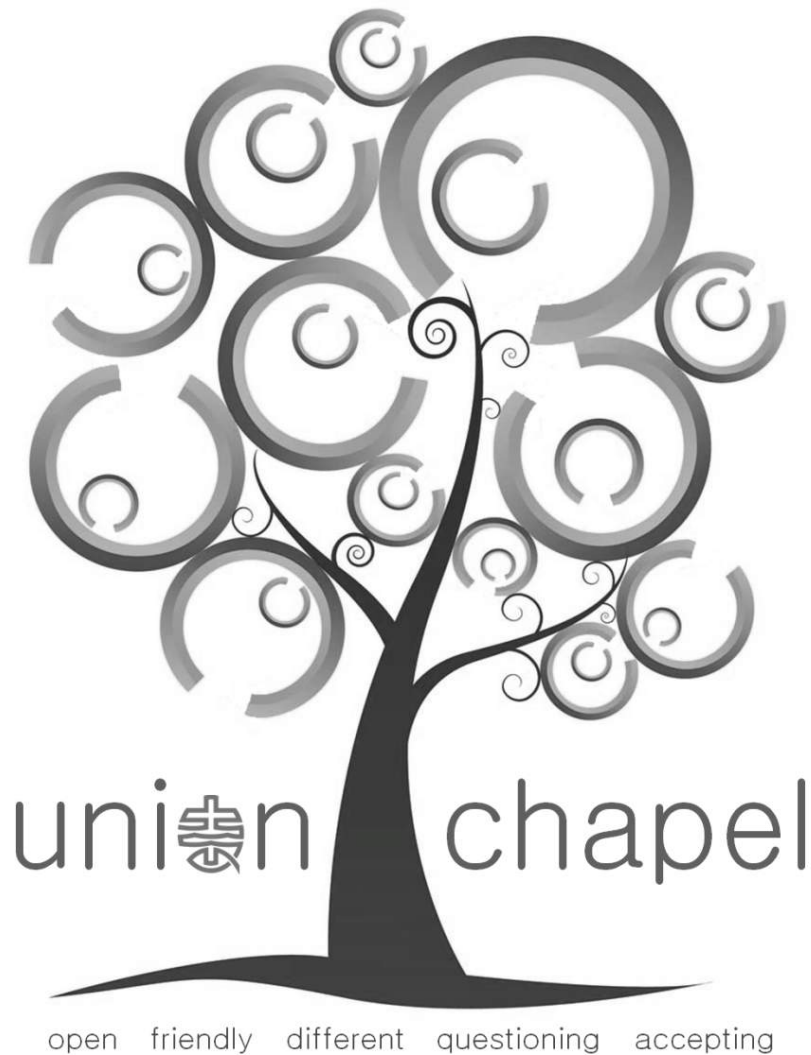


Christward

The magazine of



July 6th–August 31st
2014

~ From the Minister's Desk ~

I was very grateful to Tim Presswood for facilitating the sessions on our recent church weekend. I am not naturally inclined towards poetry (I know that 'getting it' is not the point, but it annoys me when I don't), and therefore I was very pleased to have been exposed to it in a way that wouldn't have happened if I had been left to my own devices. It strikes me that one of the precious gifts we can give to one another is exposure to new things; sometimes this is befuddling or even painful, but more often it is invigorating and enriching. I was also grateful for his relaxed and creative approach, and how comfortably he dwelt among us.

Most people involved in learning have not just accidentally settled on a particular style or approach (unless they are very bad, or very lucky) but it is the result of an ongoing dialogue between experience and educational theory. Tim referred to some thinking that had influenced him when he made a brief reference to Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and the criticism of the 'banking concept of education'. I was aware that some of us may be quite familiar with this seminal work of the early nineteen-seventies, and some of us may be thinking 'Peda-what?' Whilst this is not the place to dive in to this in any great detail, it is worth some brief consideration as it influences much of what does (or should) happen at Union Chapel.

Many of us will have experienced the 'banking concept of education'. At its worst it occurs when the teacher distils the learning experience into petrified and lifeless information which is then transferred to the empty vessels which are the students. This information is banked; it is deposited into the minds of others with as little interference as possible, entirely disregarding the individuality and experiences of the listener. Knowledge is a gift to be passed on from those with authority to those without, it discourages critical thinking and restricts freedom – it is oppressive.

