



**ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES WALES**

**ADNEWYDDIAD EGLWYSWYR CYMRU**

**Issue 38 January 2005**

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## A Message from our Chairman Nick Jones

Writing this message post Christmas 2004, the issues I am trying to deal with may seem pretty insignificant in the face of the tragedy that has just unfolded in the countries surrounding the Indian Ocean. Just the scale of the loss of human life and the suffering of those who have survived is overwhelming and may challenge the faith of many. Questions such as, "Why did God allow this to happen?" may be in the minds of many people. It is hard to reconcile this situation with the picture in the Creation Narrative where we are told, "And God saw that it was good." We should remember also that creation has fallen from that "Good" condition through the rebellion of that which was made. In choosing other than God, we are making a choice for other than the perfection of God.

Such overwhelming power as demonstrated in the Tsunami following the earthquake is not down to human design, nor is it within our power to prevent, but such effects of a fallen creation are within God's ability to change. In Christ, God stoops down to a powerless world to restore and renew that which is lost in the "Fall". In John's vision in the Book of Revelation we find the fulfilment of that work of God in and through Our Lord Jesus Christ, "Then I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth," (Rev 21 v 1).

Such a vision of the fulfilment of God's purpose for His creation should strengthen our resolve and faith in His love expressed in the birth of the Christ that we celebrate each Christmas season. The suffering of so many as the result of the natural disaster, should not weaken us but strengthen our desire to be co-workers with God to restore creation to His sovereign will and purpose. So let us pray, let us do what we practically can to alleviate the suffering of so many. But let us also strive the more for the Renewal of God's Church in this nation so that we may see the Gospel of hope proclaimed to all nations of the world.

Our understanding of what it means to be "co-workers" is not always as clear as we would like. For instance, the issue of the relationship of the Flames of Fire Conference to New Wine Cymru was not resolved at the AGM in November 2004. The situation is summed up in the motion passed at the meeting, "That the proposal not be put to the meeting, but that the executive committee (of ARM Wales) be instructed to work alongside New Wine Cymru, to see how things progress." This may not be what people on each side of the emotional debate might have considered God's Will to be. Yet I trust that God does know what is best, more than any of us. The situation does show us that, no matter how strongly we feel something to be right, we still might not be hearing God clearly, and might not be collaborating, as we would intend.

So where does that leave ARM (Wales) now? Well, we continue to seek God's way forward, through prayer and faithful loving action. The Executive meeting in December 2004 has begun a prayerful focus on the needs of the Church in Wales, seeking what ARM (Wales) can contribute to the Renewal of the Church at Parish, Deanery & Diocesan level. The Flames of



Fire Conference preparations are being managed by some of the key section leaders involved at the conference each summer. So things are moving ahead for the work of ARM (Wales).

The work of ARM (Wales) and Flames of Fire is not for the few, but each of us has some part to play in it, and I would invite members of ARM (Wales) to consider how better to be involved. Please seek God in prayer for how we together may work alongside Him in Renewing the Church in Wales. Please pray for the preparations being made for Flames of Fire 2005, for the speakers that have been confirmed, Stuart Bell, Christina Baxter, Kenny Borthwick (New Wine, Scotland), Bruce Collins, and for the seminar speakers as they prepare. Consider whether you may have skills that can be offered in some practical ministry during the conference.

I hope that you will have had a joy filled celebration of Christmas and that you will have a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Yours in Christ

Nicholas

### **One with the Father.....**

In my own prayers I return to this unity with God frequently, perhaps because I see everything in terms of a relationship with God. Now I hear God reminding me of this in every aspect of our Christian lives. It is relevant to our situation within A.R.M.(Wales), it also applies to the future of the Church in Wales or, to think of it closer to home, to our parishes and deaneries. All are considering changes and perhaps even to start again with the plan that God has for us. So let us attempt to see it from his viewpoint.

