

The Liberal Christian

Herald

UCA AGM

Building Bridges

Entering Divine Life

Preparing for the Best

June 2013 - No76



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Dear Friends

However we deal with the constant tide of events there are always new things and we are challenged to respond. We are challenged to respond because time brings change. It seems that in only two or three short decades the religious and philosophical landscape in Britain has changed. In some ways things have changed for the better, in cultural terms and particularly in terms of women's rights and the rights of minorities. This has led hopefully, to a broad acknowledgement that diversity is something to be celebrated and accepted and not denigrated.

On the other hand, the increasing secularisation of our society and the accompanying discrediting of the Church seem to bring the future of the Christian faith very much into question. A recent survey showed that two-thirds of 18-24 year-olds in the UK says they have no religious affiliation at all. We are all living in qualitatively different times but I do not believe that the Church will die out although many church congregations are.

I think that the wider Christian tradition is very much to be celebrated but it is in the contemplative tradition, in the silence of prayer that we may have a sense of the presence of God and where we may seek renewal and transformation. At our forthcoming Summer Meeting on Saturday July 27th, at Meadow Chapel, Godalming, Surrey, we are, fortunate indeed in that there will be an introduction to Christian Meditation, offered by Raymond Lamb of the World Community for Christian Meditation.

It is in the silence of prayer that we may we acknowledge God, in whom we live and move and have our being, and know that in changing times we have our part to play. In changing times, let us respond in faith and action and let us always give witness to God's boundless love.

Bob



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UCA at Godalming

Cover photo: spring blossom
Back cover: UCA AGM, Leeds

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ENTERING DIVINE LIFE : *A LENTEN RETREAT* *ON THE NAMING OF GOD*

Andrew Bethune

Considering that Unitarians claim to be open to inspiration from a diversity of religious traditions, I find it strange that our worship rarely strays from a sequence of wordy hymns, prayers, readings and addresses into experimental liturgy or creative worship.

So I was delighted when Claire Henderson Davis, a theologian, and a Cambridge Unitarian, offered to lead a 'retreat' at our church along with her colleague Angela Reith. Angela is a musician and music therapist, and works with Claire under the banner of PublicWork.

Claire had been hugely supportive and helpful back in 2011 as we planned and ran an 'Away Day' for Cambridge church members, and my expectations were high.

'Entering Divine Life' was different from that 'Away Day'. Participants had to commit to five Saturday afternoons during Lent - they couldn't simply drop in and out. Because running the retreat was part of the leaders' work portfolio, participants had to pay to attend.

We have become used to a church activities costing nothing or next to nothing. The church committee provided the accommodation free, and the event happened in our beautiful oak-panelled church.

PublicWork seeks to 'facilitate a shared vision of the common good by renewing the practice of individual and collective storytelling', beginning with Christianity, 'the public narrative that has given rise to the West', and asks 'Where does the story go from here?'

The rationale behind the retreat is best given in Claire's words:

The world is a mess... Every generation works to articulate the nature of the mess it finds. Part of our current mess is the loss of God's name. Our traditional naming of God is out of date - failing to offer entry to the divine life. This retreat explores a new liturgical naming of God, appropriating and building on Christianity, using the traditional liturgical tools of movement, music, silence and words, with opportunities for discussion and conversation. The framework is drawn from Christian theology in dialogue with discourses such as depth psychology. The aim is to offer entry to a contemporary vision and practice of human flourishing.

I was one of nine who took part. Most were Cambridge Unitarians, two had previously worshipped regularly with us, and another had known of an earlier retreat Claire and Angela ran in London. What happened at the retreat? That is hard to describe in a way that conveys what it was like to be there.

There was a theme for each weekly session - God as mother, father, lover, beloved - all coming together into the new Easter liturgy, which was only figuratively about Easter. The last session was longer than the others, since it concluded sharing a simple meal together.



Movement, dance, music, symbolic actions, silence, listening, words, conversation all featured in the retreat. Patterns ran through from one week to the next. We had homework to do during the week - setting aside ten minutes a day for meditation. It sounds easy, but did not come naturally to all of us.