That all sounds rather dramatic, but it can all too easily happen, especially in churches. The situation is made worse when the process is hidden beneath layers of tradition and theology, and even when both the teacher *and* student inadvertently cooperate in maintaining it. We might recognise it in more obvious forms, for example when a minister informs the congregation that there is only one way to interpret a bible passage, when membership becomes primarily about reciting creed and convincing the existing members that you are just like them, when the church as a whole attempts to enforce its way of thinking on to an unreceptive world. Or perhaps more subtly; when we come to church expecting an expert to provide us with some novel answers, when we get irritated when someone asks us to participate, when we switch to autopilot and unthinkingly use words that are not our own. Or even more subtly still; when we unconsciously give extra weight to words that are in print rather than spoken, or scripted rather than extemporaneous, when we assume that someone else knows better, that our discomfort is our own problem, and that we'd better not ask questions.

Good learning, says Freire, should be liberating. It should be a mutual process which encourages critical involvement, full of questions and debate and the sharing of experiences. He uses wonderful phrases like 'mutual humanization' and 'conscientization', but what he's getting at is that we should all be empowered and enabled through our learning together and that it will not only transform us, but also the world in which we live.

I think that the questioning approach of Union Chapel, our commitment to critically engaging with our own teaching (and that of others), and our strivings to become more multi-voiced – all make the 'banking concept' a thing of the past. On the other hand, it is always easy to fall in to bad habits.

One of the great ways to enliven the learning process is when we all employ our imaginations in playful and meaningful ways. In the never-ending quest to find the solution to truly inclusive worship, I have noted with interest two occasions when we seem to have achieved it quite naturally. Firstly in the weekend session of 'fridge

poetry', when we all created our own words to contribute, and then everyone had the opportunity to rearrange those words to create something new (notwithstanding some practical issues of space and access). The second one was last Sunday when we all thought about what prophetic words we would speak to the world if we were given the use of a billboard in Manchester for a few weeks. This latter example led to some incredible thoughts being expressed, and it was notable that the age and background of the author was almost impossible to distinguish – it was a level playing field where all were both teachers and students, givers and receivers of wisdom.

We will continue to strive to create opportunities of mutual learning and imaginative sharing, and we will pursue the multi-voiced ideal of church. As a small part of that we have devised some second sessions that will encourage us to write our own liturgy (prayers, responsive readings, hymns, poems, reflections, etc). Not everyone might feel they can get involved in the 'delivery' of Sunday services and so collating a collection of resources written by us is another way of ensuring that what we participate in together is truly our own. We will begin by thinking about Harvest liturgy at the beginning of September, so start getting those creative juices flowing!

Ian Geere

~ Women in the first world war ~

History is very often the story of men and their actions. Frequently, if not usually, the lives of women are overlooked and ignored. It seemed to me earlier this year, that this was happening with the media coverage of the history of the first world war. What follows is an attempt to provide a balance to this.

The war started on the 4th August. By the 10th August, the main Suffragette organisations who had previously been campaigning (sometimes very violently) for women's suffrage agreed to suspend

their activities until the end of the war and to actively support and help the government in the war effort.

The immediate response to this was that several aristocratic suffragettes set up small groups of women to aid the government and the forces. One such was a group of ladies, with their own motor cycles who could be used as couriers. The War Office rejected these offers - in fact one official is supposed to have told them to go home and sit still!!

Similar efforts by other women were also rejected by society - it was seen as the role of men to fight and that of women to stay in the home.

However in 1915, several events caused changes in the situation. Firstly in March, the British Army was defeated at Neuve Chapelle and this was the result of a serious lack of munitions - the so-called shells scandal. Factories were changed to produce munitions and women were recruited to work in them. Many of these were working class and had previously worked in domestic service or in other factories and mills. They were known as the munitionettes; they wore uniform and worked twelve hour shifts in dangerous surroundings. They turned yellow from the chemicals and the TNT could explode, killing them. By 1916, there were 75,000 of them, and although they were paid less than men doing a similar job, they were much better paid than in their previous employment.

