

MINISTER'S LETTER



Listening to Rhidian Brook offer his *Thought for the Day* on BBC Radio 4 this morning (20/1/2011), I was reminded that this week has been referred to by a British psychologist as being the most depressing of the year, with ‘misery troughing on the third Monday of January, or ‘Blue Monday’ as it’s now been dubbed.’

If this is the most depressing week of the year, it goes without saying that the weeks either side of this date aren’t going to be that great either. During the months of January and February, a number of things combine to leave many of us feeling if not low then lower than usual. For some, it will be just a blip. For others, the dark feelings will threaten to engulf and overwhelm – hence, perhaps, the use of the language of depression in the findings of this psychologist at Cardiff University, released some five or six years ago now.

We live in a culture that’s deeply uncomfortable with depression. We tend, as a society, to veer between denying the very existence of depression on the one hand or identifying it with weakness and belittling it on the other. So this week, each year it seems, newspapers trawl out these findings and, Rhidian Brook excepted, make something of a joke of them. But that might be because many of us use the language of depression too readily and lazily. I know that I am as guilty of this as anyone - not least when my beloved football team hasn’t won for a few weeks - but when we joke of being depressed, we are doing the disease and those who suffer from it a great disservice. As the eminent American novelist and essayist, William Styron tells us, ‘depression’ is “a true wimp of a word for such a major illness”.

I don’t know enough about depression to be able to write about it at any length – so I’m not going to. I don’t know what it is to be depressed, I don’t know just how awful depression can be. But, statistically, 1 in 5 of us will experience depression at some stage in our life. That could be a person in every pew or row of every church – including this one. Surely then we have to take it seriously and find a way to talk about it in

church. We have to find a way to give people permission to talk about their own depression and not assume that because we have God or Jesus in our lives everything is always going to be just fine. It's not. So we have to create a culture of honesty in which people can be real with one another.

Jim Cotter, an Anglican Priest, has written a brilliant, insightful and moving book about his own deep depression. A superb wordsmith, he's called it 'Brainsquall' because he thinks 'brainsquall' more accurately describes what he went through than the word 'depression'. 'There is' he says, 'meteorologically, a black squall, with a rapid build up of dark clouds giving warning. But more apt is a white squall, a sudden violent tempest whipped up seemingly from nowhere, 'out of the blue', wreaking havoc and threatening destruction to everything in its path. It may not last long but the effects of its passing last a very long time.'

In the introduction he describes his experience like this:

The house of my being was not secure against the elements, and too many windows were open. A stormy wind hurled me along a passage, and my foot dislodged the catch of a trapdoor that I did not know existed. I fell down rotten steps, the door clanged shut, and I landed unconscious on the stone floor of a dark cellar. There was enough air through a ventilation shaft for survival. From time to time voices and shadowy figures would impinge on my awareness, and they became clearer as my eyes got used to the dark. Some were earthed enough to sit with me without intruding and helped me discover that the stone floor was trustworthy. And little by little the steps were repaired with the help of 'angel-messengers' descending and ascending upon them. A few sat on the top step and blocked out the light...

Taking up Jim's analogy with the trapdoor and the cellar, perhaps too often in the Church we have been guilty not only of blocking out the light for those struggling with depression but also, sometimes, of slamming the trapdoor shut and bolting it from the other side.

For the Church to be a bearer of the Christ-light, it first has to acknowledge the presence of the darkness. We're often quick to do this

in abstract terms – speaking at times of a battle between good and evil or perhaps worse (in my opinion) of God and the Devil. That’s easier to do - that’s “out there”. Talking about and acknowledging the reality and presence of depression within the Church and in our lives, now that’s much more difficult, much more costly.

But what would the Church look like if we all took seriously the hymn words,

*I will hold the Christlight for you in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I’ll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow til we’ve seen this journey through’?*

What would the Church look like? More Christ-like for a start.

With every blessing,

Paul

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BIBLELANDS

The following uplifting story appeared in the 10th Edition of the Friends of Biblelands Newsletter recently published. Our friend, Ladeem Shwaysi, who founded the Al-Kafaât Foundation in Lebanon for disabled children many years ago submitted the article which tells of his son, Raif’s association with the child in the story.



Raif, you may recall visited Martin Way many years ago and shared a presentation of his father’s work; he has now taken over the Directorship of Al-Kafaât - we hope you enjoy this heartwarming story.

