

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

[Luke 24.32]

Hearts on fire!

The experience of those two disciples on the first Easter Sunday afternoon, as Jesus drew alongside them, is surely the one we would all seek as we meet together Sunday by Sunday. Like the two travellers to the village of Emmaus, we now know that Jesus is alive! And so, like them, we would want our hearts to be set on fire with a new love and passion for Jesus as he opens up his Word to us by his Holy Spirit week by week. It should surely mean we will never want to miss an opportunity to sit under God's Word, as it is faithfully expounded to us Sunday by Sunday at DRBC.

Walk the Walk

On Sunday mornings, we are continuing our series of studies in *Ephesians*. The first three chapters of the letter lay a sound foundation for our faith, by describing the amazing things God has done for us in and through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The second half of the letter then sets out what our response should be to all that God has so lovingly done for us. We are to live lives that are worthy of our privileged calling (4.1). So the teaching of chapters 4-6 is very practical and down-to-earth. Don't miss it!

Face to face with Jesus

On Sunday evenings, we have begun a new series in Luke's Gospel, looking at some of the people who came face to face with Jesus, and how their lives were never the same again. We will also be exploring different aspects of worship together. So again, let me encourage you to join with us on Sunday evenings *regularly*, to share in the good things God has in store for us.

Remarkably, no fewer than 99 different people have worshipped with us on Sunday evenings so far this year (10 more than the figure for Sunday mornings). 22 of the 99 have had other church connections, but that leaves 69 adults and 8 children for whom DRBC is their only church contact. Wouldn't it be an encouragement to us all if these 77 people

committed themselves to worship with us regularly! Let's be earnest in prayer that we will not only continue to attract new people to the Church, but that many of our newcomers will become regulars.

Recent Developments

There are several recent developments in the life of the Church it is encouraging to be able to report.

➤ **The Ethiopian Christian Fellowship**

A group of Ethiopian Christians (mainly refugees) are now using our Church premises regularly on Sunday afternoons for worship and fellowship. They had out-grown the house they were meeting in in Newcastle and were looking for alternative accommodation. As they are drawn from all over the Northeast, and as our premises are close to the Gateshead Bus and Metro stations, our location is ideal for them. It was encouraging to see several of them stay on for our International Tea last month, and we hope they may be able to share with us at our next International Tea on 25th May.

➤ **Gateshead International Ministries (GIM)**

Progress was shared at our recent Church Meeting on the formation of a Charitable Trust to oversee our overseas work, and some of the other activities that we hope will be based at DRBC in the future. The Trust will be in a good position to apply for funding grants for many aspects of the work we believe the Lord is directing us into. GVOC (the Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council) have been very helpful in giving us guidance on the best wording for the Trust's *Objects* and *Proposed Activities* to enable relevant documentation to be prepared for submission to the Charity Commissioners. Before this happens, a further Church Meeting will be called to answer any outstanding questions members may have, with a view to us then supporting the application for charitable status.

➤ **Building work**

We are hoping GIM could be put forward as a suitable partner in our applications for grants to carry out the much-needed access and refurbishment work that has been approved by our members. Outline planning permission is being sought from Gateshead Council (hence

the Planning Application notices pinned to our side-door entrance) and from the Baptist Union Corporation (who act as Trustees for the building). Please be much in prayer as this process moves forwards towards decisions over the next few weeks.

➤ **“Safe to Grow”**

At our recent Church Meeting, revisions to our Child Protection Policy were outlined in the light of the Baptist Union’s third and completely updated “*Safe to Grow*” document. Ruth Wilson has kindly agreed to act as our *Children’s Advocate*. A list of those needing to apply to the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for clearance to work with children will be drawn up shortly and then followed through.

Looking Ahead

➤ **126th Anniversary Celebrations**

Following last year’s successful and highly significant anniversary celebrations, a planning group is being formed to oversee this year’s arrangements. We would hope to repeat some (if not all) of the activities that worked well last year, but also add some new activities and events. So please feed all your ideas into the group so we can sift them and come up with an appealing and profitable programme. One of the ideas that has been put forward already is to hold a **Week of Prayer** early in September. We believe this could be a highly significant key to seeing the Lord’s blessings being released in great power and to great effect at DRBC.

➤ **International Co-ordination Group**

We are also hoping to set up a small group to oversee our international activities. We continue to be encouraged – and often amazed – at the wide diversity of backgrounds represented by newcomers to the Church. New Zealand, Ghana and the Czech Republic are the latest countries to be added to our list of overseas nationals who have worshipped with us over the last year. Current activities for those from overseas include an **International Bible Study Group** (which will meet on Monday evenings instead of Tuesday evenings as from this month) and a monthly **International Tea** (held on the last Sunday of each month). In

addition, we have a table displaying a wide range of **Christian literature** in a variety of foreign languages, and are always pleased to supply **foreign language Bibles** to those who need them. Over the summer months, we are hoping to organise some **outings to places of interest** in the Northeast. Brian and Helen Sharp have kindly agreed to take on responsibility for these. We have applied to two organisations for grants to help with transport costs, entrance fees, and refreshments, and are awaiting replies. We are grateful to those who offer **hospitality** to our friends from overseas, and who thereby help develop their **language skills**. The small group we are proposing will oversee and develop all this work. It will be composed of a mixture of refugee/asylum seekers, overseas students, and Church representatives. It will provide a forum for our friends from overseas to put forward their own ideas as to how the work can best be developed further.

Forthcoming events

Please make good use of the publicity for our next three ‘*Food and Fun for all the Family*’ events:

- ◆ a **Games Night**, to be held on **Tuesday 13th May, 7.00-8.30pm**; and
- ◆ **Summer Barbecues**, planned for **Tuesdays 10th June and 8th July**.
- ◆ In addition, a special **Bank Holiday Birthday Barbecue** will take place at our home in Sunnyside on **Monday 26th May, noon – 2.00pm** (weather permitting!). This will be a fund-raising event for IREF, the indigenous Indian Christian mission David is associated with. The proceeds will help provide start-up costs for one of IREF’s new Day Schools. These are being established in some of the poorest villages of Andhra Pradesh where, otherwise, children would lack even primary education.

Home Mission funding

Thank you for remembering the Home Mission Visitors meeting in your prayers last month. It went well, and we await its outcome. We continue to look to the Lord for him to provide for all our needs, as we seek to reach out to the local and international community of Gateshead and further afield.

David Hunt