Secondly, in March, the Board of Trade appealed for women to register for "War Service" work at their local Labour Exchange. Twenty thousand registered immediately, but still employers were reluctant to employ women.

Thirdly, on 21st July 1915, approximately 30,000 women marched through London carrying banners demanding the right to work. This was organised by the leading Suffragette, Emmeline Pankhurst.

As the war continued and more men were needed to fight at the Front, women started to replace them in the workforce. This

process was accelerated after conscription was introduced in February 1916. By the end of the war, after considerable initial opposition, women were working in all areas of the economy from chimney sweeps to manufacturing and service industries and even in the heavy industries like ship building and mining. They drove ambulances, buses and trams. - by the end of 1915, half of the Manchester tram conductors were women.

In agriculture, as in trade and industry the work of women became essential. There was the added problem that much of the food eaten in England was imported from overseas, and in wartime the ships were frequently torpedoed, leading to serious food shortages. Many farmers resisted the Womens Land Army, and in 1916 the Board of Trade started to send agricultural organising officers around the country to persuade farmers to accept women workers. By 1917, more than 260,000 women were working in agriculture and forestry.

Nursing was a more traditional sphere of womens work and as the troops suffered massive numbers of casualties, the demand for nurses grew. There had been many different small nursing units before the war - two of the main ones the British Red Cross and the St. Johns Ambulance amalgamated into the Red Cross for the duration of the war. The largest of the nursing organisations were the Voluntary Aid Detachments. These were usually formed from middle and upper class women who had not worked previously and who experienced appalling working conditions, as well as the horrors of the ghastly war wounds. They had tuition, had to pass tests, and after a number of years service, could nurse abroad as well as at home. In the UK, hospitals were set up in large buildings and in stately homes. In Manchester, one was set up in Alma Park School, and another at Dunham Massey. Ninety thousand women served as VAD's during the war.

At the beginning of the war, women were handing out white feathers to men who were not in uniform. By the end of the war women were in military uniform themselves. The three womens services were

established in the last two years of the war. The women took over the non-fighting roles, to free the men for the front line.

By the end of the war, a very large proportion of women were in paid employment - generally they were not paid as much as men for the same job, but many women had more money than before. However there were those who did not work for family reasons and these experienced great hardship. Food was scarce and costly and rents were going up. Middle class women combined to organise local relief groups and fund raising, and set up health and maternity centres, and cheap sources of food and meals.

Even in the initial euphoric stages not all women supported the war. Sylvia Pankhurst left the suffragette movement to assist women in East London . Various women socialists opposed the war and supported peace conferences which were held in Europe. The largest of these was the Hague Womens Peace Conference in 1915, attended by 2000 women. Many British pacifist women who wanted to attend this were denied passports and so could not attend.

I have tried to give some idea of the scope of women's involvement in the first world war - some supported it, some opposed it, many worked, others stayed at home. The appalling circumstances of life for the poor led to some middle class women doing charitable work and setting up organisations which were the forerunner of the welfare state. There were a small number of iconic women such as the nurse Edith Cavell who did extraordinary things.

There are two final points.

One -women of all classes knitted - The historian, Asa Briggs reports that 1,724,947 mufflers and 1,574,155 pairs of mittens were knitted for the troops during the war.

Two - women wrote poetry. Not about the glory of war, but about its reality and futility, and about the misery of loss. There is an almost

unknown anthology of womens poetry from the first world war called Scars Upon My Heart. It includes work by seventy nine women including people like Mary Webb, Marie Stopes, Edith Sitwell, Enid Nesbit, Rose Macauley, Eleanor Farjeon, and Vera Brittain. Very few poems written by women have been included in the standard anthologies of war time verse. The title comes from Vera Brittain's poem To My Brother - 'Your battle wounds are scars upon my heart, Received when in that grand and tragic"show" you played your part.' It was written as he was dying in 1916.

After the war, most women stopped work and went back into the home. There were, however, many whose husbands and sweethearts had been killed in the fighting. They worked - teachers, nurses, civil servants, typists, shop assistants, amongst other things.

As for the suffrage movement - women over the age of thirty with certain property qualifications were given the vote in 1918.

