

## MINISTER'S LETTER

In the wake of the EU Referendum and its result, I thought I ought to offer something in response.



Whilst I am still in an early stage of reflecting upon the events of the past few days, I did manage to write a sermon for the first Sunday following the referendum (26th June). Given that I preached it to a select band in the evening at Martin Way, I offer it instead of a letter this month in the hope that you find it helpful.

With every blessing

*Paul*

### **Sermon based on Luke 9: 51-62**

1)

I want to talk about people on a journey. People with a clear destination to work towards. People whose faces are set resolutely in a particular direction. People who, with great determination, seek to draw others in to think as they think, believe what they believe and join them in proclaiming their message as they journey on towards their goal.

I want to talk about people on a journey who are suddenly forced to realise that not everyone shares their beliefs, aims and objectives. Not everyone welcomes the message they bring with open arms. Indeed some, many in fact, will reject it and all that they stand for.

And when the door is slammed shut in their faces and they find that not everyone is willing to embrace all that they stand for - even though they themselves are utterly convinced of the truth of it and firmly believe it to be in the best interests of everyone, even those who reject it - they feel (amongst other things) hurt, saddened, frustrated, confused, bewildered, bereft, cut adrift, lost, betrayed, embarrassed, ashamed and angered. And with all these emotions kicking around inside them they want to lash out in righteous anger at those who've rejected their beliefs and message and stopped them from reaching their destination.

Because that's what we do, as human beings, isn't it? When we're feeling hurt and defeated, we want to lash out in one way or another.

2)

Do you recognise any of this, anyone? These feelings?

Because this has been the story for roughly half of the population this week, those who voted 'Remain' in the EU Referendum, as the 'Leave' side won by a small majority. And, of course, it's also the story of Jesus' followers as told in that account towards the end of Luke 9. Which is kind of fortunate, for surely it's the gospel of Jesus Christ - the good news of Jesus Christ - that, more than ever perhaps, we need to turn to at this time.

3)

I say this because, whilst something like half of the population celebrates, the other half is bereft. And we find ourselves as a continent, as a country, as people *not* in a place where we're all moving together, our faces set in one direction. Rather, we find ourselves in a place where people are seemingly more divided than ever and moving in varied directions. For this isn't just a story about the UK moving in one direction and the countries of the EU moving in another.

Even if we leave the confusion in Ireland to one side, if Nicola Sturgeon's unsurprising but strong hints are anything to go by, there's every chance that Scotland may soon be heading in a different direction to the rest of the UK. Following David Cameron's resignation, there's a question as to which direction the Conservative Party will move in. And with knives out for Jeremy Corbyn, there has to be at least a question about the future direction of the Labour Party.

There are so many paths in front of us and no set direction of travel as yet. And whilst some view this as exciting and full of possibility, others find it confusing and worrying. And that's going to be the case for some in this room. For it'd be very surprising indeed if everyone here has voted the same way.

4)

Amongst those who voted 'Leave' there will, of course, be some

jubilant. Some, I know, woke up the next morning thinking, ‘What have I done?’ (because they never expected to win) but many will be thrilled. “I’ve got my country back” is a cry that has been heard in more than one tv/radio interview in recent days (not that I’ve got any clue as to what that actually means). But on the ‘Remain’ side there’ve been a whole range of reactions. And I can talk about this because I think I’ve experienced most of them.

Now I’ve heard it said that those of us who voted ‘Remain’ should just accept the result and move on. And I do accept it. But the moving on bit is more tricky - as it undoubtedly would have been for those who’d voted ‘Leave’ had ‘Remain’ won. (You may have heard that over 3 million people have signed a petition calling for a second referendum because a 60% majority wasn’t achieved and turn out was less than 75%. Well, that petition was created by a ‘Leave’ campaigner before people went to the polls!)

But in any case, for reconciliation to ever take place, there first has to be a period of reflection, sharing and listening. Those with grievances have to be allowed to give a voice to their true feelings. It’s absolutely necessary to allow people time and space to vent their frustrations.

At some point though (and I don’t think I’m quite there yet), we have to reach a place where all are able to ask, ‘What next?’

5)

For those of us in the Church, it might seem simplistic or trite to say it, but - what else can we do but turn to God in prayer and turn to the scriptures for guidance?

Not yet perhaps, but in time - when people are ready, this story in Luke 9 that we’ve heard today, mightn’t be a bad one to turn to.

