

# **NEWSLETTER**

***March and April 2010***

Dear Friends,

When I was young I was so full of life and enthusiasm. I used to dream in colour, dreaming of heroes and such like. I would be a prince one night and head teacher the next. Life was fun, play, eat and play again. Negative was rare. Optimism was the going word, always. Life was colourful indeed. Of course that was before responsibilities crept in, before facts and figures, before a black and white, stark world appeared. Some would say that was before reality set in. I am sure if you had a happy childhood you would, like me, look back with nostalgia. We become less optimistic as we grow older it seems, yet our faith demands that we remain so. Optimism translates hope, joy and faith.

The first quarter is always a difficult period for one reason or another, but it's only a small fraction of the New Year. We cannot, or should not let it spoil our year. With the Haiti disaster in mind, some might feel despondent; some might even still themselves for a difficult 2010. We need to fight negative vibes and be positive. Hope should be the key word always.

This brings us nicely to another positive matter in Christianity. The Bible is the most widely distributed book in history, an estimated 4.8 billion copies have already been circulated. There are many people buying Bibles every day, yet Bibles are not exactly cheap. An average 60 million copies are produced every year. The Bible is the world's most published book today, but before then, it survived numerous hazards. At some point or other, it has been banned, binned and burned. Those that dare to translate it have been oppressed and killed. It survived and remained over the years. Popular works of fiction break records at 12 million copies a year, not 60 million like the Bible. The most impressive fact of all is the Bible's lack of decay.

The oldest of the 66 books of the Bible is over 3000 years. The original writers recorded the inspired messages on perishable materials such as papyrus and leather, yet these survived long enough to be passed on over the centuries to the present day. Of course these were other recorded materials such as Roman soldiers' pay records, estimated to have been over 200 million, yet only 2 have been found to be legible enough. How then has the Bible survived this long? One can only assume this to be miraculous. The 'God' element survives all hazards, climate and otherwise.

We can be encouraged by that therefore. Our faith, the Christian movement and all that is Godly and divine is therefore eternal. We can regard the New Year in a positive manner, whatever the difficulties, we will survive. Our hope and faith should not diminish whatever hazards we face. Still in existence today are some 6000 handwritten copies of the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament) and some 5000 copies of Greek scriptures (New Testament). These have survived the test of time and so shall our Christian faith. Some may fall along the way, but the Church will always be there! We must hope for good in our lives. Hope and faith is what those Haiti folk (discovered 7 days, 8 days and 12 days after the earthquake) kept them going. Just like them, just like the Bible, we as the Church, as the Body of Christ will always survive! You wait and see, year 2010 will come to pass! We can continue to dream in colour!

Shalom

*Freddy*

## Methodism offers to die, to rise again.

*Ruth Gledhill wrote from the Anglican Synod for The Times*

**February 11, 2010**

A wonderful and most inspiring act of Christian self-abnegation has just awoken a sleepy Synod. No-one ever expects much from presentations with titles such as 'An Address by the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference'.

So it rather surprised us all when we suddenly realised that David Gamble, President of the Methodist Conference, told us that the Methodist Church was prepared to sacrifice its very existence and return to the Anglican fold, for the sake of the greater good of the Gospel.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, will be addressing the Methodist Conference at Portsmouth in June. Here are the words with which Mr Gamble ended his speech:

'Methodists approach the Covenant with the Church of England in the spirituality of that Covenant prayer. So when we say to God, "let me have all things let me have nothing," we say it by extension to our partners in the Church of England as well. We are prepared to go out of existence not because we are declining or failing in mission, but for the sake of mission. In other words we are prepared to be changed and even to cease having a separate existence as a Church if that will serve the needs of the Kingdom.'

Of course there are a few problems.

Some Methodists are not sure about whether they want bishops or not, and some Anglicans, from the ranks of those who oppose women bishops, are not sure about whether they want Methodists. The reasons for both oppositions are the same: questions around orders and the Apostolic succession. But the Methodists might be prepared to accept bishops if women are allowed to join their ranks in the Church of England, as Methodism is fully inclusive of women in all leadership positions.

It is possible to envisage a scenario where those Anglo-Catholics who would oppose unity with Methodists leave for the new Roman Anglican Ordinariate as the Church of England proceeds towards women bishops, paving the way for full Methodist Anglican unity.

