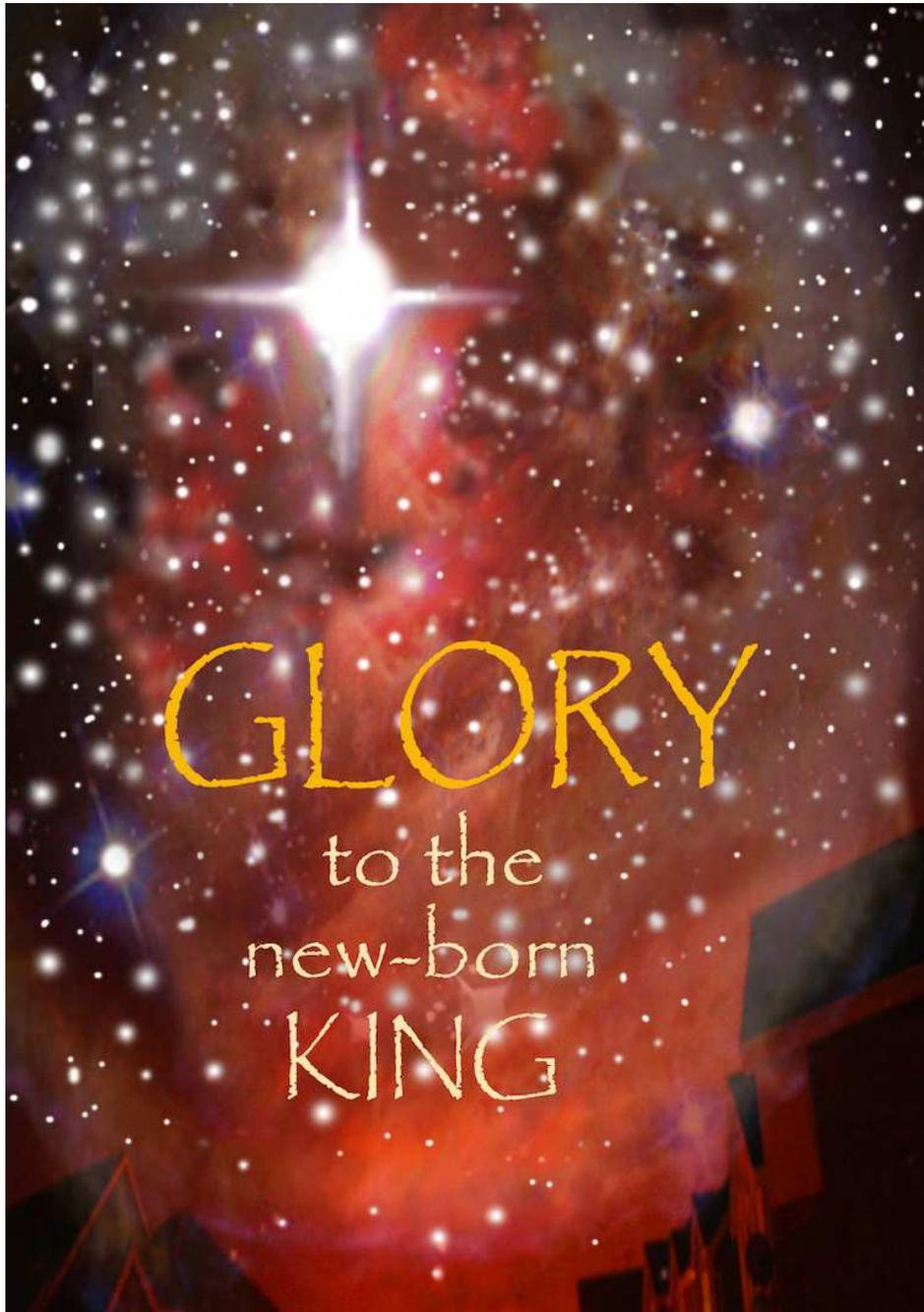


FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES

The magazine of Sydenham Methodist Church



December 2012

Church Weekend - page 7

Hungary Trip - page 12

FROM THE EDITOR



Traditions. What comes to your mind when you think of this word? Do you think tradition is a good thing or a bad thing? At Christmas time, maybe you have certain traditions in your house. I remember as a child waiting in anticipation for Christmas Eve. This was because I was allowed to open one present! I chose to open the same present every year. One which I knew had books in it.