He is probably stuck with the Church in Wales because it is what we want! Just ponder that for a moment, He has given us free will and we have over the centuries come up with a complex system of rules and organisation that were certainly not spelled out in Scripture. In fact I have been reminded recently that the Normans, under William the Conqueror, had some hand in it. Before that the Celtic Church was a much looser grouping of Christians. But before you blame the English (French actually) ask yourselves why a Christian nation didn't do more to evangelise the Anglo Saxons?

Our Commission is to make disciples of all people and that means work for all of us, but how unless we are guided by God himself, by the Holy Spirit?



Firstly I believe He is telling us that we are not ready to do this work in our present state. We might all have thoughts on how we would like our Church and A.R.M.(Wales) to be, but how much is it of God and how much is it “me”?

Secondly He is saying that He can make us ready but that means changing us. He will not insist on changing us but if we are not willing to be changed then He will reluctantly have to find someone else to do His work in Wales.

At their Autumn event, Bangor Renewal Team hosted a meeting at which Christina Baxter was the speaker. Her theme was the Potter’s Wheel as described in Jeremiah 18.

*Then the word of the LORD came to me: “Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done?” says the LORD, “Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.”*

She pointed out that God was speaking to a group of people and we could apply it to our Anglican Church. She spelled out recent changes within the Church of England which had produced new structures which would make it possible for the Church to again be able to give mission a priority. She started from the point that lack of money had led to the various parts of the Church working together and sharing what they had. Perhaps God had allowed the shortage of money so that He might take the Church to the Potter’s wheel?

So what about the Church in Wales, what about A.R.M.(Wales)? Are we willing to be remade, even to start again? In the local scene I am praying into the past because I believe that God has already told us what He wants and I feel that we have wandered away and done our own thing. I am intrigued with the idea that perhaps small groupings as in the “cell churches” could be similar to our old Celtic Church.

You will now know that the resolution presented at the A.G.M. was amended because it was so clear that many of our members were hurt and upset by the idea of giving away the **Flames of Fire** conference, to a yet untested organisation, **New Wine Cymru**. Most of the Executive were very disappointed but our unity is more important and we praise God for the way He has held us together. Now we must get to know **New Wine Cymru** and see how we can work with them. Nick Jones is in fact heading up both groups, please be aware of the enormous amount of work he is going to have to do as well as serving his two parishes. Perhaps you have gifts that could be offered to make his task easier, especially to help **Flames of Fire** and publicise the event to bring more people to the conference. We need at least another hundred delegates to break even in 2005.

The Executive is seeking God on how we can do more in other parts of Wales especially within Anglican parishes to encourage Renewal. But to return to what God has previously shown us, we must remember our Welsh name:

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which was given after much prayer and searching to an earlier membership.

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*Flames of Fire* has given us an opportunity to work with many from other denominations and a large number of our delegates are not Anglicans. We praise God for this for we are sure that He wants us to be “one”, and especially “one with Him”, but I believe that He is reminding us of our call to renew the Anglican Church in Wales.

Is it a coincidence that after volunteering to be one of the two representatives of our parish to the Deanery Conference I found myself being asked to join the steering group to devise a “Deanery Plan”? I see it all coming together for the Deanery needs Renewal. They may not yet see Renewal as we do but they know that we can seek God’s guidance in prayer through the Holy Spirit, and we have made a start with a prayer day in the parishes and a Deanery Day is planned. The Diocese is offering training days through the “Board of Renewal and Parish Development” but these are very ambitious in that few from our P.C.C.s are likely to attend until God shows them that they have a part to play and cease to depend on the clergy to do everything.

At the end of his televised Christmas message our dear Archbishop Rowan said, “**You are needed to make a difference**”. I believe that we can all apply that to whatever area we are working in.

Every Blessing to you all for 2005.

Mary Newsom

## **The Story of Ananias Eric Fawcett**

There are three men with the name Ananias in the New Testament but the one in this story is the one who lived in Damascus.

He was a man who obeyed God in circumstances which made it very difficult to do so. He wasn’t well known except in his own locality, where it was said of him, that “*He was a devout man, an observer of the law and well spoken of by all the Jews that lived there*” (Acts 22:12-13).

