

MINISTER'S LETTER



November 1st: All Saints' Day

‘The communion of saints’ is one of those Christian phrases or concepts that is often considered ‘other worldly’ and therefore ignored or dismissed in the present day. Part of the problem may well be the ambiguity of the term itself, but time spent wrestling with it is well rewarded. Understood, ‘the communion of saints’ can still speak powerfully to a world that takes for granted the earth’s resources and values human life so cheaply.

Whether translated from Greek (*koinonia ton hagion*) or Latin (*communio sanctorum*) it can be read either as ‘the sharing in holy things’ or ‘the sharing by holy persons’. Whichever definition we take speaks of profound relationship.

‘The sharing in holy things’ suggests that ‘the communion of saints’ is made up of those who share in holy things. The bread and wine that we share at communion *could* be said to be ‘holy things’ that bind us together. These shared ‘holy things’ could also be the things that God ‘has done, is doing, and will do’ for us in Christ. But by extension it could also be said that since God created this world and blessed it, the whole of creation is a ‘holy thing’. We share, with all of nature, in the sacred community of life. ‘The communion of saints’ then is not restricted to human beings. That stated, the other possible translation, *‘The sharing by holy persons’*, suggests that this is a communion of people across time and space bound together by a shared participation in the work of Christ. John Wesley certainly believed this and wrote that, in this communion, members of the Church have fellowship with God; with all living members of Christ on earth and with all the faithfully departed.

All Saints’ Day is then an opportunity for us to remember those people who have been saints for *us*. People who have faithfully followed Christ and who have, in perhaps little ways, played a significant part in *our*

Christian journeys. The Church may not have awarded these special individuals such an illustrious sounding title as ‘Saint’ but it has provided this ‘feast of splendid nobodies’ for us to give thanks for the lives of these people with whom we remain connected. But we have here too an opportunity to reflect on the way that we are connected with the whole of God’s creation – people and planet. We are bound to one another and to our world. Sharing these connections brings responsibilities. Let us take the time then to ask ourselves what our sharing in this communion might mean for our own lives and for our often troubled world.

With every blessing

Paul

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2009 KENYAN TRIP

Faith Nyota is planning a trip to Kenya in August 2009.

The proposed dates are 12th -26th August 2009
We are having a meeting for all who are interested on Sunday 16th November at 3pm at Wimbledon Methodist Church, Room 1 - the hall upstairs. Parking is free on Sunday in Griffiths Road and the surrounding roads.



If you are interested but are unable to get to the meeting then please contact Faith Nyota, 020 8946 3181 or Valerie Ashcroft 020 8715 3938.

Our Benevolent Fund



I have been asked to explain what happens to the money raised from the Benevolent Collections at the monthly Communion Services. There are eighteen Charities to whom we make regular donations, most usually at £30.00 a time. These distributions are made when the money in hand is in excess of £120.00.

The Charities regularly supported, but in no particular order, are:

Shelter	The Samaritans
St. Raphael' s Hospice	Mildmay Mission Hospital
The Royal Marsden	Premier Christian Radio
Biblelands	Guide Dogs for the Blind
NSPCC	Christian Care
Tear Fund	Macmillian Cancer Relief
The Salvation Army	Action for Blind People
Corrymeela Link	Muscular Dystrophy
Livability (previously The Shaftesbury Society)	
Methodist Relief & Development Fund	

In addition there are periodic requests for funds for worldwide disasters, such as the Bangladesh Cyclone Appeal, and occasionally local deserving benevolent appeals.

Should anyone want any further information, or would like to make any comment or an additional donation to any of these worthy causes, please have a word with me.

John Butland

SAIRA'S STORY*

Saira could remember a time when she, her Mum and her baby brother lived in a “proper” home. Now they were all squashed into one room. It was such a muddle - two beds, a cot, boxes and cases and nowhere to play. Mum always looked worried; sometimes she shut herself in the bathroom and when she came out, Saira was sure she had been crying. She shouted at Saira more than before – well, if Saira was honest, she too often screamed and cried. Why? They had been a happy family.



There never seemed to be enough food and what they had was boring. But Wednesday was a good day, because then “Auntie” from Christian Care brought a bag of food, and nappies for her brother. Sometimes there was a treat for her - a bar of chocolate, even a book, or perhaps some clothes. Saira liked it when Auntie read to her but often she was told to be quiet while Mum talked and talked to their visitor.

Christmas was coming and the children at her new school were all talking about the presents they wanted. Saira asked Mum about this and she said she had no money for presents. This made Saira sad because she seemed to be different from everybody else. But she did have one thing to look forward to. It was the Christian Care New Year

Party. She had the invitation stuck on the wall above her bed. Her Mum and brother were invited as well. Auntie said there would be games, face painting, a special tea and a pantomime. Would she get a present? Saira could not wait. Not long now!