For, after all the righteous anger - to which Jesus says, ‘Come on, don’t be silly’ - Jesus points out that the future was always going to be especially uncertain for those who’d follow him. He then instructs his followers not to waste too much energy on, or to be too distracted by, looking back -

even if we're tempted to do so because of deep feelings of grief and loss and severed relationships. Our task, Jesus says, is to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Not proclaim Great Britain. Not proclaim the European Union. Proclaim the Kingdom of God. God's new world, that place where there is good news for the poor, liberty for the captives and justice for the oppressed.

And surely that's what we have to do now more than ever. That people will deliver on the promises they made during the referendum debate has to be at least questionable. And those hurting people in communities up and down this land who for too long have felt overlooked and disenfranchised and who believe that life is going to be somehow different and better for them - well, whether that turns out to be the case for them or not (but let's hope it is), they're the kind of people that God has always declared a profound interest in.

Proclaiming isn't, in Jesus-speak, just about telling people what to believe. And thank God for that, we might think - we've all had more than enough of that of late. Proclaiming includes showing, demonstrating, revealing.

Jesus is calling us to move alongside people and, when given the opportunity, to share in their lives: listening to, talking with, learning from one another - embracing one another in the way that Jesus and his first followers longed to be embraced themselves.

And surely that's all we can do. That's all we can do. However we all voted within this church community, however we feel about the result, it remains our shared task to set our face resolutely in this direction, continuing to walk alongside one another, working for healing and reconciliation here in this place and beyond.

We've already answered the call to follow Jesus. This is the shared path we've already committed ourselves to walking. This perhaps is all that we need to remember today - praying that, in time, we may find the grace and courage to do so.

*Paul Timmis*

# SPRING AND CRAFT FAIR

A great day was had by everyone who attended the Spring and Craft Fair on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May. A big thank you to everyone who helped in making the day go well, I will not list everyone but you know who you are. The rain did not spoil the event too much, most of the stall holders have reported back to me how much they enjoyed the event at our lovely church, yes they were the words used by them. Several stall holders have said to be sure to let them know if we ever hold a similar event again. We also had a compliment on the coffee served, saying it was the best coffee they have ever had at a function, they even asked for name and brand of coffee!

It was pleasing to see a lot of new faces attending the event, hopefully that was because the event was advertised on Radio Jackie, also the Guides delivered leaflets in their roads which no doubt contributed to the new faces. The Rainbows and Frogs Club also gave notices out to the people that attended, so thank you to all the organisations that spread the word.

We made a total of £1,052.24 towards the Flush Fund, so thank you once again to the Flush Fund Girls and all the able bodied men that helped as well.



*Sylvia Baxter*





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**Mike Fuwa**

**Tel: 07956 369579**

**Email: [mfuwa@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mfuwa@blueyonder.co.uk)**

# GUNG-HO!

Gung Ho was great fun. Shame I couldn't do the inflatables but I walked some of the course. Well done to the Gung Hoppers who did the course and made it over all the obstacles (in some cases more than once)

Thanks for all your donations for Mind and Macmillan, we have raised over £500 for these worthy charities.

*Anne Marie Pallister*





## Care for Uganda Update

Later this month I together with Emily Bacon, Phoebe Pallister and Rebecca Smith, (all members of our Young People's Fellowship) and nine other people from Clevedon and Swansea South Wales will be visiting Bbowa (Home of Care for Uganda) within the Buganda Kingdom in Uganda.

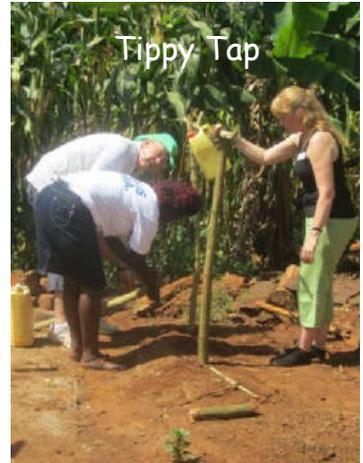
Although we will only be there for 10 days we will not be having a holiday as each day will involve activities of one kind or another, e.g. organising and taking part in school sports days, constructing tippy taps, helping to fit mosquito nets, visiting some of the sponsored children and of course the obligatory trip to the equator - plus many other activities.

This being the first time that the girls have visited Uganda I am sure they will find it very strange, but also very exciting and challenging. They will I'm sure come back full of story's and hopefully wanting to tell everyone about their time in Uganda (together with lots of photos).

I know from my first time there how I fell in love with the people and the country and I'm looking forward to meeting some of the people again and hopefully I will get to meet Joseph the teenager I'm sponsoring.

The part I will not be looking forward to is the flight out and the flight back. As British Airways no longer fly to Uganda we have had to find another airline who will take us for the same (or near same) price so we will be travelling with Turkish Airlines and in doing so our travel time will be 15 hours against 9½ hours when we previously travelled with BA. However to keep travel cost to a minimum we have no alternative because Care for Uganda would have less money to use on all the projects they are involved in.

