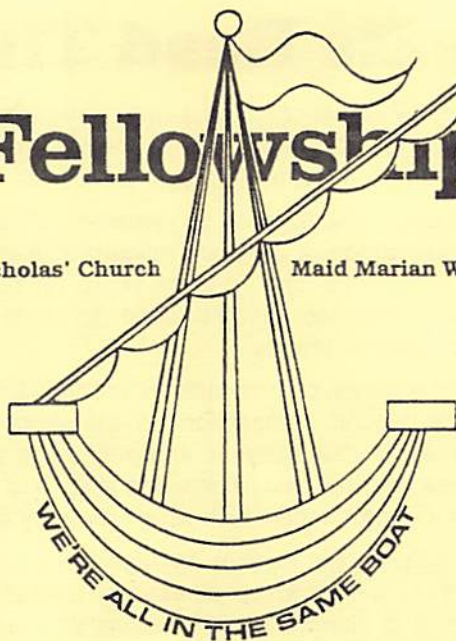


Pete and Margaret Bates
Subscriptions Remaining : 5

Fellowship

St. Nicholas' Church

Maid Marian Way



In This Issue:

- ❖ **Jeremy's Farewell**
- ❖ **Why the Church is a No-Go Zone for Men**
- ❖ **Budget Blockbusters**
- ❖ **A Thought Provoking Mini-Series**

Please Read This

In previous magazines, we have often published controversial articles. This is not to cause trouble, but to help people to think through some issues that can easily be put to one side as 'too difficult to think about just now'.

We have had valuable discussions on whether children should take communion. A few years ago, a poignant article about miscarriage evoked heart-felt responses in many people. At these times, we have printed articles of a personal nature without the author's name, so as to allow freedom of expression without invasion of privacy.

In this edition, there is a series of three articles entitled 'Just Visiting?', not to be confused with the regular competition on the inside back cover. We commend these articles to your attention and encourage you to think about each piece before reading the next. There are also four articles written in response to the 'Just visiting?' series, with which you may agree or disagree.

If you would like to help people to think through the issues raised and put your thoughts in writing, we would be pleased to publish them in the next edition of Fellowship. It is important that you sign your article, although we will be happy to print it as *name supplied*.

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From Here To Skegby . . .

Well, they wouldn't make a film out of that title, but God works in mysterious ways, and to Skegby we go, with our Licensing and Installation service on the 13th July.

We'd love you all to come, but the church building is quite small, and it's important that Skegby people have a seat, so we've had to send invitations to representatives from St. Nic's. Please remember us on that day!

Jerry and the PM?

I was going to begin by asking the question "why do you have to go to London to get to a parish just the other side of Sutton-in-Ashfield?".

The answer lies in the patronage system of the C of E: it was the Bishop who asked me to look at Skegby, but the patron is involved in the appointment, and I had to go to meet him. Well, actually the patron is

the Lord Chancellor, who delegates that responsibility to others. In an office. In Number 10 Downing Street. So there was Fletcher sitting in the hall where world leaders have their photograph taken, waiting to talk to someone about an ex-mining parish in Nottinghamshire. Mysterious ways indeed.



Hatch, Match & Dispatch

The parish of Skegby with Stanton Hill has about 13,000 people in it, two church buildings, a regular

Sunday attendance of around 80, and lots of weddings, baptisms and funerals. In many ways it resembles the parish we came from in Hartlepool: there is every kind of housing from council to back to back to semi's to detached to farms.

The people are a complete mixture, but the big issue is about



employment, especially after pit closures. There are three primary schools and a comprehensive, and I'll be involved in the church school a lot, as a governor and assembly taker.

No Cricket Pitch!

The Vicarage is modern, right next to the church (at last!), and set on a wooded hillside in three acres of grass and trees. Sadly nowhere is flat enough for a cricket pitch, but the garden will be a paradise for the boys. The church is in good heart, and I think they know what they are getting. And we're only half an hour away, in the same diocese, so you'll see more of us I'm sure.

