



October 2004

The Recorder

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*An edited version of this magazine is now available on the Church Web-site.
(Personal details are NOT included.)*

Church web site: <http://www.trinity-urc.org.uk>

Trinity - A Family Church

Worshipping together - Caring for one another - Sharing with others

Rev. Michael Shrubsole

Minister of Trinity United Reformed Church

I want to encourage you to make sure you have the October Church Meeting in your diary. I want to see as many people as possible in attendance. It's not on a third Tuesday like normal. It will be held on Tuesday 12th October at 7.30pm in the Schoolroom. This is a special meeting. We are inviting two architects to come and tender for the job of producing new drawings for the disability access and other developments for our building. As part of the tendering process they are going to be given an hour each to tempt you with their ideas and abilities. It is a competition. The church members will be asked to vote for the person you liked the most. The winner will be awarded the contract.

All members have had opportunity to see the report presented to the April Church Meeting this year. The report contained the recommendations of the Steering Group to Church Meeting. It was approved at the April Meeting, and the May Meeting ratified that decision. If you have lost your copy of the report, or did not take one when they were made available, please see Mike if you would like a further copy.

In brief, we are asking the architects to achieve two main things. Firstly, to make our existing building as disabled-friendly as possible. Secondly, to make major improvements to the toilets and to Crendon Hall which will make the building more attractive to all users and particularly to potential future hirers. We have stressed that we are interested in cheaper answers. We wait to see how attractive and ingenious their possible answers to our problems are.

Three years ago we asked a different architect to carry out a Feasibility Study. We asked him to show us how to make the best of our building. We needed to demonstrate to anyone who enquires of us that we were willing to see if we could put all our problems completely right in a thorough way. We could not miss this step out. But the answer the architect came up with was felt by enough of you to be too intrusive and too expensive for us to continue. We now know that there are limits on our desire to change the building, and limits on our ability to fund the changes, and this will result in a solution that will have its limitations. Now we must discover the best that we can achieve in these circumstances.

The law of the land, the Disability Discrimination Act, says that we must do what is reasonable to open our buildings to people with disabilities. And an open and accessible building will be more welcoming and attractive to us all; mothers with pushchairs, deliverers of large packages, those getting stiff and frail, all of us appreciate accessible buildings. An accessible building proclaims in bricks and mortar our desire to be a welcoming community who want people to come in and use our facilities and meet with us and worship with us. And I believe an attractive and accessible building can be part of the way in which we grow in numbers and in impact in our local community. This is about the future of our church. It is one way in which we can prevent ourselves from becoming a little religious club preoccupied with the burden of funding the maintenance of an old building, and become a lively community whose focus is on the wider world.

Mike

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Rev Michael Shrubsole,

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October Services

Sunday Morning Worship at 10.30 a.m.

Children of all ages meet for part of morning worship using the SALT material from Scripture Union. Adult worship usually follows the texts of the Revised Common Lectionary.

3rd October - Morning Worship with Communion. Luke 17:5-10, Habakkuk 1:1-4,
2 Timothy 1:1-14, Psalm 37

10th October - Morning Worship. Luke 17:11-19, 2 Kings 5:1-15, 2 Timothy 2:8-15, Psalm 111

17th October - All-age Worship. Luke 18:1-8, Genesis 32:22-31, 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5, Psalm 121

24th October - Morning Worship. Luke 18:9-14, Jeremiah 14:7-22, 2 Timothy 4:6-18, Psalm 84

31st October - Morning Worship. Luke 19:1-10, Isaiah 1:10-18, 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12, Ps 32

Sunday Evening Worship

Sunday 17th October, 6.30pm. Union Baptist Church, Easton Street.

We are invited to attend evening worship at Union Baptist Church and hear Revd David Coffey, General Secretary of the Baptist Union, Moderator of the Free Churches Group and Co-President of Churches Together in England. Revd Coffey is a much respected Christian leader and preacher, it is a rare treat to have him preach so near at hand.