I know that several people in our church are together sponsoring 3 children (Jannifer Nakiwala Kisaakye, aged 6, Samuel Sekamate, aged 12





Jannifer



Samuel



Sarah

and Sarah Nanfuka, aged 11) and Andy has sent a letter to me to share with all at Martin Way.

So I will leave you to read the letter and I would like to finish with my wish / hope for you that you also will have a great time over the summer time - be on Holiday or like us meeting new people and having an experience of a life time.

*Tony Loft*

First, I would like to thank you for your ongoing support for the work of Care for Uganda. As you may know, I regularly visit Uganda with various teams so have the opportunity to see many of the children on our sponsorship programme. I can assure you that your sponsorship is making a difference.

For most children in Uganda, their education is sporadic. They are sent to school when their parents or guardians have some money but this is always only part payment for the term. Once this money is used up, the children are sent home from school until they can afford to pay more towards the fees. Sponsorship means that your children are able to attend school regularly. This obviously has an impact on their learning and performance.

Many things in Uganda are not straightforward. For example, on my recent trip to Uganda with a medical team, we went to visit Lawrence who is sponsored by a friend of one of the team members. When we arrived at his

home, we discovered that they hadn't been able to afford to pay the rent so had moved to a cheaper property. We then had to ask around to try to find out where they had moved to. Fortunately, we went to the new area and managed to trace Lawrence. He is now having to walk quite a long way to attend school, but next term he will transfer to a school which is nearer to his new home. His mother is extremely grateful for the help she is receiving through sponsorship.

Annette, one of our Field Officers, regularly visits the schools to check on the progress of sponsored children and most of them are progressing well. In a few cases where the progress isn't so good, Annette seeks to find out the reason which means we are then able to try and address the issues.

Our community sponsorship programme helps to pay for various projects Care for Uganda operate: providing mosquito nets, solar lights, breeding livestock, energy saving stoves, afro-pads, tippy taps and keyhole gardens. The community members are grateful for those interventions and regularly talk about the difference these things make to their lives.

We started providing solar lamps because we discovered that some people were not using mosquito nets, as they were scared that they would catch fire when they used their kerosene candles. Sadly, I saw a child in a health centre with quite severe burns. The risk of malaria is so great that we wanted to try to help in these situations. Travelling around the area, it was thrilling to see many solar lamps being charged. This means that people can now use mosquito nets without fear of fire and burns. This project is being very well received.

Your sincerely  
Andy Pilcher - CEO





## **June Press Releases from CSW**

It was Refugee Week 20th-26th June. With everything else happening in the world at the moment, it's more important than ever that we take a week to remember the plight of refugees.

One of the many reasons the people you will see in media coverage are fleeing their homes is because they cannot practice their religion freely. A new UNHCR report says more people are being driven from their homes by wars and persecution than at any time since records began, and 24 people are displaced every minute. Our Real Change for Refugees campaign is focused on this idea: that while it's important that we care for refugees by meeting their practical needs, it's also vital to tackle the issues that forced them to flee in the first place.

Mayss, for example, was a teacher in Syria until Daesh came to her school looking for 'the Christian'. Though she was able to escape thanks to the quick thinking of a colleague, the pressure increased on Mayss' family. Eventually they were forced to flee to Lebanon, where they're currently awaiting resettlement in another country. Mayss' story is just one of many – this Refugee Week, please remember Mayss and the thousands of people like her who cannot return to their homes.

Finally, we are pleased to inform you that news that Egyptian human rights defender Mina Thabet has been released on bail. You may remember from last week's email that Mr Thabet, who specialises in Coptic and minority rights, was arrested on 19th May. Last week, we shared his concerns about the deteriorating state of human rights in Egypt: "the course of justice in Egypt saddens me a lot, not only because of what I'm going through, but because the situation has deteriorated". Let's thank God for Mr Thabet's release and pray for the many other human rights defenders who are at risk in Egypt.

In summary, please pray:

- ◆ For safety for the many refugees who have fled their homes, and an end to the violence that forced them to flee;
- ◆ That Mays's family and others like them would find a permanent home soon;
- ◆ Thanking God for the release of Mina Thabet and asking that the charges against him would be dropped;
- ◆ For Mr Thabet's mental and physical health as he recovers from his imprisonment.