With my own family we have started our own traditions. Whether you have Christmas traditions in your house or not, celebrating Jesus' birth is a tradition worth keeping.

God sending His Son...

CAROLYN HALL

With thanks to this edition's contributors.



Dear church family

I am writing this letter on what is known in the United States of America as Thanksgiving Day. As you read this magazine you will find there is much to be thankful for: the faithfulness of volunteers who give of their time; the faithfulness of those who give of their financial resources; and above all - God's faithfulness to us throughout the year. There have been highs and lows for us a church family and they are reflected in the following pages.

We are rapidly approaching Christmas, although this year the preparations seem to have begun way too early (in my opinion)! Adverts on television from late October, Christmas music in shops from early November, part of me wants to say 'at least wait until December!'

Yet, when we really think about Christmas and God sending his son to the world, it's not just a message for one day, or one month of the year, it is a message that can be told every day. So as you prepare for Christmas take a moment to thank God for sending his son Jesus into the world and think of who you could share the real message of Christmas with.

May you know His peace this Christmas.

Karen

Congratulations and best wishes to those who have recently married:

Scott Nesbitt & Julie Coates
Graeme Davidson & Melissa Silcock
Andrew Kane & Amanda Warwick
Simon Corbett & Debbie Neill
Graham Whan & Lesley-Ann Carmichael

In the Sacrament of Baptism we welcomed the following to our church family:

Lucy Margaret Bruton
Carter James Lesley McConnell
Scott Rory Thomson

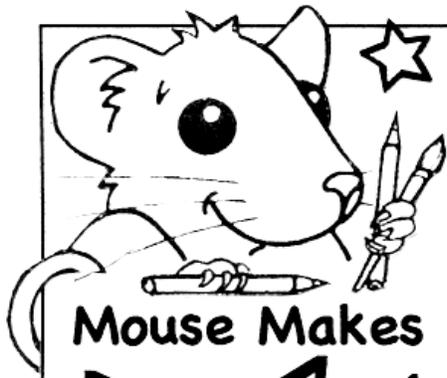
Adult Baptism

Emma Gilliland
Nicole Helena McKeown
Amanda Irene Warwick

Deaths

We give God thanks for those lives which touched ours while they lived among us:

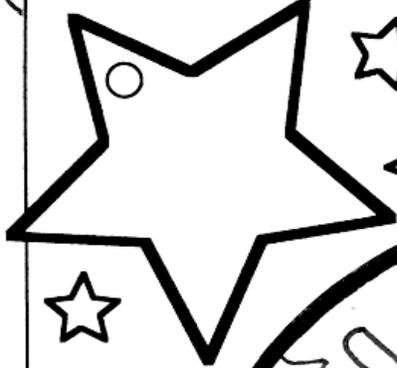
Albert Anderson
Erin Thomson
Georgina Dougall
Helen Johnston
Sam Gourley
Ida Irvine