Some of the language was undoubtedly Christian, but for me, the retreat impinged on my inner life in a psychological way, rather than a theological one. It encouraged me to consider the person I am, or think I am, the influences that brought me to this point, aspects of myself that have troubled me over the years, how to deal with a recent major change in my life. The retreat gave me a meditational tool and a framework of ideas for ongoing reflection. Sabrina Lewins, summed up the value of the retreat for our church :

'We experienced in beloved community our own uniqueness, our personal expression of God in the world. My prayer is that some of this work can be expanded to our church services, helping us to form a more supportive and inspirational consciousness of what we, as a congregation, have to offer the world.'

PublicWork offers a 'bespoke' consultancy service, which I understand to mean they can tailor their programmes to suit the organisation hiring them, and so I am happy to recommend PublicWork to other Unitarian communities.

Andrew Bethune

<http://www.publicwork.co.uk/aboutus.html>).

BUILDING BRIDGES

Derek McCauley

The relationship between the Unitarian and Free Christian movement and the national Christian ecumenical scene is not what it might seem. The General Assembly is neither a Full nor even an Observer Member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), the main ecumenical body. I won't go into the history of this decision nor seek to explore if it might change, however, despite this lack of formal recognition Unitarians retain an engagement with the national Christian churches. This can take various forms; formal and informal, through various groups but increasingly networks of interest. This question was raised at the recent Annual Meetings in the Executive Committee Report.

Despite not being a member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland the General Assembly has continued to be invited to the Churches Public Issues Network, which recently resumed regular meetings. This network brings focuses upon issues of public policy as they affect the churches and communities and amongst planned work is to produce resources for the next General Election. A major project has been called "Good Society", in part a response to the Big Society initiative, which highlights the work of local churches in local communities. It was pleasing to see Rev Chris Hudson of All Souls, Belfast part of the NSPCI featured on their proposed website as one of the examples of faith in action. It is an excellent opportunity to find out what other churches are doing in the public arena and to identify partners.

A related but more informal group is RADAR This meets for an hour each month and brings together the parliamentary officers and public affairs officials of the churches and larger Christian charities. Karen Hanley



At Lambeth Palace, December 2012

has attended for the General Assembly and we recently hosted the group at Essex Hall for six months. Everything discussed is "off the record" and on the basis of "no surprises". It was an interesting experience to stand in for Karen the day after the House of Commons vote on same sex marriage meeting at the Catholic Bishops' Conference premises in Eccleston Square! I was also able to circulate our consultation document on assisted dying.

The General Assembly continues its association with the Churches Legislative Advisory Service (CLAS), formerly known as the Churches Main Committee, and Alan Ruston and I attend regularly. The meetings, which are chaired by a Bishop of The Church of England who sits in the House of Lords, feature high quality speakers on aspects of the legislation going through Parliament or Government policy that may affect the Churches. The United Synagogue is, like the General Assembly and several other bodies, an Associate Member. We also receive monthly bulletins of great value and have access to their advice.

A significant ecumenical partnership remains Christian Aid. The General Assembly is a sponsoring body and receives an invitation to the Annual General Meeting with full voting rights. I have made a point of attending and contributing to the strategy

discussions and have recently spoken to their Director, Loretta Minghella, on several matters of concern to Unitarians. I am pleased that the UCA has worked to support a Christian Aid project showing that even a small group can have an impact.

Of course, we also engage with the mainstream Christian Churches as well as representatives of other religious groups, in the Inter faith Network, through the Faith Communities Forum. Our campaigning work, for example on same sex marriage has also opened up avenues to work with liberals in other denominations,

awareness of what others are doing can help build bridges.

particularly the Quakers and progressive Anglicans and members of the URC.

I think that as Unitarians we make a distinctive contribution to these bodies. Often working with the Quakers, we ensure that the full breadth of opinion is highlighted on sensitive issues of public concern rather than narrow conservative perspectives. Our view from the margins is respected and it is good for all to have “taken for granted” thinking challenged. As a small denomination we have to focus our resources and energies on a few issues; however, awareness of what others are doing can help build bridges. I have learned that those who argue that the churches no longer have influence on Government and public policy clearly do not understand the nature of church involvement across a range of issues.

For the future we do need to be aware that the ecumenical scene is changing. CTBI is reviewing its approach to meet the needs and aspirations of member Churches, all of whom face financial constraints. They have consulted on moving away from

formal networks, which rely on church officers who are often overstretched or even have their posts disappearing, to a more flexible issue-based networking approach drawing upon task groups of specialists. What will emerge from this consultation is not yet clear, but as we learned from the Keynote Speaker at the recent Annual Meetings, the digital age is introducing new ways of networking through social and other media.

