

Christward

The magazine of



September 2nd–October 28th
2018

~ Some thoughts on Churchspeak at Union Chapel ~

I have a Mission, you have an Agenda

Just as all families have some private code words which are unintelligible to outsiders, so most churches indulge in Churchspeak. This is a language in which certain things are not said openly, just implied, and where some words don't carry the same meaning as they do in the world outside. Much of the vocabulary of Churchspeak is common across denominations, but some is peculiar to each denomination and some to each congregation. There is a school of thought that Churchspeak (often used quite unconsciously by the regulars) is one of the most offputting things to outsiders with no religious background. They know there's something they're not "getting", even in conversations at coffee time, but they don't know what it is.

Of course, there is a whole realm of public discourse where certain words have become tainted. I read recently that defenders of the NHS will never agree that it should be more "efficient", as the expression "efficiency savings" is just heard as "swingeing cuts". Similarly at Union Chapel, I've discovered over my time as Secretary that any wish to make things more organised or systematic (and consequently less stressful and time-consuming) has somehow been heard as a desire to be harsh, uncaring, impersonal, rather than "Nice" – the ultimate Church quality.

I am getting rather weary of hearing that "the Church" ought to do something. This can mean "someone other than me ought to do it", or "I like to think that I belong to a Church which is doing this even though I can't help personally". Please look round and think who "the Church" is before expressing these sentiments!

Which brings me on to Missions and Agendas. In the Church "having a Mission" is always good and noble – unlike in the outside world, where it can be morally neutral. In the Church, Mission comes with a halo attached. At the office I may be told that someone is on a mission to clear a work backlog or visit every dress shop in the town centre.

Over the last five years or so, the expression “having an Agenda” has entered Union Chapel discourse. This is the opposite of having a Mission. According to the dictionaries I consulted, other than for meetings, having an Agenda is generally seen as a negative thing in the world at large, “hidden agenda” and bad faith being the implications. In the Church, it’s more about a (perceived) desire of the other person to work to a result that the speaker doesn’t like, albeit retaining a hint of something underhand going on.

An Agenda is a bad, unspiritual thing to have, and therefore the arguments thought to arise from the underlying Agenda can and should be dismissed pretty much out of hand. The problem is that the suspected Agenda is often a distortion of the views of the alleged agenda-holder. Someone can present a thoughtful and nuanced position in a meeting or email discussion, only for me to hear a couple of weeks later, “Of course, X has an Agenda to....*[insert gross oversimplification or even complete misinterpretation here]*”

Please, listen to what people are saying properly, and if you are unsure, speak to them in private and take time over a conversation. At a time when we have big decisions to make and need to do our best to work to a consensus, there will be enough genuine differences of opinion without imagining polarities which aren’t there.

Gwyneth

~ A Challenge to all Readers! ~

You're the Editor of your church magazine (my sympathies)! Called simply 'Together', it's very different from Christward (that's something)! A team of 60 or so volunteers drop it every month through the 5,000-odd letterboxes in the parish.

You've just given your report to the Annual Parish Meeting. When the Chair asks for any questions, a newcomer to the area expresses his disappointment that no clear Gospel message is presented in 'Together'. The Vicar is allowed a column three times a year, but apart from that and a brief list of church services and contacts, readers would hardly know there was an active church in the parish.

As Editor you have to respond to your questioner there and then. You have four main options. Two are clear cut and straightforward, two are more involved. Which do you choose?

1. You thank the questioner and promise a direct evangelistic challenge in each of the next five issues.

2. You thank the questioner but restate the church's policy that this is a magazine for the community and the hope is that readers will 'own' it and not feel threatened or 'got at' by it.

3. You thank the questioner and issue a challenge to the meeting for someone to produce a strongly evangelistic article which at the same time reassures readers that the traditional articles of Christian belief are much more telling if understood metaphorically and not literally.

4. You gently suggest to the questioner that they're wrong that there's no Gospel in the magazine. The life of the community is there, with its joys and its sorrows, its successes and its failures, its births, new births, and its deaths. It's all there. And 'God is all and in all'.

So which option do you think is best? Please respond - now, before you forget! But certainly by Tuesday 25th September. On a postcard to 60 Addison Road, Worcester, WR3 8EA, or by email to gordon.n@btinternet.com. It will help me with my church magazine research. And I hope the Editor will find space, perhaps on that one last page, to share your findings in the next issue of Christward.