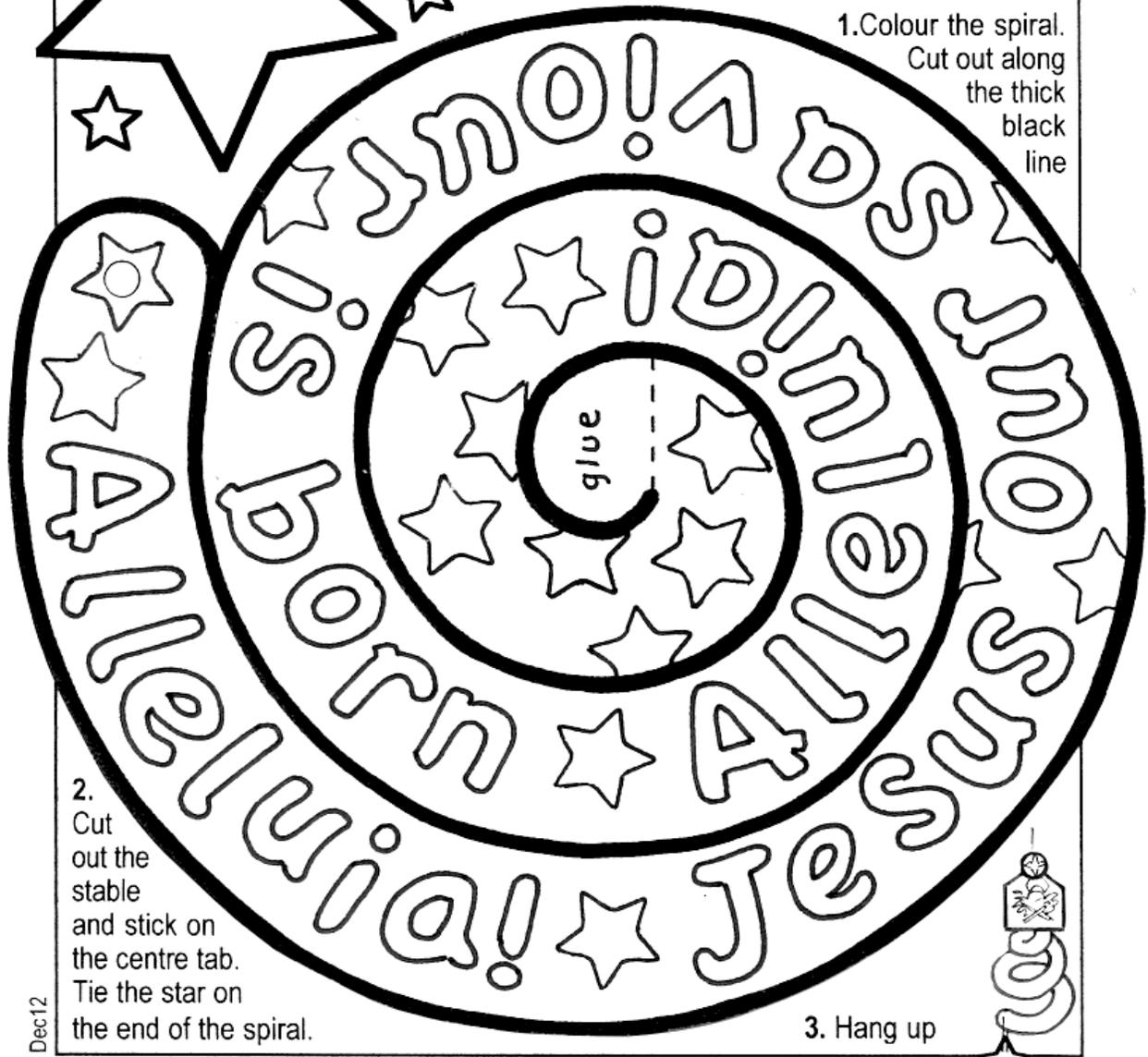
Mouse Makes

"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord"

Read: Luke 1-20



1. Colour the spiral. Cut out along the thick black line



2. Cut out the stable and stick on the centre tab. Tie the star on the end of the spiral.

3. Hang up

Dec12

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9th Scout Group
Weekend away at Dunluce
14 - 16 September 2012

FRIDAY

First we arrived at the church, then got on the bus to Dunluce. Once we arrived, we unpacked and put everything out. After that we went for a walk on the beach, and after that we went to bed.

SATURDAY

On Saturday we first got changed, (waited for Dillon) then we went to get breakfast. Then we had inspection and we played outside until lunch. Secondly, we went kayaking. We started off using our hands then we used the paddles. It was a lot harder and some fell out and got frozen. Thirdly, we went in, got changed and then headed back to Dunluce Guide House and played a bit while there, then had tea. Afterwards we sat at the campfire and had marshmallows then went to bed.

SUNDAY

Woke up, got packed, inspection again then breakfast. After that we had Scouts' Own (a small informal worship) then headed out to Sheans Farm for horse riding. I didn't go on because I have an allergic reaction to them. I got to observe them though. Ben really liked his horse. He even told me he wanted to steal his horse. Then the Scouts and Explorer Scouts came and rode the horses. After that we all had a barbeque then went home.

