

MARCH 2010

City of Lincoln Group of United Reformed Churches

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Minister's Letter

Dear Friends

Lent, a period of reflection and perhaps taking on something rather than giving it up... a short course... reading a novel, spending extra time with friends and family... More than at any other time of the year I try to consciously 'slow down'... to build into the diary those spaces that allow time just 'to be' ...

At a party the other night a friend was talking about being shocked at the behaviour of motorists - one who saw an old woman crossing but didn't slow down, instead hit his horn, and deliberately missed her by inches; others who bounce over speed bumps at high speed, sending sparks flying from their chassis; and those who shout abuse at my friend, in his slow old car. He said, "I take offence at being sworn at by someone I don't even know just for going slower than him."

Driving home from the party I guiltily made sure I was inside the speed limit. But another man was weaving fast

between moving vehicles across three lanes. At the lights I noticed his car sticker proudly said, MANIAC.

And on the radio, late night talk show guests were debating the perceived coarseness and callousness of our society. There was plenty of resigned agreement around the reality of that. I felt a bit shamed by all this, because I'm in it, and I know I contribute to it when I'm rushing around from A to B.

Much later, this verse from Michael Leunig came to me. It offers a good antidote to our overheated society:

God help us to live slowly:

To move simply:

To look softly:

To allow emptiness:

To let the heart create for us.

Amen.

With love and prayers, Revd Sara

*Sankey sing-a-long
Saturday, 6th March
Trinity at 7.30pm*

A reminder to everyone that our major fundraising effort for CfL is the 'Sankey Sing Along' on Saturday March 6th at 7.30pm. You are advised to arrive early asis aand enjoyable evening event and in this case for an extremely good cause that Trinity supports through Christian Aid in Bangladesh.

There will be a light supper as usual and a small raffle for which interesting donations would be gratefully received. Any donations for CfL will be accepted as this will not be a ticketed event.

Thank you Neil & Frances Caldwell

St Columba's

Greenland Ladies Club

9th March - Discovering Iceland by Peter Skelson

16th March - Weirlife Wildlife Hospital

Trinity

Thanks

My sincere thanks to all for their telephone calls and cards during my few days stay in hospital. Looking forward to getting back into circulation. *Roy*

Rev Stuart Bidmead

Stuart was a minister in the URC and his untimely death came as a shock to his family and all who knew him. He was latterly the Industrial Chaplain in Grimsby and the son-in-law of one of our members Dorothy Marriage.

A service of thanksgiving for Stuart will be held at Trinity on Monday 15 March 2010 at 12.30 pm. We extend to Sheila his wife, their three daughters and son-in-law, our very sincere and heartfelt sympathy and remember them all with love and prayers.

Lent Meetings

A series of meetings has been planned for the 5 weeks of Lent and commences on Friday 26 February at 1.00 pm. Each lunchtime meeting will be preceded by a light lunch. Times and dates of all the other meetings are to be found on slips at the back of the church. Please help yourself and come and join us on any of these days.

Space Filler

I am a bit short of news, articles, this month so have some space fillers for your amusement. Please get back to me if you think you can answer any of them.

- ◆ Did Paul ever get a reply from the Ephesians ?
- ◆ Where do the sick people of Lourdes go ?
- ◆ If a single bed is 3ft wide, how come a double is only 4ft 6ins wide ?
- ◆ Why do alarms go off instead of on ?
- ◆ Why is abbreviation such a long word ?
- ◆ Why can't we shuffle the letters in `anagram` to make another word ?
- ◆ How did the man who invented the bicycle know it was a bicycle ?

and on for the Scots amongst us

- ◆ Why does the phrase "Look, pal" in Glaswegian have nothing to do with friendship

As I said, if you think you can answer any of the above, please let me know and I will publish them.

The editor

Meeting Point

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday March 9th at 7.45pm at the home of Danny and Muriel Walsh, 32 Sandwell Drive Lincoln. We hope to discuss Mormonism.

Everyone is welcome and if transport is a problem please ring Neil or Frances Caldwell on Lincoln 750041

Commitment for Life

In October, Christian Aid's partner, the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), marked a significant milestone in its work to empower the extreme rural poor and, in particular, women. It is now two years since the launch of its largest development initiative the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction Programme (CPRP). The anniversary was an opportunity for reflection on progress achieved and to identify the major hurdles that remain and the challenges that lie ahead. An external team led a mid-term review of the CPRP, their research included discussions with forum members. Their findings are summarised in this update.

CPRP achievements

The CPRP helps to organise people into groups or forums and, through training and mentoring, to equip them with skills to give them confidence to become a sustainable social force in their communities. There are 62,924 people organised into 1,193 forums in 15 districts. The forums have motivated members to increase their livelihood options either by improving what they do already or by trying new ways of earning a living. Each forum member makes a regular contribution, 10 to 20 pence per week, to a savings fund from which they are able to take out loans to invest in their homes and livelihoods. The review identified an on-going and very gradual shift in the way that people earn a living, from natural resource-based activities such as agriculture and fishing towards service activities such as retailing, van driving and tailoring. Other achievements have included:

Many households now possess latrines and tube wells; an increase in ownership of poultry and livestock; Saplings of fruit trees and medicinal plants supplied by CCDB have resulted in more trees growing around villages; Some forum members now possess new agricultural equipment such as irrigation pumps and threshing machines; and other forum members have invested in capital assets such as shops, vehicles and sewing machines. As well as improving livelihoods, the forums have played an instrumental role in transforming children's lives through education and improved nutrition.

