

# UNITY



**The Newsletter of the Ealing Green Church**

Ealing Green Church, The Green, Ealing, London W5 5QS.



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## November 2008

## **From the Methodist Church**

### **Being a minister and a university lecturer**

**Revd Dr John Ogden is a Methodist minister, retired lecturer in Computer Science and now, the Methodist member of the chaplaincy team at Reading University.**

I put 'Revd Dr' on my office door immediately after I was ordained and that led to some interesting conversations. Some of our Hindu and Muslim students, seeing 'Revd Dr' on my door, often came to me with their problems, thinking that I might be able to understand their religious sensibilities. I had one conversation with a young man who'd served for ten years as a Hindu priest, but now didn't quite know how he related to the Hindu community and he wanted someone to talk to.

I often felt that my colleagues in the ministry would regard me as a bit of a let down because I could not, and would not, take the view that a Muslim student coming into my office was fair game for conversion. I always tried to reassure the student that their home was in their own faith community and they should try to find the resources there for whatever was troubling them. I don't think I got any feedback as a result of that, but certainly people trusted me because I wasn't trying to convert them.

Sadly, seeing students from different faiths doesn't really happen now that I'm in the chaplaincy because I'm toting the Christian gun, as it were.

And I suppose – it's a bit odd to say this - but the relationship between my ministry and my secular work was actually validated when a much-loved colleague died. He was an atheist but he and I understood where we were coming from. We'd natter about this and that, and he asked me once, "John, over the weekend I've had one of my occasional brushes with organised religion at a family funeral. Can you tell me what you mean by the phrase, 'In sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life?'" That was the kind of conversation we had.

When he died in 1996 his family asked me to perform the funeral – a secular funeral – so I didn't go in clerical dress. But being his friend, it made more sense to entrust it to me than to anybody else.

My friend was really into ancient music and was part of a madrigal group. As a tribute, his friends from the madrigal group who were scattered all over the world, all came together and sang William Byrd's Mass for three voices, for his secular funeral. It was just amazing.

*With acknowledgments to the Methodist Church of Great Britain*

#### **Thought for the day:**

God is present with us in our doubting as in our believing

# UNITY

It's funny not having Alan to chase up for his piece. As Joni Mitchell said in Big Yellow Taxi, 'You don't know what you've got 'till it's gone'. He will be a hard act to follow. His passion for Zimbabwe has had a significant impact of the church. His writing and theological involvement has been a major influence on him, with an underlying message that he passionately believed in. And many of us will miss him.

But,

Before he came to us we had a number of ministers who were also outstanding individuals and anything but short of personal experience. We were reminded of that only recently at the Thanksgiving service, led by one former minister, Hugh Sheehan. What a character and what a wealth of experience he brought to the church. Love him or loathe him (and for the purposes of this piece, I take it that we fall into the former category) it would be hard to ignore him. How many churches have ministers with such a booming and highly trained voice, and such a background in opera and interest in German philosophers and theologians? Unique doesn't quite cover it.

Then there was Jo Gouverneur, with his accent and deep philosophical thinking and academic application - and his experience of the problems in Central Europe and his wife's family. Experience and intensity weren't something that Joe was short of, and his willingness to debate all manner of things for hours – if you had the time, marked him out from many others. His sermons were intellectually rigorous, but at the same time always clearly related back to the message that we could all relate to. There are not many churches who have had the benefit of someone with what he had to offer.

Further back than that we had, and are happy to welcome back again when he has time for us, Ralph Eveleigh. During his time at Ealing Green he built up such a well of good feelings with those, many of whom are sadly no longer with us, that it is hard to imagine, for those of us who are left, it ever running dry. He was compassionate and did so many things for those of us who knew him, but for me and many others, his quiet way of doing God's work and the way he could just listen to you when you needed it, was something that remains when all else is forgotten. Ralph is a man of God that everyone could love.

They were, and are, all men of God and his message flowed through all of them. In different ways and coloured by their experience, but they all had the same message, made more personal through their perspective. I'm not saying they were all saints. They were, and are, like you and me, only human. But for all that they were chosen to be His channel for passing the message on to us.

They were all hard acts to follow, and our new minister, when he, or she, comes to us, will also hold that potential. Something to look forward to.

Looking back at those who God has chosen to send us, it's easy to see the truth in the saying that God works in mysterious ways.

God bless you



## Letters

**From Mr. Frank Bedwell**

Dear Friends

I pray for all my good friends at Ealing Green Church, for the Church Elders and the Church Secretary. As we wait for a new Methodist Minister to succeed Alan, who has moved to Adington Avenue URC Northamptonshire, we pray for him and Sheila in their new ministry and new manse. Colin told Maria and myself that Alan and Sheila are moving into their new home this month.

