

Barnoldswick Gospel Mission

2009 No.5

December



*"The people who walk in darkness will see a
great light.
For those who live in a land of deep darkness,
a light will shine."
Isaiah 9:2 (NLT)*

www.barlickmission.org.uk

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Pastor's Notes

God is Nearer Than You Think

Christmas means “Christ present.” Jesus is called Immanuel which means “God with us”. So Christmas is all about God coming into our world and being near us. Yet many people say “if God is real why doesn’t he show himself?” The whole question of the nearness of God needs a closer look.



‘Paul & Sue
Standley’

From a prison cell the Apostle Paul wrote this to his fellow Christians, “rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.” Philippians 4:5. What did he mean by the Lord is near? In the next verses he goes on to talk about not being anxious but giving our burdens to God in prayer. I believe this gives us the key to what Paul means, he is talking about the Lord being near people to help them. He is saying that we can be gentle when others are aggressive, we can rejoice and not be worried when everything is going wrong because the Lord is near to help us.

So the question “where is God” needs to be answered personally. **The Bible tells us that the Lord is near, in the sense that he is near to people who know their need of him.** For example in the Psalm 145:18 we read that “the Lord is near to all who call on him” and then in Isaiah 57:15 that he “lives with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit.” So God is near to those who call out to him in their need but not to those who say they do not need him.

All this is mirrored in the Christmas story. Jesus was born into poverty, obscurity and homelessness. He soon became a refugee and grew up as part of a cruelly oppressed people. When he taught his disciples in the sermon on the mount the first words he spoke were “blessed are the poor in spirit for their’s is the kingdom of heaven.”

So if you are lonely or in pain this Christmas there is a God who wants to come close to you. God is nearer than you think. We are taught to expect so much from life by the glitz and glamour of the advertisers but the reality is that we live in a fallen and sinful world where people hurt one another and bad things happen to everyone sooner or later. However, there is a greater reality that God has demonstrated his love for us in coming to this world to live and to die with us. Jesus died to bring us to God, to forgive and restore those who have done wrong and feel their guilt, to be the comfort to all who need him, to free those held in slavery all their lives by their fear of death, to be saviour to all. The words of the Christmas Carol remain as true today as they ever were,

***“where meek souls will receive him still,
the dear Christ enters in.”***

I trust you will have such an experience this Christmas.

Paul Standley

Peter & Kirsty Bramhall



In February 2006 one of our Members, Peter Bramhall, began a 4 year course at Moore Bible College Sydney, Australia, and moved there with his wife, Kirsty, and their two children, Nathaniel and Harry (then aged one and three). Their third child, Joel, was born in November of 2007.

Peter is now at the end of his course and will be returning to England to take up a position as Student Pastor at Christ Church, Fulwood, in Sheffield in the New Year. Please pray for Peter and Kirsty and their family as they adjust to being back in England again, and as they take this new direction in their lives.

As a church we have given financial support to Peter & Kirsty over the last 4 years, relying principally on designated gifts from Members and friends of the fellowship, for which the Church Officers are most grateful.

This financial support will obviously now cease so no further gifts will be allocated to Peter & Kirsty after the Financial Year End on 31st December and any designated gifts from unidentifiable donors received after this date will be treated as general gifts.

Christopher Jackson
Church Treasurer

Book Review

The Thirty One Days of Christmas by Roger Ellsworth

Review by Caroline Adamson

This is a book of daily readings to take you through the Christmas story during the month of December. With bite sized portions, just about five to six pages a day, you can read a good Christian book in a month!

The entrance into this world of God the Son was staggering, apart from Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection there has never been a more profound and dramatic event. The Apostle Paul exclaimed "thanks be to God for his indescribable gift", 1 Corinthians 9:15. Jesus is this indescribable gift, given by God the Father at incredibly great cost, in order to bestow the incredibly great benefit of eternal life to all who will receive him.