Unitarians and Free Christians with something to contribute can certainly find a space to influence the wider Church. I have recently, for example, been appointed as Secretary of MODEM, a “body in association” with CTBI which focuses upon leadership, management and ministry. No one asked did I subscribe the CTBI statement of faith! So if you have an interest; be it the environment and green theology, women in the church, asylum there is certainly some form of network or body to associate with to be found by simply searching the internet. You will be made most welcome. The future is much more fluid compared to the institutional form of ecumenism of the past and this must suit our freer approach.



With Loretta Minghella, Director of Christian Aid

PREPARING FOR THE BEST

Bob Pounder

I'm sure we've all had that experience at home where we've just had a nice fulsome two or three course meal, perhaps even eaten a little more than we should have done and then whilst everyone is still sat at the table, somebody says, "What are we having for tea?" I think it's at this point that a bit of a groan goes up because one meal has barely been finished, people's stomachs are full and the last thing that you want to be thinking about is the next meal.

'Timing, they say is everything', but the truth is, a few hours later appetites will be beginning to stir and then we really will want to know exactly what it is that we will be having for tea. Knowing where the next meal is coming from and what it will be is all about planning and preparation. In life there is a certain joy in giving way to spontaneity, taking pot-luck and even leaving things to chance, to adventure so to speak but generally our experience cautions us in the words of Baden Powell to 'be prepared.' At home, at work, in business and in our own personal self-management there can be no better advice than to be prepared.

I think most of us do have a planning system, and I think in most cases it's probably a 'to do list', a 'priority list' and a diary. It's my preferred system anyway; write it down, get it done and cross it off! Nevertheless, I think most of us would like the freedom to live our lives a little more carelessly, not having to worry too much about our endless list of duties, and responsibilities and obligations. Perhaps we can take comfort from the words of Jesus:
"Take no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

However, in the gospel of Mark he says:

"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing: or in the morning."

At first sight these statements appear to contradict each other, not to worry about tomorrow and then in the next breath, as it were, to keep watch for something that may happen in the present or in the future. But in both of the sayings of Jesus it appears that we are only being asked to be alert, to be awake to the present moment, not to worry unnecessarily about the future, not to 'sweat the small stuff'. By being alert to the present moment in wakefulness, we can find our potential to be the best that we can be to act in accordance with our higher selves and to serve God.

This planning, the preparation that I am talking about often presents itself as a challenge. Within the Christian tradition there is still this expectation that we might give up something for Lent, that we might eat a little less or even fast. Sometimes I think that the devout Moslems often put us Christians to shame, for in Islam there are five daily prayers and their is fasting throughout the month of Ramadan.

There are sound religious reasons in all the great faith traditions of the world for such exercises of self-denial and for periods of increased devotion. And they're not in my opinion, meaningless expressions of piety but a path to understanding. In the book of Proverbs (18:12) we are told that, *"A fool has no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself."*

The easy path of careless living is the antithesis of the wilderness days, the forty days and forty nights of extreme hardship of hunger and cold and the yearning for the comforts of the world. But there in the bleakness of the wilderness Jesus struggled in an effort of will, and determination and with a sense of the presence of God. His preparation was in readiness for a unique ministry, for the trials that would lead to suffering and pain beyond human endurance. The wilderness experience helped to forge an incredible strength of character, insightfulness, and compassion. Jesus of Nazareth was the personification of all these qualities.

This preparation, this time in Lent is given to us because we need to drill down into our own souls, to create a sure foundation of faith that we can live by, a foundation that can withstand the rigours of life. This idea was expressed many times in the life of Jesus' ministry and perhaps most graphically or illustratively in the parable of the wise and foolish man. (Matt 7: 24-29)

"Everyone, therefore, who heareth those sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew, and struck against the house and it did not fall; for it had been founded on a rock. And everyone who heareth, and do them not, shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and struck against that house and it fell, and the downfall of it was great."

This story is probably one of the most easily remembered Bible stories, a Sunday school story, definitely, and one made even more memorable by the Sunday school song that went along with it. Such stories are given to us, they are our early lessons in life, and in many ways they are seeds that grow only slowly if at all; because we think we know better. But these lessons, we often

later find, can actually become the bedrock of a more successful, authentic way to live once we return to them with the benefit of our own experience. They are simple wisdoms but they are an integral part of a universal human wisdom as well as part of the Christian faith.