Rotas for October

Not included in this version

What's on in October



- Monday 11th Oct Harvest - Sale of produce
- Readings & poems
(8pm. Hostess - Norma G)
- Monday 25th Oct Book Sale
Book Reviews
(8pm. Hostess - Marie Wi)

WOMEN'S MEETING

- Tuesday 5th Oct Preparations for the Autumn Fayre
- Tuesday 12th Oct Holy Days & Holidays
- Tuesday 19th Oct No meeting at Trinity. We are invited to the Priory Road site of Hamilton School for their Harvest. Please note this starts at 1.15pm. Lifts will be arranged - see Olive S
- Tuesday 26th Oct Hymns and Readings for Pentecost



All meetings start at 2.30 in the Lower Schoolroom unless otherwise stated

15th and 25th October

at 2pm -

Scrabble

Can you do better than you did last season? Only time will tell. Get along and give it a go!



CHURCH WALK

Saturday 30th October

Meet at the National Trust Car Park by Bradenham Manor at 10:30am for a leisurely stroll round Bradenham woods - about 3 miles. More details from Olive S

Not included in this version

In July, I was able to return £100 to Norma for Church Funds – this being the leftover sum of coffee collections for the year, after all expenses had been paid. Thank you all for your generous giving.

Anne H



Coffee 'gossip'

In accordance with the decision of the Church Meeting, Fairtrade products are used wherever possible for all coffee mornings at Church.

Reform Magazines for 2005

I soon have the place our order for the 2005 editions of Reform, the monthly magazine of the United Reformed Church.

If you think you may be interested in subscribing to Reform, but have never seen a copy, I will be leaving a couple of recent issues at the back of the Church for you to have a look at. The subscription for 2005 is £11.75 (for 11 copies as July and August are published together) this I need to collect by 24th October to ensure continuation of our order. Please make any cheques payable to "Trinity URC."

Also a reminder to this year's readers, would you please return the slip enclosed with the September issue and monies if appropriate, as soon as possible.

If any new people decide they would like to take Reform after the deadline I can place a new order at any time.

Thank you.

Kay E

Diary

Quiz and Curry Evening - Saturday 2nd, in Crendon Hall

Elders Meeting - Tuesday 5th, 7.30pm. in the Schoolroom

Trinity Autumn Fayre - Saturday 9th, 2.00-4.00pm in Crendon Hall

Church Meeting - Tuesday 12th, 7.30pm in the Schoolroom. Come and hear the special presentations by the architects.

Church Theological Discussion Group - Tuesday 19th 8.00pm in the Schoolroom

Listen - Learn - Discuss - Debate.

Subject for Meeting One: "Who was the real Jesus?" A consideration of alternative points of view. See Mike or Arthur for further information.

OTHER DATES

RAISE - Saturday 2nd October

At the Hub, Union Baptist Church

Wycombe Youth for Christ are hosting 'a prayer event for the children and Primary schools of Wycombe'

1.00-4.00pm - prayers and displays

6.30-8.00pm - meet and talk, followed by praise and worship

See poster for further details or telephone Erica Holt, 522777.

Making the Bible Dangerously Real

Led by Rob Lacey, author of 'The Street Bible'

Sunday 10th October

2.30-6.45pm

Crossway URC, Elephant and Castle, London.

See poster for further details.

Thames North Synod - Autumn Academy - 15-17th October

St Katherine's Foundation

Limehouse, East London

A residential weekend. (Day visitors also welcome.)

Cost £100, with £50 subsidy available for all who wish to apply.

Guest speakers: Bishop Laurie Green, author Vaughan Jones, Moderator Revd Roberta Rominger.

See poster for further details.

Bible Society Sunday

24th October

Songs of Praise on BBC TV in the evening is scheduled to be a service in celebration of the work of the Bible Society. Watch out for this interesting service.

Synod Quiet Day - "What on earth are we waiting for?"

Thursday 18th November

10.30am - 4.00pm

Queens Park URC, Harrow

Led by Revd Rachel Poolman, minister of Yardley Hastings.

See poster for details or telephone Bob Allen, 020 7799 5000.

Trinty / Sunnybank combined Youth Group

October 10th Friendship Evening (Sunnybank)

October 24th Shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child (Trinty)

"Take Time"

Take time to pray ... it helps to bring God near and washes the dust of earth from your eyes.

Take time for friends ... they are the source of happiness.

Take time for work ... it is the price of success.

Take time to think ... it is the source of power.

Take time to read ... it is the foundation of knowledge.

Take time to laugh ... it is the singing that helps with life's loads.

Take time to love ... it is the one sacrament of life.