The book presents Christ, that precious gift, to readers in today's needy world. The section headings include, Angels at Christmas, a Christmas prophecy, the grace of Christmas, what makes Christmas special, the king is born and the songs of Christmas.

The Harry Lau Story by Bob Kitson

Part 1. Meeting Harry

I first met Harry about twenty years ago at the home of Terry and Sue Daly, relations living at the time in Hove. Harry was there on a visit and my wife Trish and I had just arrived. Harry introduced himself to us and during our conversations he told us how he became a Christian.

Every Christian has a story to tell of how they met the Lord Jesus Christ but for most it was not a spectacular experience. There may have been a joy within and a feeling of being close to God, a change from the old to the new, but no blinding light such as Paul experienced on the road to Damascus. However, there are some who have had experiences like the Apostle Paul. I have read many stories of Christians who have had remarkable conversions but to actually meet someone with a similar experience is quite remarkable. I have never forgotten Harry Lou's testimony and when I feel down it gives me encouragement. So in the next edition of this newsletter I will begin to tell the story of how Harry Lou, a Hindu, met the Lord Jesus.

Online Shopping

If you shop online, please consider joining 'The Giving Machine' as a Donor. You can nominate the Gospel Mission as a beneficiary to receive a percentage of the amount you spend (at no extra cost to you). Participating retailers include Amazon, Argos, Debenhams, Next, HMV, and many more.

Once you have joined as a Donor you must visit the relevant retailer through the 'Giving Machine' site, rather than going directly to the retailer's site, for the donation to be picked up.

Visit www.thegivingmachine.co.uk to join or contact Christopher Jackson for further details.

Stories From The Message

I have now been working at The Message in Manchester for 10 months. I worried about the travel for a while but God has been in control. I am able to set off early enough to miss the rush hour traffic on the Manchester Ring Road. This means that the journey takes only 1 hour. I am also able to leave work early, having arrived early, and again I miss the rush hour on the way home. It's not a particularly hard journey and it has, in fact, given me a much greater confidence in my driving.

It took me a while to feel comfortable there as a lot of the employees are very outgoing and vocal in their worship. Everyone is completely on fire for Jesus but only a few are quiet as I am. I have now settled in and am very much a part of the worship and prayers here, I even joined the worship band last month, with my flute. That was scary but God provided me with courage. (Strangely enough we then sang a song with the line "Give us your courage".)

Once a month we have a prayer day where everyone at work, workers from out on the Eden projects and other friends and supporters meet together to share worship, prayer, testimonies, encouragement and teaching. The testimonies are especially encouraging and often show how we are actually making a difference. In fact it is always clear that it was not actually us who made the difference, but God. A short while ago one of the Genetik course leaders shared an incredible story which goes back many years to the time of The World Wide Message Tribe.

One Christmas-time the office received an e-mail from a group in Switzerland who invited the Tribe to do a gig on New Years Eve. They replied saying they were all on holiday then. The group replied back insisting that they were sure the Tribe was the band needed for this. Again the answer was "No, we are on holiday". One final e-mail from Switzerland went on the lines of "We are positive God wants you at this gig and if you come we will pay for accommodation, flights and a ski instructor for up to 25 people to have a weeks holiday after the gig is done".

Suddenly they had a revelation that God wanted them to go to Switzerland!!! Anyway, it was an awful gig; Andy forgot his lines (for a song he had been doing for years), the sound had to be kept DOWN as they were near a residential area, in short, apart from the fabulous holiday, it didn't seem like it was from God.

One particular girl was at the concert. She had been brought up in an Occult family who had wanted her to be a spy in the church so had sent her from an early age to "learn" how to be a Christian. She was also abused terribly and would self harm amongst other things, also keeping herself from looking desirable to avoid any male interest. She had many experiences of Jesus during her childhood but would not commit her life to him, even though the experiences lead her to believe he was actually real. In her teenage years, I think, she attended this gig, not because of the Christian aspect as she was still rejecting Jesus, but because Techno was her favourite music.