By Jake (Cub Scout)

SENIORS' FELLOWSHIP

The Seniors' Fellowship meets in the Taylor Room at 2:30pm on the third Thursday of each month for fellowship, fun, entertainment and afternoon tea.

Why not join us?

New members are always welcome.

For further information speak to Sadie Anderson, Jean McGuffin, Pru Cummings or Margaret Gordon.

See you soon!



Church Weekend Away

Friday evening, bags packed, so off I head for Newcastle for what I hoped was going to be a "Time Out" couple of days with like minded friends! Once we had all gathered at Glenada we soon found out the theme for the weekend was "REconnect" and to help us reconnect with each other, one family had organised a weekend long game of Connect 4. (I lost but I'm not saying who to!)

As a way of reconnecting with God we were encouraged throughout the weekend to consider the words of Psalm 139 and what the Psalm was saying to each of us. For me this meant, "There is nowhere I can go physically or mentally that God does not go with me".

Saturday turned out to be a lovely autumn day with the sun reflecting off the sea. What a view to have. After breakfast and a time of worship, we went into different groups to share with others our ideas of reconnecting with God, with other people, and ourselves. These ideas were all brought together with the idea of putting our thoughts about reconnecting in the form of a banner. After lunch, on such a lovely afternoon, some of us went for a walk while others joined in a well organised treasure hunt. The treasure hunt took us up by Spelga Dam where we had the most amazingly clear view of the mountains of Mourne in all their beauty that our God had made. Back at Glenada others were busy designing the banner.

After eating and worshipping it was time to put our brains together for The Big Quiz. Best team won!

Sunday morning was a time for us to reflect how we had reconnected with God, with other people, and how we could keep on reconnecting. Before sharing in Communion, Karen invited us to make a bookmark showing how we personally felt what reconnecting meant for us. It was very evident that the Power of the Holy Spirit was with us.

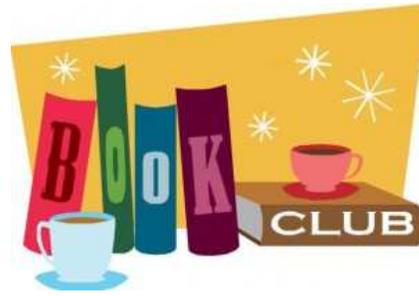
A big thank you to all who prayed, organised events and made sure everything ran smoothly. A special thank you to the ladies who made the tray bakes!

P.S. Wish you could have been there you would have been blessed, had fun, and reconnected!!

Yvonne Sands



"Does anyone have a light, please?"



The Book Club

I love a good read. “Who dun-its”, history, autobiographies are some of my favourites. So when a book club was started I thought mmm.... Christian books? I’ll give it a try. I was not sure if the reading material would be to my liking or my understanding.

Anyway, I went along to the Manse one Monday, with my newly read book tucked under my arm. Was this going to be too much for my “little grey cells”?

Well, I have now been introduced to C S Lewis, Philip Young, Andrew Wilson and many more authors. Some I have heard of and never read, others I have never even heard of.

I have found the discussions about the various books enlightening and thought provoking. The group has covered many topics - moral dilemmas, modern and bygone day standards, personal experience of God and the world through the eyes of the authors. We are able to discuss and reflect on how we could apply them to ourselves.

Sometimes there are more questions than answers! That is a good thing - it shows we are all individuals, and that the desire for knowledge and answers about God and the world is alive and well.

Maybe you have read a really good book and would like to share it with others, then the Book Club is the place for you.

So if you like a good read, why not come along to the Book Club. A warm welcome awaits you. We meet on a Monday evening at the manse. See church notices for date, time and current book, or look at the church's website, www.sydenhammethodist.org

Happy reading!

Ann Holmes



"It's funny the way you always decide to get down and pray whenever the vicar scans the congregation for volunteers."

Some thoughts to ponder at this 'giving' time of the year...