We leave St. Nic's amazed at how 3 years have flown, privileged to have learnt so much from what is a remarkable church, humbled at how much you have allowed us to do (and how you've coped with my mistakes), sad that we are leaving, but confident in the faith that this is God's will for us, and looking forward to what is in store.

Thank you for what you have taught us, which is far more than we can have given you. I hope Steve, Jenny, Emma and Tim have as good a time as we have. I know you'll make that possible.

With love,

*Jeremy, Julia, Nicholas and
Matthew.*

Jerry's Farewell Song

As sung by the evening Music Group

it's early on Sunday, get up late out of bed,
I put on my collar, polish my balding head.
Then Julia asks me, do you feel alright?
and I say 'No, I had a vindaloo last night'.

It 10 on a Sunday, should have been there by nine.
I'd prob'ly have made it, if not for that Communion wine.

What shall I tell them, as I walk through the door?
I'll say 'Hey, haven't I been here before?'

I'm in the service, leading the worship time,
playing the bass-guitar, everything seem to be fine.
I hear an awful noise, that sounds like a moan,
Yes, it's David, singing in the microphone!

It's now the response time, words keep tumbling out.
Then from the back room I hear a terrible shout.
It is demon possession? Call on Sinclair Payne!
No, don't fear, it's that urn boiling over again!

It's after the service, David approaches me.
I pick up my cassock, head for the vestery.
Then when he finds me, Oh, he looks real mean.
'Was it you on that dreadful tambourine?'

Time to get out now, but Barbara's blocking the way,
Bill Phipps is beside her, both of them have something to say.

You know in your sermon, when we were asleep,
We counted over forty thousand different sheep

I'm off to Skegby, It not as strange as it seems,
They're wanting a batsman for the first cricket team.
And when they ask me can you really catch?
I'll say 'yes, I caught J. John out last match.'

How we will miss him, and all the things he's done.
For his cracking good sermons, for his wisdom and fun.

Lord, we must thank you fro the Fletcher Crew.
Watch out Skegby, you don't know what's coming to you!

Why the Church is a No-Go Zone for Men.

At Easter a high proportion of churches up and down the land had packed congregations. The Easter rush, second only to Christmas.

For us believers it's a glorious celebration, because it hinges on the one truth without which the whole of Christianity would fall apart - that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It means there is hope for the future, a purpose in life now and a fresh beginning no matter what has happened in the past. There is not, however, a proper representation of humanity worshipping in church. And you know the missing section? Men.

Matriarchal Society?

Sure, there will be some, more in thriving churches than in those that struggle. But some estimates are that women outnumber men in congregations by around two to one. Why is this? What is it about us blokes that makes it so hard for us to grasp spirituality?

Even allowing for the fact that fewer people profess to be committed

Christians these days, what can explain the wildly unbalanced proportions of men and women that people the pew? Some have advanced the theory that once men come through a church door, they find themselves in a matriarchal society. There seem to be more women in the pews, there are flowers all over the place and the emotions and qualities which Christian worship calls upon are seen more as 'womanly'.

This is tosh.



Unfamiliarity

Its true that some men feel inhibited if outnumbered by women. Others may see it as a positive bonus. But I think one of the biggest problems for men is a) unfamiliarity and b) lack of conviction. If churches are going to see an influx of fellas, these two have got to be addressed.

Unfamiliarity comes when you're landed in the middle of a strange ritual where you're asked to sing things you've never heard before (and you can't sing anyway), the language is more akin to a Restoration drama,





you find yourself standing when everyone else is sitting, and vice-versa, and people say things you simply don't understand. Men will simply mutter 'I'm not coming here again', after wondering why vicars so often have wet handshakes.

Lack of conviction is an entirely understandable reason for men shunning church. Quite right, too. Thankfully, the days of social church-going are on the way out. You're far less likely to find people in church because they think they ought to be, but don't believe a word of it.

1950s Clothes

Men need a reason for doing things, and they're blown if they're going to give up their Sunday mornings to stand next to people in 1950s clothes, espousing Victorian moral and singing from an 18th century hymnals. Especially when there seems to be no point in it.