I wonder how the history of the war would have proceeded if the women had not played their part. I think it is important to realise that "her story" is frequently as important as "his story".

Margaret Edmonds

~ Skating around the Truth ~

We recently had occasion to consider a passage in the gospel where Jesus says 'I am the way the truth and the life and no one may come to the Father but by me'. This led to an examination of what different people mean when they ask or say things and over the differences in the objective truth or meaning. The objective truth is for me a tricky business at best as it often depends on the conceptual framework of the viewer. Even the most objective observations of science rely on the conceptual (or real) lens through which the outside world is observed. Galileo found this to his cost some years ago.

Yet there are so many things which rely on at least some degree of agreement about objective truth as in the case of our laws for instance. There is for me, however, a truth which is able to encompass all differences in conception, education, sensitivity or capacity.

This is the internal reference to the truth which I believe we all have. From the perspective of internal truth it matters not one jot if I believe that everything goes around the earth or around the sun. If that is what I believe then I would be a liar if I reported otherwise. I have often thought that it is an odd thing that I should have the capacity of reporting truly whatever I did or said or felt on some past occasion or indeed what I think, feel or am doing. For as I live, this reference point (referent) lives with me if I care to notice it. Of course I can ignore it, I can forget it or I can lie about it but I can never actually get rid of it entirely, it remains an internal referent. It is the centre of conscience of Shakespeare's Hamlet "thus conscience doth make cowards of us all".

Over the years I have thought about this great deal and it seems to me that it is this truth which is behind the rather perfunctory general confession in the Anglican Church and the more structured, but still limited, confessional practice of the Catholic Church. C. G. Jung took this aspect of psychology (soul words) much more seriously and had a much more elaborate system of 'confession, exploration, elucidation, and integration' when dealing with reference to a person's internal truth. This referent seems to me to be, oddly enough, totally egalitarian. The uneducated or unimaginative don't have to deal with the twists and turns of the educated or imaginative mind keeping track. The blind do not have to deal with the sights and responses of the seeing person. It seems to me it is also trans-religious, it doesn't matter if you are a Hindu or Buddhist, a Sufi or a Christian, it is available and belongs to all equally. Providing the person's relationship to this truth is the important thing, not what is actually believed.

I wonder if this was the truth that Jesus was claiming to personify in John 14: 6.

As a human being I have discovered that I seem to have many ways of avoiding this simple internal reference to truth. There are so many ways of attempting to short cut it, partialise or get around it and yet it remains absolutely present and perhaps it lies behind another gospel saying from the sermon on the mount 'blessed are the pure in heart for theirs is the kingdom of heaven', if purity of heart is being one with this internal reference.

I don't believe for one minute that I'm alone in this avoidance. It seems to me that many of the social and religious forms can provide many ways of distraction from this truth.

However there are some things I have learned on my travels and in my consideration of this internal reference to truth. Whilst it is necessary to be honest and truthful about particulars, I don't pursue my whole (holy the good, the bad and the ugly) truth except in an environment of love because it is only love that deserves (or can cope with) it. Nowadays when someone asks me what I'm thinking, I usually ask if they are sure they want to know!

Harry Fleming

~ Union Chapel Annual Report 2013 -2014 ~

As a new venture the March Church Meeting decided that instead of receiving verbal reports from the Minister, Secretary etc at the AGM all reports together with the Church Accounts should be published in a booklet. This was made available to members before the AGM which was held in June.

You can download a copy of this Annual Report by going to the Church website www.unionchapelbaptist.org.uk and clicking the icon Church Report 2013/14 on the Home page.

~ Fallowfield an Withington Food Bank ~

Our Food Bank opened at Union Chapel and St Cuthbert's on Friday 9th May and Tuesday 13th May respectively. For both distribution centres the opening hours are between 12.00pm and 2.00pm.

So far we have fed 56 people including 29 adults and 27 children. We are beginning to get known by our referrers and expect the number of people requiring food to increase considerably over the coming months.

We are still looking for volunteers to help with the Food Bank. There are many jobs which need doing and not all of them have to be carried out during Food Bank opening hours. If you are interested and would like to know more please contact Colin on 07739571991 for more information.

