

The Vicarage door has two bells, but whichever one you ring you will get the same answer!

Anyone who has lived in a Vicarage will know well that the door bell can ring at any time - day or night. Yes, it is important that people feel able to come to the Church, in the bricks and mortar of the Vicarage, whenever they feel the need.

One part of the 'Vicarage's' ministry - and it can happen to anyone who is in the house at the time - is the provision of something to eat and drink to those passing through the area. I suppose it may come as something of a surprise to some readers, but, on average, our Vicarage has about a hundred and fifty requests a year. Sometimes people ask for 'a cup of tea and a sandwich' or money for food or fares. At other times people ask for clothes, baby wear, or nappies. Perhaps the most alarming is the number of people asking if there is anywhere where they can spend the night. SPEAR (Single Persons Emergency Accommodation in Richmond) does great work, but it is always full.

In our Parish, and around it, people are sleeping rough; in empty buildings, in Bushy Park, at the Airport. Camping out in the Summer for fun is one thing, but being forced to rough it throughout the year is something altogether different. We know that over six hundred homeless people die each year whilst sleeping on the streets. That is almost two per night. Particularly worrying is the number of young people - and the increasing number of young families - who have nowhere to live and no work.

A spokesperson for the Children's Society recently made the point that homelessness and unemployment for young people can all too often be two sides of the same coin. 'A percentage of young people end up with no training, no jobs and no income. What we are seeing in our work is that homelessness is a fact of life for some, they can't get a job without an address and they can't get an address without a job, because they can't get support or their income isn't enough'.

The poverty trap is real and it is real even in Hampton Hill. Recent remarks about begging and the style of aggressive begging by some appear damaging, uncaring and irresponsible. We need rather to know why people find it necessary to beg. Church leaders have not been slow to respond: Bishop Jim Thompson remarked that 'while there are people who beg aggressively, there are many more who have fallen into a deep Pit' and Bishop David Sheppard, the Chairman of the Church's Board for Social Responsibility, added 'The Government doesn't seem to understand that there are people who fall off the bottom rung of the ladder, yet who are still precious to society.'

Remember the Church's report 'Faith in the City' now nearly ten years old. It recommended that 'Decent, secure housing should be accepted as a fundamental right for everyone'. Making recommendations is one thing, putting them into practice is quite another. However, one result of that has been the creation of the Churches National Housing Coalition, which is urging Churches, Housing Associations, statutory and voluntary bodies, as well as local and national government, to look critically at the housing situation in our country today, and act. 'What is needed,' says the Archbishop of Canterbury 'is nothing less than a moral crusade to rid society of the evil of homelessness.'

We do well to remember and act upon the words of Jesus that the 'Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head'. Cups of tea, providing babies with nappies and families with some food, important tokens as they are, remain just that - tokens of our compassion and God's care for all his children. But in the 'Year of the Family' we would do better to search for longer term answers to 'the evil of homelessness'.

Brian Leathard.

ST. JAMES'S DAY

JULY 24th 11am

FESTIVAL SERVICE

followed by Lunch



Not a Sabbatical !

Although Brian was granted three months sabbatical leave, the only way I was able to join him was by taking Time off the Payroll. Christian Aid, my employer, granted me this time off on the understanding that I undertook work that would be beneficial to the organisation. This took the form of an attachment (which I was able to arrange through various contacts) to the Development Commission of the National Christian Council in Sri Lanka - a partner organisation of Christian Aid. The Development Commission is engaged in work similar to that of Christian Aid, but works on a much smaller scale and an even smaller budget.

During my period of attachment I undertook several field visits to projects funded by the Development Commission and to potential projects. The objective was to be able to produce project profiles for the annual report to donors and also to evaluate projects and make recommendations to the Commission regarding the channelling of funds in the future.

Most of the projects I visited were working with poverty stricken people in rural parts of the Island. The visit to one of the poorer provinces (the Uva Province) exposed me to the poorest of the poor in a variety of projects. The work of the Development Commission of the N.C.C. in this area is an attempt to move into the rural sector. Two particular groups spring to mind.

The village of Meegahakivula is an area where 'Chena' (slash and burn) cultivation used to be the prime occupation of the people. A group of approximately 45 villagers cart firewood with the use of bullocks into Badulla (the closest big town) 40 kilometres away in order to sell their stock. They travel through the night, sometimes in torrential monsoon conditions and make their way back the following afternoon when they have sold the firewood. The poverty in the village prompts this long trek into Badulla to top up their income so as to ensure their families have basic food items. They are being encouraged and have talked of planting more trees, so that whilst cutting down for firewood, some form of re-forestation is also taking place. The devastation caused by multi-national companies engaged in logging is evident in this area, depriving the villagers of their livelihood.