Mary and Derek Heaton

A CHILD I SHALL NEVER FORGET

(A story from Biblelands Newsletter)

Nehmeh Nehmatallah was a few months old when he was found inert, lying in a garbage bin in Saida. It was a passer-by who sensed his presence and rushed to call for help. In hospital, Nehmeh was given emergency treatment, and he was to survive. Only Nehmeh was not what you would call a healthy boy, for he had all the possible ailments nature can possibly inflict onto a human being. With multiple handicaps and a severe form of cerebral disability, Nehmeh could not see, nor hear, nor even feel anything with his body. To make things worse, Nehmeh had serious respiratory problems due to his cerebral condition, which led the hospital to place a nasal tube that was to dangle through his nose from that moment. Added to these endurances was his inability to masticate food, which obviously made his feeding a long and tedious task for therapists and helpers alike.

Funny that Saida, our Biblical Sidon, was to be the location where Nehmeh came into the life of Al-Kafaât. Christ passed through Sidon on his first visit across Tiberius, wandering north of Cana where He attended a wedding and demon-strated himself for the first time as The Son of God. Looking up from the old city of Sidon while standing at the exact lo-cation where Nehmeh was abandoned, you can see the cave of Mneitra, a naturally carved grotto where it was said that Mary waited for Jesus as He walked around the lands at the foothill of Mount-Lebanon, today Sidon, Sarafand (the Biblical Sarepta) and Sôr (the biblical Tyre).

I read the news in the papers and immediately called on the procurator of the Republic, the one person who has the authority to entrust Al-Kafaât with a street-child who has no apparent family. Nehmeh needed specialised care, which he could only receive at Al-Kafaât. Quite expectedly, the procu-rator was relieved that I called and he hurriedly issued the documents that gave Nehmeh to our custody. I designated Sister Victorique to make the journey to Sidon to collect the child and bring him to his new home.

We thought of taking him to Church and christening him. A ceremony

followed and a name was conferred: Nehmeh, the Arabic word for Grace, and Nehmatallah, for Grace-of-God. Sister Victorique and my son Raif stood as godparents. They were to look after him from that moment onwards.



The room allocated to Nehmeh at Al-Kafaàt looked like an intensive care unit more than anything else. You could see puppets and an army of teddy bears sitting calmly on oxygen bottles while lullabies and chimes invaded the room from a ceiling-carousel that was fuelled to keep turning round and round. Nehmeh could hardly see or hear any of that. He was locked away in his own cell. 'Never mind this', Victorique would say, 'I am sure he can feel us', in a motherly effort to interpret what would seem to others to be an involuntary mimic or echolalia on the part of Nehmeh as an attempt to establish communication.

It was not long before he was admitted to hospital again for irregularities in his cardiac activity and difficulties in breathing. While in hospital, his temperature dropped and doctors were alarmed by a situation that was unequivocally turning more dramatic by the hour. He was given up for lost. To make things worse, the hospital management informed me that the Government Health System would not pay for a respirator in case of a respiratory arrest, as this equipment is scarce and cannot be disposed of 'for such cases' (sic). In other words, if Nehmeh were to need a ventilator while in hospital, Al-Kafaàt was to arrange for the equipment from private sources and the cost was just incredibly high. As I left for home it was early evening already. The nurse had positioned a halogen high lamp, turning its head towards Nehmeh to warm his freezing small body. His temperature had to climb back to normal were he to survive.

I sat for dinner at home with my family. The mood was grim as you can imagine. One astonishing incident I recall is Raif feeling a sudden chill that made him wear a jumper, although it was a warm autumn evening

in Beirut and all others around were in short sleeves.

Next morning Raif was in a joyful humour as he came to pick me up. He was humming an old tune, something he usually does when he has good news to share. He looked at me as we jumped in his car and said to me: 'he will be alright, you will see!'

And he did know! Nehmeh was his normal colour when we entered his room. His breathing was back to normal (back to what it originally was, that is, remember that normality in his case was somewhat distinct), his heart and tempera-ture clear of any danger. He could go home! I looked to Raif with inquisitive eyes; he smiled back and said: 'I prayed to Jesus last night that He took some of my warmth and gave it to Nehmeh, and He did!'

