

## MINISTER'S LETTER

In his book, *Threshold of the Future*, Mike Riddell writes:

*'The Christian Church is dying in the West. This painful fact is the cause of a great deal of avoidance by the Christian community. To use terminology drawn from pastoral care, the terminally sick patient is somewhere between denial and bargaining. Many refuse to contemplate the prospect of death, bolstered by small outbreaks of life, or encouraging one another to falsify the diagnosis. Others try to broker a deal with God, whereby if they remain faithful or pray harder or open themselves to a new experience, their small corner of congregational life will be saved.'*



Mike is suggesting that we're burying our heads in the sand, that we're in denial - hoping that the situation will go away when there's no evidence to suggest that it will and indeed plenty of evidence to say that it won't.

Denial is a very human reaction to grief of course – we know that from our own lives – but it's rarely a healthy state to remain in. It's not until we accept reality, however unpleasant it might be, that we can hope for change. And here's the reality. Life is fragile. Death is inevitable, even for the Church.

Now though isn't a time for despair. There *is* cause for hope and even for celebration. At the heart of our faith is a belief in resurrection life. Sometimes things have to die in order that God can do something new. Painful as it might be, there's sometimes a need for us to let go and to trust in God. The story of the Bible is that God is a God of new life who can and will do new things. We can trust God.

This isn't to say that we should just sit back and watch the demise of the church, mourn its loss and wait for God to do something new. The story of the Bible also shows us that time and time again God uses human beings as agents of change in the world. As human beings, we're called by God to be partners in a creation that's ongoing. We each have a part to play in the work of the kingdom. In the first place this may well involve

us letting go, grieving and trusting God. But it will involve more besides.

We increasingly live in a pluralist society. Pluralism refers to the close proximity of differing and sometimes competing belief systems, culture and lifestyles. Our politicians largely follow a secular agenda – which has no real place for religion. Our communities are increasingly made up of people from different faith backgrounds and none. I'm not bemoaning these things - far from it, I think it's a good thing that our political system is secular and that the society in which we live is rich and diverse - but what it means is that when we use the language of the Church, we're rarely speaking a language that those around us – who don't share our faith – can understand.

Riddell reminds us that the good news is that Christianity grew in a pluralistic context, and did it by and large by telling a local, timely, particular story with an experiential slant. He goes on to suggest that, in the new environment in which we find ourselves, there's an increasing freedom for us to recount our story. It'll not be the only one told, but if it has substance and authenticity, then that may well be communicated to those listening.

We'll have to do many things if we're to play our part in the work of the kingdom but surely one of the most important things that we need to do is to find new and powerful ways of telling the story of Jesus Christ with feeling and passion.

We have to remember that it's simply not our job to convert anyone - God's Spirit does the converting, when it's appropriate and when the time is right - but surely we do need to believe in the story, make it our own and allow the Spirit to work. Again, the story of the Bible tells us that, if we can do this, the story will connect and people will be both challenged and inspired to follow Christ and to live Christ-like lives.

Perhaps we need to return to that analogy of the terminally ill patient.

Over the years I've had the great privilege of journeying with several people who received the news that we all dread - news that they had an illness, a disease, a condition that was going to be untreatable. People

react to such dreadful news in different ways. And, there is no right or wrong way to deal with the news that your life is almost over, that you're going to die soon.

But, in my albeit limited experience, those who somehow managed to come to terms with this harsh reality and who decided to live life differently, treasuring every moment, cramming as many experiences as possible into their lives; those who realised that they had nothing to lose but everything to gain by being more daring and taking more risks even, not only enjoyed a better quality of life and a more rewarding last few months or years, they also found a new lease of life and - for a while at least - confounded medical opinion by living longer than expected or predicted.

If the Church in the West is dying, if the situation is terminal, what have we got to lose by playing it safe anymore? And if we start taking some more risks, who's to say that that won't increase the chances of us being alive to new and exciting possibilities that God has in store for us?

The writer Kester Brewin assures us, 'The body of Christ will continue, eternally. But these little bodies that we build, trying to bring some structure and rhythm to the relationships we share, need not carry on forever.'