Thankfully, that caricature of church life is growing increasingly inaccurate. Many men have not rejected Jesus Christ, but an archaic stereotype of what they think the church is. Church, in many people's minds, is outdated, irrelevant and boring. And they're always after your money.

And Christianity is a prop for the weak-minded.

The Bottom Line

Increasingly, when men come face-to-face with truth, they find it hard to resist. That's the bottom line: *is Christianity true?*

If a man finds good evidence for faith in Jesus Christ, and there *is* good evidence, things begin to make sense. Jesus' teaching suddenly becomes bang up to date and life-changing. And living a Christian takes guts. The early Church discovered that: their faith often led to an agonising death. In this country, freedom of worship is safe, so martyrdom is unlikely. But cutting against the grain in a world where it's easier to be a sheep is no easy task. Far from being a prop, living faith becomes a challenge of the highest calibre.

Macho Men

Agnosticism is the new establishment belief. And it can be an unwillingness to face up to belief in God, because the ramifications are too far-reaching. Macho men often turn out to be all front and no bottle. I wonder how many men will have the courage to go back to church next Sunday and turn to their wives and say: 'You were right, all along'?

Russ Bravo

(Reprinted from the Derby Evening Telegraph with permission)



From Our Own Correspondent



A Letter from Gorem Gorem

(with apologies to Robert Lacville)

Only Guardian Weekly readers will understand the title! The Guardian Weekly - three weeks out of date or course - being an important part of missionary life. In a place like Gorem Gorem such points of contact with the outside world are much appreciated. I will be attempting to follow the World Cup Finals on the BBC World Service.

Life in Gorem Gorem is certainly very different from Nottingham. I share a courtyard with another missionary, a local family, a cow, some chickens and various visitors (both two and four-legged)! This evening we ate maize paste and a leaf-based sauce with our fingers. Tonight I will sleep under a straw 'hangar', as it is

too hot in the mud-brick house. On market day, when the Bellah come in from the bush villages, we have rows of camels looking over our wall.

But these things are not difficult to adapt to, nor is wearing a long robe and a turban. It is the deeper issues of culture and world-view that take more time. As I make progress in the language I gain more and more insights into what people think and how they think. It is a slow process, but a rewarding one, and one that will help me eventually to share the Gospel in a comprehensible and relevant way. That is what makes it worthwhile - knowing that through this, God will bring his salvation to the people of this place.

David Sudlow

Answers

Pictures - 2,5,3,4,1.

Word Maze - Paul, David, Hannah, Ruth, Joseph, Miriam, Moses.

Quiz - 1, Zipporah. 2, Priest of Midian. 3, He was standing on Holy Ground. 4, I Am who I Am. 5, Flowing with milk and honey. 6, Silver, gold and clothing. 7, In case the Israelites did not believe him. 8, Staff and snake; leprous hand; water and blood. 9, He was not eloquent. 10, He was sometimes seen with Aaron and sometimes without!

Children's Charter

Since 1994 is the International Year of the Family, the Diocese of Southwell has put forward a children's charter for discussion in the parishes. You may like to read the following points and use them as a starting point for what you would like to see nailed to the door of our church.



Towards a Charter for Children in the Church

- * Children are equal partners with adults in the life of the church.
- * The full diet of Christian worship is for children as well as adults.
- * Learning is for the whole church, adults and children.
- * Fellowship is for all - each belong meaningfully to the rest.
- * Service is for children to give, as well as adults.
- * The call to evangelise comes to all God's people of whatever age.
- * The Holy Spirit speaks as powerfully through children as well as adults.
- * The discovery and development of gifts in children and adults is a key function of the church.
- * As a church community we must learn to do only those things in separate groups which we cannot in all conscience do together.
- * The concept of the 'Priesthood of all Believers' includes children.

A Visit To Karlsruhe

Barry and Annie Williams

Annie and I have just spent a week in Karlsruhe in Germany as representatives of St. Nic's in the Nottingham Council of Churches. If you do not already know, Nottingham is linked to the city of Karlsruhe which is in the South West of Germany near the border with France.