Challenges

Many forum members remain concerned about their vulnerability to changes that can threaten their livelihoods and families. In particular, they highlighted concerns about natural disasters, access to clean water, chronic diseases and poultry disease, as well as seasonal fluctuations in wage rates and the depletion of natural resources. Increasingly, climate change is threatening livelihoods, and its effects are manifested in prolonged droughts and irregular and prolonged rainfall and flooding.

Recommendations

The forums provide a space to help communities find solutions to issues that they face. And the review has recommended that local measures for adapting to climate change should be explored through discussion with communities and technical experts. Other recommendations from the review include placing an increased focus on developing skills to help people find sustainable livelihood options beyond traditional activities such as farming. The learning from the review is helping to reinvigorate the CPRP initiative and to ensure that the next stage can effectively tackle the effects of poverty, as well as the causes that keep people poor. Support from Commitment for Life has enabled Christian Aid to provide long term support to partners such as CCDB as they embark on long term and ambitious initiatives like the CPRP.

Neil Caldwell

Women's World Day of Prayer
Friday, 5th March
2.00pm at St Faith's Church
Charles Street West

"Let Everything, that has Breath Praise God"

A service prepared by Christian Women of Cameroon
All welcome — men, women and young people

The Republic of Cameroon is situated on the Gulf of Guinea and is twice the size of the UK. Cameroon has been described as "Africa in miniature" because it consists of many diverse geographic regions resulting in a wide range of natural resources and grown produces.

Cameroon women are involved in the struggle for peace, justice and integrity. The right of tradition often discriminates against women, only male heads of households have land rights, however many women are involved in small businesses, farming and common initiative groups.

Of great concern are malaria, poverty and malnutrition - affecting more than one in five children - and child trafficking. Despite all these concerns their response is "Let Everything That Has Breath Praise God".

HERE AND THERE

In a magazine devoted to the interests of our citizens, I came across an interesting item about those of maturer years, (please not the diplomacy in all this), and how they are treated in other parts of the world.

I particularly noted that in Bermuda older people are given a small, laminated pass. This entitles the holder to various concessions. What I particularly liked about this idea is that the pass bears the words "Special Person".

For those of you who have not yet reached the status of "Special Person" -fear not your turn will come.

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A plumber was working on an old farmhouse restoration. On his first day everything seemed to go wrong - a flat tyre delayed him getting to the job, his electric drill packed up, and his van broke down needing a call out to get him on his way.

As he arrived home feeling just a little depressed, he paused briefly at a small tree by his front door and touched the tips of the branches with both hands, By the time he opened the door his mood had completely changed. He hugged his two children and gave his wife a kiss. Some time later I learned about this plumber and his tree. He called it his `trouble tree`. He knew he couldn't avoid meeting difficulties in his work from time to time, but he knew also that these troubles didn't belong in his home with his wife and children, So he `hung` them up on the tree every night when he arrived home and asked God to take care of them. In the morning he `picked` them up again, but more often than not he found there wasn't as many as he had hung up the night before.

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A thought or two on smiles:-

- ◆ A smile is a light in the window of a face which shows that the heart is at home
- ◆ All people smile in the same language.
- ◆ Smile! It improves your face value

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“When we long for life without difficulties, remind us Lord that oaks grow strong in contrary winds, and diamonds are made under pressure”. Peter Marshall

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Why is it that Church notices in particular don't always seem to get it right.

- ◆ *‘For those of you who have small children and don't know it, there is a crèche downstairs.’*
- ◆ *‘The minister will preach his farewell message and then the choir will sing “Break forth into Joy,”*
- ◆ *‘Jane Brown and John Smith were married in the church last week. So ends a friendship that began in their schooldays. ▯*
- ◆ *‘We would like to remind all parishioners that the cost of attending the Fasting and Prayer weekend includes all meals.’*

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There's a man who owns a candle, and a man who has a match;
They'd like to get together, but alas, there is a catch
for neither trusts the other not to steal the precious spark.
So blinded and divided, they stay stranded in the dark.
So let us draw a lesson from this sad, misguided pair.
And try our very utmost to love and trust and share.
For with determination, and faith in human worth
We'll light so many candles as will brighten all the earth.

Margaret Ingall

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“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

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Service details

28th February

Trinity - 10.30am Revd J. Bolton
- 1.00pm Church AGM
Ermine- 10.00am Revd H. Temple
St Columba's - 11.00am Ministry Team

7th March

Trinity - 10.30am Revd H. Temple (HC)
- 6.30pm Revd H. Temple
Ermine - 10.00am Mr J. Duke
St Columba's - 10.00am Circuit Service at Robert Pattinson School

14th March

Trinity - 10.30am Mrs S. Ashmore (Mothering Sunday)
Ermine - 10.00am Revd H. Temple (HC)
St Columba's - 11.00am Anglican (HC)

21st March

Trinity - **11.00am Group Service at St Columba's**
Ermine - **11.00am Group Service at St Columba's**
St Columba's - 11.00am Revd H. Temple

28th March

Trinity - 10.30am Revd A. Vaughan (Palm Sunday)
Ermine - 10.00am Palm Sunday Blessing
- 10,30am Revd H. Temple
St Columba's - 10.00am Ministry Team (Palm Sunday)

4th April

Trinity - 10.30am Revd Y. Oldfield (HC) (Easter Sunday)
- 6.30pm Revd H. Temple (HC)
Ermine - 10.00am Mr. B. Stonehouse
St Columba's - 11.00am Revd H. Temple