Take time to dream ... it hitches the soul to stars and to God.

Take time to play ... it is the source of youth.

Take time to worship ... it is the highway to reverence.

Author Unknown - previously published in the magazine of the Coke Memorial Methodist Church, South Petherton.

"Water to Wine"

An Irish priest is driving down to New York and gets stopped for speeding in Connecticut. The state trooper smells alcohol on the priest's breath and then sees an empty wine bottle on the floor of the car. He says, Sir, have you been drinking?"

"Just water," says the priest.

The trooper says, Then why do I smell wine?"

The priest looks at the bottle and says, "Good Lord! He's done it again!"

[Submitted by Andrew W

Windshield Message from a child

One rainy afternoon I was driving along one of the main streets of town, taking those extra precautions necessary when the roads are wet and slick. Suddenly, my daughter, Aspen, spoke up from her relaxed position in her seat. "Dad, I'm thinking of something."

This announcement usually meant she had been pondering some fact for a while, and was now ready to expound all that her six-year-old mind had discovered. I was eager to hear.

"What are you thinking?" I asked.

"The rain;" she began, "is like sin, and the windshield wipers are like God wiping our sins away."

After the chill bumps raced up my arms I was able to respond.

"That's really good, Aspen." Then my curiosity broke in. How far would this little girl take this revelation?

So I asked... "Do you notice how the rain keeps on coming? What does that tell you?"

Aspen didn't hesitate one moment with her answer: "We keep on sinning, and God just keeps on forgiving us."

I will always remember this whenever I turn my wipers on.

[Submitted by Andrew W

Commitment for Life

August 2004

Dear Commitment for Life church.

Since writing to you in early July so much has happened. We have had General Assembly and the launch of our new materials "the United Reformed Church working for justice and peace in the world through Commitment for Life and Belonging to the World Church". We are starting to see the role that we have to play in 'Catching the Vision' and the renewal of the church, that is focused outwards to a world dis-eased by injustice and inequality.

This autumn will, we hope, have you all engaged in the **Vote for Trade Justice** (see letter enclosed). This is THE major campaign for the autumn - a million returned ballot cards might lead to a real breakthrough in policy initiatives for the poorest nations. It is the start of the MEGA CAMPAIGN FOR 2005 **MAKE POVERTY HISTORY**.

Israel/Palestine has been much in the news with the International Court passing an opinion that the wall is illegal, followed by a Resolution at the United Nations. We shall have a visit from **Ahmed Sourani, Director of PARC** in Gaza and **Abla Nasser, Director of YWCA** in the West Bank this October - see reverse for details. *Do* come and hear them so that we too might enter their plight in solidarity and take actions to support them.

We hope more of you will subscribe to receive our 'Moving Stories', the fortnightly email newsletter to keep you abreast of new stories, of peace-makers and actions you can take. Email michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk for the latest.

We have had phone calls to ask how churches may respond to the flooding crisis in **Bangladesh** Christian Aid's partners have been distributing emergency food and oral re-hydration packages. Now a limited emergency appeal is being launched. Please **see** the attached appeal, trusting that our churches: will respond to the huge and immediate need.

Please also hold in your prayers the people of **Zimbabwe** - as the crisis deepens and there is a potential threat to NGOs working to relieve suffering. **Jamaica** continues to need our support, as they prepare for the implications of the European Union's intention to slash the price it pays for regional sugar by more than a third over the next three years, and their response.

Vote for Trade Justice - what do we stand for?

We believe everyone has the right to feed their families, make a decent living and protect their environment. But the rich and powerful are pursuing trade policies that put profits before the needs of people and the planet.

To end poverty and protect the environment we need Trade Justice not free trade.

The UK Government should:

- *Fight to ensure that governments, particularly poor country governments, can choose the best solutions to end poverty and protect the environment. These will not always be free trade policies.*
- *End export subsidies that damage the livelihoods of poor people around the world.*
- *Make laws that stop big business profiting at the expense of people and the environment.*

If you want trade to be part of the solution, Vote for Trade Justice.

Campaigning for change - past, present and future

Over the last three years, thousands of people have pushed Trade Justice further towards the political centre stage by lobbying their MPs in a series of record-breaking events:

In 2002, over half of UK MPs were lobbied on one day, in the largest ever mass lobby of Parliament. 12,000 Trade Justice campaigners gathered from all corners of the UK to tell 347 MPs that the world needs 'Trade Justice not free trade'.