The joint church then gets the squillion pound Westminster Central Hall (just £94 million in fact), one of the top pieces of real estate in the entire country, if not the world.

What could be simpler?

Everyone's problems, temporal and spiritual, solved at a stroke.

I'm tempted to say Gamble by name, gamble by nature. Methodists in theory still oppose gambling. Except, perhaps, when the jackpot's a cert.

What a church for the nation that would be.

Pope Benedict XVI has told Anglicans that they will have to be self-financing in their Ordinariate, even to the point of funding their own seminarians. Some believe the Anglo-Catholics had their bluff called by this, and now, how can they possibly match the Three Kings the Methodists have just thrown on the table?

Perhaps the Pope could offer them a spare Oratory or two when he beatifies Newman at Birmingham on 19 September.

Who ever would have thought that Christian unity would turn into a game of such high stakes. That's something I'd never have bet on.

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## An Item from the Methodist Council

The Methodist Council acts as Conference between Conferences and has one representative from each District as well as various *ex officio* members. Our representative is John Woosey, a Local Preacher and Magistrate from Cleckheaton.

At its latest meeting, Council was invited to explore the possibility of a change to the current pattern of having a President and Vice-President, instead moving to a President with 2 co-Presidents, one lay and one from the Diaconal Order. Offices could be held for 1 year as at present, or for 3 years. This led to a very interesting discussion which concluded with an agreement that the Conference should be offered an increased number of options for possible change from which it could choose, including whether the Presidency/Presidium should include 2 or 3 people.

We shall see what happens in July!

## Lent

### A time of turning around

Jan Sutch Pickard was Vice President of the Methodist Conference in 1996-7, and has been a long-time supporter of the Iona Community, first working there as a volunteer cook in 1967. From 1999-2004 she was on the staff of the Iona Community, latterly as Warden of the Abbey. She has also written several books (including *Gatherings*, *Dandelions and Thistles* and *Advent Readings from Iona*) and has been a teacher, local preacher and mission partner.

Here are her thoughts for Lent:

Truly dust we are, and to dust we shall return;  
and truly yours we are, and to you we shall return.  
Help this to be a time of turning round and beginning again.  
Through the forty days of Lent, help us to follow you  
and to find you: in the discipline of praying and in the drudgery of caring –  
in whatever we deny ourselves,  
and whatever we set ourselves to learn or do.  
Help us to discover you  
in our loneliness and in community,  
in our emptiness and our fulfilment,  
in our sadness and our laughter.  
Help us to find you when we ourselves are lost.  
Help us to follow you on the journey to Jerusalem  
to the waving palms of the people's hope,  
to their rejection, to the cross and empty tomb.  
Help us to perceive new growth amid the ashes of the old.  
Help us, carrying your cross, to be signs of your Kingdom. AMEN

*Jan Sutch Pickard*

*From Eggs and Ashes: Practical & Liturgical Resources for Lent and Holy Week, Ruth Burgess & Chris Polhill (eds.), Wild Goose Publications*

# SHIPLEY CHRISTIANS TOGETHER

## LENT & HOLY WEEK 24 February-04 April 2010 EVENTS IN SHIPLEY

- Wednesday 17 February    **ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE**    7.30 pm  
Taizé style worship at St Paul's  
CE Church, Kirkgate, Shipley
- Saturdays    **PRAYER BREAKFASTS**    8.30-9.45 am  
at Shipley Salvation Army  
Crag Road Drop-In Centre Team
- 27 February    Crag Road Drop-In Centre Team
- 06 March    Court Chaplaincy – Mary Carroll
- 13 March    Rapid Response: a Christian Perspective –  
Nigel Fawcett Jones
- 20 March    Inter-faith Issues –  
Bruce & Deborah Warren
- 27 Mar    Fresh Expressions – Colin Blake
- Good Friday 2 April    **WALK of WITNESS**  
Meet for prayer at St Paul's    11.30 am  
(Lunch following tbc)
- GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP**    7.30 pm  
Led by Gracespace  
At Saltaire Methodist Church



### Profile of Zimbabwe by the BBC

#### Facts

- Full name: Republic of Zimbabwe
- Population: 12.5 million (UN, 2009)
- Capital: Harare
- Area: 390,759 sq km (150,873 sq miles)
- Major language: English (official), Shona, Sindebele
- Major religions: Christianity, indigenous beliefs
- Life expectancy: 43 years (men), 44 years (women) (UN)
- Monetary unit: 1 Zimbabwe dollar = 100 cents
- Main exports: Tobacco, cotton, agricultural products, gold, minerals

The fortunes of Zimbabwe have for almost three decades been tied to President Robert Mugabe, the pro-independence campaigner who wrested control from a small white community and became the country's first black leader. He presides over a nation whose economy is in tatters, where poverty and unemployment are endemic and political strife and repression commonplace.

