

Alive!

News from
Totley Rise
Methodist Church

Feb/March 2006

Feasting, Fasting and Fitness

No sooner have the pre-Christmas ads finished their onslaught encouraging us to overindulge than a new wave starts persuading us to improve ourselves in some form or other. This year the fad seems to be detox! Whether on TV or within the pages of some glossy magazine, we have all been encouraged to purge our systems of all the toxins we have so diligently consumed over Christmas. This year, apparently, we need more than a few extra glasses of water! We require a whole array of sachets containing a variety of exotic substances. But do any of these help? According to the manufacturers they are the best thing since sliced bread. However, most scientific research seems less convinced and suggests that good old fruit and veg along with some tap water will do just as good a job!

Detox, though, is nothing new. The observance of a period of fasting during the 40 days leading up to Easter (the season of Lent) has been taking place since the early church. But for Christians the focus is on spirit as well as body.

So if Detox is back in fashion, is Lent? When asked by the writer, a surprisingly large number of people had given something up. The list of items discarded for Lent was varied. Predictably chocolate was at the top, with some more bizarre entries further down the

chart, including a complicated diet involving the elimination of wheat from the diet.

Lent, however, is not really about depriving our bodies before overdosing on chocolate eggs at Easter. For Christians it is a chance to reflect on their faith and rededicate themselves to God. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday after the consumption of all those pancakes the day before, and lasts for 40 days (you don't count the Sundays). The 40 days reflects the time Jesus spent in the wilderness. The idea behind fasting is that by changing our diet we are making a personal commitment to God and reflecting Jesus' actions. By using the 40 days to reflect on Jesus' life and our own relationship with Him, we can deepen this relationship by changing the things which are not right.

Lent provides us with a great opportunity to improve our physical and spiritual wellbeing. Why not use Lent to follow a programme of fasting, readings and prayer to focus on your relationship with God. (A booklet to help with this will be available in church at the end of February.) As an advert from Boots the Chemist said in January 'Just change one thing', but instead of a Detox diet use Lent to change one thing that brings you closer to God in your everyday life.

Flying for Jesus!

TRM church has many contacts with people round the world. When he is in England *Andy Blake* comes to TRM church with his mother Eileen. We asked Andy to tell us how he got involved with his flying job in Africa. This is his story.

It was when I was still in full-time teaching in Kent that, as a very young Christian, I was given a copy of a book called *Jungle Pilot*. This was the story of the beginning of *Mission Aviation Fellowship* (MAF) in America and was about Nate Saint the pilot and Jim Elliott the famous evangelist, both martyred in Equador. It made quite an impression on me.

On leaving school I had taken a flying scholarship with the RAF as a cadet and therefore had a little flying experience already. One day a mature Christian friend asked me what really was the desire of my heart? Not being accustomed to questions quite as direct as this I fumbled at the answer; something about wanting to fly for

Jesus. Her reply was, 'Well! Don't you think that might be His desire for you as well?' Actually the thought had never crossed my mind - that so much fun could possibly be on offer just for me.

Fourteen years later, flying a Cessna 206, I departed Dodoma in Tanzania for a distant airstrip in the north of the country with an engineer on board, a few simple tools and a tin of brake fluid. Another MAF aircraft flying with the Masai had had a brake failure. We were the rescue party. It was my first operational flight.

With this type of work, you never know what the next flight is going to be. My last flight was a sad one; to take home to Ngara the body of a deacon of a Dodoma church with his wife, sister and child. Tomorrow I fly to Burundi to fetch a group of NGOs, working



with returning refugees who themselves want to escape Bujumbura for a New Year's break in Kigoma where I live. It is a beautiful flight along the North Eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika. The rains are here now, however. Tomorrow may be crystal-clear, but I will have to be ready for it not to be. God does some amazing things with heat and water vapour.

I bless God for His wonderful grace; that He has given me this work - to fly in His service. What a truly great God we have!

Film Nights help Albanian Youngsters

For many years Fred and Shirley Cocking have been running film nights in their home. Here Fred writes about how they have used the money collected.

It is now well over 12 years since I experienced the utter poverty and despair in Albania through *Operation Friendship* with the *Open Doors* organisation. We distributed bibles and took in medicines and clothing to people shut off from the world for 40 years by a ruthless dictator who declared an atheistic state and bankrupted his country.