A visit to the village of Nilmalpotha in this area brought us in contact with villagers belonging to a very low caste. They are commonly referred to as 'Rodi' which is a derogatory term but are in their own parlance known as the 'Gadi' caste. They are effectively outcasts, looked down upon by those around and their means of subsistence is extremely low. They receive no support from the local temple or neighbouring communities.

Here the Development Commission has made a grant of Rs.1000 (£15) in the first phase of an income generating project. Two families are making brooms from the husk of coconuts and ekle sticks (also from the coconut). Their skill in making these brooms is quite evident. (One villager made a broom in 10 minutes whilst I stood watching and then proceeded to present me with it). The second phase involves the sum of Rs.1000, 50% of which is a grant and 50% an interest free loan. The third phase is a further Rs.1000 which will be an interest free loan. This has facilitated the community with the means with which to help themselves and retain their self-dignity - and all for £45.

At the moment the materials for the brooms are bought in the Kurunegala and Kegalle districts in the Western Province where most of the broom industry is currently based. These villagers hope to capture the local market in Badulla and once they have established themselves, they intend to diversify into making rugs and cleaning-brushes.

These two communities not only have a critical understanding of their poverty stricken position but have taken the initiative to improve their situation and try and overcome their problems in spite of the the obstacles they face.

Much of this work tied in well with Christian Aid's own statement of commitment "To Strengthen the Poor", which is the basis for all its action and reflection. I was constantly reminded of Dom Helder Camara's words "When I give food to the poor they call me a Saint, when I ask why the poor have no food they call me a communist". Perhaps we should all exercise this "communist" (the social conscience) within us, by lobbying, asking questions, informing ourselves and making others aware of the plight of our fellow beings around the world. I feel this is part of the way in which we as individuals can tread the path of justice as required by our Christian faith. To this end I concur with Christian Aid's statement that

"we must act to strengthen the arm of the poor until they can stand up to those who often act against them, and have the power to determine their development under God"

Ramani Leathard

Charitable Giving at St. James's

Many of you who give so faithfully to the ever present financial needs of our parish are probably not very aware of the support we give to charities. Each year the PCC of St. James allocates about ten per cent of its income to charitable donations. It is the responsibility of the Charities Committee to decide which causes should benefit from this sum of money. A couple of basic guidelines that the committee follows in allocation the money are firstly, to divide the money as evenly as possible between charities in the UK and charities overseas, and secondly, to give where possible to organisations with a Christian basis.

Some examples of our giving within the UK in recent years are the Church Urban Fund, which supports community projects in some of the poorest parts of the country, the Princess Alice Hospice in Esher, well known to all of us, and the Mildmay Mission Hospital in Hackney, the first hospice in Europe for people with AIDS. Each year the parish also supports the work of Welcare, our own diocesan funded organisation for local social welfare activities.

Overseas the main recipient of our giving in the past year is the Milo Mission Hospital in Tanzania. We have funded the purchase of a motorbike for use by the hospital staff, especially Mr. Benaiah Kilwale who has visited our church in the past whilst staying with Hannah. The motorbike is a very important addition as the hospital is in a remote part of the country. This year we are continuing our support by sending funds to cover the costs of essential spare parts that will ensure the motorbike is always in action. Other overseas giving is to the Church Missionary Society.

As you can see, the presence of St. James's Church, Hampton Hill, is felt by many people beyond our own local community.

Ann Peterken

The Central and Cecil Housing Trust

Many Charities and Causes vie for our attention. In many cases we feel unable to do anything other than give money to help. A new Charity shop has just opened in Teddington which is appealing for more than just either money or goods with which to stock its shop, it is asking for our practical help in staffing the shop with volunteers.

The Central and Cecil Housing Trust is a Charity concerned with providing homes for single homeless women and the frail elderly, they also have sheltered accommodation for retired active couples and move-on homes for the long term homeless women.

Two of these homes are in Teddington, so this is a very local Charity, other homes are scattered throughout five other London Boroughs. This month's Leader column concerns homelessness, so this new shop is asking for people to work in its shop or to provide a van occasionally to move furniture locally. This gives us the opportunity to do more than just give money.

Anyone interested in helping should get in touch with Pam Deacon in the shop, 15, Broad Street, Teddington (almost opposite Tesco's). Even if we feel unable to help in this way we can all either give items to the shop or go in and perhaps buy something, or better still, both.

This is a cause worthy of our support, let us try and give them some.

Among the papers left by Gordon Wilson is this poem dated 1954.

Suppose it should be true!