In 2003, over three quarters of MPs were lobbied in their local constituencies during the biggest ever coordinated lobby across the country. This campaigning resulted in our first big success - the UK Government's u-turn on its support for a controversial set of new trade rules.

In 2004 and 2005 Vote for Trade Justice will build on these successes and ensure that Trade Justice is given the priority it deserves on the political agenda.



Bangladesh Flood Appeal

'Bangladesh, hit by its worst flooding in years, could be facing a major humanitarian crisis' *Fred Eckhard- UN spokesperson*

Bangladesh is in the midst of the most devastating flooding it has seen for many years. Over 30 million people are seriously affected, three quarters of the country is under water and over 650 people have already died. Equally worrying is the fact that flooding normally peaks in late August. The situation could get much worse.

Much of the main rice has already been lost and many of the traditional mud homes will be washed away. The impact of the flooding will be felt by the people of Bangladesh long after the flood waters have retreated.

The Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) and 7 other Christian Aid partners are working to provide immediate relief to the worst affected, the agricultural workers, day labourers, traders and fishermen. They are providing food parcels, to families who have no supplies and oral rehydration tablets to combat the diarrhoea that has already hit 85,000 people.

CCDB's community emergency preparedness work has already saved lives in this crisis, but there is still much work to do. Christian Aid partners are hoping to feed 500,000 people in the coming weeks but only have enough money to supply 250,000 people with the rice, potatoes and salt that they urgently need. **They need our support now.**

The long-term damage caused by the floods will only become apparent at a later date, but beyond the immediate needs of the affected families it will be essential to start the long process of rehabilitation. Over the course of the next year partners in Bangladesh will need to help rebuild houses, reconstruct river embankments, restore schools, repair damaged wells and restart the human development projects like micro-credit that have been so successful.

Commitment for Life support for the people of Bangladesh has been vital in the success of organisations like CCDB in the past. At this time, they need our support more than ever.

Please give

If you would like to make a donation to the appeal please send it to Commitment for Life in the usual way, that is a cheque payable to "United Reformed Church", sent to: Commitment for Life, 86 Tavistock Place, London WCIH 9RT. BUT please clearly mark the envelope '*Flood Appeal*'. All of the money raised will be sent to Christian Aid to fund emergency and rehabilitation work following on from the floods in Asia.

MILESTONE DATES IN THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY

At the dates indicated, a comparison of (1) the number of Bible-believing Christians, and (2) the total number of people in the world.

It took 1430 years for Bible-believing Christians to become just one percent of world population.

By AD 1430, (1%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 99 after 1430 years)

By AD 1790, (2%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 49 after 360 years)

By AD 1940, (3%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 32 after 150 years)

By AD 1960, (4%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 24 after 20 years)

By AD 1970, (5%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 19 after 10 years)

By AD 1980, (6%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 16 after 10 years)

By AD 1983, (7%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 13 after 3 years)

By AD 1986, (8%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 11 after 3 years)

By AD 1989, (9%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 10 after 3 years)

By AD 1993, (10%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 9 after 4 years)

By AD 1997, (11%) were Bible believing Christians. (One to 8 after 4 years)

THE LATEST PICTURE

Today, 645 million or (11%) of the world population are Bible-believing Christians. ("Bible-believing" excludes those whose Christian adherence is nominal, or whose Christian faith is mixed with traditional or tribal beliefs.)

Of the world's 24,000 "Unimax" People Groups, 10,000 (having 2.1 billion persons) are still considered Unreached--though Christian work is being done among most. A unimax people is the maximum sized group sufficiently unified to be reached by a single, indigenous church planting movement.

A Visit to Ghana

To be asked to preach seven times in two days seemed like a tall order but somehow worship in Ghana was always a joy even when the first service started at 5.30 a.m. and the longest lasted for over 5 hours! I was visiting the Sekyere Presbytery six hours drive north of Accra as a guest of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Part of the ritual of hospitality was to be asked from where I had travelled and what the purpose of my visit was. I answered that I had come to bring the greetings of the South Western Synod and to celebrate our belonging to the one church. I spoke of how I believed that God had given all of us gifts to be used in the work of the kingdom and that we were challenged to respond with generosity. And generosity was what I received.