It remains a distinct possibility that God can still use the Church in the West but not as it has been/is currently. It remains a distinct possibility that we could be - that we need to be - witnesses to the death of our little body. But perhaps witnesses also to its re-birth.

Let's trust that God will do something new again. Let's allow the Spirit to move that the Church may, yet again, experience resurrection life. Let's engage with scripture in fresh and exciting ways. Let's own the story for ourselves. Let's find new and powerful ways of sharing this story, our story, with others.

With every blessing

*Paul*

## AVISIT TO THE MOSQUE



On Sunday May 2<sup>nd</sup> we went on an invited tour of The Morden Mosque. We were greeted with great civility at the door and given Guest Tag for our lapels. The whole visit was organised by men. The ladies were having a Ladies Day amongst themselves. We were asked to remove our shoes before entering the Prayer Hall, the reason being that when Muslims pray, they kneel and their faces are pressed to the carpet. It would not be hygienic if the carpet were soiled.

The Mosque is the largest in Western Europe and the two Prayer Halls holds 2000 people each, one for the men and another separate hall for the ladies. The reason given for the separation is because when Muslims pray, they are kneeling with their faces on the floor. It would not be very appropriate for a man to be close behind a lady or vice versa. Imagine what giggles from the teenagers there would be.

Everywhere was spacious and light, painted cool blue and white. I was

surprised and had expected vivid colours and swags of flowers. They use no music, so there was no organ but a very plain Lectern for the Imam (Minister).

After the Prayer Hall we replaced our shoes and toured the Huge Library, Exhibition Hall, Crèche and Homoeopathic Pharmacy. Everywhere was beautifully clean and shining. You could have eaten off the stripboard floor they were so spotless.

We had our own guide. He was very helpful and willing to answer any questions without being offended. They call themselves The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and follow the original Koran written in Egypt thousands of years ago. They claim that Islam was the very first religion from which all others evolved, including Judaism and Christianity. I must admit many of their beliefs do coincide with ours.

After our tour we met in one of the halls for a question time and many questions and assumptions were explained. Their motto is 'Love All, Hate None'. They plead that not all Muslims be judged by the action of some who are extremists. Their rules are simple.

Kill no women - kill no children - kill no old people - no person set on fire - kill no sick, injured or disabled.

Prisoners of war to be treated well. Protection of Holy men, defend yourself - not attack. Women dress with modesty. That doesn't mean a sack over them with a slit in the face, that's extremism again.

After question time we were given a very pleasant meal of Chicken Curry, Saffron rice, Naan bread, juice and water. At no time did we feel unwelcome or ill at ease, it did amuse us that the men did all the work, cooking and serving, The ladies joining us to eat when all the work was done!

If you have the opportunity to pay a visit next open day, I'm sure you would find it a pleasant and informative experience.

*Kay and Ron Moore*

**CAN YOU HELP TO SEND 20 YOUNGSTERS TO  
CHRISTIAN CAMPS THIS SUMMER?**

**Camp Fees**

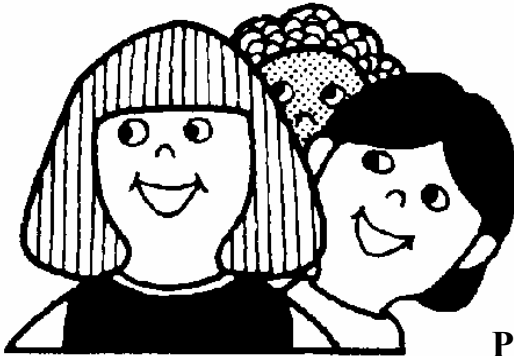
**£120**

**Transport**

**£20**

**Bible**

**£10**



**Pocket Money**

**£10**

This August Christian CARE is planning to send a total of 20 children and teenagers aged 8-15 years to Church Pastoral Aid Society Falcon Camps at Hall Green in Kent. This can cost of up to £160 for each youngster. The Camps include both fun outdoor activities and Christian teaching.