When I later went to take further supplies I discovered Pastor Miltiades and his wife Vita in Corfu. They were taking in Albanian refugees – some of whom had swum across – providing a bible and comfort in rooms under the church. Many have now become Christians and two new churches have been opened up in Albania through this ministry. In his Christmas newsletter Pastor Miltiades reports further church work helping the Albanians and he includes the following passage.

“Also this year we would like to comment how the Lord touched us with a special answer to prayer. Until the actual week that the Youth Camp was about to start, we only had about one third of the money. Yet we were going on, as we could not disappoint all those people who were looking forward to the camp and believing that we were in the Lord’s will. We could not hold our tears when one day before the camp started, a dear couple from England sent us a gift that was exactly the amount that we needed.

Finally, we not only paid off the expenses, but were also able to fix our Land Rover which had broken down and put it back into weekly operation that it is doing throughout the year with diaconal work. Praise be to God for His wonderful family.”

The gift of more than £100 was made possible from those who regularly attend our *Film and Fellowship* nights over the winter, for which we give sincere thanks. The more support we get – the bigger the reward to others.

In the Spotlight



Tuesday Coffee Mornings

When? Every Tuesday from 10.00 am to 12 noon

Where? TRM church lounge.

12 years and still going strong! When Hilary and Shirley started the Tuesday coffee morning in 1993 they did not realise how successful it would become. The aim was to

provide a friendly environment where people from the community could meet and chat over coffee and biscuits. There is no fixed charge for the coffee but contributions towards the cost are accepted. Refills are plentiful.

Typically about 35 people will drop in on a Tuesday morning and at any given time you may find 25 people in the lounge. Unlike most coffee bars there is a lot of movement between tables and chat across the room. You can meet many people – some from TRM church, some from other churches and others with no church background.

We asked some regulars why they come. Answers included “for a good laugh”, “we meet here before going on as a group for lunch”, “we meet other Christians, friends and neighbours” and “it’s a place to get to know people”.

Tuesday coffee morning is a very friendly place and everyone is made welcome. Try it sometime.

Chariot Parking at Bethlehem

As I donned my TRM standard issue fluorescent jacket and collected my flashlight I was a little apprehensive of the traffic mayhem I was about to face in my role as car park attendant for the evening. Double parked camels, aggressive donkey drivers, broken down oxen; I don’t fancy wheel clamping a chariot either – could be a tough shift I thought. I need not have worried. A succession of smiling, excited faces was all I had the pleasure to face as I directed the throngs (well perhaps not quite throngs but certainly a steady stream!) to the magic within the transformed Church Hall. As the



experience’ and the allure of the tea and biscuits. As various little groups of families with wide eyed children clutching all manner of market place ‘purchases’ began to drift away into the night I managed to grab a few reactions. Words like “inspiring, magical, deeply moving” were a common theme from the adults, although some admiration was also expressed for some of the centurions’ legs! The children were no less moved if more excited as they recounted their journey through the ancient land, sharing in the birth of Jesus, and meeting the characters they had read about in their bible stories.

As I handed over my ‘uniform’ at the end of my shift I thought I had better take a look for myself – me being a J2B virgin so to speak. In keeping with the other visitors I had spoken to earlier I too felt touched by the shared experience and perhaps could add a further word – joy. Couldn’t agree about the centurions’ legs though!

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Thank you from Garry & Dawn for Journey to Bethlehem -

We want to thank all involved with Journey to Bethlehem. We found it a powerful and moving visual reminder of the Christmas story. It was a very important part of our own Christmas celebrations and one we will always remember and be grateful for. We were both really moved by the experience as we were reminded afresh of what God has done in fulfilling his promise of old to come and save his people. It was wonderful to hear about the mystery of prophecy revealed and experience the power of love in Christ.

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Rev-ing Up



Already in the shops (early January) there is an increasing array of cards, photo frames, cuddly toys all hailing the message of unending love, and how lovely is that? All of this is to usher in Valentine's Day, the one day in the year where the price of roses and other flowers rocket sky high and suddenly a meal in your favourite restaurant doubles in price. All of this to say, "I love you". The minds behind all the consumerism of Valentine's Day are tapping into something which we are all wired up to know and experience - love.

The Beatles certainly hit the right note when Lennon & McCartney penned the words, 'all you need is love...love is all you need'. We all need love. I would find it hard to believe you if you said you didn't need to know you were loved by someone somewhere. Without being mushy or sentimental about it, to know that we are loved is wonderful indeed.

Not all people feel or know that they are loved, Every blessing , Garry Dawson-Jones

How was YOUR Christmas?