We were able to welcome back our former minister and friend, Hugh Nigel Sheehan and his wife Tina, now retired and living in Dorset by the seaside. Hugh took the annual Thanksgiving service. Maria and I were pleased that our church was full this morning.

I am still a devoted Christian and look forward to helping lead the morning worship on November 30<sup>th</sup> at 11 am. I have always wanted to preach a sermon at Ealing Green, since I first started attending Ealing Green. I will be studying the bible at night times instead of watching late TV programmes, which make me angry and shout at our staff, who help me a lot. The staff here help me with my problems. My key worker Mercy, also helps me a lot as do Bennett, Diana and Eric, Maria, Sara, Beverly and Zara.

On Monday I will be at college in Hammersmith West London. Tuesday, we will be cooking with our cooking group with our tutors who help us. The next week is half term, so we go back to college on November the third.

I pray for you all as we wait for a new minister to succeed Alan. It will soon be Advent Sunday and Christmas time.

God bless you all  
from Frank Bedwell

The creator of the universe works in mysterious ways. But he uses a base ten counting system and likes round numbers.

*Scott Adams*

## News of the Church Family

Congratulations to **Mosima & Nyimpini Mabunda** on the birth of their first child, a son called **Nyinko**.

**Doug Edwards** had a nasty fall in the house which has left him bruised and shaken. We pray for him and his wife, **Rene**, as she cares for him.

**Margaret Cooper** has been unwell for the past couple of weeks and unable to work.

As well as these friends, we also remember in our prayers those who are elderly or housebound, and their carers including **Ruth Doe, Robina & Clive Thexton, Christine & Denis Edwards**.

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Thank you to all those who helped to decorate the Church for our Harvest Festival and also to the people who helped dismantle the display 24hrs later! Many thanks to those who distributed the gifts, which were gratefully accepted by the recipients. We have received the following letter from The Ealing Soup Kitchen:-

“Thank you very much for the Harvest gifts for Ealing Soup Kitchen.

We currently have about 50 clients at the Soup Kitchen, on both Saturday & Sunday, each weekend throughout the year and your gift will help us to continue to provide this valued service of both food and drink.

We endeavour to have four special events during the year including:- an Easter Karaoke party, a Day trip to the coast, a BBQ and a Christmas Party. These events have strengthened our relationships with the clients and their sense of value and belonging.”

*Gill Hatherall*

### Diary Reminders:

Please could you note that, having gone on to broadband, my email address has changed to: [colin.hatherall@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:colin.hatherall@tiscali.co.uk)

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November – Remembrance Sunday – **service starts at 10.45am**

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November – Annual Church Meeting follows morning worship

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### Proposed Pilgrimage Tour to Egypt, Jordan and Israel

A pilgrimage tour to these countries is planned for 14<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2009. Our new Superintendent Minister, Rev Michaela Youngson, will be the spiritual leader for the tour, which is being organised by Donney Samuel from The King’s Hall, Southall, afternoon congregation. The price for the tour will be £1,650 per person. For more information and for bookings, contact Donney on 07949114936 or by email at: [donneysamuel@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:donneysamuel@hotmail.co.uk)

## **New Minister ???**

Due to the change of Moderator in the URC, we are still waiting to hear whether we will be provided with temporary cover until August 2009. In the meantime, we will be inviting old friends and contacts from outside the Circuit to come and preach at our Church. Other slots will be filled by ordained or lay preachers within the Circuit. So it is still 'business as usual' !

The procedures for seeking a new Methodist Minister from September have been started and we will keep you informed of any progress.

**Pastoral Oversight** – In the absence of a Minister, the Rev Michaela Youngson has kindly offered to cover this responsibility. If you require an urgent ministerial visit at home or in hospital, this can be arranged. Unless it is an emergency, please try to avoid her day off, which is Friday.

### **Annual General Meeting**

This important Church Meeting will take place after morning service on 16<sup>th</sup> November and will be chaired by Rev Michaela Youngson.

Church Council vacancies – We invite nominations to fill 2 vacancies. Please obtain forms from John Collingbourne.

### **India Project**

The Team selected to travel to India, visit and research the Project on 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November are:-

Hema Souri Parsons, John Collingbourne, Charles Kenny with Stalin Sundarraj as facilitator. We will remember them in our prayers and wish them safe travelling.