Aid agencies and critics partly blame food shortages on the land reform programme. Mugabe has accused Britain and its allies of sabotaging the economy in revenge for the redistribution programme. The government's urban slum demolition drive in 2005 drew more international condemnation. The president said it was an effort to boost law and order and development; critics accused him of destroying slums housing opposition supporters. Either way, the razing of "illegal structures" left some 700,000 people without jobs or homes, according to UN estimates.

For years Zimbabwe was a major tobacco producer and a potential bread basket for surrounding countries. But the forced seizure of almost all white-owned commercial farms, with the stated aim of benefiting landless black Zimbabweans, led to sharp falls in production and precipitated the collapse of the agriculture-based economy. The country has endured rampant inflation and critical food and fuel shortages. Many Zimbabweans survive on grain handouts. Others have voted with their feet; hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans, including much-needed professionals, have emigrated.



### **Zimbabwe: After a year of 'inclusive government'**

by Sue Lloyd-Roberts, BBC Newsnight, Zimbabwe

It has been a year since President Robert Mugabe and his former political rival, Morgan Tsvangirai agreed to work on a new constitution which will pave the way to free and fair elections. So what has been achieved?

"The inclusive government has bought peace and there is food in the shops," Julius, a 35-year-old teacher said. "Anytime you get a dollar, you can rest assured that you will find something to buy."

The problem is getting a dollar. Teachers like Julius will mark the anniversary by going on strike this week. He said he welcomes the fact that the coalition government has restored peace to the country, but complained that he still cannot feed his family. Julius takes home \$150 (£96) a month. Over \$100 goes on renting two rooms in a house, which leaves him with a little more than a dollar a day to spend on food. We followed him to the supermarket where the shelves were stocked high. He bought one loaf of white bread - "our weekly treat" he explained - and then walked outside to a market stall to purchase his family's more regular fare - 1kg (2lb) of potatoes. He took us home to meet his wife and two daughters.

"Of course, things are better than they were," he said, pointing to his younger daughter. "When she was born, we had no food at all. She went for hours without food. She is three years old but looks like a two-year-old."

He is right. Things were a lot worse. I have travelled to Zimbabwe regularly over the last tumultuous decade and, if I were to write a report card at the end of this, the first year of the inclusive government, it would read: "A good start, could do better, but with a very uncertain future."

The timetable for political reform has slipped badly. Only the former opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), have been holding outreach meetings with their supporters to discuss a new constitution. These meetings should have been concluded last November. At a rowdy, dancing and singing MDC gathering two hours' drive east of Harare, people were celebrating that they are able to meet at all.

"It was horrible before," Susan, a local party organiser, said. "Zanu PF thugs would come and beat people. Now, we thank God that we can move freely and meet together." The meeting was addressed by the MDC deputy Prime Minister, Thokozani Khupe. To cheers, she told the crowds that her party wants to restore political power to the prime minister and to parliament. Zanu PF are not holding mass, outreach meetings.

Back in Harare I found Paul Mangwana, Zanu PF's constitutional expert, putting finishing touches to what his party believe should be the shape of the new constitution - to put the power firmly in the hands of the one executive authority because of Zimbabwe's wealth. "We have a rich inheritance - nickel, platinum, diamonds - every mineral known in the world," he said. "We need to concentrate power in one, strong individual to safeguard those resources and protect them from being taken by foreigners."

Indigenisation is the key to the Zanu PF political philosophy, a philosophy which would appear to exclude white Zimbabweans. Four thousand white commercial farmers have now had their farms confiscated and given to supporters of Mr Mugabe. A diamond mine has been taken from its white Zimbabwean owner and is being operated by a government-owned company, protected by soldiers. From 1 March, any company operating in Zimbabwe must ensure that the majority of shareholders are indigenous Zimbabweans.