Gordon Neal

PS. Gordon is offering £5 to the church for each of the first 25 responses he gets so send him a response as soon as you have read the above article.

Editor

~ It's that time of year again....shoeboxes! ~

Firstly, a question....do we still want to make up shoeboxes this year? Some people enjoy collecting bits and pieces, but not everyone enjoys the actual task of filling. That's ok, of course.

So, I suggest those of us who want to collect items, do so. I know Beryl's knitted 5 pairs of gloves already!

We have six or seven boxes to date.

The Link to Hope website writes...

“Thank you for helping us to send 43,966 Family & Elderly Shoeboxes to those in need in Eastern Europe in December 2017.

The **Family Shoeboxes** of gifts are given to families who often have to make a choice between buying food or fuel at Christmas time – buying presents is just not a priority. Many of these families do not have running water, heating or electricity. Some live in appalling conditions, often living in just one or two rooms, and life for them is a real struggle to survive.

Due to the number of elderly people that are now being left alone due to their families leaving to work away, we have launched the **Elderly Shoebox Appeal**. The boxes are similar however the children's games and education materials are replaced with a wind up torch, sensory items, candle and holder etc.

Boxes get sent to **Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine**.

We are small enough that we have a personal relationship with all the key contacts in Eastern Europe who distribute your Shoeboxes and we do spot checks to ensure that your boxes are received by the correct people.

We are a **Christian charity** who believe in distributing love to those in need regardless of background, colour, creed or religion.”

The Link to Hope website makes interesting reading if you get the chance to look. Otherwise, here's a summary.....

There are 8 projects in **Romania**....growing food, teaching work skills, supporting teenage mothers, care for the elderly, social club, kindergarten, homework club, parents school...all hoping to improve lives and change the future for people in the remote villages Iasi, Gherla and Cluj.

In **Bulgaria** an education and college project has been set up in Chirpan.

In **Moldova** there are 6 projects. Three are in Dancu....a wood and metal workshop has been set up to teach skills and provide income for the village, the Emmaeus club for the children, and the Inn of Love which feeds the elderly. A minibus collects isolated elderly people from remote areas and brings them to the centre once a week for food and company, and takes them home with food to last until the next trip. Project in three other villages feed needy people too.

In **Ukraine** three villages have projects related to their needs.... prison visiting, a school for gypsies, and a drug rehabilitation centre.

Link to Hope are also fund-raising for yet more projects begun by local pastors..

They have helped a pastor in Moldova to buy an old building to use as a community centre, and are now raising money to fit out a kitchen. The pastor and local people are digging a well, and have dug an area for a sewage system. This will help the very many children who are left in the care of elderly grandparents while their parents go abroad to work, and whose pensions are not enough to live on.

And they are funding the building of a shower block in Gherla, to serve 300 people! Already two such projects have helped improve lives in Romania.

I'll stop there! Back to the shoeboxes..... here's what goes inside them, in case you fancy taking a list when you're shopping..

Customs regulations

Customs regulations mean there are certain items which cannot be included in your Shoeboxes. So please take care not to include any of these things as Link to Hope could be fined or your boxes impounded.

NO medicines or medical products

NO money

NO tinned food

NO perfume

NO coffee, tea or alcohol

NO out of date items/poor quality second hand items

NO underwear

NO books or literature

Family

Essential Items

- Gloves/Scarf or Hat (new or knitted)
- Sweets/Chocolates (BB June 2018 EU Origin)
- Soap & Flannel (New)
- Toothbrush/Toothpaste (New)
- Colouring Books/Pens/Felt Tips
- Small Toys - Yoyo/Skipping Rope/Toy Car
- Teddy/Doll/Soft Toy
- Candles & Holders
- Screwdriver/Tape Measure/DIY Tools
- Small Games - Travel Size Draughts/Dominoes & Playing Cards etc

Extra Items

- Shampoo/Shower Gel - Max 300ml each
- Craft/Sewing Kit
- Socks/Tights (New)
- Hair Accessories
- Safety Razors/Plasters
- Wind Up Torch/Radio
- Foldable Brush/Comb & Mirror
- Simple Calculator - Solar Powered
- Scarf - Square or Straight (Light Weight)
- Work Gloves
- Nail Clipper/Brush/Small Scissors