At this concert she felt Jesus was present, she described it as seeing Jesus among the crowd and dancing with everyone. She had an experience which made her finally say "I'm ready to be yours now". In the time since this gig she has been on a dancing course, had counselling, learned to love and trust enough to get married and she is now off to Australia where she hopes to be in a band herself and reach out to other young people the way that the World Wide Message Tribe did for her.

God DID want the Tribe at that concert, possibly there were many hundreds of teenagers who responded to the message that night but God would have wanted the Tribe there even if it was only for this one girl.

I'm just praying that God has put me at The Message for a reason. Hopefully it is for the salvation of hundreds, but even if it is just for one person I'm glad God has chosen me to be the one to help.

Victoria Holtom

Bassenfell

An unexpected late change of pre-arranged plans enabled me to partake in the Bassenfell experience for the first time. Setting off in the early afternoon of a beautiful Friday in October, I was accompanied by my daughter and granddaughter, the latter of whom insisted that there were more cows and sheep in the fields on her side of the car than mine but she did not succeed in being first to spot a horse.



‘Morning Activities’

We could not have asked for better weather as we travelled towards the Lake District and although the journey is quite familiar to me, it never fails to delight and impress. The rolling hills of the Dales become rugged fells and rocky peaks that sweep down to picturesque waters. Completing the glorious scenery are trees, displaying an array of autumnal colours in golden yellow, bronze and ambers, interrupted by evergreen pines and spruce. I am reminded of how God can speak to us through the majesty of his Creation. “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it and all things were made for His Glory”. We arrived in the late afternoon to find that Bassenfell is delightfully situated in an elevated position overlooking Bassenthwaite Lake.



‘Off for a Walk’

The view was stunning and, being among the first to arrive, we decided to explore the surrounding area and nearby woods where the fallen leaves had formed a colourful carpet for our feet. I knew it was going to be an uplifting weekend, especially as, over the lake, soft sunshine was turning to red-streaked sunset. Over the next few hours, others arrived, ranging in age from a few weeks old to late 70s.

My room was on the top floor with a lovely view of the lake and I had the choice of 5 different beds and the added bonus of an ensuite. I went to see Ann and Peter Buckle when they arrived and how nice it was to see them again and hear news of each others families. We had spent a lot of time together in the 1970s and early 80s when our children were young. Peter was Pastor when both my children were born. After supper we had a time of fellowship in the lounge and were treated to guitar duets from Chris and Jo. Robin and Jo gave their testimonies as did Peter and Ann.



‘O What a Morning’

We were greeted by another beautiful day on Saturday and after breakfast, we had a time of worship in the lounge and Peter shared God’s Word with us following which we began our chosen activity for the day. It will come as no surprise to you that I had decided against the abseiling, archery and rock climbing, (maybe next year – only joking!) I opted for the walk up Skiddaw but only as far as Whitewater Dash waterfall as the walk had been all uphill to that point and was enough for me.

A few others also decided to turn back there and we found a suitable spot to eat our picnic lunch. Richard and Margaret Kay were kind enough to take me with them into Keswick and what a lovely afternoon we had, strolling alongside the pebbled shore of pretty Derwentwater, having tea and scones overlooking the lake, walking around the town and market stalls. We chatted about past times and how we had changed over the years. We headed back to Bassenfell in time for our evening meal and then had a time of fellowship together and were tested on our miming skills in a quiz. Our team won! We also had a quiz on passages from Exodus giving those who had recently studied it a distinct advantage!



Sunday morning brought a cloudier sky and early morning mist had descended over the lake adding an eerie beauty of its own. We heard God's Word from Peter after breakfast and set off to Bassenthwaite village, climbing up through the woods and then reached a high plateau with open views for miles which were well worth the effort of the climb. We descended into the village, crossing a bridge over the stream where the youngsters paddled or played on the swings. It had started to drizzle and some of us returned to Bassenfell by the road. The hedgerows boasted some holly with berries and we even found some very late blackberries which were promptly eaten by Elizabeth.