Suppose there really is a God
 A God who really lives
Believing this is not so odd
 In view of what He gives;
There's live itself - the simple fact
 Of me, myself, alive;
And in that little thought is packed
 The most we can contrive
To know of our existence here -
 I know that I am I.
From that idea the next is clear -
 I know that I must die.
Does God exist? We'll not debate,
 But let's assume He does
And life is ruled by Him, not fate,
 That means a lot to us.
If God is real - as real as you
 And just as much alive -
He knows your life and what you do
 And whence your thoughts derive
You're made by Him, you're not self-made,
 You can't just go your way
As though no God should be obeyed
 And you were here to stay -
You're not, you know, and comes the time
 Before you're really fit,
Eleventh hour begins to chime,
 It makes you think a bit!
If God does not exist, of course,
 It doesn't matter much
Just how you live - the only force
 In conduct is the touch
Of feckless, witless, sightless chance;
 The dreary, empty scene
Of turning figures in the dance
 Of daily dull routine.
But life is real and God is true,
 To hell with Satan's grin;
If we ignore God, as we do,
 Let's call it simply - sin.

C. Gordon Wilson (1954)

Prayer for Tourists

Heavenly Father, look down on us, your humble tourist servants, who are doomed to travel this earth, taking photographs, mailing postcards, buying souvenirs and walking around in drip-dry underwear.

We beseech You, Oh Lord, to see that our plane is not hi-jacked, our luggage is not lost and our overweight baggage goes unnoticed. Protect us from surly and unscrupulous taxi drivers, avaricious porters and unlicensed English-speaking guides.

Give us this day divine guidance in the selection of our hotels, that we may find our reservations honoured, our rooms made up and the hot water running from the correct tap if at all. We pray that the telephone works, that the operator speaks our tongue and that there is no telegram waiting from our children which would force us to cancel the rest of the trip.

Lead us, Dear Lord, to good inexpensive restaurants where the food is superb, the waiters friendly and the wine included in the price of the meal. Give us the wisdom to tip correctly in currencies we do not understand. Forgive us for undertipping out of ignorance and overtipping out of fear. Make the natives love us for what we are and not for what they can screw out of us.

Grant us the strength to visit the museums, cathedrals, palaces and castles listed as 'musts' in guidebooks, and if per chance we skip a historic monument to take a nap after lunch, have mercy on us, for our flesh is weak.

For husbands only.

Dear God, keep our wives from shopping sprees and protect them from bargains which they neither need nor can afford. Lead them not into temptation for they know not what they do.

For wives only.

Almighty Father, keep our husbands from looking at foreign women and comparing them with us. Save them from making fools of themselves in cafés and nightclubs. Above all please do not forgive them their trespasses for they know exactly what they do.

Together.

And when our voyage is over and we return to our loved ones, grant us the favour of finding a willing audience for our movies and a sympathetic ear for our stories, so that our lives as tourists shall not have been in vain.

Amen.

From the Tourist Office in Bruges, Belgium

Zimbabwe

After my retirement this year, I plan to continue teaching in the National University of Science and Technology, (NUST), in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. I shall be teaching some of the NUST degree course in electrical engineering to Zimbabwean students.

Zimbabwe is peaceful, one of the most fortunate countries in Africa. Until 1965 it was part of the Commonwealth, and called Southern Rhodesia. In 1965 Southern Rhodesia illegally declared independence, (UDI) under the minority white leadership of Ian Smith. It withstood weak sanctions until 1979, when Lord Carrington negotiated a transition to legal democratic independence and Zimbabwe was born. Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, both ex-guerilla leaders, contested for power in the elections of 1980. Mugabe won, and has succeeded beyond most expectations in uniting the country. Old enemies have worked in harmony since 1979.

Zimbabwe is a landlocked African country, just south of the equator, about three times the area of England, bounded in the north by the Zambezi, and in the south by the river Limpopo. It is a beautiful country with a kind climate and modern cities. The population is about 10 million. Agriculturally rich, its main crops are tobacco for export and maize for its own consumption. It has some mineral wealth and industry, and is trying to free itself from foreign debt by combining strict financial control with a programme of education and economic development. The NUST is part of this programme; it is the second university to be established in Zimbabwe, the first being the University of Zimbabwe in Harare. The NUST is new, and the first cohort of students will graduate in December 1995.

Mary and I fly to Bulawayo at the end of July, and plan to stay for about two years. A few years after we return to the UK I hope that some of my students will be themselves teachers in the NUST. It would be good to look back and feel that we had had a part, if only a tiny part, in building this promising new country.