Elderly-unisex

Essential Items

- Gloves/Scarf or Hat (new or knitted)
- Sweets/Chocolates (BB June 2018 EU Origin)
- Soap & Flannel (New)
- Toothbrush/Toothpaste (New)
- Reading Glasses/Small Magnifier
- Wind Up Torch/Radio
- Pens & Writing Pads
- Candles & Holders
- Sensory Items - Lavender Bag etc
- Small Games - Travel Size Draughts/Dominoes & Playing Cards etc

Extra Items

- Shampoo/Shower Gel - Max 300ml each
- Craft/Sewing Kit
- Socks/Tights (new)
- Safety Razors/Plasters
- Nail Clipper/Brush/Small Scissors
- Foldable Brush/Comb & Mirror
- Shopping Bag - Strong Cotton Cloth
- Scarf - Square or Straight (light weight)
- Mug/Wooden Spoon/Cutlery
- Cloth Hankies (mens sizes)
- Work Gloves

Carole Walker

~ Snippets of Hebrew and a Paperclip ~

We were reminded by Steve Roberts that it has been suggested by some churches, that stealing a paperclip from work has been thought of as bad a murder, since sin is sin, and displeases God. The Jewish understanding of sin and righteousness is as one might imagine, a little different to ours.

A clue comes from Jesus' parable of the 100 sheep. The parable is one of three parables which are all about counting. The other two are the parable of the prodigal son, and the parable of the lost coin. Jesus did not tell any stories about paperclips, you will have to read little further to discover the connection.

So righteousness first. Usually the interpretation of the parable of the one hundred sheep is that there are no righteous sheep among the ninety nine, and Jesus is just clearing the decks to highlight his point about the one sheep which went astray, so by assuming that the other sheep are righteous he removes them from the picture. Well, although the usual Christian interpretation is that there are no righteous people any-where, ever, there are hints to the contrary.

Elizabeth and Zachariah, who were John the Baptist's parents, were both described as "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless".

Others in the Old Testament come to mind, Noah perhaps being one of the first. He was righteous enough to be saved, which is usually what is at stake when it comes to righteousness.

Think of Job, although fictional, he was declared to be righteous. The adjectives used are perfect and upright, one who eschews evil.

Ironically Job's name means one who repents, is this irony or what?

And finally we turn to sin. (That's not an expression you will find in many Church Magazines!). Jesus said there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, than ninety nine who need no repentance. So to give heaven the most joy, one has to start with sin, and stealing paperclips from work could be a good place to begin.

Geoff Walker

~ News of the Family ~

Rose Bell has had her knee operation and although she is still in hospital is making good progress.

The Wedding of the Year took place on Saturday 7th July between **Anne Clayson and Andy Howes** (Sorry Harry and Meghan you didn't even come close.) The sun shone, the flowers bloomed and the voice of the turtle dove was heard in the land.



The bride looked stunning, Andy looked stunned, the champagne flowed, the food delighted, the music, — — —

Ah! the music, this was sufficiently modern and loud enough to keep the young inside and those of a more mature age lounging on the straw bales outside in the sun.

A truly wonderful day.



~ Food Bank ~

The Trussell Trust has just issued its Quality Assessment Report, covering all aspects of the Food Bank's work. I'm delighted to say that once again we have received an excellent report. This is a huge testament to everyone who ensures that we provide an essential and much needed service. To everyone at Union Chapel and beyond thank you for your continued support.

The report has highlighted a 60% increase in demand for support since April this year. I can certainly attest to that and the huge impact it has for the Food Bank as a team.

The increase in demand for our service brings with it a number of challenges here are just a few ways you might be able to help:-
1) become a volunteer. 2) donate financially 3) assist with administration 4) donate tinned fruit, custard, rice pudding, coffee, UHT Milk & Fruit Juice.

An advance notice of our annual Tesco Collection which will take place on Friday 30th November 2pm - 10pm and Saturday 1st December 8.30am-10pm. On Sunday 2nd December we will sort, date and weigh all donations commencing at 12.30pm at Ladybarn Community Centre.