Nehmeh stayed among us in the centre for six more years, tenfold the time he was given by the expert doctors that first assessed him. He soon became the mascot of Al-Kafaât, having visits from practically every member of staff and children throughout the different centres, and he was on everybody's lips. All through these years, Sister Victorique cared for him as if he was her own child. Raif recounts how he and Sister Victorique once had a row in the Emer-gency Room of another hospital with Nehmeh under ex-amination on what turned out to be a false alarm:

'On this one occasion that I missed coming to see my child' Victorique said, 'he had to have fever!'

'But I was there to cover for you today,' Raif replied, 'you're not his only parent, you know!'

The attending ER doctor and the nurses who stood present to a conversation between a nun and a young man about their child certainly were very surprised!

Nehmeh passed away in May 2000. The church of Al-Kafaât was overflowing with people, children and staff, as the Maronite priest presided over the final service. Raif spoke that day:

' .. ,You had no arms, yet you could do wonders. You could not see, hear, or walk; yet you had what it took to re-build the Temple in three days.

You sowed in all of us enough force to move mountains, would you be disabled then? What sort of a creature are you to have worked, endeavoured, walked and talked through a multitude?

... Great are you little one, Courageous are you in your frailty. Blessed are you who graced us with a little of God's presence, and elevated the greatest of hymns we sing to the sound of your strangled cries .

... You are the true meaning of Al-Kafaàt, Nehmeh,
.. .You will always be a living prayer for your mother Victorique and me, a prayer we recite in the Temple of Life, in our calling for God through the service we do to our next-of -kin ... '

Nehmeh was laid to rest in the vault facing the altar, in the church of Al-Kafaàt.

Within a month after Nehmeh passed away, Sister Victorique succumbed to cancer. I was told her last words were for her child Nehmeh, as she prepared to join him.

Nadem Shwayri, founder of Al-Kafaàt (Lebanon)

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BIBLELAND Gifts for Easter

With Christmas time drawing to a close, we now draw your attention to the variety of Easter Cards, Candles and Palm Crosses offered in the Bibleland Catalogue. The ceramic gifts also offers a varied collection from which you can choose if looking for a gift for a loved one.

Every item purchased will help Biblelands to assist their mission to deliver health, education and community development opportunities to vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the lands of the Bible.

For more information about the catalogue speak Mary or Derek Heaton.

THANKS TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED

Martin Way made donations to Christian Care, Methodist Homes for the Aged and Action for Children this December as follows. Thank you to those who contributed their time and talent as well you who donated money. We collected more this year than last year, lets see if we can do even better next year.

Total of £1277.00 Donation to Action for Children

Carol Singing at Morden Station	£ 675.00
Sigma Presentation of “The Greatest Show on Earth”	£ 427.00
Christingle Service	£ 125.00
Collection at Christmas Day Service	£ 50.00

Total of £145.00 Donation to Christian Care Children’s Party

Retirement Collections	£ 145.00
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Total of £125.50 Donation to Methodist Homes for the Aged

Christmas Post Box	£ 125.50
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John Butland

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BIG BRUNCH

Our final two Big Brunch events before September are on Saturday 12th February and Saturday 12th March from 10am until 1pm. To help us take the young people to Spring Harvest (a Christian festival held over Easter at Butlins Minehead) we have been fund raising by providing people with cooked breakfast at Big Brunch events.

It is a friendly and relaxed atmosphere where people can come along for breakfast, brunch or lunch, so if you haven't been before why not give it a try and join us. Come along for a full cooked breakfast, a sandwich or if you just fancy some tea and toast. We will be happy to serve you.

Thanks to all those who have been along and continue to support us. Also Thank you to all those who help provide the cooked breakfast - from the cooks Mike and Tony, Scott who keeps us all organised and all the young people who help serve and clean up.

shootingstar.org.uk

020 8481 8180



Epsom & Ewell and Sutton Supporters Group

TABLE TOP SALE

AT

MARTIN WAY METHODIST CHURCH

MORDEN SW20 9JZ

(corner of Buckleigh Avenue)

ON

SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY 10am-2pm

**Stalls include PHOENIX GREETING CARDS, JEWELLERY
HOME-MADE CAKES, PAMPERED CHEF, STATIONERY
1ST FEET BABY MEMORIES and much more**

Tea and Coffee Served

Light lunches available 11.30am - 1.30pm

Entrance 50p Children Free

Tables available £12

To book a table please phone

020 8540 3429

All proceeds to

THE SHOOTING STAR CHILDREN'S HOSPICE



BRIGHT STARS SCHOOL OF DANCE

DANCE LESSONS FOR AGES 3-11

EVERY TUESDAY


Ballet 16:45 - 17:30	£4 per class
Cheerleading 17:30 - 18:15	£4 per class
Jazz 18:15 - 18:45	£3 per class
Ballet and Cheerleading	£7 per student