Can YOU help us to raise money towards the New Year Party and other projects to show the love of Jesus, who as a child was homeless and a refugee, to children in Merton like Saira?

Donations may be sent to:

***Christmas Appeal 2008,
Christian Care Association,
St Barnabas Community Centre,
Thirsk Road, Mitcham,
Surrey CR4 2BD
Tel No: 0203 044 009***

Email:christiancaremerton@gmail.com

* Names and circumstances do not relate to any one family supported by Christian Care.

Original drawings by Tara Northey

Gillian Thick

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God has given us two hands.
One for receiving and the other for giving.

Billy Graham

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH - NOVEMBER 2008

Will this be the last Thought of the Month that I will ever write? I don't know and you don't know. The chest infection/pneumonia or what ever it is has been going on for two months now and the dozens of antibiotics I've taken have had no obvious effect and I realise the seriousness of the illness has been kept from me. It could have been or could still be fatal.

None of us can tell what our final conscious act may be, but a nasty illness can teach us many things. I have had many cards from friends and groups of friends. I've had dozens of phone calls with many people making offers of help. In short I am surrounded by love. Of course there is far more love in the world that there is hatred. Love comes naturally to us. We all need to be loved and be loved in turn.



We need to trust in God at all times, but especially during times of difficult illness. It is at such times that we are reminded forcefully that we are utterly and completely in God's hands. He gave us life and it is up to Him when he decides to take that life back. That day will come when

we have completed the work he has got for us to do, perhaps when we are ready to go to other tasks he has for us in the life to come.

When we consider our lives, we see that they are made up of beginnings and endings. There is no reason to see that death is anything other than a continuation of that process. Our tears at a bereavement are shed for those who are left behind rather for the one who has departed.

Thanks for prayers, cards, thoughts and telephone calls which are all part of God's love sent out by you and surrounding me. God uses each and every one of us when we are not aware of Him doing so.

Bill Cox

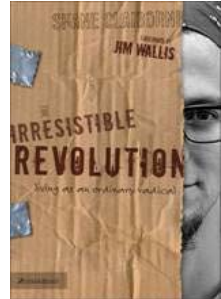
REVIEWS from RE:FRESH BOOKS

The Irresistible Revolution

Living as an ordinary radical

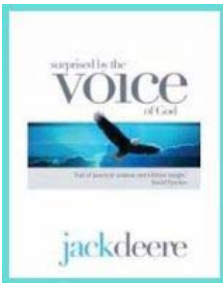
by Shane Claiborne

Ever wondered what your life would be like if you really did sell all your possessions and give to the poor ... or opened your house to anyone and everyone ... or were not only willing but happy to be taken advantage of?



Now you're starting to understand Shane Claiborne. He is the founder of The Simple Way, a community in inner city Philadelphia. It's been running now for 10 years, constantly learning new ways to love the poor around them.

The Book addresses questions about the church and the world through some incredible stories of The Simple Way. It is both inspiring and challenging.



Surprised by the voice of God

by Jack Deere

Jack Deere was a self proclaimed Bible Deist. He believed that the only way God speaks today is through the Bible, so the importance of Christianity lies in learning the Bible back to front and applying it to you're life. After meeting a man who believed in God's healing power he came to believe that God may still interact in the world as

He did in Bible times. *Surprised by the Voice of God* tells of Deere's journey into learning how to hear God's voice today.

This book draws heavily from both the Bible, which Deere knows extremely well, and personal experience. It shows the great variety that God uses to talk to us providing practical advice with biblical and personal examples. He tells stories gained from spending time with the famous American Paul Cain, who many regard as a modern day prophet, and his stories are told brilliantly, fitting perfectly into the points he is making.

He asks all the questions you can think of when it comes to hearing God's voice such as How does God speak? How do you distinguish His voice from your feelings? and of course how do I hear God for myself and others? It is well worth a read for anyone who is interested in how God speaks today.

*These books are available from re:refresh books & christian resources,
23 The Broadway, Tolworth, Surbiton KT6 7DJ*

NEWS FROM KENYA

19th October 2008



Dear Rafikis,

After a very dry September, the rains, which started this month, has been a most welcomed sight. There has been a noticeable flurry of activities in the shambas with people planting potatoes and greens i.e. those vegetables that take only 3 months to harvest, this being the season of the short rains.

Before Joyce left at the beginning of the month, we both did some local sightseeing; the Hot Springs in Kijabe town is worth a visit with different views of the Rift Valley and Central Province along the way. An hour and a half's walk away is Maai Mahui aptly translated 'Hot Springs' as well, at the base of the Rift Valley. One of the Refugee camps that I visited in January was situated here. After all our walking, Joyce left fit enough and ready to tackle Snowdon on her return.