He was described as a disciple, in Acts 9:10-19, who had seen a vision in which the Lord spoke to him. Today we might say that he saw a picture. Words accompanied the vision and what he heard must have shaken him to the core. He was told to go to the house of Judas, in Straight Street, Damascus and ask for a man called Saul who came from Tarsus. Furthermore he was told to go and lay his hands on Saul so that he might recover his sight.

This in itself was a task requiring faith, because Ananias, like the rest of us, couldn’t make blind men see unless God himself really gave the empowering. But not only this, Ananias knew that Saul had come to Damascus “breathing threats and murder” against the Jews who

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had become disciples of Jesus. He expressed these feelings to the Lord and was given reassuring words.

Ananias went because he believed the words that Jesus had given him, and he did what he was asked to do. As he obeyed, Saul received his sight and Ananias prayed for him to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Saul was baptised, thus sealing his intention to be a disciple of Jesus – a complete turn around.

So through his belief in, and obedience to the word of the Lord to him, Ananias became a major instrument in transforming Saul the persecutor of Christian believers into Paul the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

As has been said, Ananias believed and trusted in the Lord to perform the great work when he went to the persecutor of the disciples and prayed for him. We infer from this that before he received the vision, Ananias must have been a person who really loved the Lord and had opened himself to receive whatever the Lord wanted to give. But more than this, turning it around, **the Lord believed in Ananias!**

This is evidenced by the words of Jesus before the event – Saul has seen a man named Ananias laying hands on him to receive his sight.

So the whole thing came together, Saul was blessed and I'm sure that Ananias was blessed too by what the Lord had chosen to do through him. God could have done all this without Ananias but He chose to do it through him, and (dare I say it?) maybe Jesus was blessed too by the whole episode.

**Can He believe in us also?**

## **More than Happy Clappy by Steve Waters**

One thing mankind has always been good at is causing division. We have got splitting a perfectly happy group of people into several different factions down to an fine art, and nothing lends itself to the expression of that more readily than religion. And nowhere within the realm of religion is this more apparent than in Christianity.

When Jesus ascended to Heaven, he left those who had followed him and believed in him a lifestyle that was unlike any other. It was unique and yet very simple, and knowing human nature like he does, he even made a source of power in the form of the Holy Spirit available to us so that we would have somewhere to turn for assistance when the going gets tough, and worldly lifestyles seem more attractive. In short, he left a group of people who loved him and, acting on his instructions and following his example they lived a common lifestyle that immediately and obviously set them apart from other people. They were Christians united by their faith in and love for their Saviour Jesus Christ.



But now, two thousand years later you cannot simply call yourself a Christian any more. Now you have to be an Anglican, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Baptist, etc. you have to be slotted into one of the many different denominations which mankind has created through centuries of arguing over interpretations of what Jesus meant by the things he said. And just when it seems things can't get any worse, we find a new split opening up within the Christian Church. The difference is that this split is not as a result of something that mankind has done, rather this new split is as a result of something that God is trying to do. This new division in the Church transcends even the barriers of denomination, and puts people into one of two camps, traditional Christian or charismatic Christian.

Charismatic Christianity is nothing new as there have been outbreaks of revival periodically for centuries, but it wasn't until the 1960's in England and the late eighties in Wales that this phenomenon which has been disparagingly named Happy Clappy really became noticed on a wide scale. There was nothing new about what was happening, i.e. people laughing hysterically, falling into trances, falling to the ground in tears, speaking in other languages (tongues) etc, all these could be seen in the other revivals that have broken out previously. What made this time different was firstly instant communication that has been part of our way of life since the eighties meant that news of these happenings travelled all round the world in a short space of time, whereas in the past, news of outbreaks of revival was confined to the distance that people could physically travel. And secondly it happened at a time when people were no longer content to believe the scientific "if you can't touch see or feel it then it doesn't exist" way of thinking. People had started to become more aware that there was a spiritual side to life on earth.