At each of the services I received a gift of embroidery or some locally produced product. I was fed by people who know what it means to be poor. Poor in a way that no one in English society can contemplate. The worship varied but at some point in the service an offertory was taken. Always there were drums and often brass instrument and occasionally a keyboard. This was an excuse for the whole congregation to get up and dance in procession to put their offertory into a basket placed at the front of the church or open space in which we were worshipping. What struck home was the look of joy and delight on the faces of the congregation as they put their gifts into the basket, joy that they had so much to give thanks to God for. It seems that the more we have the less we recognise what we have and the slower we are to give thanks.

I was often asked about the Church in the UK and in Europe and I answered that we were having a hard time of it. I explained that congregations were faithful and it was not through lack of effort that numbers continued to decline. I spoke of the contemporary culture in England where people who go to church are often regarded as somehow a little pathetic, where God is irrelevant and faith a hobby or leisure pursuit. My Ghanaian hosts listened patiently and then promised that they would pray for renewal in the South Western Synod of the URC. This commitment extended to them asking the ministers and congregations of the Presbytery to give a week to prayer and fasting for our renewal. Humbling indeed and I wonder what commitment we will make to our own renewal and to the growth of the Church in Ghana? They, we should not be surprised to hear, expect the membership of the Presbytery to double from 20,000 to 40,000 within the year!

Throughout my stay I was humbled by the generous way in which I was welcomed and offered hospitality. Imagine then my embarrassment and shame when I discovered that ministerial students from Ghana had been refused entry visas to work on placement with congregations in the South Western Synod. The cost of the visit was to be paid from funds set aside from the 'Belonging to the World Church' programme but the British government refused to believe that the URC had such funds to support the visit and even suggested that if we did have such money then we could find better ways of spending it! It is quite outrageous that the government should seek to interfere in the work of the Church in this way and points to the deep-seated racial prejudice that lies just below the surface of British society.

I will remember for a long time what my sisters and brothers in Ghana taught me about hospitality and worshipping with joy. I only pray that one day they might see that we have learnt our lesson and have become ourselves communities of joyful people practising generous hospitality to all who ask.

David Grosch-Miller,

Moderator of the South West Synod of the URC.

[This is another item taken from the Coke Methodist Memorial Church magazine - with permission from the editor, if not the original author! We thank Geoffrey Key for his continued interest in the happenings at Trinity, and his willingness to share articles such as this one.]

Our history

Chapter 6 of the writings of Rev Auty in 1924

MR. Browne's successor was the Rev. Joseph Woodhouse (1874-82), and he was followed by the Rev. George Payne Jarvis. Both these gentlemen are remembered with esteem, Mr. Jarvis in particular having rendered valuable help in local undertakings. For some years he was Secretary to the district Association of Congregational Churches. His pastorate was notable for the reunion of Trinity and Crendon-street Churches, after a separation of 76 years. This was facilitated by the resignation of the two ministers—the Rev. J. Woodhouse at Crendon-street and the Rev. B. C. Matthews at Trinity. Mr. Jarvis succeeded to the oversight of the united churches in 1883, and served as minister until 1900, when he retired.

Mr. Jarvis was followed by the Rev. William Fredk. Clarkson, B.A., a name of high repute in the Congregational body, both as one of its leading preachers and as Secretary of the Church Aid Society. Mr. Clarkson, after ministerial activities at Colchester, Lincoln, Edgbaston, and Southampton, came to Wycombe in 1903, and continued in charge of the united Church until 1911, when increasing age led to his decision to relinquish the Wycombe pastorate for a less strenuous position. It was the veteran retiring from the front line, for the day that brought his ministry at Wycombe to a close (July 10th, 1911) was also the Jubilee of his ordination as a minister of the Gospel. It will be interesting to quote the resolution recorded in the Church minutes on receipt of Mr. Clarkson's letter of resignation :-"They record their high appreciation of his faithful labours in the pastoral office and earnest evangelical pulpit ministrations. His untiring zeal for the welfare of all; his private words of counsel, warning, rebuke, or praise; his assiduous visitation of the sick and needy; his love of the young; his care for the aged; his great gift in prayer; his brotherly friendship; and, notwithstanding his scholarly attainments, his modest bearing and small appreciation of his own worth and character, will ever be affectionately enshrined in the memories of all the members of the Trinity fellowship." Mr. Clarkson went in 1911 to Brading, Isle of Wight, where he has continued to work for Christ so far as his strength will allow.