Most of the clothing, dressings, toys, spectacles and mobile phones have been distributed to the various group and the toys and books especially, received with great excitement. Joyce and I commented on the sheer joy in the face of a 7 yr old girl when she was given something as basic as an exercise book and a pencil of her own. I have noticed when returning to the primary schools that some of these items i.e. crayons, stencils, paints are used under strict control by the teachers as some of the children have never handled them before. The knitted dolls were a success with the younger children though they are taught to share them. The Lari Disabled group are always pleased to receive wound dressings and to talk about how they are coping. Next month 24 of them are planning to go to Nyeri to meet with representatives from 'Through the Roof Ministries' and some are hoping to get new wheelchairs. They were interested to hear more about TTR and to know that some of our churches are supporting this Charity.

Vicky, Joyce and myself had a memorable and exhausting day wading through the Nairobi traffic to get a matatu (bus) to Kasarani. We were collecting 136 bibles from the Bible League office armed with a suitcase

and a backpack each. Quickly realizing when we saw the load, that there was no way the 3 of us could manage, we started making tentative plans to return for the 2 boxes remaining. As we were pondering this, a Bishop from Sudan came into the office, was on his way to Nairobi by car and fortunately for us gave us a lift as far as the matatu stop for Kijabe. The matatu touts wanted to charge us for the extra seat that our load occupied but relented when told that we were carrying bibles. I have since had the privilege to be present at the Kimende Bible study group graduation when 23 young people and 2 older men were presented with Bibles, some of whom has never owned one before. The Magina group, which have increased since their last graduation in January will have their presentations on the 26th October and I am looking forward to meeting the new students.

I am often asked why, as a ‘muzungu’, I do not use the car that is available for use if needed, and usually my reply, besides the rising price of petrol, is that I would miss the fun of the matatu experience and being able to identify with the local way of life as well as doing a little to help the environment. The last time Joyce and I used the car, we had not estimated the extra mileage by going along rough terrain and we consequently ran out of petrol whilst on our way back along a busy highway. Again we were fortunate that our friend that accompanied us was able to hop on a matatu to the nearest petrol station while Joyce and I amused the children, which had joined us, with games and songs. I have since discovered how useful coffee filters can be, by making a hole in the base, make excellent funnels for pouring petrol into empty tanks. This was the same memorable day, which began with a flat battery in the car, having started it then had no petrol, later in the day all 3 of our mobile phones needed charging and so did my camera! But hey, this is Kenya and I would not trade the experience.

This past week has been taken up with visits to Kamae along with medical representatives from the local Hospital to discuss the possibility of a Travelling Clinic to that needy community, meeting up with the HIV/Aids group, a sponsored walk from Kijabe hospital to Kimende in aid of Palliative and Hospice Care and a Graduation Ceremony in Nairobi of my friend’s daughter. Unfortunately the crowds at the 39th Graduation were too large to get a good view of President Kibaki, Prime

Minister Raila Odinga and former US Secretary-General Kofi Annan being conferred with honorary Doctor of Law degrees. Before I return at the end of the month, there is just a small matter of a mountain to climb. Longonot at 2779m should be a doddle!

All for now.

Gwen Wildman

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STOP THE TRAFFIK

(People shouldn't be bought and sold)



**You are Invited to the
WORLD'S LARGEST
CHOCOLATE FONDUE PARTY and QUIZ
on Saturday 29th November
at 6.30pm
Tickets £5.00**

See **ABBY HERRING** or **TONY LOFT** for Tickets

www.stophetraffiik.org

SIGMA CHRISTMAS PRODUCTION

'Oh No, Not The Nativity'

8pm, Sunday 14th December 2008



As you know SIGMA has put on a production at Christmas as part of the Seasonal Celebrations.

This will be the third production that has been undertaken since Bob and Janet moved to Devon. Last year we performed a Christmas Musical called " Topsy Turvy Christmas" which was enjoyed by all those who took part and also more importantly by all those who came and watched the production.

This year , the production is called "Oh No, Not The Nativity" which will include drama, songs and some traditional carols.

The production will start earlier at **8pm**. This is because all the churches in the circuit are not going to be holding evening services therefore giving an opportunity to everyone to come and share in this part of our celebrations at Martin Way.

There will be an interval with refreshments including mince pies. We shall also have a retiring collection on behalf of the NCH. So please put the date in your diary and come and join us.

We look forward to welcoming you

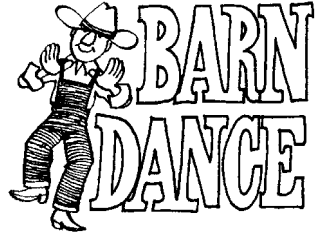
Anne Conquest

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The best way to break a bad habit is to drop it.