Our children await Christmas presents like politicians getting election returns.- M Cox

People will not care what you know until they know that you care. - Anon

As perfume to the flower, so is kindness to speech. -
Katherine Francke

A part of kindness consists in loving people more than they deserve.- J Joubert

The word 'alms' has no singular, as if to teach us that a solitary act of charity scarcely deserves the name. - Anon

Joy is the gigantic secret of the Christian - G K Chesterton

Kindness is a hard thing to give away. It keeps coming back to the giver. - Ralph Scott

The Christian is strong or weak, depending upon how closely he has cultivated the knowledge of God. - A W Tozer

Hungary, I Come to You

Approximately 30 miles north-west of Budapest is the small town of Piliscsaba. With nothing more than a few residential areas and a train station it was the site of the Hungarian CE house. It was here that two years ago I went to take part in co-ordinating a Junior CE camp. Now two years later I returned to take part in a young adults' camp. The house in Piliscsaba is owned and run by the Christian Endeavour in Hungary. It holds lots of camps throughout the year, for example German speaking camps, English speaking camps and CE conferences. It is a great big house with many dorm rooms for the leaders and campers to sleep in, and grounds which serve for some of the afternoon activities; we also use a local school's pitch for football.

Unlike with the junior camp, which is run totally by the Irish and Scottish team, the young adults' camp is divided equally between the Hungarian leaders and ourselves. This year, the Hungarian team led the talks in the morning and we told our testimonies in the evening. Worship was shared between those on the team with the ability to play the guitar. The worship was two guitarists and Alex on the 'Magic Box' providing the rhythm. Because it was so warm the sessions were held inside which felt more relaxed and free.

The morning talks were based around the story of Joseph and each day a different issue was discussed; for example his complicated relationship with this family, Potiphar's wife and his time in prison. These talks and our testimonies were always translated into English or Hungarian for the benefit of those who have limited English, or limited, or no, Hungarian. Personally I found this very useful as when the translator was speaking

Hungarian it allowed time to think and organise what you were going to say next.

However, it was probably a different story for the translator especially when some of us use 'Norn Iron-isms' way too much, like. The morning talks led into discussion groups. These groups were small and so very open. It was clear from the discussion groups that there were a lot of personal issues to be addressed amongst the campers. After a lunch consisting of a spectacular soup and a main course we would head out for afternoon activities. These ranged from football, craft and long walks, to trips to Budapest and the lake at Dorog.

At the end of the week we all came together to share our experiences from the camp, and it was clear that the issues were addressed in some form. This closing night was both a celebration of what God had been doing that week, and a time to spend with each other one last time.

The camp leads itself to developing relationships between other campers, as we are all living under one roof and constantly see each other and do all the activities together. This year I only knew a couple of the other team members but at the end of the week, we all knew each other really well and were very comfortable around each other.

Dave Gordon

Small Groups



**The Pliscaba CE House where
the camp takes place**



A GOOD LIFE, THE GUIDE TO ETHICAL LIVING

Edited by Leo Hickman

This is not a Christian book but it is my strongly held view that it should be of interest to any Christian. If it is not of enough interest to be read by every Christian, then we should at least be giving consideration to the topics covered inside, otherwise we may not be living the lifestyle that Jesus is calling us to live. Why? Because the Bible teaches us that we should live for God in all aspects of our lives. Worshipping God means living for him 24/7, not just turning up in church on a Sunday morning.

God our heavenly father is interested in what we get up to on a Wednesday afternoon as much as on a Sunday morning. So how should we live our lives in the mundane everyday world that we find ourselves in?

Ethical living is promoting a mindset that espouses a better awareness and sense of conscience about ones actions. Surely that is something that Christians should desire and in our case our conscience should be attuned to God's leading.

Our ecological footprint is the amount of land, water and other natural resources required to support our lifestyle. Since the 1980s we have been using natural resources faster than they can be replenished. If the whole world lived as Americans do, we would need 6 earths to meet the demands for natural resources.

However, ethical living is not just about environmental concerns. It also attempts to focus on our emotional wellbeing, mainly through our relationships with others. This can mean familial, workplace and personal relationships, how best to nurture community relations or how to look at a product in a shop and relate to the person who produced it.

