make a stand, as he did over the inner cities, the miners' strike and the Falklands War, with the same sort of courage that had won him a MC in the war and had him preaching from a wheelchair at the memorial service for a friend three days before his own death.

He inspired fierce loyalty in those who knew him well and worked with him. The fact that his death was the first item on the news the day he died is a tribute to the way his worth was ultimately recognised, for all the carping and criticism of earlier years.

Thank God for Robert Runcie.

May they both rest in peace.

**Michael Perham, Dean of Derby**

## Books of the Bible

In **Genesis** the world was made by God's creative hand,  
In **Exodus** the Hebrews marched to greet the Promised Land  
**Leviticus** contains the Law. Holy, Just and Good:  
**Numbers** records the tribes enrolled - all sons of Abraham's blood. Moses,  
in **Deuteronomy**, records God's mighty deeds:  
Brave **Joshua** into Canaan's Land the host of Israel leads.

In **Judges** their **rebellion oft** provokes the Lord to smite;  
but **Ruth** records the Faith of one pleasing in His sight.

In **First and Second Samuel** of Jesse's son we read;  
ten tribes in **First and Second Kings** revolted from his seed.

The **First and Second Chronicles** see Judah captive made;  
but **Ezra** leads a remnant back by princely Cyrus' aid.

The City walls of Zion **Nehemiah** builds again;  
while **Esther** saves her people from plots of wicked men.

In Job we read how Faith will live beneath affliction's rod;  
and in **Psalms** are precious songs for every child of God.

The **Proverbs** like a goodly string of choicest pearls appear;  
**Ecclesiastes** teaches us how vain are all things here.

The mystic **Song of Solomon** exalts sweet Sharon's Rose;  
While Christ the King and Saviour the rapt **Isaiah** shows.

The warning **Jeremiah** apostate Israel scorns; his plaintive **Lamentations** their awful downfall mourns.

**Ezekiel tells** in wondrous words of dazzling mysteries;  
while kings and empires yet to come **Daniel** in vision sees.

Of Judgement and of Mercy **Hosea** loves to tell;  
**Joel** describes the blessed days when God with us shall dwell.

Among Tekoa's herdsmen **Amos** received his call;  
while **Obadiah** prophecies of Edom's final fall.

**Jonah** enshrines a wondrous type of Christ our Risen Lord;  
**Micah** pronounces Judah lost - lost, but again restored.

**Nahum** declares that Nineveh just judgement shall be poured.

A view of Chaldea's coming doom **Habakkuk's** visions give;  
next **Zephaniah warns** the Jews to turn, repent and live.

**Haggai** wrote to those who saw the temple built again;  
and **Zechariah** prophesied of Christ's Triumphant reign.

**Malachi** was last who touched the high prophetic chord; Its final notes sublimely show The Coming of the Lord.

**Matthew, Mark, Luke and John**, the Holy Gospels wrote, to tell us how the Saviour lived, His death and all He taught.

**Acts** shows how the apostles preached His Word in every place, St Paul, in **Romans**, teaches us how we are saved by grace.

And in **Corinthians, he still** exhorts, instructs, reproves,  
**Galatians** shows how faith in Christ our heavenly father loves.

**Ephesians and Philippians** show what we ought to be, **Colossians** bids us live for God and for eternity.

In **Thessalonians** we are told that Christ will come from Heaven, In **Timothy and Titus** too, the Bishop's rule is given.

**Philemon tells** of Christian love which only Christians know.

**Hebrews** reveals the Gospel truths as shown us here below.

**James** teaches us that without love our faith is vain and dead,  
and **Peter** points the narrow way through which the saints are led.

**John**, in his three Epistles, the love of Christ does tell,  
while **Jude** the warning gives to all of judgement, heaven and hell.

The **Revelation** prophecies of that tremendous day, When Christ in glory comes again, and earth shall pass away.

**Peter Grayson**