My "minder" at the Ministry of Information was very keen that I should meet a successful businessman in Zimbabwe today. Philip Chiyangwa, Mr Mugabe's nephew, bought several companies at a time when high inflation, price controls and shrinking demand made it difficult for them to operate in Zimbabwe. Now a millionaire, he displays the full list in his "Native Investments" portfolio on full-length wall charts. It encompasses everything from luxury hotels, foodstuffs to the window frame company he says he bought from Roland "Tiny" Rowlands.

He was optimistic about Zimbabwe's future: "Look at me - I have never left Zim for any other country, I don't intend to leave this country, I am doing business here and I am successful here. Mr Chiyangwa invited me to visit the 35-room mansion where his wife, Elizabeth, showed me around the family car collection - her husband's Rolls Royce and Bentley, her Mercedes and their daughter's sports cars. I asked her whether she feels comfortable with such wealth when people in her country are starving. "It is a gift from God," she replied, "it is a blessing from God. I know people are hungry and we are very grateful for what has been done for us".

As Julius puts his children to bed that night, after another meal of potatoes, he could be forgiven for wondering whether it is not his turn, and the turn of millions like him in Zimbabwe, to receive such gifts and blessings



## **Judith Gilbert**

The Artist chosen for this year's exhibition in September

She writes about herself:

I trained at Birmingham College of Art and now work from my home near Haworth West Yorkshire.

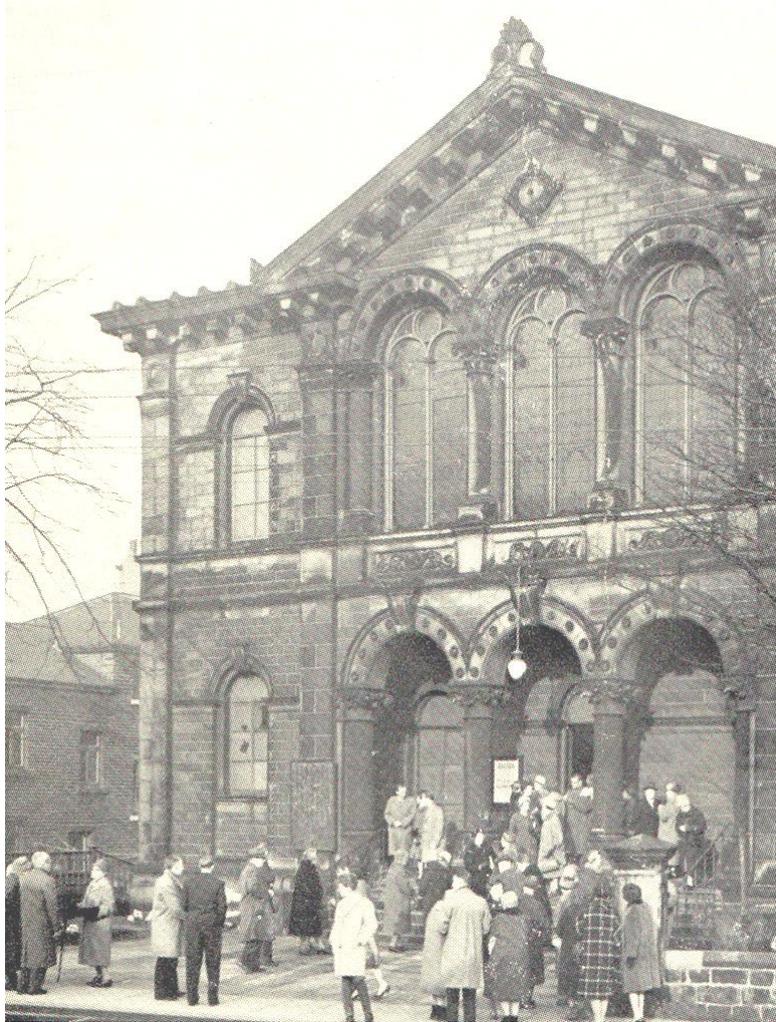
Having rheumatoid arthritis I have to work on a small scale and find gouache the ideal medium to express myself.

I am interested in Art History and love especially the work done before the 15th Century and Eastern art. I also do Calligraphy and have illustrated books on aspects of Yorkshire.

Along with my twin sister I have had various art exhibitions and have also had work shown in Bath, London, and Chicago.

In 1994 I became artist-in-residence at Bradford Cathedral where I still help with the education programme.