Another crucial difference between previous outbreaks of revival and the modern "Happy Clappy movement" is that in previous times the lack of world wide communications meant that it was much easier for the traditional church to put the lid on outbreaks of this kind whereas today, so many people get to know about it in such a short space of time that the traditional church can no longer keep such things quiet. Also the Church today hasn't got the power over people's lives that it once had, and people today are more willing to question the Church's stance on things than they were years ago. These two things have meant that the traditional churches have been forced into taking one of two stances regarding the Charismatic movement, either agreeing with and recommending it, or disagreeing with and condemning it. Thus we see the new split in the Church of God today between traditional and charismatic.

The real tragedy of the whole situation is that by distancing themselves from the "Happy Clappy movement" and all it stands for, the traditional churches are missing out on blessings and gifts that God wants so desperately to bestow on it. There was a time in the early days of the Christian movement when miraculous healings as a result of prayer and laying on of hands were commonplace. Singing and praying in tongues was for everyone. It was encouraged and expected, and no-one batted an eyelid about seeing someone in tears because they had been confronted by God about some wrong in their life. And what about clapping and dancing as you worship God? It was Common place in the early Church, but sadly, not so commonplace now.

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These things were all part of being a Christian in the early days, gifts given by a loving God to his people. But where are they today? Why are these gifts not as evident in today's Christian lifestyle as they once were? What has gone wrong? The problem as I see it is that sometime in the Church's past it was conned into believing that these gifts that are 'of the Holy Spirit' and that were so common in early Christianity were a 'once only' thing for the early Church and therefore do not apply to today's Christians. And this is reinforced in my mind by the fact that I grew up with the Anglican Church, it always has been a very strong influence in life, and yet it wasn't until God got my attention when I was in my mid thirties that I found out something was missing from my Christian life. Growing up as a boy I was never taught in church or Sunday school that ordinary people could speak in tongues or be healed through laying on of hands. I never ever saw people in such close communion with God that they were laughing or weeping. And I was always taught that in church you kept quiet. Clapping and dancing would certainly have got you thrown out.

It seems to me that for so long now the Church, as a result of this con, has in effect only paid lip service to the real power behind Christianity, the Holy Spirit, and believing the lie that the gifts of the Spirit were for the early Church only, it has been trying to spread the message of God under its own power. Now this may have worked very well in bygone times when the Church held a fair amount of influence in people's lives but you only have to look at the state of most mainstream churches today to see how successful that plan is now. A lot of churches today have a congregation that is at best only holding it's own and at worst is actually in decline, leading to accusations that the Church is in decline and is irrelevant. But the truth is that the Church is not in decline, far from it. If you really look, there are plenty of Christian churches world wide that are growing at a phenomenal rate, including some churches of the so called traditional denominations, and the one thing that they have all got in common is that have rediscovered the true power of the Holy Spirit and embraced the gifts that He has to bestow. And that is the way forward for Christianity. We have to realise that these gifts were not a once only happening for the early Church. Jesus meant them for every one who turns to him from the day He sent them to us until the day He comes back again. To deny them is to deny what God wants for us his children, and if the Church today wants to be seen once again as a force to be reckoned with in people lives, then it must realise this. The way forward for God's people today is to realise that there is a spiritual side of life on earth and to embrace it. It's only when we accept this that we can allow the Holy Spirit to live in us and work through us as He did in the early Church, and that is the challenge for us who are members of the charismatic church. We have to communicate this truth to a world that needs to hear it, we have to persuade people that charismatic Christianity is more than Happy Clappy, more than just a lunatic fringe on the edge of the Christian Church. It has been famously said that there is a God shaped hole in every one us and that only God can fill that hole. Well the truth is that the hole is specifically Holy Spirit shaped and it takes the Holy Spirit to fill it, all we have to do is make people aware of this fact and show them what to do about it. Simple isn't it?