We are also pleased to accept donations of food for the Food Bank. There is a collection point in the church foyer together with a list of foodstuffs we need (no perishables).

~Church Weekend 2014~

The Church Weekend was held at Thornleigh, Grange over Sands over the weekend 13th - 15th June. As usual it was a gathering of Union Chapel people past and present, from Manchester and further afield. There was opportunity for lots of talk, catching up, exploration of the theme all in the context of good food and spectacular scenery.

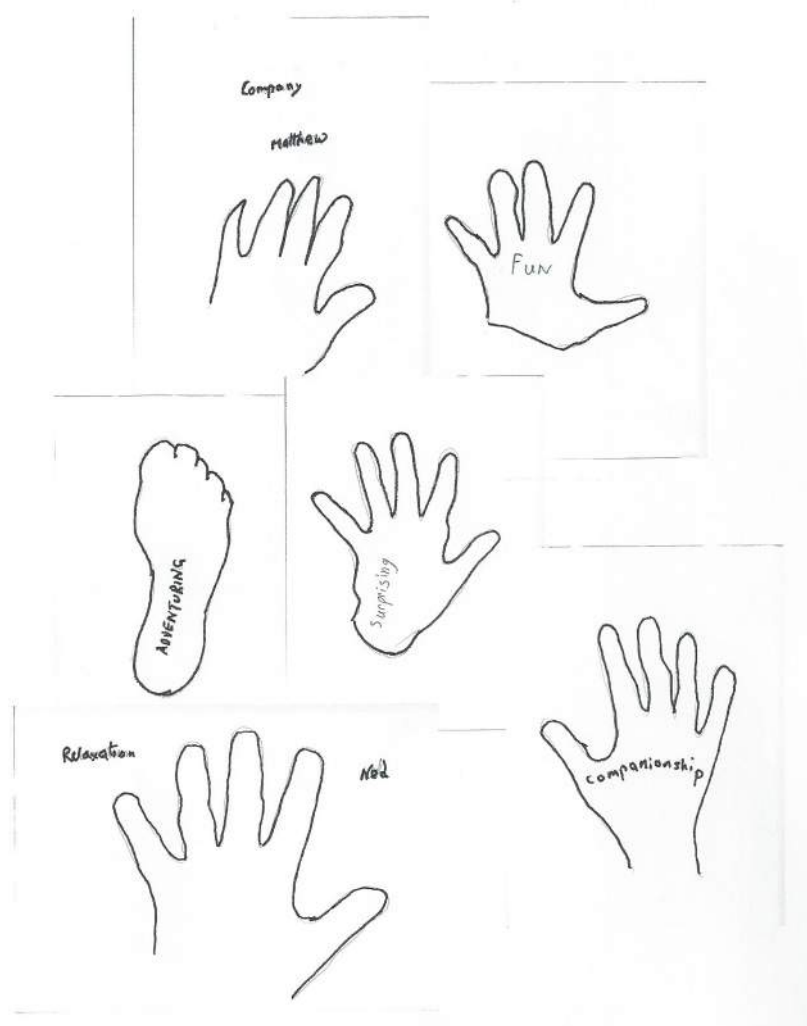
The theme was 'The Poet, The Warrior, The Prophet' led by Tim Presswood, the Regional Minister of NWBA. Planned to be inclusive it enabled everyone to explore the Word of God through language and in our own words.

Some of our attempts were used in the final service and you can get a flavour by what is reproduced below.

Poem by Leonie Earnshaw (Junior Church)

The sun shines on my face.
I think I need to tie my lace.
I wonder why the sky is blue.
Can't I go to the zoo?
My silly sister gets to go,
can't I take part in the show?
Now I've told you about my morning
can I tell you about my dawning?

Five Hands = One Foot



Psalm for Communion at the Church Weekend's Ending

Praise God for the beauty here of sea, sand and song,
of hills, hospitality and hope.

Praise God for our gathering here to reconnect and refresh.