Back in 1998 the UUA Minister, Robert Fulghum, came to prominence when he wrote a book called, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. Fulghum's work is a simple childish message of sharing and caring and personal integrity. However, this book has been described as a work that is 'dripping with sentiment, a treasure for those (a) rejoice in homilies and/or (b) swear by newspaper advice columns and/or (c) have a high sugar tolerance. Diabetics and cynics beware.

***these lessons,
we often later find,
can actually become
the bedrock
of a more successful,
authentic way to live***

Another book review reads, *"I think through most of the stories what Fulghum was trying to convey was that you shouldn't take things too personally, that you should look for the good in situations and that you should be happy with the simple."*

I think that in spite of the cynicism, the title of Robert Fulghum's book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, is itself a striking truth. Maybe the stories that he conveys *are* dripping with the sentimentality of a 'high sugar content' but let us be clear: many of the lessons of early childhood do point towards a deeper religious spiritual truth.

The stories that Jesus told were simple and direct; they are stories for everybody regardless of age. Sometimes I have to admit to being disappointed when cynical analysis is applied to the spiritual message of scripture. There are those who intellectualise religious thought to the point that the essential meaning become washed-out and lost. Someone once said that the problem with men of learning is that learning often goes to their heads and not to their hearts.

Religion is not the language of the head, or of the intellect it is a language of a higher order altogether.

true religion is the language of the heart

I think that true religion is the language of the heart, the language of unconditional love and its founding principles can often be rediscovered in the lessons of early childhood as in the golden rule, 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you'.

I think one of the things we discover in life is that things never do move in a straight line, we often repeat the same mistakes and so have to relearn the same lessons. The garden of the soul has to be properly tended, weeded and cultivated. We have to remain awake not only to the good and beautiful things that we receive each day, but to the seeds of negativity, cynicism and despair that can discolour our perspective and choke the spiritual life.

The cry, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" is simply a call to return to that which is good, to turn away from that which hinders our progress and to renew the commitments of our faith. This call for repentance is merely an acknowledgement of our frailty, our constant rising and falling on the

rollercoaster of life, the depths and the heights of it all where it is so easy to lose our balance and sense of proportion.

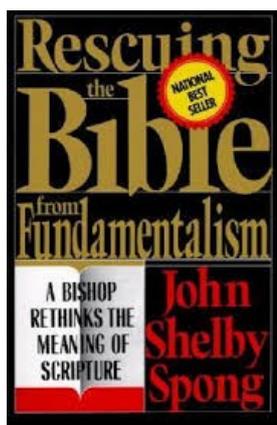
Again, the time of Lent within the church gives us a space and a time of preparation and renewal. The famous dancer, Martha Graham wrote these words:

"I believe that we learn by practice. Whatever it means to learn to dance by practising dancing or to learn to live by practising living, the principles are the same. In each, it is the performing of a dedicated precise set of acts, physical or intellectual, from which comes shape of achievement, a sense of one's being, a satisfaction of spirit. One becomes in some area, an athlete of God. Practice means to perform, over and over again in the face of obstacles, some act of faith, of desire. Practice is the means of inviting the perfection desired."

Although we cannot be perfect, we can be the best that we can be we can be inspired by the life and Ministry of Jesus, we can seek to follow his example by affirming his teachings, not just through the days of Lent and Easter but throughout all the days of our lives.

This article was drawn from the Lenten sermon given at the Service at the UCA AGM in Leeds by Rev Bob Pounder

BOOKS



Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism

A Bishop rethinks the meaning of Scripture.

John Shelby Spong
HarperSanFrancisco
ISBN 0 06 067518 7

I found this book whilst browsing in a favourite bookshop of mine, in the market town of Bakewell, in Derbyshire. Its title immediately grabbed my interest, perhaps not least because it was at a time when I was struggling with my new Christian faith, but still attending a very fundamental, evangelical church.

How could I maintain my faith, and yet resolve all my questions about creeds, dogma, and doctrine? Could I really accept all I read in the Bible as literally true?

I bought the book, and it proved to be my first step along the road to a much more liberal interpretation of the Christian faith, and ultimately to Christian Unitarianism.