## **Where is God in Natural Disasters - a personal view by Mary Newsom**

In the light of the Asian tsunami we know that many are questioning their faith or challenging ours. How can you believe in a God that allows it to happen? Having heard the radio comments following Archbishop Rowan's article in the Sunday Telegraph (2nd January 2005) and even reading the front page of that paper I was reminded again of how people hear what they want to hear and make a judgement on that. So is it possible to say anything helpful? Perhaps it is a good thing for our faith to be challenged for it could be that it will be refined and bring forth actions that will show that we are indeed in Christ and He in us.

My certainty of the presence and protection of God stems from a natural disaster – the Lynmouth flood of August 1952. I was at the youth camp at Lee Abbey, with a party from our church in Farnborough, Hampshire. It was the first time I had been to a Christian gathering, it was a mixture of holiday and teaching. We went for walks on Exmoor and along the coast – Lorna Doone country. We went into Lynton and Lynmouth shopping for souvenirs and enjoyed a beautiful countryside, both sea and moorland. Then came that Saturday night storm. We had been sleeping in eight-person ridge-tents, each had an adult leader and I remember the straw-stuffed palliasses we slept on. But on that night the storm was threatening and alternative sleeping arrangements were made, the boys moved into the main marquee which we had used for meals and meetings and the girls into the beach café which was built high up on the rocks overlooking the bay. So for us, I was almost 15 years old, it was an adventure. What we didn't realise until the morning was that the leaders had spent the night in prayer. The sea came up to within three inches of the door of that beach café before it retreated. This was when I first realised the importance of prayer and how we could expect an answer.

At breakfast we were told that there had been three narrow escapes for people in our camp, in one a car was washed away. We were told that in Lynmouth a bridge had been destroyed and the river had changed course having burst its banks. I can't remember the morning programme but I expect we had some form of camp service and praised God that we were safe. I do know that we were not really aware of the total devastation that was being reported on the radio news and newspapers. (In 1952 few families had television) Fortunately one of our church members was going home by motorbike and on arrival visited all our families to tell them that we were safe, for it had not occurred to us teenagers to try and 'phone anyone, in any case we had no 'phone in our house. Later I realised just how worried my parents had been as they tried to find out if we were alright.

Later that morning we walked the mile or two into Lynmouth and encountered the chaos. Footpaths and railings near the river were gone and water was rushing through the village to reach the sea. It was a solid stone bridge crossing the road that had been washed away as well as some roads. Shopkeepers were sweeping deep mud from the souvenir shops that we had so eagerly patronised in the previous week. I remember seeing their faces and hardly dared look



on their distress. Then there were the dead, I believe that over thirty people lost their lives in that swirling river, every one a tragedy for the family concerned. There was actually a commemorative T.V. programme in 2002 which told a new generation of how a disaster had struck such a beautiful seaside village and the surrounding countryside.

At that camp I realised just how real God was, all my years in Sunday school and going to church were a foundation but now I knew that He had looked after me and my fellow campers. It formed the basis of a testimony of faith for me for years.

But that faith has had to be built on and allowed to grow even to be threatened by science and logic. I digress somewhat now to show how the Lord never forsook me when I questioned what I really needed to believe.

My favourite subjects at school were physics, mathematics and chemistry. I needed to consider God's creation in the light of subjects that I chose to study. Not only did I find beauty in the countryside, flowers, birds and animals but there was a magnificence in the starlight skies, so much easier to see in the days before light pollution, and in the fantastic structure of atoms and molecules. Was there a conflict? If so it had to be resolved for me. Our Scripture teacher, who was a part-time Baptist minister, was the one who first introduced me to the theory of evolution. I was vulnerable and it blew a hole in the Book of Genesis; logic and history also had me worried about Noah and his flood. How much of the world was affected? This had to be resolved for I had not seen any miracles or experienced the continuing presence of God in a way that I now enjoy.

My mother had cancer and we prayed for her healing. She had various operations and radiotherapy, we hoped that she would get better. So I remember at the age of eighteen saying, "Lord, I really do believe in Jesus but I can't cope with Genesis." It was as if He spoke, telling me not to worry but to see it as a parable, written at a time when people needed a story to explain creation and sin, and written long before men had any real understanding of the natural world. For me that was enough for I could continue with my scientific training rejoicing in the wonders of the periodic table of elements and how the chemical formulae of molecules worked. How the various physical constants had particular values and how a powerful Creator God was behind the structure of all things, mathematics was a beautiful language and although man could not solve everything it was a means of understanding much of the universe.