This week, please pray:

- ◆ Thanking God for the opportunities CSW has had to make recommendations for tackling the refugee crisis;
- ◆ That the Real Change for Refugees campaign would be successful in highlighting the need to tackle the refugee crisis at its roots;
- ◆ That the UK, US and French governments would use their positions in the UN Security Council to push for an international investigation into allegations of genocide against religious minorities in Syria and Iraq; That the UN would take appropriate and decisive action on behalf of Syrian civilians;
- ◆ For the release of all of the women and young girls from religious minorities who have been abducted by Daesh (Islamic State);
- ◆ That God would bring an end to the violence being committed by Daesh across the Middle East and North Africa; For peace, hope and safety to return to every nation affected by extremist violence.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

The CSW team

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admin@csw.org.uk

## Extreme Rumour

*Taken from: Extreme devotion, the voice of the martyrs from the co-authors of Jesus freaks. Serious followers of Jesus pay a price, and extreme followers often pay the ultimate price. Each story is true.*

### ROMANIA : AN IMPRISONED PASTOR

**"Is is amazing how you can see Jesus in the face of other believers. Their faces shine, and it was quite an achievement for the glory of God to shine on the face of a Christian in Communist jails. We did not wash -- I had not washed for three years -- but the glory of God shone from behind the crust of dirt. And they always had triumphant smiles on their faces," wrote an imprisoned pastor.**

"I know of other Christians who were released from Communist prisons, such as I was. Like them, I was stopped several times on the street by passer-by asking, 'Sir, what is it in you? You look like such a happy man. What is the source of your happiness?' I told them that it came from many years in Communist jails suffering for my Saviour.

"They could not understand this because they could not think beyond the difficulties of their own lives. They had not learnt to walk in the Spirit and to experience the presence of God. Many would think, 'If only you knew what a life I have -- a husband who batters me, a wife who nags, and children who break my heart.' There are many material difficulties and tempests in your soul. But what of them? How are they to compare with the joy of knowing Jesus?"

*What Jesus gives, no one can take away. He gives us joy in the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. And though our circumstances may grow dim and dark, our joy still shines. Even the darkest dirt from three years in a Communist prison cannot disguise Christian joy. We are not necessarily happy for our affliction. We are not glad for our sorrow. Yet we remain joyful because of Christ's presence within our sorrow. Have you lost your sense of joy? You realise no one can take your joy from you. If it is missing from your life, it is because you willingly gave it up on account of your circumstances. Ask God to restore your joy in him today.*

You will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. (John 16:22)

# July



## CHURCH DIARY

Fri	1	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	3	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Valerie Ashcroft
Tue	5	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	10	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Mon	11	2pm-5pm	Afternoon House Group Social
Tue	12	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	15	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	17	10.30 am	Café Worship led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	19	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.00 pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Summer Social with Friends</i>
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	24	10.30 am	Morning Service
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	26	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	31	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev Chris Morley

*Please refer to the Website ([www.martinway.org.uk](http://www.martinway.org.uk))  
or Weekly Notice Sheet for any additional information*

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The Afternoon House group are holding their social afternoon tea on Monday 11th July 2 - 5pm at 93 Aylward Road, SW20 9AJ. All are welcome to join us.

*Gwen Wildman*

# CHURCH DIARY



Tue	2	8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	7	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Valerie Ashcroft
Tue	9	8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	14	10.30 am	Morning Service with Baptism led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	16	8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	21	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Tony Loft
		6.30 pm	Healing and Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	23	8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Sun	28	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Brenda Cannon
Tue	30	8.00 pm	Time for Prayer

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We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday during these months a very

*Happy Birthday*

and especially to:

**Francesca Heald on 5th July**

**Anne Jenkins on 12th July**

**Jessica Hazen on 26th July**

**Rebecca Smith on 11th August**



Together with Mike Mortley and the Timmis family I walked the 'Circle the City' on Sunday 22nd May for Christian Aid. We would like to thank those who have sponsored us this year for the walk.

*Tony Loft*

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## **New Leader**

Jo Downer will become the new leader for 1st Merton Park Rainbows. She will be taking over from Geraldine in September. Jo is the mother of two children, a girl aged 9 (who goes to Cubs!) and a son aged 5.

Jo has worked in healthcare with children and families for the last 15 years and has volunteered with Barnardos, children's mental health and mentoring charities for several years. She will be a great leader and, with the help of the rest of the team - Janet, Bama and Aisling - the unit will continue to flourish.

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## **Invitation to Grace's Baptism**

On Sunday 14th August, our family and friends will be joining us for the baptism of Grace Fern Harker.

Please do join us to help celebrate Grace's baptism and for cake after the service!

*Martin and Ruth Harker*

Items for the **September Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: [roife@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roife@hotmail.co.uk)) by **Sunday 21st August** at the latest