

Catch the Vision!

One Sunday morning recently, we were looking together at the wonderful vision of heaven that John records for us in Revelation 7.9-17. He was shown a *crowd beyond counting*, drawn from *every nation, tribe, people and language group* on the face of the earth. As a Church, we are committed to playing our part in bringing this great vision to fulfilment, so that Jesus is glorified as fully as he deserves to be for his supreme act of self-sacrifice for the whole of humanity.

Soaking everything in Prayer

We began our autumn session with a **Week of Prayer**, recognising that by ourselves we can achieve nothing of lasting value. We can be busy, but only as we allow God to work through us will we bear lasting fruit to his glory (John 15.4-8).

The Week of Prayer was considered to be a very worthwhile exercise, and the **Lunchtime Drop-ins** were particularly well supported and appreciated by those able to call in on them.

The Mission Planning Group is recommending that we hold a similar Week of Prayer around the same time next year, from **5th-12th September 2004**.

Reaching out in Mission

Our Week of Mission began with a **Games Night**, which, by common consent, was one of the best we have held. The 40 or so people present enjoyed using the new equipment we had purchased over the summer, thanks to the generous grant we had received from the Gateshead Community Chest. Our new table-tennis, snooker and pool tables, and table-soccer game provided everyone with plenty of fun. It was good to see children and young people from our Clubs present, and one of their parents for the first time.

Our Saturday **Coffee Morning and Flower Show** coincided with the National Heritage Open Days weekend. As a result, five or six people who would probably not have been contacted in any other way came to look around our premises. Consequently, the Mission Planning Group is recommending that we hold a Coffee Morning again next year to coincide with the HODS weekend.

Several people have expressed their appreciation of Barry Dunmire's Bible teaching over our **Anniversary Weekend**. We were enriched too by the musical contributions of two guest singer-guitarists from

Heaton Baptist Church in Newcastle, who helped lead our worship on the Saturday night, and by our own James Appiah-Pippim who brought us two solos. The 40 or so people present found Sarah Xu Ji's testimony very moving, as she described how she had become a Christian in China and now belonged to the underground church there. Our thanks are due too to all those who provided such good food for the anniversary meal we enjoyed together.

We very much appreciated having Jane Kitson (a singer from Heworth Christian Fellowship) and Richard and Dianne Taylor (musicians from Westgate Road Baptist Church in Newcastle) with us for our Sunday evening service. 58 different people joined with us for our anniversary services on the Sunday (only slightly down on the 64 present last year for our major 125th anniversary celebrations).

Our Tuesday Evening **Quiz Night** was a little quieter than sometimes (!), but the 25 present enjoyed a good time of fun and relaxation together.

For many people, the highlight of our Week of Mission was the **International Evening** held on the second Saturday. We were treated to some Christian songs in Chinese from a ladies trio

(a new 'girl band' in the making, perhaps?!); and to a piano recital by one of our teenagers from Azerbaijan (including a piece by the well-known (!) Azeri composer Fikret Amirov - was this a first for Gateshead?). We were given fascinating insights into what life is like in Uganda and Iran; and enjoyed hearing songs from Nigeria, Ghana and Geordie-land! James Appiah-Pippim also spoke movingly about his difficult childhood background, which had led him to put his faith and hope in Jesus. We provided a quiz for people to tackle as they arrived: guessing the correct language for 26 different versions of the word 'welcome' - some of which were written down by people as they arrived! Another quiz was laid on for people around the room as they enjoyed their food: identifying the flags of the 30 nations that have been represented at DRBC over the last 18 months! The food provided was from all over the world: Iran, China, Nigeria, Burundi, and Azerbaijan. It was a truly memorable evening, thoroughly enjoyed by the 50 or so present.



We would hope to put on something similar next year as part of an outreach weekend, provisionally scheduled for **16-17th October 2004**.

A Good Start - facts and figures

In presenting an update of our latest statistics, I am always conscious that every number represents a person who is precious to God and to be reached for Christ.