After a few months' interregnum, the Rev. Henry Charles Gaut, of Iford, came to Wycombe as Pastor of Trinity, entering on his ministry on the first Sunday in 1912. He remained Pastor, doing excellent work, until September, 1918, when he resigned and soon afterwards emigrated to New Zealand. Mr. Gaut has since joined the Established Church in that distant Colony.

The Room

Seventeen-year-old Brian Moore had only a short time to write something for a class. The subject was what Heaven was like. "I wowed 'em," he later told his father, Bruce. "It's a killer. It's the bomb. It's the best thing I ever wrote." It also was the last.

Brian's parents had forgotten about the essay when a cousin found it while cleaning out the teenager's locker at Teays Valley High School in Pickaway County. Brian had been dead only hours, but his parents desperately wanted every piece of his life near them, notes from classmates and teachers, his homework. Only two months before, he had handwritten the essay about encountering Jesus in a file room full of cards detailing every moment of the teen's life. But it was only after Brian's death that Beth and Bruce Moore realized that their son had described his view of heaven. It makes such an impact that people want to share it. You feel like you are there." Mr. Moore said.

Brian Moore died May 27, 1997, the day after Memorial Day. He was driving home from a friend's house when his car went off Bulen-Pierce Road in Pickaway County and struck a utility pole. He emerged from the wreck unharmed but stepped on a downed power line and was electrocuted.

The Moores framed a copy of Brian's essay and hung it among the family portraits in the living room. "I think God used him to make a point. I think we were meant to find it and make something out of it," Mrs. Moore said of the essay. She and her husband want to share their son's vision of life after death. "I'm happy for Brian. I know he's in heaven. I know I'll see him..

Brian's Essay: The Room... In that place between wakefulness and dreams, I found myself in the room.

There were no distinguishing features except for the one wall covered with small index card files. . . They were like the ones in libraries that list titles by author or subject in alphabetical order.

But these files, which stretched from floor to ceiling and seemingly endless in either direction, had very different headings.

As I drew near the wall of files, the first to catch my attention was one that read "Girls I have liked." I opened it and began flipping through the cards. I quickly shut it, hocked to realize that I recognized the names written on each one. And then without being told, I knew exactly where I was.

This lifeless room with its small files was a crude catalog system for my life. Here were written the actions of my every moment, big and small, in a detail my memory couldn't match. A sense of wonder and curiosity, coupled with horror, stirred within me as I began randomly opening files and exploring their content. Some brought joy and sweet memories; others a sense of shame and regret so intense that I would look over my shoulder to see if anyone was watching.

A file named "Friends" was next to one marked "Friends I have betrayed." The titles ranged from the mundane to the outright weird. "Books I Have Read," "Lies I Have Told," "Comfort I have Given," "Jokes I Have Laughed at."

Some were almost hilarious in their exactness:

"Things I've yelled at my brothers."

Others I couldn't laugh at: "Things I Have Done in My Anger", "Things I Have Muttered Under My Breath at My Parents." I never ceased to be surprised by the contents. Often there were many more cards than I expected. Sometimes fewer than I hoped. I was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the life I had lived.

Could it be possible that I had the time in my years to fill each of these thousands or even millions of cards? But each card confirmed this truth. Each was written in my own handwriting. Each signed with my signature.

When I pulled out the file marked "TV Shows I have watched," I realized the files grew to contain their contents. The cards were packed tightly, and yet after two or three yards, I hadn't found the end of the file. I shut it, shamed, not so much by the quality of shows but more by the vast time I knew that file represented.

[continued on page 13]

When I came to a file marked "Lustful Thoughts," I felt a chill run through my body. I pulled the file out only an inch, not willing to test its size, and drew out a card. I shuddered at its detailed content...

I felt sick to think that such a moment had been recorded. An almost animal rage broke on me. One thought dominated my mind: No one must ever see these cards!

No one must ever see this room! I have to destroy them!" In insane frenzy I yanked the file out. Its size didn't matter now. I had to empty it and burn the cards. But as I took it at one end and began pounding it on the floor, I could not dislodge a single card. I became desperate and pulled out a card, only to find it as strong as steel when I tried to tear it.