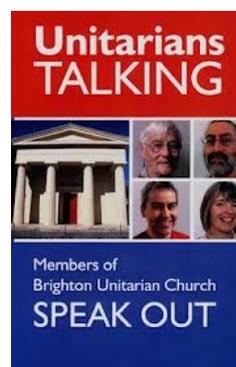
John Shelby Spong was an Episcopal Bishop in Newark, USA, and in the late 1980's sparked controversy when he voiced his radical views on the matter of Scripture.

He raised questions about how today's Christians could continue to call the Bible the Word of God when many of its passages reflected facts that twentieth century Christians do not share. As a result of his pronouncements, a series of television debates between him and well known evangelists took place, and promoted great interest and responses, including death threats!

This book was the natural result. In it, Spong examines how the Bible came to be written,

and discusses the origin of the stories and the myths contained in it, and the meanings of them. He shows that it is not necessary to accept the Bible as literally true, and in fact to do so is to diminish it. There lies beneath the words much more wisdom and eternal truths that could ever be conveyed at first glance. We need to reflect and meditate on Scripture to reveal all its treasures.

I remember on my first reading of this book, feeling somewhat alarmed at about the half way point. Was this book about to destroy my faith completely? I am so thankful that I pressed on. By the end I knew that Spong loved the Bible, and wanted to share his search for that elusive knowledge and truth of God with others. Far from destroying my faith, it led me to a greater one, one which I could speak of whilst maintaining integrity. GB.



Unitarians Talking

Members of Brighton Unitarian Church SPEAK OUT
Edited by F & C Clark-Lowes

This new book is so easy to read it could imply that the strength of the Brighton church itself came easily, but the more one delves into the individual stories here and the depth of spiritual insight, the more one realises that this is a reflection of a faith community just as diverse and yet as committed as any other in the country.

Drawing on a wide range of events and insights, it paints a picture of what can be achieved and is still in progress.

It is an inspiration to all of us. BH

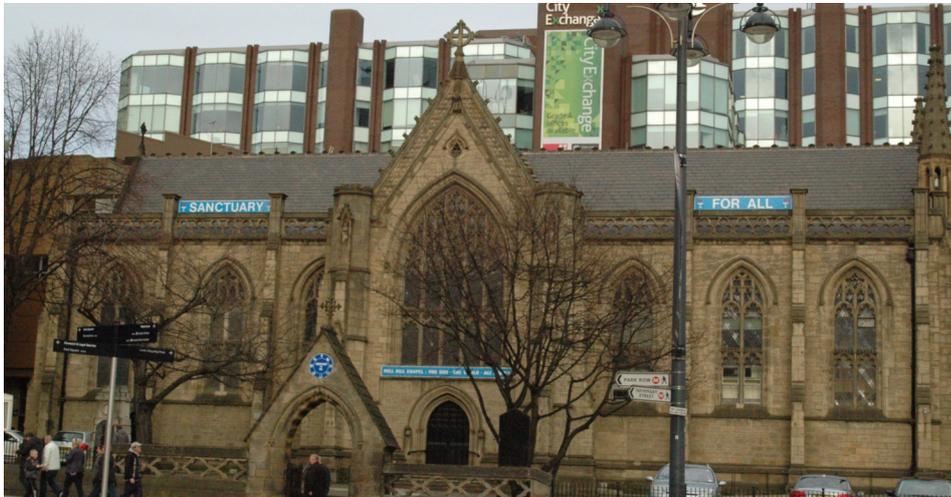
Available from Brighton Unitarian Church, New Road, Brighton, BN1 1UF 01273 696022

Unitarian Christian Association

Annual General Meeting

MILL HILL, LEEDS, UNITARIAN CHURCH, 16th MARCH 2013

Reflections from Lewis Rees and Denise Birks



It was good to join with fellow Unitarian and liberal Christians for the Annual General Meeting of the Unitarian Christian Association in the wonderful surroundings of Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds. I believe that I am correct in stating that every constituent member country of the United Kingdom was represented, and that people had travelled from far and wide to attend the gathering. As is traditional at UCA get-togethers, we followed the early Christian practice of 'eating before the meeting' and what a sumptuous feast it was too! After catching up with friends from all over our nation, we then proceeded to the sanctuary for the Lenten/Easter service of worship.

The service of readings, hymns and prayers commemorating the passion and crucifixion of Jesus and the resurrection of Christ couldn't have been better planned, with the wonderful organ playing of Mill Hill Chapel's resident Musical Directory, Anthony Norcliffe, ensuring the tone of the service was just right.