We didn't learn about tectonic plates in our geography lessons at school but I later came to see how the continents and sea-bed have changed. Earthquakes and volcanoes have to happen to release the pressures built up in the earth's core, it will go on happening as the earth is still in a state of creation. The universe though is so vast and stars are still being formed out of the remnants of earlier stars that have exploded. I no longer worry about Genesis but see it as a remarkable parallel to the way science sees creation. Those who take it literally are using a different route to come to the point when God needed to send His son Jesus to deal with our sins. I just wish that some Christians didn't have to make a big issue of this for my God is bigger than it all, bigger than the universe. He is not a God of the gaps brought out to explain the points at which science gets stuck. I acknowledge that there are atheists in the scientific



community but I have met many scientists who are Christians and their faith is strong simply because they have found God in science. Once upon a time the Church believed that the sun went around the earth and no-one would suggest that now.

But this is the real point of my speaking of science, I feel that today our children are growing up in an age where most people in the western world are uncertain of what they believe. The Christian churches that are growing in the world are charismatic and frequently fundamentalist. The countries with the most converts have not yet caught up with our education but one day may, like our children, be less certain. We must somehow be able to evangelise amongst the sceptics who need proof in this scientifically based world, to show them that God is real and allow the Holy Spirit to work in us. So we should be honest and tell them that you can have Jesus without the first eleven chapters of Genesis being taken literally. I found the answer to the creation story in the first chapter of St. John's gospel:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it (NRSV)*

Jesus is that word spoken into the darkness. It does not conflict with science and allows for natural disasters as inevitable. Jesus is there too for he does not desert us, and if we are ever called to witness a disaster we must be Jesus in that place, allowing Him our space to comfort and heal the bereaved and suffering.

So we must now pray for the latest disaster victims and have compassion on them, providing from our affluence what is required. Our faith must show in our actions, we must become the loving caring Church that Jesus left on earth, and that means caring too for others in other parts of the world who are homeless, sick and hungry. I pray that this recent disaster will wake the churches up to our responsibilities and that the Church will become God's answer to the needs of the world.

I end with another quote from St. John's gospel Chapter 14:15-17, 25-27

*"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. ....*

*..... "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.*

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."*



## Book review **The Song of the Father's Heart.** Phil Lawson-

Johnston Terra Nova ISBN 1-901949-32-X

Phil Lawson Johnston is a gifted musician, song writer and worship leader. He co-founded the worship group *Cloud* and has led worship at Christian events in Britain and other countries.

The Song of the Father's Heart takes us right into the nature of worship and the music of creation. Through Bible passages and an awareness of all that is around us he introduces us to a *'creation pregnant with praise. Whether it be the first cry of a new-born baby, the dawn chorus, or the last trumpet call at the Second Coming, there is an eternal song resonating at the core of creation.'* There are many songs in the Father's heart - songs of truth, mystery, love, agony, anger, deliverance and freedom, victory over Satan, sin and death, new creation and songs of peace, hope and delight.

The author continues to look in depth at why we were made for worship; how we engage with God through our great needs of significance, identity and destiny. He shows us the stumbling blocks and wrong worship patterns preventing our reaching the essential goal of worshipping in spirit and in truth. He looks at the fear of the Lord, the kiss of love and that fearful intimacy which helps us to change and grow and know passion in our pilgrimage.

Having set the foundational truths he shows us God's presence in worship – that hallowed ground, beholding his face and tasting and seeing. This book helps us to find the balance in our worship between our knowledge of the Truth and our experience of it.

The last third of the book deals with leadership of worship and song writing. He shows the reader examples of reluctant and servant leadership through Bible passages and stories and why the obviously musically talented are not initially, necessarily the best leaders. He gives us much to think about in the various ministries to do with worship and relationship and through his extensive experience of how and how not to lead worship.