Sunday lunch awaited us and then it was clearing up time before our departure. I really enjoyed having fellowship in an informal and relaxed atmosphere and chatting over a coffee, getting to know more about people I didn't know very well and also those I had known for years.

Sue and Ann had worked tirelessly to provide us with tasty meals and everyone worked together well in their groups to keep the kitchen and dining room clean and tidy. Many thanks to all.

It had been an uplifting and entirely enjoyable experience as well as a time for reflection and a reminder of the "awesome wonder" of "the works Thy hand hath made."

Olwen Lund

Ladies' Group Event - Trip to Haworth

Having ventured out in the summer to Harlow Carr, a small number of us travelled over the 'tops' to Haworth for our most recent outing, on a misty, very wet November afternoon. Some among us lunched out and can recommend the Apothecary's café for a fine repast.

Haworth was celebrating the approach to Christmas with a Victorian street market but our rendezvous was at the Brontë parsonage to be reminded afresh how interesting and poignant those short lives had been which had produced Heathcliffe and Mr Rochester and immortalised the moors above their home.

At three o'clock we were due down the main street at Hall Green Baptist church where the kettle was on and the mince pies on the table in readiness. A number of the ladies of Hall Green were on hand to meet us. We chatted happily over our cuppa and there were books, cards and other tempting purchases to be made from their Book Point, which is a very successful venture open to the public each weekend. Visitors come in to browse and take tea and of course there are opportunities to gossip the Gospel. Hall Green owes its existence directly to the influence of William Grimshaw who was a predecessor of Patrick Brontë at St Michael's church and who numbered the Wesley brothers and George Whitfield among his friends.

The general consensus was that the day had been a wonderful success in spite of the incessant rain. We were warmly invited to repeat our visit, perhaps in the summer months, and our wish is to extend a welcome to the Hall Green ladies in return when we can show them some true Barlick hospitality.

Jane Gilbert

Caroline Adamson adds:-

I was particularly enthralled by Olwen's account of her trip to New England and being a lover of the novels of the Brontë's particularly enjoyed the Parsonage museum. It was lovely to have fellowship and we could all in our own small way share fellowship by visiting a lonely elderly neighbour or anyone else who is lonely this Christmas.

The Way to Amarillo!

“Is this the way to Amarillo?” The words of the well known song came to me as I staggered across a boggy field on the traditional walk at the Leader’s Retreat. Just how had I managed to survive over 35 years on the Church leadership!

The words came back to me again as I struggled to drag my bike up a mountain in Grizedale Forest – contrary to popular belief the Christian life in general, and leadership in particular, leads us through a lot of boggy fields and uphill struggles! How do we keep going?

“Just beyond the highway there’s an open plain and it keeps me going through the wind and rain!” The song tells of the singer’s devotion to Marie - the woman who is waiting for him at the end of his journey. Every night he is hugging his pillow thinking not just of Amarillo but *Marie* - she is the one who keeps him going through the wind and rain.

It is the vision of Jesus, and only the vision of Jesus, that has kept me going through the trials and tribulations of the Christian life. When the chips are down it is not how well we have learnt the doctrine, but how well we know Jesus which will sustain us. In Hebrews 11:27 we read that Moses endured “as seeing Him who is invisible”. The writer to Hebrews also says “Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and loose heart.” Are we willing to walk in the foot prints of Jesus?