Dick Wilde

Around the Spire

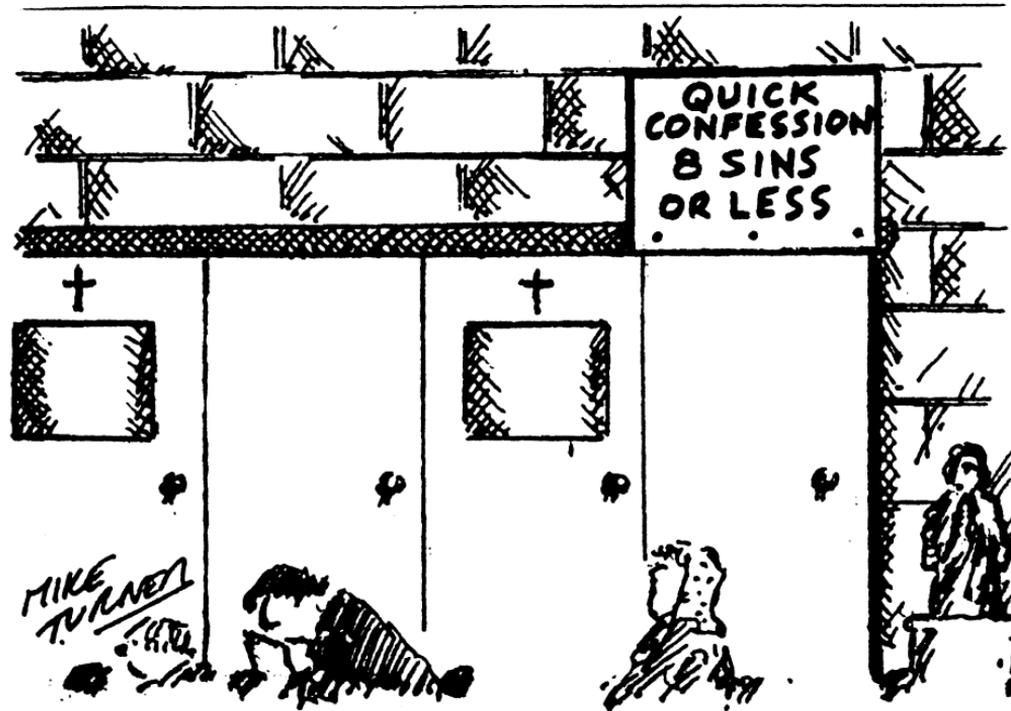
On August 27th Ruth Taylor and Danny Clarke are getting married in St.James's at 3pm. Danny hails from Edinburgh and he is a PE Teacher. He and Ruth met while they were both teaching at the same school in Essex. Since then they have spent the last two years teaching in Nairobi which they found a very enriching experience. Helen and Alan, and indeed all the Taylor family, want the Wedding to be a very happy occasion, anyone who would like to come to the service in Church is welcome and to join in a celebratory toast in the new hall afterwards.

A Church without flowers, as in Lent, always looks very bare. Money for flowers does not come out of the Church funds, it is provided by individuals who like to see the Church looking cared for. As with most things prices rise and for the first time for many years the flower fund has almost run dry. If you like to see flowers in the Church the occasional donation would most gratefully be received by Helen Taylor, or if you can bring a few flowers or greenery from your garden these are also most acceptable. There is usually someone in the Church doing the flowers from about 9.30 onwards on a Friday morning.



Len Orton, after being in hospital for five weeks, eventually returned home only to be admitted a few days later with a different condition. We send him and Margery our love and hope that he will soon be home again, and feeling better. Eve Stock is also in hospital and would welcome any visitors or a letter or card - she is in Ward PI, St. Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, London SW18.

This year's Christian Aid total was £1600. This was a good effort on everyone's part. Thank you to all those who contributed, and to all the many collectors as well as the organiser, Margaret Taylor and her helpers. As we have seen all too vividly on our television screens recently help is needed in many parts of the world to alleviate suffering and Christian Aid is in the forefront of the battle. May God prosper their work.



From the Registers for May

Baptisms

1	Joel Robert Wainwright Phillips	30 Wordsworth Road
8	Thomas Lawrance Rensmann	Bonn, Germany

Marriage Blessing

14	Charles Edward Wayne Morris and Elizabeth Ann Willcocks
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Marriages

21	Andrew Henry Lester and Deborah Phipps
28	Christopher John Parr and Nicola Anne Carey

Funerals

10	Nellie Faith Norah McEvoy	36 St. James's Avenue	Aged 79
27	Francis Williams Parks	40 Deacon's Walk	Aged 85

Interment of Ashes

3	Violet Bethia Challoner	12-14 Langley Avenue, Surbiton	Aged 90
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Dates to Note

July	3	9.30	Informal Service - St. Thomas the Apostle
	4	14.00	Editorial Board, 19, St. James's Rd.
		20.00	HCC - Hampton Baptist Church
	6	14.30	Women's Forum, Church - Invitation Service Preacher: The Rev. Marian Warman
	18	20.00	PCC - Vestry
	20	20.00	Women's Forum, Vicarage Garden
	22		St. Mary Magdalen
	24	11.00	Patronal Festival followed by Lunch
	25		St. James the Apostle

Advance Notices

Aug.	6		The Transfiguration of our Lord
	8	14.00	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road

COPY DATE FOR AUGUST ISSUE: 10 JULY