*'God wants worshippers and worship – relationship rather than performance. However much care we take to give God of our best, when we put together a meeting or service, relationship is more important.'* For song writers and worship leaders there is a wealth of information and guidance in this book and the author makes the point clearly from the outset that successful leading of worship has to embrace the whole of our Christian life. *'Worship is the outward flow of our own joyful relationship with our Heavenly Father.'* That message is for us all which is why this book will speak to musicians and non-musicians alike.

Until now I had never thought of the Bible as the essentially massive book of song that it is. I will be buying my own copy of *The Song of the Father's Heart* which will not be lent out because I have a lot to learn from it!

Gill Williams

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## **Book review Cry for Sudan by William Mather.**

Terra Nova Publications 2004. ISBN 1 90194 933 8.

William Mather is the Associate Director of *SOMA UK*, and he writes:

*The specific inspiration for this book came out of two SOMA missions — to Kajo-Keji Diocese and Yei Diocese in 2003 and 2004. But as the opening poem says, this is:*

*Much more than just a book about the Sudan.  
But a volume that speaks to the soul  
About ministry and mission  
A meditation from the heart  
That calls to prayer  
And seeing the unseen  
Helps others to understand and experience  
A different way of thinking  
That challenges presuppositions about how we live  
And die  
And have our being*

So it is a collection of poems, and sketches in pen and water-colour, and narrative, which together convey a first-hand impression of what life is like for the Christians in southern Sudan now. At the same time it is also a spiritual resource for prayer and intercession.

The *sketches* are very sketchy and undoubtedly lose something of their force in being reproduced in monochrome instead of the original colours. Yet they still communicate the artist's experiences of the country and the people and their activities, and they have an immediacy that highlights the transitory nature of the visits. For these are short-term missions to a large country with so many people suffering the traumatic effects of fifty years of civil war, and famine and drought in their turn. But despite their brevity, these missions have an enduring effect on both the recipients and the missionaries.

There are stories of mighty movements of the Holy Spirit in people's lives, through physical and emotional healing, resurrections, and the incredible, reconciliatory power of prayer and forgiveness.

And the poems grow on you with repeated reading. They tell a story of the history and the hopes and fears of the Sudanese that mirror the experiences of people in other parts of Africa, and they are relevant to us too.

This book is a little gem, heart-warming and sobering in equal parts, that will repay careful and prayerful study, and promote the invaluable work of *SOMA* in this troubled world.

Brian Newsom

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## **When Christ is All by Ken Miles**

Pulpit, font and lectern,  
altar-rail and nave,  
aisle and stained-glass windows,  
sculptured architrave,  
stone-slab floor and massive pew  
cry 'tradition' — nothing new.

Simple hall with platform,  
carpet on the floor,  
modern plain glass windows,  
Yale lock on the door;  
lessons by no symbols told,  
truth is all — yet truth is old.

Yet in great cathedral  
men have sat in awe  
as the living Spirit  
drew them to adore.  
And in humble chapel  
where the Cross was preached  
men have fallen prostrate,  
hearts the Saviour reached.

Glorious church or simple hall  
Christ will fill when Christ is ALL.

Ken Miles

## **News from our Members**

### **Ugandan Child Development Fund update December 2004.**

The following is extracted from the magazine Kate Rees sends out to supporters of UCDF.

As most readers already know, Henry Waswa, the UCDF Children's Welfare Officer was diagnosed as having cancer early this year. The news came to us as a terrible shock. He has

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had such a very hard time. His fiancée, Irene, has stood by him through it all. He is so brave and strong in the Lord. He has been granted six months paid sick leave and is staying with friends within walking distance of "The Fold". The children are able to visit him at any time, and one day he surprised everyone by walking down the hill to "The Fold" on his own. Please continue to pray that he will be healed. The cancer has spread to the lungs and he has a lot of pain in his right side. He is still having intensive chemotherapy treatment, following another course of radium. Painkilling drugs are now causing stomach ulcers. The going is very rough for Henry.

