

Brun News

Autumn 2009 - Donation 40p
www.brunswick-baptist.co.uk



About Our Church

Our Church is situated in the heart of Gloucester City Centre. If you are visiting the city then we are conveniently situated for the bus and railway stations. Just follow the signs to the docks.

Sunday Services are:

10:45 am for morning worship and 6:30 pm. Please check inside this magazine for communion Sundays and times.



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If you have a prayer request, please ring one of the following people between 6.30p.m. and 7.00p.m. unless it is very urgent. Give your message as briefly as possible and do not engage in conversation at this time. The person receiving the message will then pass it on to the other members of the group.

The Team are (In no particular order)

Janet Portwood, Hilary Hill, David & Alice Godsell, David & Louise Williams, Dorothy Manley, Audrey Pavitt, David & Georgina Dowling, Sylvia Tripp, Alison Walker, Lorna & Stuart Hurst, Rob & Miriam Atherton.

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The Discovery of DNA Profiling



On the 10th September this year was the twenty fifth anniversary of Professor Sir Alec Jeffreys developing DNA finger printing and DNA profiling. It is amazing to think that he uncovered the process by chance in his laboratory at Leicester University and the use of this technique has since been instrumental in solving so many crimes and identity cases.

The principal of DNA {Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid} is that each living creature has a unique code or structure of their cells that can be used as a genetic fingerprint to identify them from others. With the aid of super computers individuals can be identified in seconds from the smallest of particulars.

In the past I have read passages like Matthew 10:30 *“And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered”*, and

wondered how can God possibly know so much about me, when you consider there over 6 billion people on this earth. As I have learned if a computer can identify an individual in seconds from the tiniest of particulars how much more can God know about each of us.

DNA has also taught me that there is clearly a code or a design to life. And where there is a logical design there is a designer. The beautiful structure of life helps us understand a little more about our incredible creator. God is far more than an assembler of cells and molecules; rather he is an architect and inventor of the highest order.

Finally DNA has also helped me understand a little more regarding “the Trinity”. How can there be one God, yet He appears in three persons? Perhaps we could say that although God appears in different forms “Father” “Son” & “Holy Spirit” they are one, for they share the same DNA.

During September and October I plan to spend time studying, reflecting and listening to the God of the universe who desires that we make every effort to seek and understand just a little more about him and his creation.

God bless you

Pastor Colin

Thank you for asking me to submit an article to the Brun magazine concerning the Gloucester Day Parade and the Mock Mayor of Barton's inauguration. Here goes. I must apologize in advance for my lack of journalistic skills. When it comes to motivating, politicking and agitating I am in my element. I must apologize, belatedly, for press ganging and coaxing all my friends and colleagues, from Brun and members of the City Council, Military, Auxiliary groups, the G.O.D.S, political parties, commercial bodies, resident and Christian Faith Groups, into coming out of the woodwork and demonstrating their loyalty and faith in this great City.

A City under siege. The siege I am not referring to on this occasion is the siege of 1643, however heroic and inspirational the story of the Citizens of Gloucester's stance against the tyrannical abuses and Monarchical privileges practised during the reign of James I; but, our present times, here in the 21st century gloom



and doom, until recently, was the order of the day. Negativity was commonplace, apathy was encompassing and stifling the will of Gloucester folk to see all the positive changes that are coming to the fore on their own door step, We, as a City, are going through a new renaissance period, during a recession, and can justifiably boast about many things that have happened over recent months and years in our City; the University of Gloucestershire, Gloucester College, The Quays development in the docks, which is bringing wealth and employment to our City, as well as countless visitors, Blackfriars, the proposed pedestrianisation of Southgate Street, Albion corner, right out side our front door, not to mention sweeping changes that will incorporate our Church which shall be at the heart of our future City.

Brun on Gloucester Day certainly played its part by embracing the concept



of Gloucester Day, demonstrating its faith in the City and raising morale by firstly joining in the Mock Mayor of Barton's Parade. The event put a smile on countless faces as the Mock Mayor of Barton, Jean George, was transported around the City in a River Severn lifeboat. The aforementioned Mock Mayors of Barton St Mary are a by-product of the restoration of the Monarchy. Another story for another day. The procession progressed around the City and representatives from Brun collected £186 for the Civic Charities. The Youth Group and Jam Club had bags of fun waving flags of the world. In the afternoon Brun took to the streets once again to demonstrate its faith in the City and advertise our existence as a City centre church but predominantly in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Churches' contingent in the Gloucester Day Parade. Members sporting their new Brun sweat shirts stood out as they paraded shoulder to shoulder.

Following the parades the Open Door team excelled themselves by hosting 2

receptions. Members acted as security on behalf of the Mayor and Corporation by providing a secure environment for the Civic Regalia to be lodged during the receptions and during parades, also looking after the bands', and marchers' personal effects.

Not one murmur, not one complaint, not one martyr. Just one big happy family pulling together for a common goal, it was noted by many who came through the door what a cheerful crowd we are at at Brun. And rightly so.