Spirits refreshed, and following a short break, the gathering convened in the Priestly Hall for the AGM. It was heartening to hear the achievements our relatively small membership has managed to accomplish in Sierra Leone through our partnership

scheme with Christian Aid. I believe I speak for everyone present when I say how moved we all were at the speech made by a gentleman from Zimbabwe, Abraham Mdlongwa, who described how, as a member of Morgan Tsvangirai's '*Movement for Democratic Change*', he had endured persecution and torture at the hands of Robert Mugabe's regime and had been forced to flee his homeland.

However, he had become disillusioned with the MDC which has, in his opinion, become just as corrupt as the '*Zanu-PF*' majority and that he was now attempting to bring about change in his country based on the Christian principle of love of God and love of one's neighbour. Once the meeting had ended, it was good to have some quality time chatting over a cup of tea and some cake and being able to share the spiritual warmth that is always generated by our gatherings. To anyone who has yet to attend a UCA event, I would strongly urge you to do so. Each gathering is different, proving the breadth of Christian witness that exists within our movement.

Lewis Rees

I was surprised to find Mill Hill Chapel right in the middle of Leeds city centre. It is an impressive mid 19th century building, which had an even more impressive congregation of over 1000, when it opened. It was built on the site of an earlier chapel of 1767 – an era of growth for our movement, when many of our beautiful chapels were built, including my own chapel at Knutsford. One of the most eminent of Mill Hill ministers was the renowned Joseph Priestly, who commenced his ministry there in 1674, for a stipend of 100 guineas per year!

As is often the case with our gatherings, it was a time to both catch up with old friends and meet new ones, some of whom had travelled considerable distances for the meeting. We started the day with enjoying lunch together, and we took the opportunity to launch the new-look *Herald*, which was enthusiastically received.

It was decided that the £70 donations towards the cost of the meal would be donated to support Nick Morrice, from Godalming. Nick has undertaken a personal commitment to sponsor the education of 5 young men in Kathmandu, following his visit to the Nepalese Christian Church. Nick provides a wonderful example to all of us for demonstrating faith in action.

We were then led, by the Rev Jeff Gould, into a moving and thoughtful service. Several members contributed readings, and the Rev Bob Pounder, our current Moderator, provided a thought provoking homily. The service was enhanced by some beautiful organ playing, by the chapel's Director of Music, Anthony Norcliffe.

The relaxed and convivial atmosphere continued as we undertook the business of the day. It was confirmed that Rev J Corrigan had resigned from the Officer Group and the post of *Herald* Editor, to enable him to focus on his new ministry. We expressed our gratitude to Jim for his excellent work with the *Herald*, as well as significant contribution to the UCA in attracting new members.

It was also an opportunity for Dr Brian Hick to be confirmed as a new member of the Officer Group, and Editor of the *Herald*.



Abraham Mdlongwa

The Rev Jean Bradley was also warmly confirmed as Moderator Elect.

The Officer Group confirmed their commitment to support our members, and further events for the year were confirmed: the summer gathering will take place at Unitarian Chapel, Meadow, Godalming on Saturday, 27th July, and the autumn

gathering will be at the Old Meeting House, Mansfield, Notts., on Saturday, 26th October.

The Rev Bob Pounder also outlined plans for a new UCA book, which will be entitled "*Our Christian Faith*". The book will be based on the personal faith experiences of our members. Bob asked that members should submit any articles to him, and confirmed that members should not wait to be asked – all contributions are welcome! Items already received indicate that this will be an exciting and worthwhile project. Rev Tom McCready, in reference to his role as Chair of Doncaster Interface group, noted the effectiveness of the UCA in reaching out to others. He introduced Abraham Mdlongwa, a Ugandan refugee. Mr Mdlongwa offered his gratitude for the welcome he had received, and for the donations that had been given in support of sports equipment for Ugandan children. He said how much he had enjoyed the service, and in particular the homily by Rev Bob Pounder. He gave a short, but deeply moving account of his experiences in Uganda, including his imprisonment and torture for political reasons. In conversation later, he talked of how hard it was in his first few months in the UK, as he waited for his family to join him. I think all present were reminded of how fortunate we are not to live under such a regime. Before we started our journey home, we all shared in the lovely British custom of afternoon tea – I think it is safe to say that no-one ever goes away from a UCA event feeling hungry!