If you are thinking to yourself that sounds a bit fanciful then why is it that happiness levels, as recorded by a number of western governments, have not risen in the past 50 years despite massive increases in personal and state wealth? At all levels of society, we all have more stuff than ever before but all the measures for unhappiness show rising levels. Does this not just confirm what the Scriptures have always taught us? What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul? Acquiring material goods is not wrong in itself but it is not what satisfies the soul. Furthermore, the process of supplying us with the material goods may damage the environment, damage vulnerable men, women and children involved in its production as well as being unsustainable for the planet.

Ethical living might touch on the following aspects of lifestyle:

- shopping/acting locally
- rethinking the food you eat
- reducing your energy demands
- considering the impact of travel
- donating your time and money

- alleviating social injustice
- encouraging companies to be more accountable for their actions
- nurturing community spirit
- reducing the impact of toxic chemicals

If you are thinking that as individuals we are powerless, think again. We have great influence as consumers. Retailers are keen to follow the paths that we show we want to follow. Ethical consumption, including Fairtrade, in the UK, rose from £1.3 billion in 2000 to £29.3 billion in 2005.

As we consider our use of the world's resources, we must remember that much of the world is catching up with the West in consumption habits. There is a significant rise in the consumer class, people who earn the equivalent of \$7000 or more a year, roughly the poverty line in the West.

As people increasingly in the developing world aspire to western living standards, pressure on the earth's resources grows and grows. As Christians, we are responsible to God for being good stewards of His Creation.

Here are some thought provoking statistics mentioned in the book:

McDonalds spends more than \$1billion globally on advertising.

In the USA there are 325,000 deaths a year attributed to obesity.

22 million tones of bottled water are transported each year between countries.

Since 1950 worldwide production of meat has increased five times.

The world's richest use 25 times more energy than the poorest.

In the UK the average person uses 150 litres of water a day, 3 times that of a Kenyan.

Consciously or unconsciously, we are all playing a role in how God's creation is being used, including all those made in His image. This book contains a wealth of information and can help us make more informed decisions.

Alan Hall



Cardmaking Group

The Cardmaking group gathered together on Saturday 27 September in the Ferguson Hall. Along with a number of ladies from the church, and friends, we enjoyed a relaxing morning of cardmaking. The funds collected from this fundraiser being donated to a local charity.

This year we raised £300 for the Orchardville Society, whose aim is to promote employment, skills and career development to over 200 people with a learning disability in South and East Belfast.

We thank all who supported us in making this event a success.

Linda Nicholson

Liz and Pam enjoying a break



Some of the ladies adding the finishing touches

Pray for the folk next door

Have you ever considered praying for your own neighbours? That is the aim of a new national initiative, Neighbourhood Prayer Network (NPN). It was launched at the recent National Day of Prayer at Wembley (which drew Christians from 114 of the 124 post code districts from around the UK). NPN wants to encourage Christians throughout the country to commit to praying for the people along their own street on a regular basis. Regular prayer for our neighbours, and the willingness to give them practical help where possible, is something any Christian can do. It responds to Jesus' commandment to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. So far over 500 streets across the country are being prayed for each day by the Christians who live on them.

For more details on how to sign up, and to receive a book to help get you started, please visit:

www.neighbourhoodprayer.net

Christian radio in Chad

A new Christian Radio Station in Moudou, Chad is up and running. The "Good News" Station is operating in a converted storage room with a mast. The project was launched by the Swedish Pentecostal Mission and its sister church in Chad and training for the Radio Producers was provided by IBRA Media.

Bible iPhone app

Bible Society Australia and Matthias Media have launched a new smart phone app for iPhones and iPads. Called "XV: the Bible in 15", it is a free app providing 15 stages which

each look at one aspect of the story of the Bible. It gives an overview, some Bible verses and points to ponder. A web version is available:<http://25words.biblesociety.org.au/me/#apps>

Bible in Jamaican will help Christians in the UK

The Jamaican New Testament in Patois has been launched at the Jamaican High Commission in London. Up to 5 million people speak Patois or Creole, half of them in the UK. The Rev Courtney Stewart, General Secretary of the Bible Society in the West Indies said, "Having the Bible in Patois is a moment of tremendous triumph because God is speaking to us in our own language".