Many Thanks

Alan Myatt
City Crier



Sarah Kelly Concert

It was a couple of years ago that a few of us first encountered Sarah Kelly at Spring Harvest. And it was here that the first idea of having Sarah come visit us was planted. Back in July of this year that idea became reality when Sarah not only held a concert but stayed the weekend.



As part of her European Tour Sarah played the UK 'for one night only'. There was a lot of preparation to be done before the night and all this started months earlier. Publicity was the biggest task set before us, as Sarah is relatively unknown in the UK. But thanks to the internet, a bicycle, and a few flyers the word soon got out. The big night eventually came and with the piano in place, sound check & lights done, publicity in place, tickets sold and Sarah picked up from the airport, all was ready to go.

Over a hundred people came from all over Gloucester and even some from as far away as Bristol, to see her perform songs and hear her testimony. And we weren't disappointed by what we heard. Sarah sang some songs from her first two albums whilst in between explaining what motivated her to write them and in particular she talked about where she was in her life. Sarah also shared with us about the often painful moments in her life some of which were the hardest times. She spoke about the joys in her life too – knowing God; her dogs and the fact that she'd recently got married to someone who made her feel special.

Her music was truly inspirational and we were even treated to a special song (a world premiere no less) that Sarah wrote that very weekend after her visit to Gloucester Cathedral. The song, not yet given a title (Day & Night, Be God Over Me, you can choose) told of a God faithful and strong and our desire for Him to be our God watching over us.



The following day, Sarah came to worship with us at Brun and the whole church was once again treated to Sarah music. Lorna & I then went on to the Howards

Continued

Sarah Kelly Concert (continued)

and had Sunday lunch. We had a chance to talk to Sarah about other things in her life – pets; married life; food etc. This was a nice informal way to end a really good weekend.

A big ‘Thank You’ goes out to Trevor & family and all those who helped in making this event happen.

Stuart Hurst

Holiday Club 2009 - Showstoppers

This year’s theme was God’s show... not just the greatest show on earth - the earth itself is merely part of the show. “The Show” is God’s plan...

Showstoppers showed children God’s plan for saving the world. We looked at God’s creation, David trusting God against Goliath, Daniel’s problems and trusting in God, Jesus coming to earth and God’s rescue plan.



Trevor wrote Brun’s second best selling CD this year. I expect Sarah Kelly sold more. (Please buy one to make it up to him). We had about 45 children each day (62 overall) from a variety of schools and churches. We sang, competed and made mobiles and masks. We pretended it was Christmas and dressed up, we pretended it was Easter, made and ate chocolate crunchies with Easter eggs. (Shame about the boy who didn’t like chocolate!)



They went away with a booklet about God, David, Daniel and Jesus, so pray that it will have a lasting affect on their lives.

Can I say a big Thank You to this year’s team who were fantastic. We had some new helpers and lots of old ones (I mean experienced!). Some children have enjoyed holiday club so much that they have come back as helpers.

Rachel Howard

Church Outing to St Fagans

On a fine June morning a coach load of people young and old set off for the Museum of Wales at St Fagans just outside Cardiff. As we entered the museum the sun began to shine.

This museum is different from other museums as the exhibits are actual houses, farmsteads, cottages, prefab houses and even two churches. All these buildings have been moved from their original villages or towns and brought to the museum and rebuilt stone by stone. As you can imagine the size of the place is vast and you can easily spend the whole day walking! The children enjoyed the sweet shop where you could buy loose sweets in a paper bag just like I did as a child!

Some of us older people remembered the prefabricated houses built after the war to house the returning soldiers and their families. Each had a separate plot, a garden and modern kitchen with two or three bedrooms. After life in a terraced house with no garden and only a toilet down the garden, this was luxury. They were planned to last for ten years, but I think there are still a few around today.

There was a terrace of four or five two up and two down houses, showing how the interiors have changed over the twentieth century. The first house was sparsely furnished with uncomfortable chairs and little else. Each house also had a garden.

The next house had more furniture and looked a bit more comfortable with an upholstered chair possibly for father. We now come to the fifties house with radio and black and white television and a three piece suite. The final house had all the modern fittings with carpets wall to wall, more luxurious chairs but only a small table as opposed to the large one in the first house.

Having seen most of the exhibits, some of us went to the church which had only been opened a few weeks before. It had no pews, and the walls were painted as they would have been before the reformation.

It was now time to return home and many of us were quite tired, but really enjoyed the experience.

If you have not been there it is well worth a visit. The museum is free, but parking your car costs. If however you go on a coach that is also free!

Georgina Dowling



Children Learn What They Live

Dear friends, I was asked by a church member to put this poem in the magazine. I have taken the liberty of alternating he and she because it is then more powerful and personal; feel free to make your own changes!

Lena Tory

If a child lives with criticism, she learns to condemn . . .
If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight . . .
If a child lives with fear, she learns to be apprehensive . . .
If a child lives with pity, he learns to feel sorry for himself . . .
If a child lives with ridicule, she learns to be shy . . .
If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilt . . .

BUT

If a child lives with tolerance, she learns to be patient . . .
If a child lives with encouragement, he learns to be confident . . .
If a child lives with praise, she learns to be appreciative . . .
If a child lives with acceptance, he learns to love . . .
If a child lives with honesty, she learns what truth is . . .
If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice . . .
If a child lives with security, she learns to have faith in herself . . .
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

by Dorothy L. Law

Flower Rota

There are a number of gaps on the flower rota. Please sign up on the board in the foyer.

October 25th	Marie Coughlin
November 1st	Linnette Bryan
8th	TBA
15th	TBA
22nd	TBA
29th	José Jurado Aranda
December 6th	TBA
13th	TBA
20th	Evelyn Coughlin
27th	Evelyn Coughlin

Getting to Know You

In July I spent an evening at the home of Victor and Tasos — the Greek brothers whom we see nearly every Sunday. But how well do we know them?

Hilary: It feels a long time that you have been coming to our church! When did you actually start coming?

Tasos: About 2 years ago I think.

Hilary: How did you hear about Brun?

Victor: I was a volunteer at Redcliffe College and I was brought along by Ivan and Livia (the Brazilian couple).

Hilary: You come from Greece. What brought you to England?

Victor and Tasos: To learn the language for our careers.

Tasos: First of all I was studying at a college in Brighton, but we decided it would be better if Victor and I shared a house in Gloucester. You see, I am training to be a social worker. I was told it was better to come to England to get qualifications.

Victor: What I do is with medical instruments, and all the manuals are in English or German, so I need to understand English better.

Hilary: Do you have jobs at the moment?

Tasos: Yes, I am a volunteer at the hospital, and I also have a paid job at Fernbank (where Marcia works). I still volunteer at Redcliffe too.

Victor: I have a paid job at Cheltenham Hospital, working as a technician in medical instruments.

Hilary: What do you think of it over here? Do you miss your friends? And the weather..?

Tasos and Victor: Well, we miss our friends a bit — but we have new ones. And we don't mind the weather too much!

Hilary: How long do you plan to stay here?

Victor: My job is permanent. I have started on my career. I plan to buy a house in Gloucester.

Tasos: I might go to university in Bath or Bristol.

Hilary: What about Church? Are your parents Christians?

Tasos: Yes, we are third generation Christians — our grandparents and parents are



Getting to Know You (continued)

Christians.

Hilary: What sort of Church do you come from?

Victor: An evangelical one. There is of course a service on Sunday, then a prayer meeting on Wednesday, Bible study on Friday and Housegroup for 18-30 year olds!

Hilary: Thank you for sharing this about yourselves. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Tasos: Well — God knows our plans, but at the same time we have to open up our hearts to hear what He is saying and to listen to what He wants for us.

Hilary Hill

Agape Family Centre, Vaslui, Romania

Spurgeons' recent changes have meant that not only does the Agape Family Centre no longer 'come under their umbrella,' but also since May this year, neither does Family Space. The work of Family Space continues as before, as the only difference is that the churches in West Cheltenham, are now in partnership with Cheltenham YMCA.

The loss of the regular backing from Spurgeons has meant some cut back in the work of Agape Family Centre, so instead of 5 staff working with 30-35 children, they have 3 staff working with 15-20 children.

Michaela the Manager, relies very much on donations from England, especially from Family Space and she is always full of thanks for the 100 plus boxes that we send out each year full of clothes, toys, toiletries, stationery, tools, etc However,
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the most exciting support as far as the children are concerned, are the Christmas presents which, as Michaela says, bring great joy to the children who otherwise wouldn't be as blessed at Christmas time as children are in England.

As for the future, there are discussions going on with another Christian charity that works in Romania to see if the Agape Centre could be run as what is called a 'non-Government' organisation, i.e. in England what we'd call a voluntary organisation.

In the meantime Michaela, as she always does, wants to thank everybody who is thinking about the children at the centre because as she says 'without the support from England the centre would probably have closed by now.'

Phil Blake
Spurgeons Childcare

September

In September we wished Happy Birthday to Richard Fallows, 1st and his wife Ali on the 9th. Cassandra Conceicao on 11th, then Marie Coughlin who celebrated 96 years on 14th! On the same day Daniel Myatt was 12. Joanna Juszczak was also 12 on 16th. Other birthdays were Steve Howard on 18th, Don James on 22nd, then, Marcia and Daniel on 24th.

Happy Wedding Anniversary to David and Georgina Dowling on 3rd, John and Janet Portwood on 7th, Gary and Christine Thomas on 16th, and finally John and Joan Cooper on 18th.

October

Birthdays in October are Jonathan Berry on 7th, Olakunle Abioye on 14th, Joan Cooper 16th. On 22nd Jadey Paratudo will be 2 years old. David Hood is on 25th, and Michelle Shaw 28th.

November

In November we celebrate the birthdays of Karina Paratudo on 4th, Adrian Welsh on 5th, Rachel Berry 7th, Sarah Rodgers 8th, Katie Thorne 11th, Jim Hauxwell 21st, Beauty Nxumalo 22nd, Rowland Binns 23rd, Aster Hajer 25th and David Godsell on 30th.