Donations may be sent to:  
Camps Appeal, Christian Care Association,  
St Barnabas Community Centre,  
Thirsk Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 2BD

Please make cheques payable to *Christian Care Association*



# **Celebrate @ 8**

**You are warmly Invited  
to join with others from the  
circuit in cafe style worship**

**At**

**Martin Way  
on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June  
@8pm**

**For further details  
Please contact  
Mike Mortley  
020 8540 4961  
[mike@mortley.org.uk](mailto:mike@mortley.org.uk)**

# Spring Harvest

Spring Harvest 2010



LIVING DISTINCTIVELY IN A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY



This year 28 people went to Spring Harvest at Skegness in April, unfortunately there should have been 30 but Simon & Yvonne were unable to join us (we glad you are ok Yvonne and wish you well with the new arrival to your family in June). Spring Harvest was just as packed as normal with fun, laughter, fellowship and teaching, just there was more in the group - which was great! We had 5 apartments – so it was fun keeping up where everyone was but we managed (with the help of our mobile’s thankfully!)

The Theme for Spring Harvest 2010 was ‘Different eye’s’ Living distinctively in a time of uncertainly. Through a variety of Bible Studies, Morning Zone sessions, seminars and discussions we were encouraged to look closely at Ethics and how Christian Ethics are distinctive because ultimately we don’t follow set universal principles – we follow Jesus.

Sound’s quite a subject, hey! Well it was certainly a subject that got us thinking and Spring Harvest broke it down, so from the very youngest to the very experienced person there was defiantly something for all! Morning Zone sessions are based on people’s preferred learning styles; these were Activist, Theorist, Reflector, Pragmatist and this year a new





*(Missing from the photo is Celia, (Little) Emily, Natalie – as they were still at their groups. Also Paula & Les (Simon's Parents who had left earlier)*

zone - Culture. It is believed that everyone learns in different ways and Spring Harvest encouraged us to find out by filling in a questionnaire to find out our individual learning styles, so we would get the most of these sessions. If you would like to find out more about this just speak to someone who went to Spring Harvest.

The Children and young people also had something which was planned just for them; Omega Zone 8-11, Distinctive 11-14 and Iscape 15-18 years old. They all seemed to come out of their groups enthusiastic and wanted to find out more – which was great to see!

It sounds like we spent our week listening and learning which we did in a way (if not from Spring Harvest but our fellowship as a group as

well), but we also had lots of free time to enjoy all the different Butlins facilities such as the fair & swimming, also the beach, or just sitting having coffee together. People could do as little or as much as they wished. One day all the young people went to the beach in the afternoon and joined in with the Sand Castle competition and did really well coming 2<sup>nd</sup>!



*They called their Sand Boat – Ark 2 and have a look closely there is a water skier at the back!!*

Well that was a taster of what we got up to Spring Harvest 2010. We are planning to take a group to Spring Harvest 2011 and the theme is called ‘Route 66’ it’s time we stopped seeing the bible as a book. It’s 66 volumes by more than three dozen authors to make a little library. It is a repository of reference – a treasure chest of truth, a library of lives.....





## Martin Way Harvest Fair 2010

This year our Harvest celebrations will be held on **Saturday 25th** and **Sunday 26th September**.

On the Sunday, Paul will be leading us in our thanksgiving worship.

The Saturday will take the form of a Farmer's Market in which the whole community that is Martin Way Methodist Church is invited to participate.

How? By growing produce and plants (remember Paul's seeds?) and making jams and pickles for sale.

If you don't have green fingers, then we will also have stalls for Craft, Bread and Cakes for which contributions will be gratefully received. There will no doubt be other stalls as well as children's activities. Lunches will also be available.

There will be a photographic competition for different age groups (Theme: Summer Holidays).

All users of the premises are invited to take part so hopefully there will be Flower Displays and an Art Exhibition.

So get your seeds planted, needles clicking, hands kneading, cameras snapping in readiness for the big day.

All proceeds will be for charity.

More details nearer the time.