Martin Way Methodist Church
Buckleigh Avenue,
London,
SW20 9JZ

Come and join us! If its you wish to join or would like a trial lesson then all interest is welcome. You will be taught the discipline & technique to dance, whilst most importantly enjoying yourselves. Any questions please feel free to contact Becky on:

07877412474

brightstarsschoolofdance@live.co.uk
International Dance Teacher
Association - Honours



Merton Park Explorer Scouts Kenyan Project



From 1990, Merton Park Explorer Scouts, working with Mombassa Scouts have constructed with their own hands, a village medical and maternity clinic.

Returning every 3 years, at their own personal expense, money raised during the intervening years is used to improve facilities.

Work achieved so far

- harvested rainwater
- constructed clinic
- added delivery & post-natal rooms
- installed tiled shower
- provided school equipment & local employment

Work to be completed in 2011

- connect electricity supply
- erect boundary fence
- build toilet block

To help raise funds for this year's work, the Scouts are holding an Auction of Promises & Gifts at St. Mary's Church Hall.

Come and Bid at

Auction of Promises & Gifts

Saturday 5th February 6.30 for 7pm start



Merton Park Explorer Scouts Kenyan 2011
Mother & Baby Project

Saturday 5th February 6.30 for 7pm start
St Mary's Church Hall Church Path,
Merton Park, 5W19 3HJ

Items gifted or promises made include:

- Lunch and tea in pavilion at Lords Cricket Ground
- Country cottage for a week
- B&B during Wimbledon fortnight
- Dinner cooked for 4
- Sailing trip from Chichester harbour
- 5 nights stay in Ecuador hotel
- Cherry Tree
- Chauffeur driven car for evening
- Lady's bicycle
- Bottle of vintage brandy
- Garden planter arrangement
- First honey jars from new hive
- Canteen of cutlery
- Cakes
- And much more ...

Entry £2.50 (includes catalogue and first drink) at the door or in advance.

To offer last minute gifts or promises or buy advance catalogue,
please contact Alan Morris on 020 8542 5086.

Come and join the mad world of The Players Academy

A brand new musical theatre school for children 8-16 yrs



Explore the different styles
of theatre with us

Saturday mornings 10am -1pm
at Martin Way
Methodist Church Hall.

For more information
phone 07833 71017
or email

info@theplayersacademy.co.uk

musical theatre school



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Calling for a Helping Hand

We are in urgent need of help with the Sunday Club. This has been an ongoing issue for a while but this has been helped with the assistance of Rebecca Timmis. Unfortunately she

will not be available from the end of February for three months. So as you can see this is when our problem will increase.

The Sunday Clubs are an important part of our church, who need each and every one to think seriously if you can help in any way.

Please speak to any of the Sunday Club leaders if you are willing to assist or need more information.

Thank you, Geraldine, Sue, Tim, Rebecca and Abby

SIGMA CHRISTMAS PRODUCTION

We had all been looking forward to seeing the SIGMA production of “The Greatest Show on Earth” at Christmas and were most relieved when, after the snow having prevented the planned showing, the production went ahead on Sunday 9th January. Indeed for some it was a bonus to be offered a matinee as well as an evening performance.

The church hall was transformed into the circus ring and the combination of the story of the Nativity with the present day setting of the circus made everything come to life and be more relevant. As the circus people poured onto the stage at the opening of the show we knew we were to be part of a grand time!

Two things were outstanding for me personally - the music at the very beginning which swept us into the show and, at the end, the gravity with which little Kabele Sepanya, as the young Jesus, sat on his mother knee and gazed at the audience - magical moments.

Well done to Joseph, Joseph, Gabriel, Luigi, Herod and the ring-master, and to the shepherds, angles, kings, centurions, to the stalwart musicians and singers, the backstage staff and all those who helped in any way. And a special thanks to the able producer: Anne Conquest.

Rosemary Keen

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CAROL SINGING - THANKS

Once again Thank you to all those who braved the elements and joined together to serenade the commuters of Morden with carols during two nights in December.

In all, £675.00 was raised for Action for Children. £125 more than last year!



WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



Friday 4th March 2011

'HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YOU?'