### **Advance Notice – Christmas Services**

To help you plan your diaries, these are the arrangements:-

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December – 'Carols & Candles' service at 6.30pm

Christmas Eve – 'Carols around the Tree' service at 5.00pm

Christmas Day – Service **at 9.30am** led by Rev Michaela Youngson

**The Life Giving Church** which has been meeting at The Ramada Jarvis Hotel for several years is seeking a new venue. We have been approached with a request to use our Church. The church is an off-shoot of Ealing Christian Centre and has been an active participant in Soul in Ealing. Subject to various formalities, the Church Council has agreed to let The Life Giving Church use our premises on Sunday afternoons, on a temporary basis until they find more suitable premises for their permanent home.

*Colin Hatherall*

Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.

*Scott Adams*

## Study Group

A study group is being held on the topic of Services and Ceremonies. It is running for 8 weeks up to Christmas.

Everyone is welcome. You don't have to attend every session. It doesn't matter if you miss any sessions as each one is on a different topic.

There is no particular plan save that we start by reading a passage from the service book or Bible and then see how the conversation goes: people's recollections of particular services they have attended, examples of different words used or things done during services, favourite readings, hymns and songs - the plan is just to have a chance to share our experiences and discuss what each type of ceremony or service means to you and to hear what they mean to others.

### The rules are:

Start at 8pm prompt, End at 9pm prompt.

Held in the vestibule of the Church.

### Schedule of Dates & Topics:

Tue 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Baptism, Reception into membership/confirmation.
Tue 28 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Marriage
<b>Wed</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Funeral
WEEK OFF	
Tue 18 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Communion
Tue 25 <sup>th</sup> Nov.	Covenant service
Tue 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	Good Friday
<b>Wed</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Easter Sunday
Tue 16 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Christmas Day

*Jonathan*

## Bible Study

The daytime Midweek Bible Study will meet on the following Thursdays after lunch club at approx. 1.15 pm in the Minister's Vestry. All are welcome. We are currently studying a MDRF course on 'What the Bible Has to Say About Climate Change'

November 6<sup>th</sup>  
December 4<sup>th</sup>

Any further details from Fleur or John

## The first Sunday in Advent - 30<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Leading a service is a tremendous privilege. It's terrifying. In my case, it's also a time to abandon any idea that you can do this on your own. This article is a call for help.

Advent is the start of the church's year. It's a time of anticipation, a time to look forward with optimism and hope - what a wonderful way to start a year. At the darkest time of year we fill our hearts with joy, we fill our world with bright light and we think of, and gather with others, especially those whom we love. Many of us, especially the children, are bursting with anticipation.

Advent, the time of anticipation, leads to the feast of Christmas with its twelve days and nights, which in turn ends on the feast of the Epiphany. An epiphany, according to one definition in Wikipedia, is "...the sudden realisation or comprehension of the (larger) essence or meaning of something". The term is used in either a philosophical or literal sense to signify that the claimant has "found the last piece of the puzzle and now sees the whole picture,"

Let's try to make sense of this: as children we burst with anticipation at the darkest time of year and this leads to celebration and the solving of a great puzzle.

As the Church does not "do" irony there is something deliberate about starting the year at such a dark time. The days are still shortening. The leaves are still falling and the buds don't form for some weeks. This doesn't seem right, but with a moment's thought it all seems very familiar.

We all have episodes when we are in darkness, or don't know what to do, or don't know who to turn to for help, or, worse, don't know who we are and have lost our hold on life itself. At these times hope (the anticipation of something better) is the anchor of the soul. The hope of seeing a light, of holding an out stretched hand, of finding a listening ear, of being with people who care enough to know your name or offer small kindnesses or finding ourselves.

Maybe our Epiphany is, precisely that, a realisation of who we are and a union with the work God has for us. If God needs hands, eyes and ears then providing them is our mission. And doing God's work is the greatest source of joy. And the greatest need is in the darkest places. Strange, isn't it, but we know it's true.

If any of these words have touched you sufficiently to want to help at the service by providing a testimony or a reading or in any other way let me know – I really do need your help. Please contact me at church.

*Martin Sarbicki*

To listen to some devout people, one would imagine that God never laughs.

*Sri Aurobindo*

## **The Rev. Alan Spence's Induction Service at Abbington Avenue URC Church 12<sup>th</sup> October 2008.**

A group of 20 of us travelled to Northampton for the special occasion of Alan at his new church in Northampton. After taking a couple of wrong turns we finally arrived outside the Church with 5 minutes to spare to be warmly greeted by Sheila waiting outside in the glorious sunshine.

The service began with a warm welcome to everyone, congregation members and various ministers and the local Mayor. We then sang 'Crown him with many crowns' accompanied by the church 9 piece orchestra/band. With 200 plus present the noise level was amazing. I'd forgotten how full churches can sound. The service proceeded with Prayers of praise, confession and forgiveness and the hymns 'In Christ Alone' and 'Jesus my Saviour'. A friend of Alan's from Luton, the Revd. Malcolm Pritchard, gave a very uplifting sermon beginning it with the lines 'At these occasions I'm told that you are not supposed to try something new, so I have stolen from a friend and may I say that if there is anyone who has any problems with it, I have got his phone number so you can complain to him.'