SAT-7 and AWM SHORT FILMS

SAT-7 and Arab World Media (AWM) have completed 10 short films, using drama and CGI animation to confront ten of the Arab world's unspoken social problems. The first of the ten 3-minute clips is a re-enactment of a real-life reconciliation that took place between two feuding Arabic families. Others cover subjects like forgiveness, marriage, domestic abuse, child labour and disability. The clips will be uploaded to YouTube and will be suitable for watching on mobile phones and tablets.

Editor: if you have filled a shoebox this Christmas, here is some information which you may find interesting.

Sending love in 100 million shoe boxes

This month hundreds of thousands of needy children across Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa will be eagerly opening shoe boxes of gifts sent by generous people in the UK, the

US , Europe and Australia. Somewhere in the middle of all that there will be an historic shoe box: the 100 millionth shoe box that has been sent since 1990. No one will know quite which one it is, but it is a great milestone to celebrate.

Many local churches in these countries (from Bosnia to Liberia, Montenegro to Swaziland) are also offering the youngsters a short follow-up course called 'The Greatest Journey'. It simply explains who Jesus is, and what Christianity is all about. The literature and the course resources are shared at the invitation of local church leaders, after consultation with other civic leaders. Since 2010, 700,000 children worldwide have accepted an invitation to join the course. Please remember these children in your prayers – they face huge challenges in their young lives.

Operation Christmas Child was started in 1990, in Wrexham, by Dave Cooke, after he saw pictures of appalling conditions in Romanian orphanages on TV. That year he led a small convoy of vehicles from Wrexham to Romania, to help the children. In 1995 OCC merged with Samaritan's Purse.



What Does God Want for Christmas?

George asked, 'I don't know what to get my Dad for Christmas. What do you give somebody who has everything?' Harry replied, 'A burglar alarm!' Presents can be a real problem, when we want to give those we love something they really want. But what about God? What would he want from us this Christmas? What's a suitable gift to celebrate the birthday of Jesus? What do you give someone who not only has everything, but who actually made everything?

The answer can be found in Micah, a prophet who lived about 700 years before the birth of Christ: 'He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' (Micah 6:8).

This Christmas, God is looking for the gift of lives characterised by justice, mercy and humility:

Justice:- God is just - he is absolutely fair and righteous in all his dealings. Justice means 'treating people right because you know God.' In the Bible it means caring for the poor, speaking the truth and refusing to take advantage of the less fortunate. For us at Christmas, justice means doing right for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Mercy:- This speaks of sharing God's heart by loving the unlovely even when they don't love us back. How has God dealt with us this year? If He has forgiven us, then forgive

others. Has God lifted us up when we were down? Then let's seek to lift others. Where God has overlooked our faults, let's overlook the faults of others. If God has been merciful to us this year, Christmas is a time to show mercy to others.

Humility: Humility is the opposite of pride. It reminds us that everything we have in life is a gift from God. Although some may have more or less than us, we can still thank God for what we have and do the best with what God has given us. This is the attitude we can reflect at Christmas, when we invest so much time in the presents we give.

God is looking to all these actions arising genuinely from our heart.

As the carol says:

'What shall I give him, Poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I'd give him a lamb.

If I were a wise man, I'd do my part.

What shall I give him, I'll give him my heart.'

A Christmas Prayer

Lord, as I enter into the fast-paced season ahead, help me walk slowly and quietly. Let me stop and listen to the angels sing of the greatest news ever told. Let my heart, mind and soul join the chorus. "Glory in the Highest! The Messiah has been born!"

Among all the bright sparkling lights and cheery holiday tunes, let my spirit travel once again toward Bethlehem to honour and worship Jesus, my King, The Prince of Peace, the Lord of Hosts, Mighty Counsellor, Son of God, the Lamb. All Your love, mercy and power somehow made flesh in the tiny form of a humble baby born in a manger. Let me worship the only one who is worthy to take our sin away and open the gates of all eternity!

Anon



Colouring Page





The Campers



The Team from Northern Ireland and Scotland