*Jesus said "Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat.*

*But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over."*

*(John 12:24)*



# Mozart, Haydn Vaughan Williams Beethoven



A charity concert

Mozart: Overture to 'Don Giovanni'

Haydn: Trumpet Concerto

Vaughan Williams: 'The Lark Ascending'

Beethoven: Symphony No 1 in C

Christian Barraclough - Trumpet / Clare Wheeler - Violin



## The Haydon Chamber Orchestra

Conductor

Fred Shaub

**Sunday June 20th at 7.30 pm**

at

**St. Barnabas Church**

**Situated at the junction of Merton Road and  
Lavenham Road**

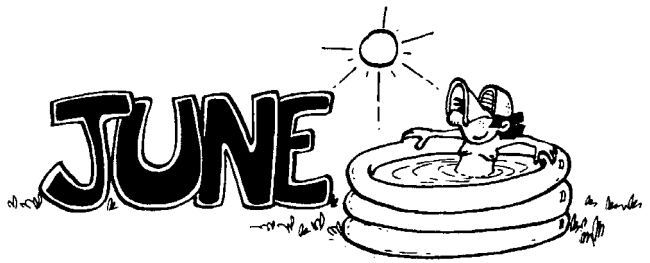
**SW18**

admission free with a retiring collection

All proceeds to be shared between CLIC Sargent  
and St. Barnabas Church.



# CHURCH DIARY



Tue	1	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Fri	4	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	6	10.30 am	All Age Worship led by Rev Paul Timmis with the Baptism of Matthew William Loft
		8.00 pm	"Celebrate @ 8" (Circuit Cafe Worship)
Tue	8	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		7.00 pm	Circuit Meeting at Martin Way
Weds	9	7.45 pm	Midways Group - <i>Andrew Fox</i> - Poland
Thurs	10	8.00 pm	Church Council
Sun	13	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Rev Margaret Adams
		6.30 pm	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	15	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
		7.30 pm	Men's Supper Club - <i>Rosie Greave</i> - History of Leisure
Fri	18	12.30 pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	20	10.30 am	Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	22	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer
Weds	23	7.45 pm	Midways Group – <i>Fish &amp; Chip Supper</i>
Sun	27	10.30 am	Morning Service led by Mr David Eagle
Tue	29	10.30am-noon	Coffee and Chat
		8.00 pm	Time for Prayer

*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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We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday this month a very

*Happy Birthday*

and especially to:

**Simon Ward on 3rd June**

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### **A CHRISTENING INVITE**

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June our grandson Matthew William will be christened. Brett & Janine Loft invite all at Martin Way to join us after the Service for light refreshments/cake. Please let Tony or myself know or contact Brett & Janine on 07966910542 or [neenloft@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:neenloft@hotmail.co.uk).

*Maralyn Loft*

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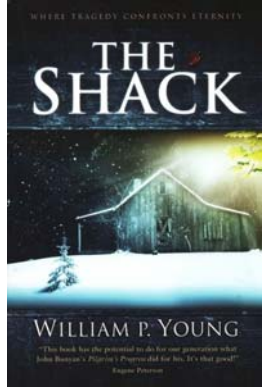
### **MEET AN AUTHOR**

Joanna Williamson is writing a book on Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission. Come and be inspired by the life of one of the most amazing and devoted missionaries that ever lived.

Come to The Methodist Church in Raynes Park on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June. We will meet at the Coffee Shop for refreshments and presentation from 6.30 to 9.00pm.

## Summer Book Club

You are warmly invited to join us as we read and share our thoughts on 'The Shack' by William P. Young.



If you would like to join our group we will be meeting on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at 8pm at my house. In preparation for the first meeting you need to purchase or borrow a copy of the book and have read the first 4 chapters. (At present the book is £3.95 on Amazon.co.uk or available from Morden, Wimbledon or Raynes Park library). We will then meet again on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June and a subsequent date to discuss the rest of the book. If you want to know a little about the book, here is the description:

*Mackenzie Allen Philips' youngest daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later in the midst of his great sadness, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to that shack for a weekend.*

*Against his better judgement he arrives at the shack on a wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. What he finds there will change Mack's world forever.*

In a world where religion seems to grow increasingly irrelevant THE SHACK wrestles with the timeless question, 'Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain?' The answers Mack gets will astound you and perhaps transform you as much as it did him. You'll want everyone you know to read this book!

If you are interested in joining please let me or Abby know.

*Jane Smith*

Items for the **July Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: [roife@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:roife@hotmail.co.uk)) by **Sunday 20th June** at the latest