December

In December we will be wishing Happy Birthday to Carol Brain on 10th, Sam Kanonik on 13th, Eryk Juszczak will be 5 on 23rd, and finally it will be Georgina Dowling's birthday on 27th and Sylvia Tripp's on 30th.

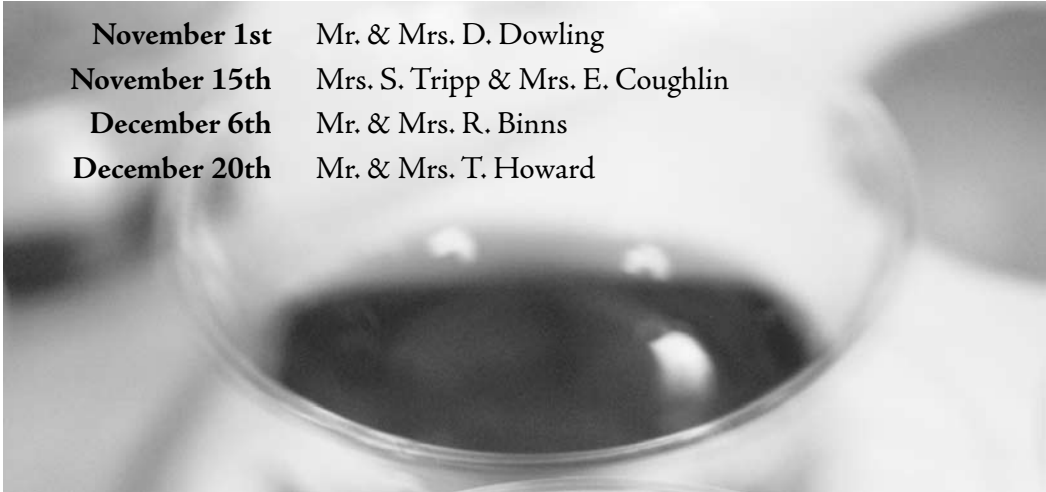
January

A long way ahead to the following in January: John Cooper's birthday is on 1st, Rob Atherton on 4th, Esther Coughlin 7th, Emily Kwepile on 8th, Matthew Berry will be 8 on 12th, then Jacqueline Smith on 15th; Livia and Ivan Naves both on 18th, Stuart Hurst and Davi Paratudo both on 21st.

Door Rota

	Duty Deacon	Morning Stewarding	Evening Stewarding
November 1st	Mr. G. Coughlin	Mr. J. Brown Mrs. P. Harvey	Mrs. L. Tory
8th	Mrs. C. Thomas	Mr. D. Williams TBA	Mrs E. Coughlin
15th	Mr. R. Hill	Mr. J. Brown Mrs. A. Pavitt	Mr. C. Horton
22nd	Mr. R. Atherton	Mr. D. Dowling Mrs. J. Portwood	Mrs. D. Manley
29th	Mrs. G. Dowling	Mr. J. Brown Mrs. P. Harvey	Mr. D. Dowling

Communion Rota



November 1st	Mr. & Mrs. D. Dowling
November 15th	Mrs. S. Tripp & Mrs. E. Coughlin
December 6th	Mr. & Mrs. R. Binns
December 20th	Mr. & Mrs. T. Howard

Signing Off

After nearly 5 years of editing the magazine, initially alongside Jim, and then for the last few years on my own; I have decided to stand down. I am taking on new challenges including being deacon responsible for mission. I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the magazine and particularly to my Mum for her hard work with the proof reading. I would like to wish my successors every blessing.

Richard Hill

“Walk National Forest” Mission - 17th-27th September 2009

For 2 weeks in September, ‘Through Faith Missions’ was running one of its major annual missions, this year to the region known as the National Forest. This area hosted 30 teams of 8 or 10 people, who were based at towns and villages, broadly spread across South Staffordshire and West Leicestershire.



280 volunteers came from across Great Britain and Northern Ireland, giving up a week of their time to “go forth and tell”. David Dowling, Colin Pavitt, Richard Hill and Philip Tory went from Brun.

Much of our week we went from door-to-door, doing a 5-question survey of people’s religious beliefs, on behalf of the local churches. This led to interesting conversations. Sometimes we were there for a deeper need, where people were in distress over something that had happened in their lives. A severe illness; the loss of a child to cancer, and so on. We were able to pray with them, and arrange a visit from the vicar or his wife. If we had not gone, their needs might not have been met.

The last survey question was, “If you could know God personally, would you be interested?” This led to deep conversations about God, often using a little booklet called ‘Knowing God Personally’. This included a short prayer whereby people could pray a prayer of commitment to Jesus Christ and ask Him into their lives. Many did so, praise God.

We worked in schools, doing assemblies or working in the classrooms. We visited care homes and hospitals. We preached in the churches on Sundays. We went to local social events, some organised by the churches we worked with. We went to the pubs



in the evenings (our limit - one pint of beer all evening), and people would get chatting, or ask us about our striking red sweat shirts. Often these conversations ended up talking about God.