Praise God for this still point here on our journeys of faith,
where brokenness, pain and sorrow as

well as joys are named and owned,

and held in love between one another and with our God

Anne Phillips

~ News of the Family ~

Congratulations to **Jonathan Walker** who has graduated with a First in Modern and Medieval Languages from the University of Cambridge. Readers will remember that Jon got married last year and that his wife (Alesia) who comes from Belarus is unable, at present, to get a visa to live in the UK. Furthermore Jon is unable to get a visa to live in Belarus. At the moment they are living in Krakow, Poland, both hoping that it will not be too long before this mess is sorted out by the Border Agency and they can both come and live together in the UK. Jon is working on analysing and translating old Russian scripts for a friend of his University lecturer.

We were sorry to hear that **Michael Welford** has had a fall but are glad that he is making a good recovery.

Alan Dobbins has moved to Cawood House Care Home, Lapwing Lane, Brinnington Stockport SK5 8JY. We send him our best wishes and hope that he will settle in to his new home quickly.

Jonathan Roberts, who has been taking his GCSE exams this summer, will be going to Xaverian College to study for his A-Levels

**~ Minutes of the Church Meeting
of Union Chapel Fallowfield (Baptist)
held on Sunday 18th May 2014
at 11.20am.~**

Present: Ian Geere (chair), Gwyneth Heritage Roberts, Steve Roberts, Beryl Dykes, Harry Fleming, Rachel Scott, Gwen Mattock, Colin Marchbank-Smith, Nicola Hamilton, Michael Welford, Enid Welford, Rachel Adebago, Leonie Earnshaw, Sarah Geere, Hilda Linton, Rose Bell, Geoff Walker, Carole Walker, Julie Bryce, Andy Howes, Irene Roberts, Margaret Edmonds

Apologies: Alan Redhouse, Margaret Redhouse, David Garner, Margaret Garner, Brenda Marston and Carmen Bowman (with children)

The Minutes of the March 2014 meeting (in current magazine) were approved.

Notification of AOB: None

Matters arising/updates/information:

The Easter services went well. There was no feeling that in future we should reinstate the 8am communion service.

(a) **The AGM will be on 8th June.** Written reports will be circulated in advance. Today is the closing date for Deacons' nominations. The annual accounts will be included in the report. We have in the past been reluctant to make details of the church's finances available outside the congregation but no-one had any objection to the accounts in the statutory format being included in a document which will be available to be read by others.

(b) **Church Weekend in June** – all rooms are now allocated and the financial side has been sorted out. Between 40-50 people will be coming. Tim Presswood has urged those attending to bring a favourite poem.

- (c) **Food Bank** – Colin M-S reported that this is now open and has had its first client at Union Chapel. There are some teething issues but things are going well. The Food Bank now has its own website. There is a standard list in the foyer of food items required but there will be a revised list issued of items they are keen to have – baby food in tins or jars in particular (not formula milk). There will be a collection at Tesco Burnage on 4th-5th July and volunteers to help with that would be welcome.
- (d) **Paths update** – the Deacons have considered the circumstances behind the costs overrun to see what lessons can be learned for the future. The Fabric Committee has not been able to meet recently because Michael W has been in hospital (we are glad to see him back) and David G has been very busy with his tutorial work. The Fabric Committee will bring a recommendation to a future Church Meeting as to how to finish the outstanding work. They will also propose some guidelines for consideration by the Deacons in the first instance as to the parameters of delegation to the Fabric Committee, and the extent of their discretion in the event of unexpected issues.
- (e) **Autumn Social Event** – there will be an evening of singing and dancing at Union Chapel on 4th October starting at 6pm and finishing at 9.00 – 9.30pm. This will be an accessible, participation event and there will be food available during the evening. Start publicising this now!
- (f) **Harvest** – the provisional theme is food poverty, but other ideas and suggestions are invited.

Linton House

GHR explained the background to the present situation. The freehold of the land on which Linton House is built belongs to the Church. Linton House, which is named after Hilda's husband, was constructed in the 1960s as a hostel for overseas students. A 99 year lease was originally granted to a Baptist charity and is now held by the University of Manchester. We were contacted two years ago by representatives of the University to say that they felt that Linton House was no longer viable from their

perspective as a student residence. At that stage we had said that we had no interest in managing the building ourselves and the conversation fell into abeyance. The University have now been back in touch to say that they have reconsidered but Linton House no longer fits with their plans for the Fallowfield undergraduate accommodation, and overseas students now prefer to be in the city centre. They wish the church to take a surrender of the lease. If we fail to agree there is the possibility that the University could dispose of the lease to a third party. The church would not be able to prevent this.