Alan then gave his affirmation to the congregation, and likewise the members of the Abbington Avenue and Headlands churches. The members of the Northampton URC Forum and Synod representative received and promised to support him in his ministry. The Hymns 'Be thou my vision' and 'To God be the glory' were sung and gifts given to Alan and Sheila from the pastorate before Alan gave the benediction.

Everyone was invited upstairs and some long tables with Sandwiches and Cakes were there for our refreshment, which was delicious.

We got chatting to a few people there including two ladies and a teenager who told us that the church was always busy. The young girl was a part of the band. Also Ralph and Doreen were there which was nice for the Ealing members. The church is in an old residential area of Northampton with many tidy looking terraced houses in the area. It appears to be quite a busy Church with facilities used by Social Services and is definitely at the Heart of the community and also near the County Cricket ground. All said it seemed a warm and friendly church and we hope that Alan and Sheila will be happy and fulfilled there.

*Kathy Dobbin*

### **Church Flower Fund and Rota for 2009**

I will shortly be preparing the Flower Rota for next year. The Flower Committee invite you to remember any special anniversary, birthday or occasion for family or friends, by donating money for flowers on a Sunday of your choice.

If you would like to give the flowers on a specific Sunday, please let me know.

Occasionally the date clashes with a date chosen by someone else, but I will do my best to accommodate your request. You will not need to arrange the flowers as well, if you do not wish to.

The Flower Fund relies on your monetary support for floral decoration, Sunday by Sunday, to enhance our worship. Thank you for your continued support. Contributions would be welcome and may be handed to Gill Hatherall.

*Gill Hatherall*

# Fabulous Christmas Gift!

## Ealing Green Church Cookbook

Inspired by our wonderful potluck lunches, what if we all contributed our favourite recipes to an Ealing Green Church Cookbook? With our culturally diverse congregation, this means not just great British food, but delicious dishes from all over the world.

- ✓ A fabulous inspiration for delicious food
- ✓ Guaranteed to work, all tried and tested - by us!
- ✓ Your recipes in print, for others to enjoy
- ✓ An ideal gift– this Christmas
- ✓ Raising money for charity, too

Please start collecting recipes now for all food you know others will appreciate - family favourites, dinner party specials, sweets, snacks, picnics and barbecues - whatever you and your friends and family like best to eat.

Give your recipes to Helen Harper and Tina Berry

- ü At church, when you attend
- ü By email to
- ü By phone, if you like – our numbers are in the Church Directory

Thank you!

## Shared Interest Foundation

Shared Interest's pioneering model of ethical finance has made a significant contribution to the growth of fair trade across the globe. To-day, millions of people in some of the poorest countries are estimated to lead better lives because of fair trade. In the UK alone, sales of Fairtrade goods are doubling every two years.

There are two strands to the work of the Shared Interest Society (a UK Friendly Society and registered charity) and the Shared Interest Foundation (also a UK registered charity) which is wholly owned by the Society.

So how does it work. Those of us who have some savings deposit money with Shared Interest Society at a low rate of interest - currently 1.5% (though you can if you wish you can waive your right to interest). You can make investments up to a maximum of £20,000 but much smaller amounts are also welcome. The minimum balance on an account is £100. You can make a one off investment or make deposits as and when funds are available. The money can be withdrawn when you require it. You will receive quarterly statements giving details of all transactions on your account. The Society lends the money to small traders or groups in developing countries at rates below those obtainable locally enabling the traders to develop their businesses and make a better living. The Shared Interest Foundation supports the work with training, particularly in business skills.

There is of course a risk that the overseas traders might be unable to repay their loans. If the Shared Interest does not have sufficient reserves to meet such losses then the balance of any loss is deducted pro-rata from members accounts - you cannot however lose more than you have invested and the Society recommend that you should not invest money you cannot afford to lose. However, I have deposited money with the Society for many years and so far have not lost any money.

The Foundation has trained representatives in Africa and Latin America who visit producer groups, listen to their needs, and where necessary help them make an application for finance. Many groups do not have the skills to fill out their application forms without this help. The trained representatives also advise the producers on how to improve their efficiency.

If you want to know more and have a computer you can access the Society on [www.shared-interest.com](http://www.shared-interest.com) - if you do not have internet access and would like more information please do not hesitate to ask me as I have copies of the Society's Quarterly Return giving details on their work.