My work is concerned with flat shape and bright colour and I have recently been exploring the mixture of three dimensional form and flat shape. In the future I hope to look at the story telling tradition that early Renaissance artists were involved with in their paintings.



## **What money was worth in 1962!**

The Church launched a Stewardship scheme in 1962 because weekly giving was not covering outgoings. The Finance Committee estimated that £2,400 was needed annually i.e. £46 per week. Money had lost value since the War. 20/- in 1938 had only 7/2d worth of purchasing power in 1962. The Committee published a table which showed what they hoped people would give. The highest gross income shown was £2,000pa. which shows how money has continued devaluing!

## **Judas Iscariot**

*Canon John Toy imagines what made Judas act as he did.*

My name is Judas bar Simon; my father and I share the same nickname, Iscariot. He taught me to love our land and people and, above all, our God who chose us to be his people, above all other nations on earth. He also taught me to hate the Romans, those invaders our land, and, above all, those of our own people who work for them.

When I was old enough, my father allowed me to join the freedom fighters alongside him. Most of the time we carried on our normal lives but when the call came we made our way to the hills of Galilee from where we made guerrilla raids on the Romans and the troops of Herod Antipas, who ruled our land for them. For the first time in my life I knew I had been

chosen to do something special for God. It was dangerous but also full of glory and people regarded us as martyrs willing to die to bring the reign of God back to Israel.

I remember a very special day in Capernaum. We had gone to hear the prophet Joshua from Nazareth. Here was a patriot! He told us the reign of God had already begun. He was so confident! He was recruiting followers and walked about the among the chattering crowd. Then he saw me and stopped; he just said, "Follow me!" and I did. I couldn't help it. But it wasn't like going with father. Joshua, or Jesus as people called him in Greek, didn't want us to go on raids. We were to travel round the countryside getting people ready for the kingdom and for the day he would go to Jerusalem and set it up. I suppose it made sense to go to the capital but some of us doubted whether he would get the same response from the people there.

The day came! This was it! I think entering the city was the most exciting time in my life. There was a big crowd ready to welcome us. People were shouting that he was God's Chosen One, the Messiah. We went straight to the Temple where he overturned the money-changers' tables. He was in charge at last! I tried to get some of the Jerusalemites to go with me to occupy the priests' rooms but they melted away when they saw the guards. Typical of the Judeans! So I rushed back to the Inner Court to help Jesus and what did I find? He had gone home to Bethany for supper!

I cried out in frustration and anger! How can you start a revolution then go home for supper? He was the most popular person to come to Jerusalem in a long time but he had to work hard over the next few days to build up support. Something had to jolt Jesus into action, so I went to the High Priest's house to urge him to arrest Jesus. That would surely get the crowds to rise in his support? But though they listened, they weren't interested.

It was late when I got out to Bethany. I couldn't believe what I found. The fire had gone out of him. He talked of being handed over to the Gentiles as if he had no choice. He was so passive and talked of God's will being done. There seemed to be no other option but to get the crowds involved. I had to get him arrested!

His mood didn't change. When we met for the Passover meal two days later he was still in an odd mood. First he washed our feet! Then he said that the exodus we should remember that night was his. The worst moment of all was when he looked at us all and said, "One of you will this night betray me, hand me over to the Priests and the Gentiles." The others began asking him. "Is it I?" But he didn't answer, instead he turned to me and said, "What you are going to do, do quickly".

I almost cried out, "No Lord not now; it's night. We need the crowds. Wait for the day."

I left with my mind whirling. Did he know what I'd been thinking and planning? Would I be obeying his wish or betraying my master? This time the High Priest decided to act at once. As soon as he heard that Jesus would be in Gethsemane. he rushed there with the guards. When we got there, Jesus stepped forward and gave himself up. I shall never forget the looks on the faces of the other disciples when they saw me with the guards.

Did I hand him over or did he choose to give himself up? He must have come to believe that it was God's will. But why?

Within a few hours he was condemned and a few hours later he was dead. I had failed. In fact, I had probably made things worse! God have mercy and help me!

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- What did Judas do?  
Probably only showed the authorities where Jesus was. They didn't need to be shown who Jesus was. They would have recognised him.

- Why did Judas do it?  
It is unlikely that it was for the money – though he probably was paid. Many commentators suggest that he was frustrated by Jesus' passive stance in the face of the authorities.