Defeated and utterly helpless, I returned the file to its slot. Leaning my forehead against the wall, I let out a long, self-pitying sigh. And then I saw it... The title bore "People I Have Shared the Gospel With." The handle was brighter than those around it, newer, almost unused. I pulled on its handle and a small box not more than three inches long fell into my hands. I could count the cards it contained on one hand. And then the tears came. I began to weep. Sobs so deep that they hurt. They started in my stomach and shook through me. I fell on my knees and cried. I cried out of shame, from the overwhelming shame of it all. The rows of file shelves swirled in my tear-filled eyes. No one must ever, ever know of this room. I must lock it up and hide the key. But then as I pushed away the tears, I saw Him..

No, please not Him. Not here. Oh, anyone but Jesus. I watched helplessly as He began to open the files and read the cards. I couldn't bear to watch His response. And in the moments I could bring myself to look at His face, I saw a sorrow deeper than my own. He seemed to intuitively go to the worst boxes. Why did He have to read every one? Finally He turned and looked at me from across the room. He looked at me with pity in His eyes. But this was a pity that didn't anger me. I dropped my head, covered my face with my hands and began to cry again. He walked over and put His arm around me. He could have said so many things. But He didn't say a word. He just cried with me.

Then He got up and walked back to the wall of files. Starting at one end of the room, He took out a file and, one by one, began to sign His name over mine on each card. "No!" I shouted rushing to Him. All I could find to say was "No, no," as I pulled the card from Him. His name shouldn't be on these cards. But there it was, written in red so rich, so dark, so alive. The name of Jesus covered mine. It was written with His blood. He gently took the card back. He smiled a sad smile and began to sign the cards. I don't think I'll ever understand how He did it so quickly, but the next instant it seemed I heard Him close the last file and walk back to my side. He placed His hand on my shoulder and said, "It is finished."

I stood up, and He led me out of the room. There was no lock on its door. There were still cards to be written. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.."- Phil. 4:13 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

If you feel the same way forward it to as many people as you can so the love of Jesus will touch their lives also. My "People I shared the gospel with" file just got bigger, how about yours?

*The next edition of the Recorder will be published on 31st October
Closing date for contributions is Friday 22nd October.*

Recorder Editor : e-mail : editor@trinity-urc.org.uk

Church web site: <http://www.trinity-urc.org.uk>

prayer page
(prepared by the youth group)

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2004

Within the Youth Group, we often pray in different ways, using more than words, and using everyday objects to focus us and help us to pray. We would like to share one of these prayers with you.

Mirrors

You will need: A Mirror, any size, a hand mirror will do.

What: Look into the mirror at yourself. We do this so many times in our lives. Sometimes it is for the sake of tidiness. Sometimes it's purely vanity. Sometimes it becomes our enemy as we see all the things we hate about ourselves. But now, take a long hard look in it without vanity, without false modesty, without fear, and ask God to show you how He sees you.

Look into your eyes. No one has had fingerprints like yours and no one has had eyes quite like yours. The retina at the back of your eye is unique, just like a fingerprint. You are a unique human being and God loves you.

Now look at some part of yourself you don't like in the mirror. We all have things we would like to change - things that make us feel inferior. Now ask God how he feels about this part of you. Ask to see it through His eyes. God's idea of beauty isn't the same as ours. Jesus said, "Look how the wild flowers grow: they do not work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that not even King Solomon with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. It is God who clothes the wild grass - grass that is here today and gone tomorrow, burnt up in the oven. Won't He be all the more sure to clothe you?" (Matthew 6:28-30)

Now look at some part of your body you feel you have wronged or mistreated in some way. St Paul said: "If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised; all the other parts share its happiness." (1Corinthians 12:26) Apologise to God for mistreating this unique part of His creation. And if you can make a resolution to be kinder to yourself in future.

Look into the mirror once more. Think about all your talents which God has given you. Think about how you differ from your brothers, sisters, and parents. We are all individuals created by God, but we are all created in His image. Read Genesis 1:26-27. Thank God for all He has given you, your talents, your individuality, His love.

Thank you for taking the time to pray with us, we hope you enjoyed praying in this way.