*Vera Marston*

I find that a great part of the information I have was acquired by looking up something and finding something else on the way.

*Franklin P. Adams*

## What's happening in Zimbabwe

This is a selection of the emails we have received from those we are helping in that unfortunate country. If you have any questions on what we are doing, please let me know and I will try to help clarify things as best as I can. As in all of these emails, we will change the names for the web version of this newsletter to avoid anyone being able to identify those involved.

Friends,

I was fortunate to receive news from Zimbabwe today. Alan reports that the government has set up quarantine camps in response to the cholera outbreak, but because there is no medicine for the cholera, they are really death camps. Fortunately an anonymous good Samaritan donated medical supplies to the camp, so there is some relief.

Peter and Susan's reports shed some light on their personal pain at the loss of their nephew in this car accident. I find myself imagining how they, and the other families will rise for yet another day. Tonight I rely on words of wisdom from friends. My friend Nigel says 'God is our only hope but He is enough. Someone told me "When you reach the end of your rope, you will find the hem of His garment" '. Another friend Diane says "I am heartsick, especially when looking at those joyful faces. You can be sure that we are praying. It's hard not to question, "how can these things be???" Our faith is that God knows, and He will help us (and them) understand, or accept."

I'm grateful for my friends around the world tonight; for the joy they have given me and for the joy they received from those young men who died this weekend, June

From Simon:

Dear Friends in Christ,

On behalf of the congregation I would like to thank all fellow Christian across Zimbabwe and world wide for your support and prayer during our darkest time as a congregation. We have since laid to rest all 6 beloved members who left us.

1. ##### (Session Clerk)
2. ##### (Elder)\*\*\*\*
3. ##### ( Peter's cousin)
4. Mr #####
5. #####
6. #####

All the survivors are on their way to recovery and could be discharged from the hospital anytime. I thank all the minister and member of our denomination from Harare and Bulawayo for your presence and support. I thank the Moderator for being with us even when he himself was in the middle of mourning. Please continue to keep the bereaved families in prayer. Thank you once more  
May God Bless you all  
Rev Simon

From Susan:

It has been one of the most shocking times in our lives. A delegation of about 15 (ministers and spouses) drove with us to ##### to be with all the grieving families. Then they came out for the burial of our nephew in ##### which is about 130km away from #####. The next day they proceeded back to ##### for the burial of the 2 ##### brothers.

The other burials will happen this week but the Presbytery members have already been with and spent time with their families. These are the names of the deceased that I know: ##### ##### (our nephew), ##### and ##### ##### (brothers, ##### was the session clerk), Mr ##### (an elder) and 2 others.

John and Doris are strong and keeping things going at the church. In fact the elders and board members are working hard whenever Peter is away that it seems as though God is taking them thru training for when we leave.

Gotta go. Lots of love, Susan.

From Peter:

I have been quite numb over the last few days. I am very tired physically but I do not understand why I am on high emotionally. Mentally I know I am not OK, but there is no corresponding emotion.

#####, one of the six who died in the accident, is my nephew, one of my late sisters' son. Since he shares the same last name with the rest of my father's clan a number of people have been confused about our relationship. The man who fathered ##### rejected him before he was born so that he had to take his mother's maiden surname. My sister had other children from other man and she got married to another man who had three children with her before she died. This meant that ##### grew up in our family almost like a brother or as many people have believed a cousin brother.

I took ##### to stay with me since 1994 when he was in Primary school. When I got married ##### had a stable set of parents so we had strong bond. He had just qualified as a teacher and was working in ##### in the ##### province. We had high hopes for him especially now that we will be out of the country. He is one of the young people we thought we could rely on, to give care to those that we love.

We are glad that he was taken away while he was serving God. He had a wound on his head very similar to the one I had in an accident last year. He was alive at the scene of the accident and eventually died in hospital in #####. It is not easy to give him back to the Lord but I know that is the thing to do.

Susan and I are now more determined to set up what we will call COMPASSIONATE VOLUNTEERS FOUNDATION. Our hope will be to help compassionate people, to help various people in need. When we see young people like ##### die in God's service we believe it is all worthwhile. Jesus says to lift up our eyes and see that the harvest is plenty but the workers are few. Needy people, esp children and needs are plenty. What we hope to see is mobilisation of compassionate people who are doing something about the needs and extending love to the needy in practical ways. I have known many people who are willing to assist the needy in many ways but feel incapacitated for various reasons. I was empowered by having a place to stay where I could take in children. When I got married we were empowered by the way various

teachers help us lay strong foundations for our family and build a stable home. We have been blessed with wonderful friends who encourage us to do good with them. We could not be able to do half the things that we do without the support, through friendship, prayer and other material and practical support. For this reason we have a vision for a Foundation that will care for needy children or elderly by supporting those who are compassionate towards them. At least the good Samaritan had his animal and the requirements to clean wounds and knew where to find the Inn. He was compassionate enough and reassured the innkeeper so that the needy would get help even when the Samaritan was not there.