This was an inspiring week: life-changing for us, and life-changing for some of those we met. Across the two weeks, the mission teams spoke

THROUGH
—faith—
MISSIONS



to more than 10,000 people, and hundreds responded with a prayer of commitment.

For detailed mission reports, see www.walkforest.org.uk and select left menu > Welcome Back. (Reports at bottom of page).

Why not join us on the next mission, Walk Saint David, in West Wales, 18 September to 10 October 2010. Ask me for details, or sign up at www.t-f-m.org.uk.

Philip Tory

Redcliffe Students Farewell

On Sunday 31st May, the church at Brun had an opportunity to say farewell to the Redcliffe students who have been worshipping with us. They have been a great blessing to us and have got involved in some many different areas of the church. Each of the students came up the front and spoke about what they would be doing next and then we had an opportunity to pray for them. Phocas then led the church in singing “God is so good” in a number of different languages. A lunch was held after the service.



Then on Saturday 6th June the Redcliffe Valedictory service was held at St Catherine’s church. This was a great opportunity to celebrate and applaud all the hard work the students had put into their academic courses and also to recognise the many fun times they had also shared. A wonderful buffet lunch was then held back at the college, which was a fitting climax to the day’s events and allowed people to say their goodbyes.

Richard Hill



This past week the temperatures here in Malawi have been rising sharply so that on most days we are now in the range of the mid thirties in centigrade. It feels like a big contrast to the bitter cold winter we experienced in the UK... just nine months ago!



Thank you for your prayers that have enabled us to adjust so well to living in Malawi. Both girls have settled into St Andrew's International High School so well, picking up on some old friendships and beginning to make some new. They are very glad to be back. Elizabeth has commenced her IGCSE's. Please pray for her workload for 10 IGCSE's. Mary is gaining confidence in finding her way around the school, and who she will be sitting next to in each lesson. She is coping very well with the work so far, even though in some subjects she has a whole year to catch up with her peers.

Today both girls went along to a Bible Club which is held in one of the classrooms and led by a senior student in year 13. About 18 students from all the years and several nationalities were there. They really enjoyed the group and can't wait until next week!

Earlier, there was a worrying time, as the High School was reviewing their bursary scheme and all who previously received help in their school fees had to make a fresh application. The school fees even with the help have been the single most 'damaging' expense to our family finance; without the help, it would be impossible to send our daughters to the school. We are grateful that the school has now granted a bursary help of 30% reduction. This means that we have to pay a little more than before, but we don't have to take our girls out of school. We are very grateful for this continued generous help from the school.

We continue to be grateful for the available technology to communicate regularly with Joshua in UK. We even had Joshua visually on our laptop screen as we sat at the table for tea. We even said grace together, and it was almost as if he was with us. We are pleased that he seems to have made a good start in his A2-level year, and we are eagerly looking forward to the Christmas time when we hope he will be able to visit us for a few weeks.

Missionary News from the Fazakerleys (continued)

Life in Malawi is essentially no different from life elsewhere, but some things seem to become more obvious, at least to us. One of those things is that things break down and that it is difficult/expensive to fix them. Almost inevitably, the first on the list is the car. Recently Helen's car's radiator ruptured with a loud noise and an alarming amount of steam coming out from under the bonnet. We thank God that if it had to happen, it happened at the best possible place at the best possible time - in our back yard, after collecting Elizabeth and Mary from school. We also thank God that a trustworthy and capable mechanic has a garage in town and that our other vehicle, although much older and has had many more serious problems over the years, is still going. We were mindful of the fact that we had not yet paid the bills for the recent services, but we have managed to pay them since then. We just hope that the bill for this repair is going to be within our ability.

On the wider scale, we are glad to note that people seem generally optimistic and confident about their own country. Malawi's economy has been stable and strong in recent years. We see new bank buildings built in town, and we heard that one of the banks where we hold our account here in Blantyre reported over 100% of profit last year. The atmosphere is very different from the one we became used to during our Home Assignment in UK. However, we are told that the current economy is carefully controlled through the foreign exchange market. As if to confirm this, we began to hear about foreign currency shortages in the country. It could be that the current level of control may not be sustained for too long. If so, then we hope the adjustment will be made in such a way to avoid too big a shock and panic. Please pray for Malawi, that the leaders will have wisdom and that the people will enjoy peace and welfare.



Malawi

Our support level at the end of August 2009 was 95.64%. Thank you very much for your faithful and sacrificial giving in our support. As we can do little or nothing to repay you, we are glad about the idea of a heavenly account which Apostle Paul mentioned to the Philippians. May the Lord credit your generosity to your heavenly account!

Megumi & Helen Fazakerley
16th September 2009

A Visit to Syria

As part of our 25th wedding anniversary celebration, Hazel and I visited Syria in May. I had first been some 46 years ago when I lived in Lebanon so I wanted to take Hazel there to show her parts of a relatively unvisited country but with plenty to offer in the way of antiquities and culture.