Since Henry became ill the older youngsters have pulled together in a very wonderful way. Peter and Martin really have taken such good care of things at "The Fold". They have both been willing to travel home from the University Campus each night, and sacrifice much of their spare time. Our new Housemother, Naigaga Christine is a real treasure, a trophy of grace and very special. She came into our lives at just the right time, God is SO good. She keeps things clean and in such good order. She does not need to be shown what needs doing, she willingly works it all out for herself. Florence and Olive have been wonderful. Rita Namazzi has worked so hard, she is an AIDS widow, sometimes her health is not at all good. This year, she has taken on many heavy loads of extra responsibility with the children because of Henry's illness.

Also our small Board of Reference, who are all Ugandan volunteers, have been a wonderful support and have worked together so well to keep things as safe as possible for the children.

### **Concern for the Refugees in Uganda**

The Ugandan Child Development Fund has always been aware of the suffering and turmoil in the north of Uganda. We are a very small organisation and we know that it is right for us to concentrate on caring long term for our existing 50 young vulnerable people in Uganda. Our number is now in fact 59, plus some Aids widows and grandmothers. We also have a little refugee girl from over the border in Sudan. She fled with her very troubled and badly traumatised mother to safety in Kampala.

We want so much to do more, and to rescue more people in Africa but if we reach out too far the quality of the work we are already doing would be spoiled.

Almost 20 years ago, Phil and Kate Rees met Charles Nyeko Lacek who came from Gulu in the north of Uganda to live in the U.K. He is a family man and now lives in Exeter, He and his wife Allison have always meant a lot to Phil and Kate. Charles is a member of the General Committee of UCDF. He visited Gulu this year and he went into some of the refugee camps there. He says, "Things are very bad." He quoted the words of Jan England, UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, who says "*Northern Uganda is the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world, and the situation is a MORAL OUTRAGE*". Charles says, "When you visit the camps where up to 400 children who fear abduction come every night to shelter in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts you feel very emotional. The camps are congested. People are existing in extreme poverty and they have very poor health. Many are now seeking comfort from the Christian Church. Support is

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needed in the following areas - EDUCATION, HIV AIDS PREVENTION, SPONSORSHIP OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES and relief provisions in general. Please lobby THE U K. GOVERNMENT and your M. P.s, to help bring peace to northern Uganda and please pray.”

No one seems to know what the exact number of displaced people (refugees) is in the north of Uganda. It is thought to be between 1.6 and 1.8 million. This an even higher number than in the Sudan which we now see so much of on T.V.

When Phil and Kate Rees worked in a church in S.E. London, amongst the congregation was a young man called Kellie Tom Okino. He lives in London and he is a Ugandan from Lira, which is also in the north of Uganda. Kellie has also been a great help and encouragement to us with the work of UCDF in general. Like Charles, he is passionately concerned about the plight of the refugees back home, and he wants to do all he can to help them. These are two fine peace-loving Ugandan family men, who are not going to rest until things change back home for the innocent vulnerable ones caught up in the horrors in and around Gulu and Lira, their home towns. Both Charles and Tom are ready and willing to make sacrifices of their time, energy and resources to try to help to change things, before these multitudes of starving people perish. Though we are so sad to have to honestly report that many have already died, this only goes to show the absolute URGENCY of the situation.

Kellie has worked at great speed and opened a new Registered Charity called: “SAVE THE AFRICAN NEEDY FOUNDATION” – “SANFO”.

When Kate Rees visited Erute camp in northern Uganda with Kellie Okino in September 2004, the refugees noticed tears in her eyes. They said, “The white woman is crying for us, we always feel like crying but we have cried so much already that our own tears are all gone, they have drained away and we have none left to use for crying”

If you would like to help either of these charities then please make contact as follows:

**SANFO - Mr Kellie Tom Okino, Telephone 07985194838**

**UCDF - Mrs.Kate Rees, Phone 01594 530887 Fax 01594 531153**