We need to coordinate those compassionate works that are going on among the families that we know first and see that people encourage one another to care for the needy. Where there are family members or relatives that can assist out of compassion then that is first prize. What is required then is some institution that can stand with them to encourage them to do good. I have known a lot of my relatives that could have helped people like ##### as he was growing up but were timid to do anything because they really feared to fail. We need to encourage people like that to have faith in God and know that they are not alone. Of course people will have to show who the needy person is and what they are doing, what they would like to do if they had resources etc. We will start small and grow big. I envisage a network of compassionate people that are helping the needy in various ways. These are preliminary thoughts arising from facing the reality that soon we will not be around to give the physical touch but we will be able to send an encouraging letter etc to those that are caring in the way we would care if the needy was in our area or relation. After all we are truly blessed to have relationships that we have with amazing people.

John and Doris are doing fairly well. The political impasse in the country has given them space to breathe as the Zanu PF people do not know what to do at the moment. It looks like they will be safe to stay on the farm provided they get seed etc to put the land to good use. At the moment their healing work is flourishing and John has become a good ambulance driver in his old white truck. It is amazing to see how they act like new Christians excited about a newly-found faith as they serve God in their community. The man who has an Offer Letter from the govt for their farm has not bothered them now since before the run-off elections. He has succeeded stopping his girlfriend from coming to our church so we know he wont be getting bad information to use against John or our church. We know there are still a few others getting info but John and Doris are determined to not let that affect how they serve.

I need to go to sleep for now. much love  
Peter

If there is a God, the phrase that must disgust him is - holy war.

*Steve Allen*

## News

### **Anglican head says Zimbabwe collapse is due to state corruption**

21 Oct 2008

The head of the Anglican church in Zimbabwe, Bishop Sebastian Bakare, has blamed State corruption and political patronage for a collapse in social services in Zimbabwe, where at least 20 people have died of cholera in recent weeks.

"Good governance, justice and peace remain a pipe dream for many in Zimbabwe," Bakare said in a pastoral letter circulated to Anglicans in the southern African nation in early October.

"Selfish leadership has no room for the neighbour. As you all know, most people have been without running water in their homes for months, let alone electricity, and there are no affordable food items," Bakare wrote.

He stated, "Cholera, a water-borne disease, has claimed several lives in Chitungwiza. In short, we have been messed up by a few men and women who have ravaged our economy through corruption and patronage."

Talks between rival Zimbabwean political leaders about the composition of a national unity government remained deadlocked on 17 October, a month after the signing in Harare of a power-sharing agreement to resolve the country's economic and political crisis.

Under the terms of the agreement, Robert Mugabe, who has led the southern African country since independence from Britain in 1980, was to remain as president. His rival, Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change party, was to serve as prime minister, with Arthur Mutambara, the leader of a smaller MDC faction, as deputy prime minister.

Mugabe had been declared winner in a presidential run-off election in June boycotted by Tsvangirai, who cited violence and intimidation against his supporters.

Zimbabwe was seen as a model economy and regional breadbasket in the 1980s but agriculture went into rapid decline after the government began, in 2000, to seize white-owned commercial farms in a land reform programme.

Annual inflation rose to 231 million percent in August, according to official statistics while some independent financial analysts put the actual figure at 750 million percent. At least 80 percent of potential workers are without job, while about a quarter of the population requires food aid.

Three state universities have failed to open this term because, they say, they had failed to secure enough money to provide food for resident students and to pay their staff, who have been on indefinite strike.

An interdenominational Christian movement, Intercessors for Zimbabwe, has urged Zimbabweans to pray for the successful conclusion of the power-sharing agreement.

*[With acknowledgements to ENI. [Ecumenical News International](#) ]*

## Godless "happy bus to nowhere" proves an instant hit

22<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2008

The fundraising campaign to procure money for a fleet of London buses that will tell people there is probably no God and they should get on with being happy has proved an instant hit - raising over five times its target in the first day.

The campaign organisers, who include anti-religion activist Professor Richard Dawkins, set their sights reasonably modestly, but even they seem surprised at the response from publicity for the Atheist Bus Campaign from readers of The Guardian's Comment Is Free (CiF) website.

Comedy writer Ariane Sherine, aged 28, kick started the idea after seeing bus ads featuring the URL of a religious website which said non-Christians would burn in hell for all eternity. Sherine suggested that atheists reading her article could each donate £5 to fund a reassuring counter-advert.