On our first full day we visited a church in Ezraa, 515 AD, near the Jordanian border, one of the oldest churches still in use, and where St George is buried. As we learned, there are many references to this eastern hero around; however, you couldn't mistake his presence here as there were many icons of the Saint. We then visited Bosra which was the Roman HQ in the region. The theatre is one of the best preserved and has many steps to climb or descend! The streets and ancient houses around have been recently opened up (people were actually living in the houses and some even had old columns in the walls). Here there is the oldest mosque, still in use and the evidence of an old roof to the baths was fascinating to see. In the distance we saw Jebel Druze, the 'homeland' of the Druze, a mystical sect. During a visit to the old city in Damascus (it is the oldest continually inhabited city in the world), the ladies donned their chadors or garments and we all went into the Great or Omayyad Mosque and spent an interesting time watching worshippers



relaxing in the general open-air public area, where children played, and in the inner worship area where an imam was preaching, and people were praying either in groups or as individuals. The winding lanes of Damascus, the hundreds of shopkeepers, the smells of spices especially jasmine, and the hubbub were things I will always remember.

After a visit to the desert kingdom of Palmyra, which saw many invaders - among them the Nabatians and the Romans, a Byzantine church was set up, and lastly the Muslims, we visited the settlement of Ugarit on the coast where one of the earliest evidence of our alphabet was discovered in the 1920's. This was followed by a visit to the crusader fortress of Saone high in the hills. The wild flowers were in plenty, many of which can be found in Britain. Perhaps not the West's most glorious period but the Krak des Chevaliers is well worth a visit as it is the best preserved eastern Crusader castle, perched high on a hill with a commanding position over a valley. Some of the ceiling vaults you

would see in an English cathedral; we saw where they pressed olive oil, stored water, grain, spices, and oil. At one time the castle was able to support a garrison of thousands of soldiers. After a visit to Hama, where the famous water wheels were turning (only in May), we had a few days in the northern city of Aleppo. While here we were taken to the 'dead cities', one of them being the very well preserved church where St Simeon Stylites in 390 AD sat on a pillar for 36 years. He had many followers, who also sat on pillars, and a church was built a hundred years later in his honour. Of its time it was the most important church. This was set amongst pine trees with good views towards the Turkish mountains. There were about 800 of these cities, scattered around the countryside, in various states of ruin (one of the best preserved we saw is a hostel with 2 floors intact), where wine and olive oil was the main produce grown in this most fertile soil, from about 2 AD. They all came to a sorry end for various reasons, mainly because wars between the Arabs and the Byzantines had disrupted their trade. Aleppo was fascinating with its medieval citadel, long covered bazaar and old parts of the city.

On the road back to Damascus we went to Apamea, which goes back to Alexander the Great and all that remains now are Roman ruins after many earthquakes. It

became a centre for Jacobite Christians, named after a monk Jacob Baradeus. We then journeyed to the Aramaic speaking village of Maloula. It was very windy and dusty up in these hills where this old town lies with its church and a convent near by and we were glad to get inside. While in the church, which is now used by Greek Catholics, we heard a priest speaking Aramaic. To think they still speak the language of Christ added poignancy to our visit and was a highlight. Our last few days were spent in Damascus and we visited the Street called Straight many times as it had the best restaurant! Tricky to find but we went in the back way through an orphanage to the chapel commemorating where Paul was lowered in a basket to help his escape from Damascus. It is now also marked with a frieze of him in the basket and a gate surrounds the whole chapel. We also visited the chapel of Ananias. All in all, we had a very enriching time, learned a great deal about the other many faiths in the area, how they have survived through the ages, met very friendly people who I suspect do not come into contact with 'outsiders' that often. They are a proud and conservative people with long held customs which they are keen to keep, some of which seem to hold them back, such as the cost of marriage, as our excellent guide candidly admitted to us.

Gavin McLaren

“Explain God”

Written by “Danny” from Chula Vista, CA, aged 8 for a Homework assignment.

“**O**ne of God’s main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die so that there will be enough people to take care of things here on earth. He doesn’t make grown-ups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way, He doesn’t have to take up His valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers..

God’s second most important job is- listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times besides bedtime. God doesn’t have time to listen to the radio or TV on account of this. Since He hears everything, not only prayers, there must be a terrible lot of noise in His ears, unless He has thought of a way to turn it off.

God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere, which keeps Him pretty busy, so you shouldn’t go wasting His time by going over your parents’ head asking for something they said you couldn’t have. Atheists are people who don’t believe in God. I don’t thing think there are any in Chub Vista, at least there aren’t any who come to our church.

Jesus is God’s son. He used to do all the hard work like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach people who didn’t want to learn about God. They finally got tired of Him preaching to them and they crucified Him. But He was good and kind like His Father and He told His Father that they didn’t know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said OK.

His Dad (God) appreciated everything He had done and all His hard work on earth so He told Him He didn’t need to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So He did, and now He helps His Dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones He can take care of Himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important, of course.