The trip became interesting for me even before we'd left England since I had never flown before. It was exciting to see both sides of the Channel at once as we were cruising seven miles above ground. It made me aware of how small our world actually is.

Amazing Autobahns!

This feeling progressed when we landed and were welcomed by our English speaking German hosts. We had landed in Frankfurt and so sped (precariously!) down the highway for an hour to Karlsruhe. It quickly became apparent that our countries had a lot in common, from our chat in the car.

The country has a divided church, mainly between Protestant and Catholic, with some Pentecostal movement. We found that our host attended an Old Catholic church, which is separate from the Roman

Catholics, having parted company centuries ago. Our host feared that the Conservatives (known as the Christian Democrats) were on the brink of starting their own period of Thatcherism. This was at the peak of political news since it was obvious the Germans had very good social policies and funds and many were concerned about the withdrawal of these services. It also appeared that the fiscal penalty of Reunification was starting to affect the average person in the street as well.

Hello Heidelberg

Having been forewarned of this, however, we found that our hosts were more than keen to be generous and were overwhelming in their efforts to please. Our visits to the European Parliament in Strasbourg and the picturesque town of Heidelberg were scrupulously planned in order to make the most of them.

Later in the week we did get down to some business, which was related to the theme of Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation. Amongst many interesting visits, lectures and discussions, there was the notable visit to a centre which helped those who

[Cont. on page 18]



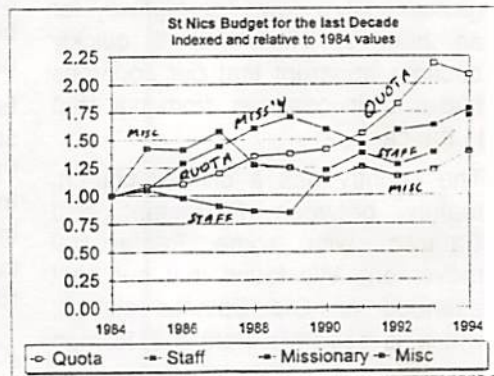
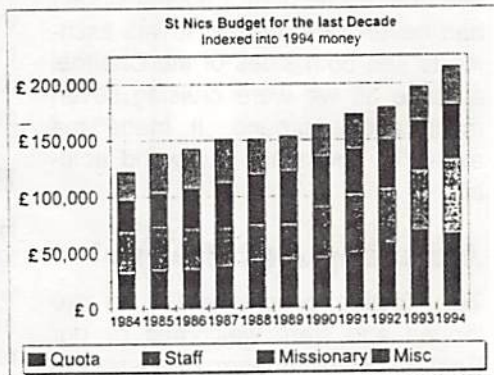
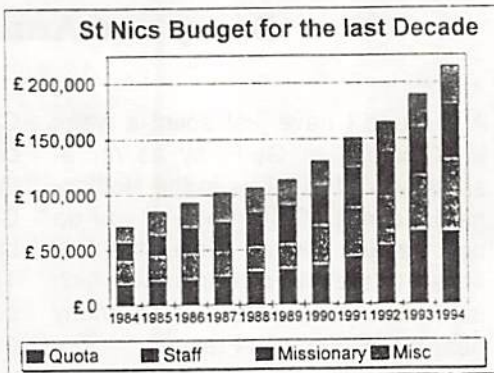
Can We Budge It?

You have heard over the past few months how the St. Nic's budget has increased again, and our expected income will not meet the target. These three graphs illustrate the actual expenditure for the years 1984 to 1993, and the budgetted expenditure for 1994. You are left to interpret the graphs for yourself and to draw your own conclusions. The Editors would be interested to receive your comments.

Graph number 1 shows the raw figures for expenditure in the years 1984 - 1994, broken down into four main sections. The total height of a bar shows the total expenditure for that year.

Graph number 2 takes account of inflation in the last decade. The expenditure in each year is multiplied by a fiddle factor to become 'what that year's budget would have cost if we had to spend it in 1994'. This shows 'growth in real terms', as they say on the news.