On Friday March 4th 2011 women from around the world will celebrate the Women's World Day of Prayer. The service has been written by the women of Chile. It is an appropriate theme for bread is eaten at every meal and is very much part of every day life. The women of Chile offer what it means to them as they share this service with us.



Jean Hackett, president of the National Committee of the Women's World Day of Prayer Movement, said:

'This is always an exciting day as a great wave of prayer sweeps the world, beginning when the first service is held in Tonga and continuing around the world until the final service takes place, some 35 hours later, in neighbouring Western Samoa. By then the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries and over 5,000 services will have been held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.'

Stretching from Peru to Antarctica, the Republic of Chile occupies a long, narrow strip of land 2,640 miles long and 110 miles wide. It is a land of incredible contrasts. It also has the highest incidence of domestic violence in Latin America and most women suffer from discrimination in some form or other. Equal opportunities are being pursued.

Although organised and led by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody as we demonstrate our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries and all are welcome to attend. Further information and resources, together with details of services in your area, can be found on the WWDP website at www.wwdp-natcomm.org

MIDDLE EASTERN CHRISTIANS IN TURMOIL AND TRANSITION: HOW YOU CAN HELP



**CHRISTIAN
SOLIDARITY
WORLDWIDE**
VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

Mervyn Thomas, Chief Executive of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, gives a quick round-up of the latest about Christians in the Middle East:

Egypt's Christians had a tragic start to 2011 when a church in the northern city of Alexandria was nail-bombed, killing 21 people and injuring dozens more. With the attack planned in the run-up to Coptic Christmas (Egypt's Coptic Christians celebrate Christmas on 6 January), it was intended to cause maximum carnage and distress. And all this happened close to the anniversary of similar attacks the previous year. And they will face similar threats when they celebrate Easter. But they don't give up hope and continue to go to church despite threats. We've been amazed to see their courage and faith in the face of adversity.

Even though the constitution says that Christians should enjoy the same rights as other Egyptian citizens, the Egyptian Government fails to prevent these violent attacks or provide adequate justice to victims after them. But in Jesus' name, this is the year we can make a huge difference to the lives of Egyptian Christians!



You'll probably have seen on the news that Tunisia's recent antigovernment protests have caused some people to suggest that the Egyptian authorities would soon face the same music. But so far,

September's Presidential elections are on track.

Meanwhile, Egyptian believers keep telling us of their great concern for the Iraqi Church, just a short stretch away from them. You might have heard about the tragic bomb attack on a Catholic church in Baghdad during Sunday Mass that claimed dozens of lives last year. Life is tough for Iraqi Christians as the country walks the difficult path to stability and peace, having to navigate intense extremist elements along the way. They really do need every ounce of prayer and support we can offer.

And for the second Christmas in a row in neighbouring Iran, a ruthless crackdown on evangelical Christians saw believers detained in night-time raids. With 25 detained since Boxing Day and over 100 other arrests in 24 cities, Iran's lack of religious freedom has become even more severe. To give a voice to these voiceless Christians, CSW's advocacy staff regularly meet diplomats, political officials and decision-makers in the UK, at the EU and UN, and in the Middle East itself, making specific recommendations informed by their meetings with Middle Eastern Christians.

I hope you feel moved to pray for all you've read, because our prayers rendered in faith are able to move mountains for others in the Body of Christ! You can learn plenty more about how you can help by getting in touch with us today, and by signing up to our free, regular publications at www.csw.org.uk or by calling 0845 456 5464

Thank you for your ongoing support for the persecuted Church.

As ever in Christ,



Mervyn Thomas
CSW Chief Executive

CSW is a Christian organisation working for religious freedom through advocacy and human rights, in the pursuit of justice.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18th-25th January 2011

This year an ecumenical group in Jerusalem were the originators of the material on the theme of “Things in common” for this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Amidst all the turmoil, danger, injustice and fragility of the Middle East, the churches in Jerusalem challenge the whole church to remain faithful to the vocation to be one, and to recommit ourselves to pray for the unity of the church that the world might believe.

The aims of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is:

- To pray as Christ prayed – “That they may be one”
- To pray for the unity of all Christian people as we share in Christ’s ministry The Week of Prayer offers opportunities to meet and pray with fellow-Christians of different denominations in our locality. Often new local initiatives emerge out of such meeting and praying together.