You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to hear you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time. You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there’s anybody you want to make happy, its God. Don’t skip church to do something you think would be more fun like going to the

“Explain God” (continued)

beach. This is wrong! And, besides, the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like camp, but God can. It is good to know He is around you when you're scared of the dark or when you can't swim very good and you get thrown in to real deep water by big kids. But you shouldn't always think about what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and can take me back any time He pleases. And that's why I believe in God."

Submitted by Michelle Shaw

Noah and the Ark

In the year 2009, the Lord came to Noah, who was now living in Britain and said, "Once again, the earth has become wicked and terrorists abound and I see the end of all flesh before me. Build another Ark and save two of every living thing along with a few good humans." He gave Noah the blueprints, saying, "You have six months to build the Ark before I will start the unending rain for 40 days and 40 nights". Six months later, the Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping in his yard but no Ark. "Noah", He called urgently, "I'm about to start the rain! Where's the Ark?" "Forgive me, Lord," begged Noah. "But things have changed. For example:

The local Planners say I need a building permit, claiming that the Ark isn't portable and moveable because of its dimensions.

- My neighbours claim that I've violated local planning regulations by building the Ark in my garden and exceeding the height limitations. We had to go to the County Council Appeal Board for a decision.

- My neighbours also stated that the constant sawing and hammering violated the Noise Abatement Act, and they appealed to the local authorities that I was using a residential area for industrial purposes.

- Next the Ministry of Transport demanded a bond be posted for the future costs of moving power lines and other overhead obstructions, to clear the passage for the Ark's move to the sea. I argued that the sea would be coming to us, but they would hear nothing of it.

- Then the Department of the Environment ruled that I couldn't build the Ark until they'd conducted an environmental impact study on your proposed flood.

Noah and the Ark (continued)

- Getting the wood was another problem. There's a ban on cutting local trees in order to save the spotted owl. I tried to convince the environmentalists that I needed the wood to save the owls. But no go!
 - When I started gathering the animals, I got sued by an Animal Rights Group. They insisted that I was confining wild animals against their will. They argued also that the accommodation was too restrictive and putting so many animals into a confined space was cruel.
 - I'm still trying to resolve a complaint with the Human Rights Commission on how many minorities I'm supposed to hire for my building crew. Also, the Trade Unions say I can't use my sons. They insist I have to hire only Union tradesmen with Ark building experience.
 - To make matters worse, the Inland Revenue seized all my assets, claiming I'm trying to leave the country illegally with endangered species.
- So, forgive me, Lord, but it would take at least ten years for me to finish the Ark." Suddenly the skies cleared, the sun began to shine, and a rainbow stretched across the sky. Noah looked up in wonder and asked, "You mean, You're not going to destroy the world?" "No," said the Lord. "The government and activists are already doing it!"

Submitted by Tony Chamberlain

In the Creche

Below are some photos taken in the creche of the young children at feeding time and play time.

Evelyn Coughlin



I have just finished reading again an article in our recent Sunday newspaper. It depicts the plight of tens of thousands of men, women and children who are in prison as “undertrials”. This means that they have been arrested but they have not been brought for trial. They are often taken into custody for crimes such as ticketless travel or petty stealing. Many of these people are poor and come from the marginalised section of society. It is not that most crimes are committed by poor people but that these people are too poor and powerless to free themselves.



They cannot afford bail or lawyers to defend them and overburdened courts do not find the time to try them. An estimated 243,244 people exist like this as days run into weeks, into months and finally years. Some “undertrials” have been locked away for literally years without any hope for the future. Do you ever weep before God for the injustice in our world? I did that day and on many other days as I face different kinds of injustice almost every week in some form or other.

As I opened the door of the room Monica was sitting looking out of the window. The first thing that struck me was how beautiful she was. Tall and slim, Monica was from Kenya with ancestors from the Masai tribe. She worked as a counsellor for HIV and Aids patients and told me how she loved her work. We sat and talked for sometime as she explained how she had been diagnosed with leukaemia; that the family had banded together so that she could come to Vellore for treatment. Her brother had taken over the family farm from their elderly father. There were cattle and fields of cash crops, and probably by Kenyan standards, the family were comfortably off. Monica needed a bone marrow transplant. Her brother was a perfect match and had travelled with her. When I visited the next day Monica had a worried look as she explained that they had been told the cost of the transplant. It was quite beyond them. They had calculated so carefully in Kenyan shillings and could not believe that it would be so expensive. Sadly we are unable to apply for help for anyone like Monica because she is a foreigner. We talked about possible alternatives but everything revolved around trying to find enough money. When I went to see her the following day she had already left... what of the future for this vibrant young person? It is quite bleak. Just a month ago I had met a young man brought by his friends from Afghanistan...again with a brother who was a perfect match for a transplant. He had also had to return home without hope as necessary funds were not available.

Continued

Do you ever enter into the suffering of people like this? I find that I do many times. Injustice and suffering often go hand in hand. I believe that God wants us to see the small injustices that we face each day. To share and to do all we can to alleviate the pain.