The campaign has also produced a lively debate on the web, with many welcoming it and others dubbing it a "be happy" vehicle "on the road to nowhere."

The Methodist Church put out a press release earlier today welcoming the attention to God the campaign will elicit. The religion and society think tank Ekklesia welcomed the fact that it was not "knocking" others, and said it could provoke a useful discussion about how people promote their beliefs in a mixed society. But it suggested that there was public resistance to being told what to believe.

Recently the Quakers in Britain held an awareness week to encourage reflection on a spiritual path based on peace and understanding. It included the poster, "Thou shalt... think for yourself."

Ms Sherine, Atheist Bus Campaign creator said of her fundraising hit: "This is absolutely brilliant and I'd like to thank everyone who donated for their support. The sky's the limit for atheists even if we don't believe there's anyone up there."

Hanne Stinson, Chief Executive of the British Humanist Association added: "We have met our target five times over... If the money keeps pouring in we can expand the campaign, not just to ads inside the buses as well as outside, but to ads on the tube or other transport, and in locations outside London."

Comments left by some donors on the fundraising website at [www.justgiving.com/atheistbus](http://www.justgiving.com/atheistbus) called for the campaign to be rolled out to Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh and other towns and cities all over the UK.

Justgiving.com – the online fundraising website which the BHA is using to collect the donations – called the campaign's success "amazing" and in a post on their site said: "This page is remarkable for the sheer speed that it's raising money - we've been noticing that there are new donations every time we refresh the page."

The website, which also raises funds for humanitarian and religious causes, added: "Whatever you believe, it certainly shows the power of online fundraising. The campaign has not only smashed its target [...] but it's gone from trebling the target to quadrupling it in the time spent writing this blog post."

Richard Dawkins' book *The God Delusion*, which has been praised for its condemnation of religious extremism and criticised for its flawed pop philosophy, has already broken bestselling records for a book of its kind, and indicates that there is a

strong backlash against religion as well as a mutation of religious and spiritual commitment towards the margins and to more vocal groups.

Ekklesia co-director Simon Barrow commented: "We no longer live in a society where institutional churches embody most people's convictions, if we ever did. We live in a multi-conviction society. The real issue is whether people on different paths of understanding can learn to talk together, cooperate and share the best of what they have to offer, or whether they will try to out-advertise each other and impose their ideological moulds on others. This applies to religious and non-religious people alike."

"In post-Christendom, the era beyond formal church power, Christians need to witness to a path which is about the power of love not the love of power - in the way they live, as well as what they say," Barrow suggested. "This would represent both a contemporary return to the subversive origins of Christianity in the Jesus movement, and an investment in the shared search for justice and peace."

*These two articles are reprinted from Ekklesia.co.uk*

### **Ealing Green Players**

The Players AGM will be on Sunday December 7<sup>th</sup> in the Church Hall. Please do your best to attend, as the future of this old-established amateur drama group will be discussed.

Make a note in your diaries, please.

*Ken Shallis*

### **Bible Reading Notes**

***Begin each day feeling graceful and at one with the world!***

**New Members especially** – Have you thought about daily Bible Reading?

The church has a number of helps and guides. They are:

**Every day with Jesus** – bi-monthly - £2.25 per copy

**Daily Bread** – quarterly - £3.50 per copy

**Light for your Path** or **Words of Today** – both are annual - £7.50 per copy

Look at the Vestibule as you come into the church. Also visit the bookstall that is in the hall, when we break for coffee after the Morning Service. I have a number of back-issues for anyone who wants to try out Bible Study.

Once you have decided more definitely, what you would like, you can contact me with any details or requests.

*Frances Groves*

# Collection Point Collection Point

Premier  
Christian  
Radio

From Claire Southall:

I don't know how many people know what I do for a living... for those who do, I apologies in advance, for those that don't I'll try and keep it brief.

For the last six and a half years I have worked as Sales Manager for Premier Christian Radio based in Westminster.

Premier has been around for over 13 years now and broadcasts across London on MW 1305,1332,1413 and DAB, and nationwide on Sky, Freeview, Virgin Media and of course, the internet.

The station has both charity and commercial status with more than half the station's operating income coming from generous and sacrificial donors. I head up the Sales department and I am responsible for generating the advertising income that helps to make up the other half of the income needed to keep the station on air.

Premier is an exciting and challenging place to be. Visitors arriving at Premier's reception will find themselves right next to the live studios as the Presenters talk to nearly 400,000 listeners across the country every week. In my time at Premier I have met some interesting people -- The Archbishop Of Canterbury, Terry Waite, Joni Earekson Tada, Pam Rhodes (a regular contributor to the station), Fiona Castle, Anne Widdicombe, Brother Andrew author of God's Smuggler to name but a few Cliff has never been in.... the main reason I joined Premier!! (well not quite!)