Much teaching today tells us that receiving Jesus will give us a trouble free life! This is not my experience neither I suspect has it been the experience of God’s people down the ages. I am reminded of a note by Selwyn Hughes speaking about the storm on the lake. **“When we get into the boat with Jesus we can be sure of three things: the presence of Jesus, storms and a safe arrival!”**

Richard Kay

"The Gathering" Skipton Baptist Church

And what a gathering it was, more than thirty men attended the recent weekend of activities organised by the men's group of the Skipton Baptist Church. It started on Friday night with a meet and greet at Herriot's in Skipton, Roger Sutton former Pastor of the Altringham Baptist Church was the speaker for the weekend. He was cordially introduced to the group and interviewed by Phil Burns. A quiz had been organised and was enjoyed by all "Who killed a quarter of the worlds population?"

Saturday morning brought the men together over breakfast; food was to play a big feature in the day's events, it was a full English with seconds and even thirds for those with hearty appetites. After breakfast we spent a few minutes relaxing and expanding our belts over a cup of coffee. Phil led the band and we praised the Lord with all our hearts, "blessed be the name of the Lord". Our first seminar from Roger was about how the role of modern man, that's me and you brother, has become confused. We live in a stressed out world and are continually exposed to media advertising the ideal man, unfortunately for us men it looks like David Beckham.

We have gone in a few short years from bread winners to bread losers, in a society where women rightly have equal rights; we have been turned from the macho hunter gatherer into a well groomed poodle. Roger encouraged us to think gender, it seemingly comes very easy to the ladies, but men have to think about it? Men have to be aware of their feelings, to think, listen and take advice, we too easily compartmentalise our life into home, work, hobbies and faith. The Lord Jesus should be at the forefront and be a part of all our life, at home, at work and at play. We then had a break for tea and biscuits. We reconvened with how we find our way ahead, our spiritual journey; men can have a false portrayal of who they are, they show people one side, but have a completely different personality, their true self.

So we looked at accountability and what it would mean to be held accountable. St Pachomius started the monastic movement, creating a number of rules for life, rules about time, rest, relationship, power and spiritual disciplines. All these rules held his followers accountable for their actions. As men we should be more accountable for our actions but in doing so we need a mentor Paul says "Imitate Me" and remember faith is about practice and through faith alone shall you find true happiness. The session covered lots of other areas but all were food for thought and talking about food we had lunch soup and sandwiches.

In the afternoon we did the manly activities of archery and air rifle shooting at paper targets of course, not an animal in sight this may be because they weren't as stupid as us, standing out in the pouring rain enjoying ourselves. After two hours of being Robin Hood we retired back to church for tea, a wonderful meat and potato pie, enough to sink a battleship, another two notches on my belt "breathe in, look manly". We finished in rousing praise to our Lord and Saviour. Sunday saw a family service at Skipton with Roger Sutton speaking - see the Skipton Baptist website for the sermon.

What did I learn, firstly not to eat so much food, secondly make sure you always have your raincoat with you? Joking apart 2 Timothy 2:22 says "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with these who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." NIV

Who do we want to be our role model? David Beckham, Harry Hill? I say to you brothers neither, Jesus Christ is our King, Saviour and Shepherd, let him be our standard and beacon in this darkening world.

Martin Brierley

What's On This Christmas and New Year

On **Sunday 13th December at 3:00pm** there is an opportunity to sing Carols at Cravenside. Please join us.

On **Thursday 17th December at 4:30pm** there is the HOPE BARLICK Carols on the Square. It should be a great opportunity to share the good news of Christmas with the people of our town. We have the Border Singers, Church School Choir, Puppets, Community Carols and a talk and it will be followed by punch and mince pies. Please remember this event in prayer.

Sunday 20th we have our Carol Services, **10:30am** at the Civic Hall in the morning and **6:00pm** at the Mission.

Meet in the Town Square at **6:30pm on Monday 21st** if you want to do some traditional carol singing around the town.

We meet at **10:00am on Christmas Day** at the Mission for a short Family Service.

On **Sunday 27th** we meet at the usual Sunday times and venues. The evening praise service will be an opportunity to share your experience of God in 2009. Please come to share and encourage one another.

On **New Year's Eve** we will have our Safari Supper starting at **8:00pm**. See the bulletin for venues.

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