

Thank you!

On behalf of all our friends in India, let me say a huge 'Thank you' to all of you who contributed so generously to this year's IREF fund-raising barbecue. Over £360 was raised to help support the two nurses who work amongst IREF's 1,000+ children who live at their main orphanage in Repalle, Andhra Pradesh.



A recent IREF newsletter gave news of their Children's Annual Bible School. This is held each year after their end-of-school-year exams, in April. Their programme of activities includes Bible lessons, story telling, learning new songs (including action songs), memorising and reciting Bible verses, and Bible quizzes. On the last day of the Bible School, the children perform a dance/drama depicting the life of Jesus. Please pray that many of these children in IREF's care will go on to become good, strong disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Welcome to the Shelburnes

After many months of patient waiting, we are delighted that **Travis and Hannah Shelburne** have been granted visas to come and work with our young people for the next 12 months. It was as long ago as April 2008 that we invited them to join us, for the whole of 2009. But due to changes in our UK Immigration Laws, it has been necessary to go through a long and complicated process to issue them with their required certificates entitling them to undertake youth work in the UK. They are now looking into the best available flights in order to be able to join us as soon as possible.

Travis (25) has a degree in Business Administration from Montreat College, North Carolina.

After graduating, he worked as a management trainee for various companies. He has considerable experience of youth work, both in the USA and overseas (including mission trips to Guatemala and Cuba). He lists sports, exercising, bouldering (?!) and biking amongst his interests.



Hannah (23) is also a graduate of Montreat College, where she studied Human Services and Spanish. She has also had considerable experience working with young people both in the USA and overseas (including mission trips to Honduras, Guatemala, and Cuba). Both she and Travis undertook relief work in Mississippi in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Hannah's interests include hiking, walking, and bouldering, so we will have to introduce them to the delights of Hadrian's Wall and the Cheviots!

Hannah and Travis's first child, **Tristan**, was born on 16th April last year, so will be just over one year old when they arrive in the UK. This means there will be plenty of opportunities for people in the church to volunteer to baby-sit for them to enable them to engage in youth work together, both during the day (for school visits) and in the evenings (at the clubs and undertaking visits to our young people).

We are excited at the prospect of this fine young couple joining us to help with our youth work.

Please remember them regularly in your prayers as they prepare to say farewell to their families and friends in the USA and then settle into a new way of life here in the UK.

The Wonders of God

At our special Pentecost All-age Service at the end of last month, we spent some time reflecting on the statement the crowds in Jerusalem made concerning the first followers of Jesus: *we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues* (Acts 2.11).

We thought about ...

- **the wonder of human beings**, made as we are in God's image to bear his likeness (Gen 1.26), reminding ourselves that we have been *fearfully and wonderfully made* (Psalm 139.14).
- **the wonder of Jesus Christ** – his amazing miracles (Acts 2.22), his remarkable death (v23), and his astonishing resurrection (v24).
- **the wonder of God's gift of his Holy Spirit to us** – who makes us alive to God where once we were dead (Ezek 36.26-27; Eph 2.4-5); who makes Jesus real to us in our every day experience (John 14.16-18); and who transforms us into the people God wants us to be (2 Cor 3.18).

In that connection, we went on to think about the fruit God longs to see reproduced in our lives by his indwelling Holy Spirit. Jesus reminds us that this is how we show we are genuine disciples, committed to becoming more and more like him (John 15.8).



*The fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*
[Galatians 5.22-23]

One of the greatest *wonders of God* is that he transforms our lives, so that ...

- Instead of us being *selfish* people, thinking only about ourselves and our own needs and desires, we become truly *loving* people, putting the interests of others before our own.
- Instead of us being *miserable*, grumpy old so-and-sos(!), our lives are filled with *joy* as we focus on the goodness of Jesus.
- Instead of us being *anxious* and worried about things, our lives are characterised by an inner *peace* when God's Holy Spirit is truly in control of them.
- Instead of us getting *cross* with other people and 'flying off the handle' at them – or giving up on them altogether – we will be *patient* with them.
- Instead of us saying *nasty* things to other people (or about them), our words, actions, and thoughts will be full of *kindness*.

- Instead of our lives being like a *bad* apple, they will be full of *goodness*.
- Instead of us being unreliable, untrustworthy, or disloyal kind of people – promising people things and then not delivering on our promises, thereby letting people down badly – we will be known as people who are dependable, loyal, *faithful*, trustworthy, and reliable.
- Instead of us being *clumsy* with people – abrasive in our speech and aggressive in our manner - we will be *gentle* in drawing alongside others.
- And all of this will happen when we allow God's Holy Spirit within us to *control* our lives better, so that they are not as wild or undisciplined as they used to be.

So, here's one of the truly great wonders of God: he can take very imperfect people like you and me, and transform us by his Spirit to become more and more like Jesus. May he do so, as we allow his Spirit to fill us moment by moment!

Redecoration programme

A good start has been made to our redecoration programme. The Old Minister's Vestry has been repainted and work has begun on the adjacent access corridor. The door to our Fitness Room, used by the Fit for Life Club, has been trimmed and re-hung, and most of the carpet tiles in it have been cut to the right size and shape.

But there is still plenty more work to be done! I am hoping we will be able to complete our re-painting of the access corridor by the end of this month, and also finish re-fitting the carpet tiles in the Fit for Life Room. I am planning for us to repaint the Parlour (Small Hall) during July and then tackle the Main Hall during August.

So, if you are able to help with any of this work, please let me know so that we can fit you into the programme.



NOTICE

Our next **Church Members' Meeting** is scheduled for **Wednesday 24th June**. Any regular worshippers who are not currently in membership, but who wish to attend this meeting, should speak to the Pastor at least two weeks before this date to allow time for a conversation to take place with the church leadership, as outlined in our last Newsletter.

David Hunt