D.S Yoder

HARVEST SUPPER and BARN DANCE



On Saturday 4th October Martin Way held a Harvest Supper with Barn Dance. I must admit I was not looking forward to this occasion. I feared it would be a pretty miserable affair with hardly any people there. It was therefore more out of a sense of duty than anticipation that we went as a family to the dance. Fortunately we had a good attendance of all ages.

The evening started off with a dinner (Shepherd's Pie in more than sufficient quantities) in the coffee lounge. On our table our minister demonstrated his artistic side as he entertained his children (and the rest of us) with a well rendered scarecrow drawn on the (paper, disposable) tablecloth. After pudding (a wide variety of crumbles) we went into the hall for the main event.

The next fear was that the band would be indifferent (or even downright bad) so it was reassuring to see Fred, our regular drummer in the band (who were called Ouch!). Any doubts about their virtuosity were soon dispelled and it started to become clear that the music would be of a very high and enjoyable standard. Brian, our caller/master of ceremonies was able to easily entice sufficient numbers to join in the various dances. He explained, with considerable patience, the various formations and we did our level best to comply.

The occasion was very good humoured and so it did not matter when we failed to follow the instructions quite as intended. Somehow we generally ended up in more less the right place. The warning about forming whirling baskets such that the ladies would be flying around with their feet in the air did I fear cause Xandile (my dancing partner) some moments of trepidation! However all went well and we left weary but happy after enjoying a very successful night out.

So a big thank-you to Anne for organising this event.

Tim Johnson

PUZZLE CORNER

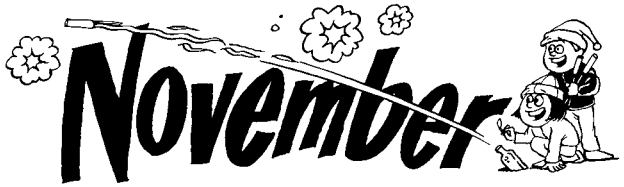
Write the answers to the clues in the boxes to the right of each clue
Copy the letters in the numbered boxes to the other boxes
 in the boxes below with the same number.

This will give you verse from the Bible.

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The above puzzle is thanks to <http://biblewordgames.com>

CHURCH DIARY



Sun	2	10.30 am 6.30 pm	All Age Worship led by David Somers Communion Service led by Rev Carol Rowles
Tue	4	10-12noon 8.00 pm	Coffee and Chat Time for Prayer
Weds	5	7.00 pm	Midways Group - <i>Bonfire Night Celebration</i>
Sun	9	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	11	10-12noon 8.00 pm	Coffee and Chat Time for Prayer
Fri	14	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	16	10.30 am	Praise Service led by Brenda Cannon & Tony Loft
Tue	18	10-12 noon 8.00 pm 7.30 pm	Coffee and Chat Time for Prayer Men's Supper Club – <i>Karen Bolton</i>
Weds	19	7.00 pm	Midways Group - <i>Lambeth Palace</i> - Joan Cottle <i>from St Raphael's</i>
Sun	23	10.30am 6.30 pm	Morning Service led by David Morgan Bible Study
Tue	25	10-12noon 8.00 pm	Coffee and Chat Time for Prayer
Fri	28	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sat	29	6.30 pm	Stop the TRAFFIK - Fondue Party
Sun	30	10.30am	Morning Service led by Rev Paul Timmis

Please refer to the Website (www.martinway.org.uk) or Weekly Notice Sheet for any additional information



WINTERSHALL NATIVITY 2008

A few of us last year went to a production of the Nativity on a farm just outside of Guildford. We really enjoyed it and thought we would share our experience. It was a lovely way to Start Christmas off last year, it is really worth while seeing!

The production is held in the open air and inside the Holly Barn and is on from Wednesday 17th to Sunday 21st December this year, there are 2 showings a day 1st at 4.45pm and 2nd at 7.30pm (Each performance last 90 minutes). Tickets are £15 for adults and £7.50 for children (from 3 years old until they leave full time education).

It is advisable to come warmly dressed and with suitable shoes or boots. The Barn theatre is a few minutes steep walk from the car park but disable access is available by prior arrangement. The seating is on plain wooden benches but you could bring a cushion to sit on if you wish. The 'Inn' opens for tea/coffee and Mince pies 45 minutes before each performance.

I am hoping to go again this year and if anyone would like to join me I will be booking tickets for the Thursday 18th Dec show at 7.30pm. Please let me know if you are interested by **Sunday 12th October** – as I need to book tickets. If you can't make it that day but still wish to go you can book tickets online on their website, but please note that the tickets do sell-out quickly. Visit their website to find out more at www.wintershall-estate.com

Abby Herring

Items for the **December Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 16th November** at the latest