The last issue of Alive! was filled with details of TRM's Christmas activities. Here is a reminder of some of the services you might have come to. If you came then we hope it will bring back happy memories; if you didn't then why not plan to come to the equivalent services next year.

On 3 December we had our **Toy Service**. Children (and adults) brought new toys to the morning service to be passed on to children in the city who would otherwise not get Christmas presents. To Christians, Christmas is about giving in response to God's greatest gift to us - Jesus. One of our youngsters was seen to look longingly at the Rupert Annual that was at the front of the Church. A carload of toys was delivered to the Family Service Unit in Sheffield for delivery later. Perhaps they have their own personal Santa!

Our annual **Carols by Candlelight** service, held on the following Wednesday, provided its usual sparkling foretaste of our Christmas celebrations. With candles flickering throughout the church, the choir entertained us with a wide variety of carols, interspersed with several in which we all participated. Appropriate readings by David Mann introduced each sequence of carols as we followed through the Christmas story. Sadly, Betty Bowring was not able to play for this service because of illness. Her place was taken at the eleventh hour by Paul Birtwisle.

Stable Story - Christmas Glory Christmas services really got swinging on 18 December. In the morning TRM's very young people dressed up and gave their nativity play. The older children read the parts whilst the youngest did the actions. There were no real animals here, but the pantomime camel made his appearance. It's not

but everyone *is* loved! As we approach Valentine's Day and leave behind us the Christmas season we will do well to remember the central theme of the Christmas story - it's all about love. It's about how God loves each one of us so much that he wanted to narrow the gulf that existed between him and us. The only way that God could see that gulf narrowed and bridged was by coming and sharing our life; and He did that through the life of Jesus - God became man. God's love for us is so powerful that God has gone to extraordinary levels to declare His love.

All you need is love is true because that's the way God wired us when He made us in His image. So come Valentine's Day, I hope you realise and come to know that, just a finger's distance from you, God still comes and meets with people to declare His love for them. He comes to us in ordinary everyday places; God can meet with us at anytime, in our living room, our office, hospital room, our car. He is always there waiting to walk into your life at your invitation with His life changing love.

often you will hear a Herod with an Indian accent. Towards the end of this service we all considered what Christmas meant to us.

Later in the same evening the **Christmas Celebration** was contemporary and very much by adults for adults. In a mixture of carols, drama, song, dance, poetry we explored the meaning and nature of the birth of Jesus and worshipped the Father who sent Him. The men at the Nazareth Working Men's Club ribbed Joseph about his girl friend being pregnant; Joseph struggled to understand what was happening but



committed himself to doing what was right. The same was true of Mary, who was not the pale figure depicted in many religious paintings but a real young woman following God's destiny. Our challenge is to follow God's destiny for us.

Christmas Eve Crib Service. This new event at Totley Rise took the form of a Do-

Don't miss this!

Getting to Know You TRM's Away Day

All families work better when they set time aside to be together as a family, without trying to do a thousand and one other things at the same time. We all know how difficult this is but, whether it's a day out or just a meal, time spent together is always worthwhile. The same is true for the Church family, which is why we are getting together for an away day (well half a day actually) on **Saturday 25 February**. Although finding the time to get together is never easy, there is only a short distance to travel (the venue in Whirlow Hall). The day starts at 1:30 pm so there is plenty of time to clear all those tasks out the way in the morning. There will be lots of activities for the children and we will all finish the day with a meal together.

The theme of the day is the 3 W's: the WORD of the Father, the WORK of the Son and the WITNESS of the Spirit. The Rev Philip Hacking will be leading the afternoon session. Philip was the vicar of Fulwood Parish Church for many years; one of Sheffield's largest and most lively Anglican churches. He was chairman of the organizing committee for the Billy Graham mission to Sheffield in 1985 and has been chairman of the Keswick convention. His teaching is always solidly biblically based and practical. He has visited TRM to preach a few times over the last few years and has always been well received, thought provoking and helpful.

It would be great if we could all make time to come together as a family to learn more about each other and to seek God's plan for us. So please put the date in your diary - and come!

It-Yourself Nativity. The Christmas story was simply told in three parts interspersed with carols. There was a Mary and Joseph, but any child wishing to take part could dress up, come down the church, put an appropriate figure in the stable, and then form part of a tableau. Six shepherds, five kings and a host of angels were a challenge to dress during a hymn, but the result was stunning. The look of reverent awe on the faces of the children was unforgettable. Don't miss the next one!