Graph number 3 shows the same information as number 2, but with each of the four sections dealt with separately. Each section of graph number 2, (e.g. 1990-staff), is divided by the appropriate 1984 figure (e.g. 1984-staff), to give the proportion by which it has increased. A figure of 1 means that expenditure is the same as it was in 1984, less than 1 means that the budget for that section has fallen since 1984, and a figure of 2, for example, means that expenditure has doubled in real terms.



Just Visiting ?

One of our congregation has been travelling. Who was it, and where do you think they have been? Nepal, British Honduras (Belize), Fiji, Burma or elsewhere?

I have been to a foreign land. I stayed with a lovely Christian couple who tried hard to make me feel at home. They loved to have visitors, and loved to pamper them with lashings of delicious home-grown food. They had a gift for making the visitor feel comfortable in a strange land.

Rugged and Primitive

The country reminded me of Scotland - rugged, with isolated settlements and primitive transport. The roads were poor, and the only railway I saw was still using steam-trains! The weather reminded me of Ireland - it rained a lot and mist frequently hung on the snow-capped mountains.

The natives were friendly, and talkative. Many worked the land to make a living, often on meagre soil. Some

spoke a strange patois, which after a time I realised was a form of pidgin English. With care and practice I found I could understand and be understood.

There was evidence of conflict between the church and the government. I found the ruins of five huge churches that had been destroyed by government troops. The people and clerics had disappeared. I found one



beautiful large church still intact. It was the size of a cathedral, but there were only a handful of people, mostly in colourful dress.

So where was I? Have a guess before reading part 2

**All
About
Moses!**

Bible Brain

Read the story about Moses, then put the pictures in the right order.



Grid Word

Some of the words from the story on the right fit into the grid. We've put some of the letters in to give you a start.

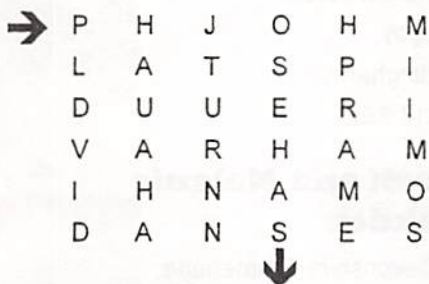
Benders

Moses Quiz

A set of tricky questions to tax the toughest thought-machine!

Word Maze

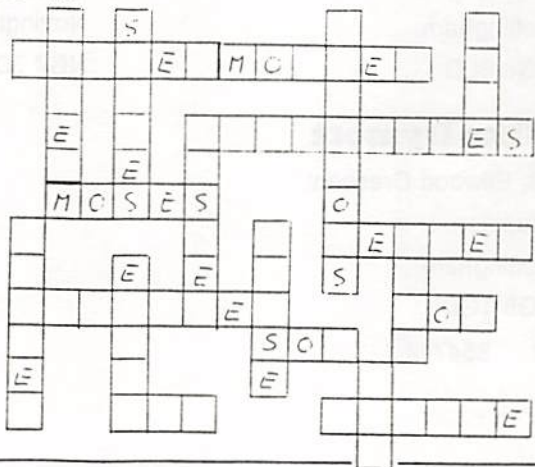
Moses is hidden in the Word Maze, together with six other Bible Characters. Start at the IN arrow and finish at the OUT arrow. You can go from letter to letter in any direction.



Moses' Story

A long time ago, when the Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt, a woman had a baby boy. There was a law that all of the Hebrew boy children should be killed, so the woman made a basket and covered it with tar and hid it in the bullrushes by the river Nile. Pharaoh's daughter heard the baby crying and found the basket hidden by the river. She took him home and got the child's mother to come to the palace to nurse him. Pharaoh's daughter brought up the baby as her own son. She called him Moses.

- 1 - What was the name of Moses' wife?
- 2 - What job did Moses' father-in-law do?
- 3 - Why did Moses have to remove his sandals?
- 4 - By what name did God reveal himself to Moses?
- 5 - How did God describe the Promised Land?
- 6 - What did God say the Israelites would take with them out of Egypt?
- 7 - Why did Moses ask for signs?
- 8 - What were the three signs?
- 9 - What was Moses' objection to going to Pharaoh?
- 10 - How do we know that Moses wore a wig?