Summer suns are glowing over land and sea

Well, they certainly have been here over the last three months or so. It has been just too hot and tiring this year. Water has become short now. People in the villages are getting drinking water every 15 days and each family is rationed. The administration brings in 18 tanker-loads of water every day from far off village areas to supply the population on the college campus here. Hot winds continue to blow every evening now and dark clouds predict rain. They pass over. While Mumbai struggles with floods we dread another drought. The next monsoon will only come in late October or November and the water table continues to drop each year.

Balanilayam (Children's Hostel)

Beulah and Chandrasekar have now realised some of the finer points of the task they have taken on. Of course there have been some teething problems and I have been in the background to offer advice when asked and to help out a little when I could. By the end of June they were really exhausted so I offered to take over for a Sunday to give them a day off. It was good being with the children again and teaching them the joys of playing with the toys and games which they were not sure how to use.

School

Yes, I am really enjoying teaching Scripture to 22 students each week and praying that we will get to know each other better as the term progresses. With sports only two weeks away everyone is either cheering, running or busy painting posters so I am taking a rest from my counselling role at the moment!

Pray:

For the children who have entered college that they will hold fast to their faith.
For the Chandrasekars in their role as house parents.
For the team visiting from Bangladesh.
That I will have the necessary health and strength.

We can't believe that our little girls are already 15 months old and are walking, talking and getting up to all kinds of mischief. It was such a special weekend for us. Erin and Freya had a Teddy Bear's Picnic birthday party on the Saturday with 20 plus of their little friends (and their parents) and a real Teddy Bear came along to dance to a few songs. I wonder who that could have been? And I wonder what he might come dressed as next year?

It was essential to us that we thanked God for our two beautiful little girls. During 2007 we had suffered two miscarriages, so when we were pregnant for a third time that year we were petrified about what the future would hold. My thoughts were that if things didn't work out this time, I wasn't sure if I wanted to continue trying as I didn't know whether I could handle any more loss. I spent the next eleven weeks until our first scan switching between thinking somehow my body was making it all up and I was having a phantom pregnancy to, 'I think it's twins'. Many pregnancy-related complications later and our two perfect, tiny little bundles arrived.

We loved them immediately and even now their sheer existence still overwhelms us with adoration and happiness. I call it 'being in baby-love'! It is beyond comprehension just how much you can love someone who you haven't



even known that long. I feel inspired by them to be a different and better person because I want to be a good role model. And in this last 15 months I have made changes to my life that I never would have had the courage to do before. All of my actions - deliberate or subconscious - will set an example, and I want to be the best example I can. Our life now has a new lens and it is very exciting to re-discover things through a child's perspective.

So, on that sunny Sunday we wanted to celebrate this new beginning for all of us with as many of our friends and family as possible. We wanted to thank our God as, not only does he know what we can bear but he does indeed give good gifts to his children. We wanted to promise to our daughters that (with your help) we will try to be the best parents we possibly can. What do Erin and Freya remember? Probably nothing. Erin had a cold and was quite miffed that her cute dress stopped her from crawling. Freya was so unaware of what was going on that she blew raspberries as we made

Continued

our promises!

Again thank you so much Church family for praying for the day and for the food at the Bring & Share - it was delicious. We would like again to make a few special mentions. *Linnette* your chicken went down very well especially with the Davies family! A big thank you to *Gwen* for the flowers, our mums loved them. To the *Worship Group*, it sounded great and we appreciate your commitment

in having an extra practice*. Marcia, Colin, Evelyn, Graham *and* Rob: *you worked tirelessly with the food and the kitchen. *Jonathan*, your barbecuing skills are legendary. And finally *Colin* for his work and preparation for the service. We hope we haven't missed anybody but you know what having children does for the memory! And we hope you enjoy watching (and hearing!) our identical twin girls grow up.

Alice and Dave Godsell

Exciting Times at Bishops' College - Project 188 and Love Gloucester

To celebrate this year's Harvest Festival the pupils and staff at Bishops' College are going to be involved in several exciting and challenging projects. Over the next few years the pupils at Bishops' College will be involved in retelling the 188 Gospel stories ... but with a twist. We are looking to recreate these stories in as many different varieties, formats, styles and media as possible, whilst trying to help not only our local community in Gloucester but also our link diocese in India. Our inspiration for this year's Harvest Festival will be the Feeding of the 5000. Over the next few months our aim is to provide Gloucester's Food Bank with 5000 items of food. The Food Bank is a local Charity which helps provide local families with food in emergencies. The food is given away

to people who are in short term crisis, in partnership with care professionals, such as health visitors. It provides a temporary, practical, stop-gap.

Totals will be kept and awards will be given not only to those pupils who collect the most, but to those pupils who show commitment in encouraging others to support the project. The Food Bank will be coming into Bishops' College on Tuesday 20th October to lead our Harvest Festival assembly and to find out how many items of food we have collected so far.

Please prayerfully support the pupils of Bishops' College as they gather food and recreate the life of Jesus in new and exciting ways.

Alice Davies-Godsell

Teacher of Beliefs and Values at Bishops' College.

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