Colin Marchbank-Smith

~ Minutes of the Church Meeting of Union Chapel Fallowfield (Baptist) held on Sunday 8th July 2018 at 11.20am.

Present: Margaret Garner (Chair), David Garner, Beryl Dykes, Michael Welford, Enid Welford, Gwyneth Heritage-Roberts, Carole Walker, Geoff Walker, Rachel Adebago, Leonie Earnshaw, Gwen Mattock, Ted Land, Lorna Richardson, Margaret Redhouse, Alan Redhouse.

Prayer by Margaret Garner

Apologies: Brenda Marston, Steve Roberts, Rose Bell, Colin Marchbank-Smith, Jane Henderson, Andy Howes

Date of Next Meeting: September 16, 2018

Minutes of meeting of May 20th, approved.

Church Weekend Feedback: Agreement that the weekend was a great success and the material much appreciated. Many thanks to Margaret and David Garner, Leonie and everyone else who helped with the content and organisation. The next church week-end will be June 21st-23rd 2019 at Beechwood Court. Any suggestions or offers to organise are welcome. It was decided the week-end of 2020 would be at Thornleigh, Grange-over-Sands. David to make provisional booking for 2020.

Church Secretary Role: Nicola Hamilton has been appointed as named church secretary. Gwyneth will continue with the correspondence and work regarding Linton House, Insurance and Incorporated Charity business. Jane will create the agendas for the Deacons and Church Meetings and the minute taking will be circulated to members.

Data Protection Policy: Jane had wished the church to approve the Data Protection policy as it was written in the Annual Report. There is to be some of the detail added later. After discussion, it was decided the church could not approve the policy as people could not remember it adequately. There was a suggestion to have a 2nd session to look at the policy and put it on the agenda for the next church meeting. All members to read, process and ask any questions on the Data Protection Policy in Annual Report before the next meeting on September 16th.

JH to organise a 2nd session on September prior to church meeting.

Lettings Update: Alan Redhouse stated the lettings calendar has been updated by Michael and Jane. The new Lettings Group, comprised of Alan & Margaret Redhouse and Brenda Marston, are now in the process of handover from Michael and will be fully responsible from September. Alan hopes they will be able to organise the lettings in order to put off or avoid the need for an external manager.

Housing Association: A summary of the last “ Way Forward” meeting has been sent to Moss Care St. Vincent (MCSV) to update them prior to the meeting Sunday, July 15. There was brief discussion as to people’s concerns re parking and the worship area.

Second Sundays: Andy, Jonathan, Jane and Lorna met to look at making the church more supportive of the young people in our community. It was decided to try an evening session, 6 – 8ish pm, on the second Sunday of the month to provide a space where people aged 16 – 25ish may come to eat and talk. Discussions will focus around topics to be decided with the suggestion of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. Rachel Eeckelaers is also joining the planning group and anyone else is welcome.

Summer Arrangement for Worship: The worship group have planned services until October along the theme “One More Step”. There will be no 2nd sessions or junior church after next week and during the school holidays in August. There is a focus on fun and joy in the second sessions in the autumn.

AOB: Be Alert- Margaret Garner noted that there are many jobs in the church. Some individuals are doing too many things and others may need to either volunteer or, if they see something amiss, just do it. Acknowledgement and gratitude will go a lot further than complaints. We need to be patient and loving with each other!

The meeting closed with the singing of Alleluia.

~ Talking to Each Other ~

If you would like to comment on any of the articles in this magazine and so start a discussion or if you would care to write an article for us on a topic of your choosing such contributions would be welcome. Please send them by email to alan.redhouse@virgin.net or by post to The Editor, Christward, Union Chapel Fallowfield, 2b Wellington Road, Fallowfield, Manchester, M14 6EQ.

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2b Wellington Road, Fallowfield Manchester, M14 6EQ

Web Site: www.unionchapelbaptist.org.uk

Editor: Alan Redhouse: ☎445-0020;
email: alan.redhouse@virgin.net

Church Office: ☎225-4226

Interim Minister: Jane Henderson, tel:07581 337178
email janehende@gmail.com

Secretary: Nicola Hamilton

Treasurer: David Garner ☎434 4984

Deacons: Beryl Dykes, David Garner, Nicola Hamilton, Colin Marchbank-Smith, Brenda Marsden, Lorna Richardson, and Michael Welford.