Family News

Two TRM families celebrated special wedding anniversaries in December - Freda and Brian Harpham their Golden, Margaret and Terry Birch their Ruby.

Local News Flash

Methodist Homes has obtained outline planning permission for a block of 30 retirement apartments in Dore on the site of the former "Fairthorn" home. Watch this space!

Church Rooms

The rooms at TRM are used for many community based activities. As well as for the different church activities described in **Alive!** they are currently used by the following groups:-

Monday: Dance Fusion Class; Townswomen's Guild Keep Fit; Down to Earth Geology; After Eight Ladies Group.

Tuesday: Townswomen's Guild meeting; Woodseats Advice Centre; Jazz Appreciation Group.

Wednesday: Playgroup; Keep Fit Group; Neighbourhood Watch.

Thursday: Playgroup

Friday: Luncheon Club; Ballroom Dance Class

If you are interested in going to these activities, please contact the organisers.

Events

<i>February 2006</i>		<i>March 2006</i>	
Thu 2	1.30—3 pm Pushchair Club 6.30—8.30 pm Youth Club	Thu 2	1.30—3 pm Pushchair Club 6.30—8.30 pm Youth Club
Mon 6	8—9.30 pm Messianic Dance	Fri 3	10.30 am Women's World Day of Prayer at Totley All Saints Church—Speaker Mrs C Snow
Tue 7	9.30—10 am Prayer Meeting 10—12 noon Coffee Morning 10—12 noon Woodseats Advice Centre at TRM Church	Sun 5	10.30 am Commitment Sunday
Thu 9	1.30—3 pm Pushchair Club 6.30—8.30 pm Youth Club	Mon 6	8—9.30 pm Messianic Dance
Fri 10	9.15 am LEGO Walk. Meet at TRM.	Tue 7	9.30—10 am Prayer Meeting 10—12 noon Coffee Morning 10—12 noon Woodseats Advice Centre at TRM Church
Tue 14	9.30—10 am Prayer Meeting 10—12 noon Coffee Morning 10—12 noon Woodseats Advice Centre at TRM Church Tuesday Ladies at Ecclesall Players	Thu 9	1.30—3 pm Pushchair Club 6.30—8.30 pm Youth Club
Thu 16	1.30—3 pm Pushchair Club 6.30—8.30 pm Youth Club	Fri 10	9.15 am LEGO Walk. Meet at TRM.
Mon 20	8—9.30 pm Messianic Dance	Tue 14	9.30—10 am Prayer Meeting 10—12 noon Coffee Morning 10—12 noon Woodseats Advice Centre at TRM Church 8.00 pm Tuesday Ladies — "Sheffield Flood", Reg Hobson
Tue 21	9.30—10 am Prayer Meeting 10—12 noon Coffee Morning 10—12 noon Woodseats Advice Centre at TRM Church	Thu 16	1.30—3 pm Pushchair Club 6.30—8.30 pm Youth Club
Thu 23	1.30—3 pm Pushchair Club 6.30—8.30 pm Youth Club	Sat 18	10—12 noon Coffee Morning for Overseas Missions
Sat 25	1.30 pm TRM Away Day at Whirlow Grange	Mon 20	8—9.30 Messianic Dance
Tue 28	9.30—10 am Prayer Meeting 10—12 noon Coffee Morning 10—12 noon Woodseats Advice Centre at TRM Church 8.00 pm Tuesday Ladies— "Banish Aches & Pains", David Brassy	Tue 21	9.30—10 am Prayer Meeting 10—12 noon Coffee Morning 10—12 noon Woodseats Advice Centre at TRM Church
<i>Sundays at TRM</i>		Thu 23	1.30—3 pm Pushchair Club 6.30—8.30 pm Youth Club
Sunday Services are at 10.30 am and 6.30 pm The first Sunday of each month is All Age Worship at 10.30 am. The monthly Toddler Praise Services will be at 9.30 am on 12 February and 12 March.		Sat 25	1.30 pm TRM Church Family Away Day
		Sun 26	10.30 am All Age Worship—Mothers Day
		Tue 28	9.30—10 am Prayer Meeting 10—12 noon Coffee Morning 10—12 noon Woodseats Advice Centre at TRM Church 8.00 pm Tuesday Ladies AGM
		Thu 30	1.30—3 pm Pushchair Club 6.30—8.30 pm Youth Club