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Doreen’s House-group

Doreen Warren's House-group will be meeting fortnightly in the weeks up to Easter and will be looking at Jesus' final week. The house-group meets at 2.45pm-4.15pm and everyone would be welcome to come and join these discussions.

Jesus’ Final Week

- Jan 19th Sunday: Triumphal Entry (Matthew 21:1-11)
Feb 2nd Monday: Clearing the Temple (Mark 11:12-19)
Feb 16th Tuesday: Teaching at the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24:1-31)
Mar 2nd Thursday: The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30)
Mar 16th Thursday: Betrayal & Arrest (Mark 14:43-72)
Mar 30th Friday: Trial (John 18:28-19:6)
Apr 14th Friday: Crucifixion (Matthew 27)
Apr 27th Sunday: Resurrection (Luke:1-43)

CHURCH DIARY



Tue	1	10.30am-noon 8.00pm	Coffee and Chat Time for Prayer
Weds	2	7.45pm	Midways Group - <i>Mike Mortley</i> - Modern Jazz UK
Thurs	3	7pm-10pm	Circuit Meeting at Martin Way Church
Fri	4	12.30pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	6	10.30am	Café Worship in the Hall led by Mark Williamson and Platform 10 ^{3/4}
Tue	8	10.30am-noon 8.00 pm	Coffee and Chat Time for Prayer
Sat	12	10.00am	Big Brunch
Sun	13	10.30am	Morning Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	15	10-12noon 7.30pm 8.00pm	Coffee and Chat Men's Supper Club - <i>Rev Paul Timmis</i> - Thanksgiving Service Time for Prayer
Weds	16	7.45pm	Midways Group - <i>Suki</i> - Circumstances that changed my life
Fri	18	12.30pm	Luncheon Club
Sun	20	10.30am 6.30pm	Morning Service led by Valerie Ashcroft Communion Service led by Rev Paul Timmis
Tue	22	10.30am-noon 8.00pm	Coffee and Chat Time for Prayer
Sat	26	10am- 2pm	Tabletop Sale in aid of Shooting Star Hospice
Sun	27	10.30am	Morning Service led by David Eagle

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

We wish all of those who celebrate a birthday
in February a very



Happy Birthday

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Sunday, 6th February

Café Worship in the Hall with Mark
Williamson and Platform 10 ³/₄.

Starting with Sausage Rolls and Coffee/Tea from 10.00, the service will
begin at 10.30am.

Come along to support our youngsters leading a lively service on the
Theme "Salt and Light" taking Matthew 5:13-16 as the lesson.

We look forward to seeing you there.

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**Do something different in 2011!
Volunteer with Christian CARE**

We are looking for
*befrienders, shoppers and furniture project helpers
and a youth outings organiser*

For more information visit our new website:

www.christiancaremerton.org.uk

To enquire about helping contact the office on 0203 044 0093
or email christiancaremerton@gmail.com

Do we pray enough for the Preaching Plan?

The article below is taken from the Methodist Church in Scotland Prayer Bulletin No 73 April-June 1993 which was given to Moira Bailey during her recent visit to Scotland.

Dear Friends,

You will have noticed that on the last Plan the printers managed to insert the preaching Plan on the inside of the prayer Bulletin cover, while the prayer Bulletin itself was placed within the Plan cover. It was a unique (I hope!) mistake. At first I found it irritating, but then came the reflection that there was a certain appropriateness in this particular error. After all, the first call on our prayers ought to be the preaching Plan. Our first duty is to worship God, but before the worship itself must come a time of preparation and prayer – prayer both for the preachers and for our own participation in the Service. Every Sunday we should pray for each of the preachers taking Services and we should pray for our own spirit of adoration and devotion as we enter our place of worship.

At the same time those of us who are preachers ought to reflect that the content of our worship needs to relate to those concerns of mission and service described in the Prayer Bulletin. Our sermons should inspire prayer and spearhead action which can only come to fruition through prayer. There needs to be an intimate relationship between preaching and prayer. Indeed there must be if the preaching is to be effective, because it is prayer which opens up the channels of communication through which God's Spirit can flow in word and in action. Let preachers both preach and pray, and let all of us pray in complete confidence that God will bless those words which are winged with prayer and will bless the prayers which make possible a word in season.

Yours sincerely,

Gerald Bostock

Items for the **March Newsletter** should be with Andrew Fox, (email: roife@hotmail.co.uk) by **Sunday 20th February** at the latest