

Reach out!

October will be an exciting month as we look forward to our special **Outreach Weekend** with **Revd Trevor Rowe**. Last year and the year before, we combined our Church Anniversary Celebrations with some special outreach events in September. But this year, we reverted to holding our Anniversary Celebrations in April, so have planned a special Outreach Weekend for **15-17th October**.

Trevor Rowe grew up in Gateshead and attended DRBC before moving on to our daughter church at Beacon Lough. He is currently a Mission Worker for the Northwest Baptist Association, and the part-time minister of Coverdale Baptist Church in Manchester. Trevor spends a lot of his time working in schools, where his skills as a ventriloquist and magician are put to good use presenting the Gospel in an attractive and contemporary manner.

Here is the programme for the weekend.

- Trevor will be leading our **Friday Club** (for 7-11 year olds) and our **Rock Solid Club** (for 11-14 year olds) on the Friday night.
- He will then travel with our **Under-14's Five-a-side Football Team** to Cramlington on Saturday morning, where he will have an opportunity to present the Gospel to players in between their matches, using his puppets and magic tricks.
- On Saturday evening, he will be leading **An Evening of Family Entertainment** with a Gospel message from 7.00-8.30pm, following a buffet meal at 6.00pm.
- On Sunday, Trevor will be conducting an **All-age Service** in the morning, with the theme, *Get a Life!*
- And on Sunday evening, he will lead **An Evangelistic Guest Service**, at which the theme will be *Live the Life*, based on Romans 12.1.
- In the run-up to the weekend, we will be holding a **Family Film Evening** on **Tuesday 12th October, 7.00-8.30pm**, as part of our *Fun and Food for all the Family* programme of monthly contact-making events. We will be showing two highly acclaimed videos by Max Lucado – *You are Special* and *Jacob's Gift*.

As we look forward to the weekend, **let's all PIP!**

- **PLAN** to be at the events;
- **INVITE** our friends and family members to them; and
- **PRAY** that they will be effective in leading many people to a living faith in Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving!

We should always mix our prayers of petition with thanksgiving (Phil 4.6). As we look back over the last few weeks, we have much for which we can praise God.

- ⇒ We had good attendances at our **Week of Prayer** events, especially for our Lunchtime Drop-ins. Around two dozen people managed to call in for prayer at some point during the week, and the times of prayer flowed so well it was often hard to get a word in edgeways!
- ⇒ We were encouraged to see about 25 visitors at our **Flower Show and Open Day Coffee Morning**, arranged as part of the national Heritage Open Day programme.
- ⇒ Members contributed just over £2,200 to our annual **Thank Offering**, a total for which we give God all the praise and glory. It exceeded last year's total, and is remarkable for a fellowship of only 31 active members, many of whom are non-wage earners. 10% of the offering will be split between BMS World Mission and the Baptist Union's Home Mission Fund. The rest will be used to support our own General Fund.
- ⇒ We have now received grants, gifts and pledges totalling £10,250 towards the cost of our **building refurbishment programme**, for which, again, we give God all the praise and glory.

Keep on praying

(a) Expectations of revival

Our recent series on revival encouraged us to be persistent in prayer. The people of Hosea's day imagined that revival would come quickly – within a couple of days (Hosea 6.2). But God's expectations were more realistic. There would be no 'quick fix' solution. There needed to be a deep change in people's hearts – an admission of their guilt, not just a desire for healing; and a true seeking after God himself, not just a desire for his blessings (Hosea 5.15). The book ends with a call to be 'wise' and 'discerning' so that we '*realise these things*' (14.9). But the same chapter also includes much to encourage those who are genuine in their desire for a revival.

"I will heal my people's waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. I will answer them and care for them. I am like a green pine tree; your fruitfulness comes from me."
[Hosea 14.4,8]

(b) The fruit of revival

Prayer is the seedbed for revival. But Psalm 80.18 tells us that a renewed commitment to prayer will also be part of the outcome and fruit of any true revival:

Revive us, and we will call on your name.

A renewed commitment to prayer, both personal and corporate, will always be the outcome of any true revival, because it's in prayer that we best express our on-going dependency on the Lord.

So let me encourage you to:-

- use our **Church Prayer Diary** regularly, to pray for those who attend the church, both on Sundays and on a Friday night, at our clubs for children and young people. Get into the habit of praying for people by name. Use the verse on the front of the Prayer Diary to pray for our mutual spiritual growth. And pray too for our various church organisations, special events and activities, listed each month in the Diary.
- think about forming a **Prayer Triplet** for our forthcoming Outreach Weekend. Meet up with a couple of other people to pray for those you would like to see come to faith.
- attend our midweek **Church Prayer Meeting** on a regular basis. 17 were present for the last one in September, the best attendance of the year so far and a tremendous encouragement to everyone present – especially the Pastor! Let's keep up the good numbers over the coming months. I believe God will honour his work at DRBC if we do so.

Being Specific

We must be prepared to persist in prayer until our prayers are fully answered. Several of the needs we focussed on during our Week of Prayer are still to be met, including **sufficient funding for our building refurbishment project**. Jesus calls us (literally) to "*keep on asking ... seeking ... and knocking*." He promises to answer the prayers of those who persevere, not those for whom prayer is merely a spasmodic activity (Luke 11.9-10). Our perseverance and persistence are necessary, not because God is reluctant to meet our needs – far from it! He longs to pour out his blessings on his people (Matthew 7.11). But our persistence and perseverance demonstrate the earnestness of our requests and the extent of our hunger for God's blessing. Our prayers provide the best read-out of what's really going on in our hearts, for we will pray about whatever concerns us most. Wonderfully, the Lord promises to grant the desires of our hearts – whenever he is our greatest delight. For then our desire will be *his* greater glory, not just our

own convenience or satisfaction. Our heart will be set on seeing *his* desires and purposes come to fruition.

*Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. [Psalm 37.4]
If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. [John 15.7]*

So continue to join with me in praying for:-

- **additional helpers** for our Friday Club (a young male and female) and Rock Solid Club (a young male);
 - the **continuing development of our music ministry**. Our worship was greatly enhanced by the extra instrumentalists who played at our recent Harvest Thanksgiving All-age Service. Pray that a praise band will become a regular feature of our Sunday services.
 - **greater consistency in people's attendance**. I am convinced of the value of consecutive, systematic teaching; but it benefits most *consistent* attenders. During the month of September, 89 people attended our Sunday services – 19 of whom attended only at night. At a time when so many other churches are abandoning their Sunday evening services, these 19 'evening only' attenders underline the importance to me of us maintaining a healthy Sunday evening congregation. Our evening service is invaluable for those who cannot attend in the morning for a whole variety of reasons (shift work, family commitments, etc.). Of the remaining 70 people, 13 were children and young people, leaving 57 adults who attended our morning worship. Eleven of these were visitors from other churches. This means there were 46 adults for whom DRBC is their principle place of worship. However, *only 11 of these 46 adults were present on all four Sunday mornings* during the month of September! Perhaps this is simply a sign of the times. Of the remaining 35, some were on holiday; others were sick; a few were on shift work; and at least one was away on business. But I wonder if some people need to 'ring-fence' their time for the Lord more carefully, so that other calls on their time don't squeeze it out. Remember the parable of the soils: *other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful* (Mark 4.19).
- So far this year, 220 different people have worshipped with us at DRBC! Join with me in praying that more and more will commit themselves fully to the life of the fellowship, so it is built up to the glory of God.

David Hunt