Several people commented on the wonderful service that Linton House had provided in years gone by for students who would otherwise have found it hard to get accommodation, but it was accepted that society has changed in the last 50 years or so.

Others felt that there must be other socially beneficial uses to which the building could be put.

The University have offered feasibility funding of up to £5K to enable us to consider this further. Our Regional Minister Tim Presswood has recommended a surveyor, Stephen Welch, who was very helpful to Mersey St Openshaw and is also a Director of our Trustee body the Baptist Union Corporation. Ian G has met him and supports the recommendation.

The Meeting passed the following resolutions:

1. In principle, to accept that a surrender of the Linton House lease on terms to be negotiated may be in the best interests of the Church and therefore to progress the negotiations with the University, and
2. To instruct Stephen Welch of Byrom Clark Roberts to carry out a feasibility study on behalf of the Church on the understanding that his fees will be met by the University.

Thanks to Ian G, Alan R & Gwyneth H-R for their work on this to date.

The Meeting closed with the singing of Shalom at 12.08pm

~ From the Christian Aid Web Site ~

Iraq Crisis Appeal: left with nothing

Violence is spreading across parts of Iraq, resulting in a growing humanitarian crisis. More than half a million people have fled from the northern city of Mosul and surrounding areas. They do not know what fate awaits them, or when they will be able to return home.

They urgently need your help now.

We are deeply concerned by the reports of indiscriminate and extra judicial killings. As a humanitarian organisation our greatest concern is for the safety and protection of all civilians.

What's happening now

Terrified and homeless, families are exposed to searing heat, often without anything to eat or drink. They are heading for a region already severely stretched by refugees escaping the conflict in Syria. Many have sought refuge in the cities of Erbil and Dohuk. Hero Anwar, from our long-term partner REACH described the situation: 'It is not the end of the conflict, so they do not know how many family members they might lose, or for how long they will be displaced. They are crying, shouting, "We don't know what to do". It is a very difficult situation. It is not only the displacement that they are coming to terms with, but the violence they have experienced too.'

Already responding to the Syrian crisis

This latest violence comes at a time when the country is already responding to the Syrian refugee crisis. There are more than **225,000 refugees from Syria in northern Iraq**. Our partner REACH has been working in informal camps to provide hygiene and sanitation kits, as well as working with UNHCR and local NGOs to provide food packages and emergency shelters. **REACH** is now expanding its work with refugee communities to support them to use the skills they have to gain employment, which in turn will enable them to provide for their families.

Violence against women: Our partner **Asuda** has worked on

combating violence against women in Iraq since 2000, using a holistic approach of awareness raising, advocacy and the provision of protection services. In response to the Syrian refugee crisis and in recognition of women's increased vulnerability in refugee settings, ASUDA has now expanded its work on women's rights to implement a humanitarian project focused on preventing gender-based violence against women and girls.

Responding to the Iraq crisis

Christian Aid has released **£100,000** to enable our partners to respond quickly. In the coming days and weeks, REACH and Asuda will be expanding their work to respond to the needs of Iraqis displaced by the recent violence in the country.

Help us reach 50,000 people. We are one of the few major agencies already working in Iraq, but we need to urgently step up our response. With your support we aim to reach 50,000 people with food, water and other essentials. You can donate to this Appeal by going to the Christian Aid Web site and following the links.
www.christianaid.org.uk

~ Spring by Isobel Earnshaw ~

Something to cheer you up. This picture looks good but is absolutely stunning in colour. You can see it in all its glory if you go on to the Chapel website (www.unionchapelbaptist.org.uk) and follow the links to the magazine



~ From the Church Weekend ~



While most people wonder how they can stay the pace.....



.....one member decides to make a break for it



Enid, Lorna & Henry gaze in wonder at the prototype of the Tardis



Owen surreptitiously checks the result of the 3.30 at Doncaster

Plenty more photos on the church website

~ 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.

Alan Redhouse

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