Denis Birks

CHRISTIAN AID NEWS

Cathy Fozard

Members of the UCA will know that we achieved our target of £5000 on 30 April 2012, less than a year since the launch! The project seemed to strike a chord with our members and friends, and the officer group is extremely grateful for the generous support for this project from individuals and congregations. The Maternal Health unit is making exciting progress with improvements in water and energy supply.

The success of our fund-raising for Kailahun meant that the officer group had a problem! We understood that other fund-raising events for Kailahun had already been organised, and we needed to find another project to support. A look at the Christian Aid website solved the problem! Christian Aid is funding another project in the East of Sierra Leone. This project deals with malaria, one of the major killers in this area, particularly among children. Five hundred pounds supports the training of a malaria control agent, and their work, for one year. These local volunteers provide advice on how to use a mosquito net and how to access treatment.

In the December newsletter I explained that we had already raised enough money to support two volunteers, a total of £1000. You will be pleased to hear that by April 2013 we raised another £500 bringing the total to £1500! We are now supporting three malaria control workers in Sierra Leone for one year.

Thank you to all our supporters for their wonderful efforts in fund raising for both the Kailahun Maternal Health Unit and the malaria scheme.

Read below the blog posted by Derek McAuley, Chief Officer of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, congratulating the Unitarian Christian Association on its achievement.



Monday, 16 July 2012
Unitarian Christian Association supports Maternal Health Project in Sierra Leone

Congratulations to the Unitarian Christian Association (UCA), an affiliated society of the General Assembly, for reaching their target of raising £5000 for the Kailahun maternal health project in Sierra Leone. This £5000 will become £20000 with European Union funding.

Christian Aid launched this project in April 2011 and the UCA agreed to support it with fund-raising in October 2011 with a target of reaching £5000 by January 2014. In fact, they have done so in just one year!

Posted by Derek McAuley at 16:56

In our continuing efforts to support Christian Aid, we are sending all members a Christian Aid recycling appeal envelope in this edition of the Herald.

Christian Aid is asking us to recycle old mobile phones and used ink cartridges to help the fight against poverty. Please do find those old mobile phones lying in the bottom of a drawer or keep the envelope to one side until you have to put a new cartridge in your printer. Just pop them in the envelope and follow the instructions. Postage is free. Thank you for your support.

SUMMER MEETING AT GODALMING

The UCA is delighted to announce that it will hold its summer gathering at Meadow Chapel, Godalming, Surrey on Saturday, 27 July 2013. The pleasant setting should be conducive to good fellowship and peaceful encounters. The day will focus on contemplative approaches to worship and private meditation/devotion. Lunch will be offered, free of charge, from twelve noon. A worship service will then be offered in the contemplative tradition, offering time and space for quiet reflection. After a short break, in which participants can take advantage of the beautiful chapel garden, a representative of the World Community for Christian Meditation (www.christianmeditation.co.uk), Mr Raymond Lamb, will offer an introduction to that tradition, followed by a period of silent meditation. A question and answer session will follow the meditation. Meadow Chapel member, Nick Morrice, will then give a presentation on the medical education project he supports in the country of Nepal. The UCA wishes to continue its support of this effort and is grateful for this opportunity to learn what Nick has observed in his visits to that country. The day's events will end with a substantial afternoon tea. There is no charge made for taking part but it would be appreciated if potential attendees would contact the UCA Events Officer, Jeff Gould (email jeffreylanegould@btinternet.com / telephone 01625 403509), for catering purposes. The chapel's website is www.unitariangodalming.org.uk .



Unitarian Christian Association Summer Gathering

'Christian Contemplative Worship and Meditation'
Meadow Chapel, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 3JB
www.unitariangodalming.org.uk

SATURDAY, 27 JULY 2013

Programme

12 noon Lunch (free of charge)

1 p.m. Worship

2 p.m. Introduction to Christian Meditation,
offered by Raymond Lamb of the World Community for Christian Meditation
www.christianmeditation.org.uk

3.30 p.m. Presentation by Nick Morrice on his support of medical education in Nepal

4.30 p.m. Afternoon tea

Please contact the UCA Events Officer, Jeff Gould,
if you plan to attend, for catering purposes.
email jeffreylanegould@btinternet.com / 01625 403509