The list of countries people have come from to worship with us at DRBC continues to grow. Since the summer, we have had people join us for the first time from Burundi, Canada, Iraq, Kenya, Lithuania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Venezuela - to add to the list of two dozen or so countries already highlighted on our large wall-map. It reinforces our conviction that Jesus is for everyone, regardless of race, language, colour or ethnicity.

During **September**, 111 different people worshipped with us. 32 of these had other church connections, leaving 65 adults and 14 children/young people for whom DRBC is their only point of contact with the Gospel. [The equivalent figures for 2002 were 44 people from other churches, leaving 51 adults and 12 children/young people as DRBC contacts. It is encouraging to note the increase in DRBC adult contacts.] 28 of the 111 were with us for the first time: 13 adults from other churches, but 12 adults and 3 children/young people as new DRBC contacts. We give God all the glory, as we stand amazed at the number of new people he continues to bring in amongst us!

Altogether **this year** so far, a staggering 206 different people have worshipped with us: 50 adults and 8 children/young people from other churches, leaving 127 adults and 21 children/young people as DRBC contacts. [Again, a comparison with 2002 shows an encouraging increase in the number of DRBC adult contacts, up from 76 at this time last year to 127 for 2003.] 98 people have worshipped with us for the first time so far this year: 37 adults and 2 children from other churches; 48 adults and 11 children/young people as DRBC contacts.

What these figures highlight particularly is our need to **turn samplers into settlers**. We continue to enjoy a large and varied throughput of new people, for which we praise God. But we are acutely aware of our need to produce settlers, those who will commit themselves wholeheartedly to the task of re-building DRBC as a viable and financially self-supporting fellowship of God's people.

We recognise this will take time, and we are grateful to God for those who have recently enquired about becoming members of the church. We hope to start a new series of **baptism and church membership classes** later this month.

Our children and young people's work has got off to a good start this session, as has our work amongst internationals. We have 11 children on our books for our **Friday Club**. **Alex and Timea Kelly** have accepted a call to youth work in a church in Scotland, and we wish them well as they take up their new appointment, thanking them for their input to DRBC over the past six years. We have 21 young people on

our **Rock Solid Club** books, and it has been encouraging to see some attend our Sunday services recently.

16 overseas personnel were present at the Introductory Meal to launch our new series of **International Bible Studies** (seven men from Iran, six women from China, two women from Uganda, and one man from Iraq).

God's generous provision

Gateshead International Ministries is now up and running and has been awarded a generous grant from the Gateshead Community Chest to help fund our International Drop-in Centre, which meets over Saturday lunchtimes, 12 noon - 2.00pm. The grant, which is for just over £5,000, will enable us to purchase a much-needed new cooker and fridge-freezer for the kitchen, and some fitness equipment to help us establish *GIM's Gym*! It will also cover the cost of the food provided each week, so that this expense is not a burden on our church funds. The grant will provide a direct contribution to church funds for GIM's rental of our halls for the Drop-in Centre, and there is also money to enable people to attend training courses in food hygiene, first aid, and fitness equipment supervision. We give God all the glory for this wonderful provision!

Wisdom for the way ahead

We have received new quotations for the **building and refurbishment work** that needs to be carried out for our premises, to make them more accessible and usable. We will share information at our **half AGM on Wednesday 29th October**. Please pray that the Lord will show us very clearly the right way to proceed.

Family and Friends

We extend our deepest sympathy to **Margaret Wallace** and her family on the death of her husband, Brian, last month. **Margaret Vickers, Morag Baggley, and Frank Headon** all continue to make good progress at home following recent hospital treatment. Sadly, we will be saying goodbye this month to **Remi, Derrin and Bayo Fasipe** as they return to the USA. They have greatly enriched our fellowship over the past year and we will sorely miss their bright cheery personalities. We wish them all well as they are reunited with Tunde and settle into their new jobs and schools.

We will have an opportunity to express our gratitude to God for all the blessings he has showered upon us as a church during 2003 when we meet together this month for our annual **Harvest Supper and Thank Offering** evening. Please let me know if you would like further information about it. We never cease to be amazed at the way in which God provides so generously for all our material needs as a Church!

David Hunt