Premier's mission is to serve the Churches and wider community of Greater London and nationwide by conveying the significance of the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - as recorded in scripture and expressed in the historic creeds of the Christian faith - through radio and other media

- Premier aims to reach Christians across all denominations that are committed to their faith and belong to a church community;
- People who have lapsed from going to church regularly, for whatever reason, but who regard themselves as Christians;
- People, who believe in a God and are sympathetic to Christian values, but have no background of church going. They would be glad to find spiritual meaning because they sense there is more to life than material things.

Premier broadcasts 24 hours a day offering a wide and varied range of entertaining and informative programming based on the beliefs and values of the Christian faith. The major emphasis is on news, current concerns and lifestyle issues and there are also programmes that explain and commend Christian belief. Praise and worship songs and traditional, modern and classic hymns and music are mixed together to

create a unique sound. In a practical way Premier also responds to its listening audience through Lifeline, its telephone helpline service.

Lifeline is a confidential Christian helpline operating from 9am until midnight, 365 days a year. A dedicated and fully trained team of Lifeliners (over 150 volunteers) are always ready to answer calls and offer a listening ear and Lifeline receives in excess of 500 hurting calls a week from people who need to hear a kind voice, practical help and of course prayer.

Various strands make up Premier's distinct programme schedule including Christian music and personality programmes, presentations on Bible teaching, reflections, Christian perspective on the news and current events, and news of Christian events and initiatives.

We know from talking to our listeners that Premier is a lifeline, a friend, a support and often an inspiration so of course we are keen to keep doing what we do! However, the current economic climate and the ever rising costs of transmission means that Premier faces a challenging financial future and more than ever will rely on the support of donors to stay on air.

If you've never tuned in, why not give it a go? Not all of the station's output will be everyone's cup of tea but maybe I could point you in the direction of a couple of shows you might like.

Inspirational Breakfast with John Pantry and Cindy Kent weekdays 7.30am to 10.30am, Woman To Woman with Maria Toth weekdays 10.30am to 12noon, The Big Breakfast with Tony Miles of Methodist Central Hall Saturdays 6am to 12noon, are all worth a listen.

If you'd like to find out more about the station you can go to [www.premier.org.uk](http://www.premier.org.uk) where you'll find we're so much more than just radio.

From working at Premier I hear so many amazing examples of how the Spirit is moving in churches and their communities all over the country and I pray that Premier continues to be a strong Christian voice celebrating the vibrancy and diversity of the church and a real support, encouragement and inspiration to Christians and seekers in their everyday lives.

Thanks for listening!

Please give generously.

*Thankyou*

Always remember that the future comes one day at a time.

*Dean Acheson*

## November Rotas

Remember that **9<sup>th</sup> November is Remembrance Sunday** and **30<sup>th</sup> November is the First Sunday in Advent**  
There are no evening services in November.

November		Preacher	Readers	Prayers	Communion Stewards	Coffee Duty *
2 <sup>nd</sup>	11:00 am	Roger Lee	Hazel Humphries	Jean Rose	DB, SA-L, JJ, CH	Charles & <u>Susanne</u>
	6:30 pm					
9 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 am	Graham Thomas	Ramesh Khanna	Helen Harper		Margaret Cooper & <u>Linda</u>
	6:30 pm					
16 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 am	Cameron Holder	Shirley Shallis	Bill Lovell		<u>Patsy</u> & Martin
	6:30 pm					
23 <sup>rd</sup>	11:00 am	Kip Bennett	Fleur Hatherall	Martin Sarbicki		<u>Marion</u> , Valerie & Philip
	6:30 pm					
30 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 am	Worship Team	Charles Kenny	Peter Chadburn		<u>Merle &amp; Colin</u>
	6:30 pm					

\*Notes: Could we please have some volunteers for the Coffee Rota. All help is welcome - and it would be nice to see other faces behind the counter (no offence to those who already volunteer). Please could the underlined person bring milk.

### Bible Readers for:

#### December

7<sup>th</sup> Janette Pender  
14<sup>th</sup> Ron Honor  
21<sup>st</sup> Pat Sucher  
28<sup>th</sup> Kathy Dobbin

#### January 2009

(can you believe it already?)

4<sup>th</sup> Lirea Beyleveld  
11<sup>th</sup> Colin Paige  
18<sup>th</sup> Ken Shallis  
25<sup>th</sup> Scott Scotland-Rose

If any of the above dates is inconvenient, please arrange for a substitute.