Changing A Dress

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Just Visiting?



(Part 2)

In conversation, I discovered the people held a terrible secret. Many of the people killed their first child, and sometimes their second child as well.

It was a practice everyone knew about. The men would not talk about it. The women thought it was normal and natural. No-one seemed concerned or realised that it was wrong. It was strange because in many other ways the people seemed so civilised.

Prophet?

How I longed to be an old-testament prophet! I could tell this tribe that the slaughter of children is wrong, that God is angry with their evil ways, and that He longs for them to cease their evil and re-

pent. But I am not such a preacher, and I said little.

How can we educate these people not to kill their children?

What should we do?

And where had I been?

Please think about this before reading part 3



A Quiet Weekend

A quiet weekend was had by all on a Morley Retreat recently.

Silent Salt

This, as it turned out, was easier for some than for others. Being the only man in the group of about 15 didn't help either. It was a strange experience eating in silence, and often I found it inconvenient trying to devise ways of getting someone to pass the salt, when talking is so much easier. It would also have helped if I happened to be a morning person, since walking in to the dining room and saying "Is this chair taken?" received a lot of silent gasps, as I forgotten about the silence bit!

Contrary Candles

Another oddity that threw itself my way was candles. Anyone who went will be able to recall my feeble attempts at lighting one candle from another using a taper. I think it was to represent the light of Jesus being transmitted. My efforts quickly thwarted the plans of Jesus as I proceeded to extinguish candle after candle!

Communicative Contemplation

Having started on the curious bits, I should say that the sessions led by Sister Pam were interesting, and inspired me to have a go at this contemplation lark. To my surprise I found a lot of healing and a lot of direct answers. In the time of sharing at the end it was a great privilege to hear how God had worked powerfully in each participant's life.

Missing Men!

In conclusion all I can say is that I found it a tragedy that I was the only man. It makes me wonder how much other men are missing out, perhaps through fear or prejudice in ignorance. It was a struggle for me, but I found it worth it, even if I was screaming and cheering when the silence was pronounced over!

Barry and Annie Williams



Just Visiting?



(Part 3)

Surprise! I had not been anywhere exotic. I had been to Pickering in Yorkshire, where the locals speak a strange language, and steam trains run on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. I had visited Durham Cathedral which was lovely but empty save for University dons.

I had also visited Riveaux Abbey, Whitby Priory, Byland Abbey, Mount Grace Priory, Fountains Abbey. These were great houses of God destroyed following the dissolution of

the monasteries by Henry VIII around 1538. Visit these ruins and see for yourself the outrageous vandalism caused by the state opposing the church.

Perhaps you know how to organise church and state to help each other and avoid conflict. If so, let me know, or write to your MP ...

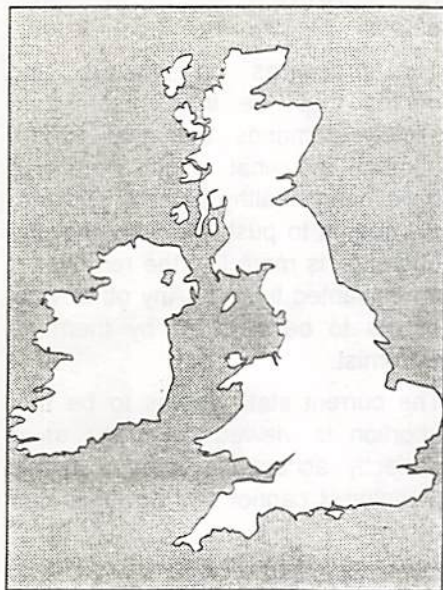
And the children . . .

Each year, in England and Wales, there are about 700,000 babies born, and about 180,000 aborted. Nottinghamshire has fewer abortions than many areas, but still had 1,800 abortions in 1991, or about 5 a day. What would the press do if one day 5 kids died in a road accident?

Moral Health

What should our response be as Christians? What does it say about the moral health of our nation that we so passively accept this? We vilify Herod for the massacre of the Judean children under 3 years old after the birth of Christ, and rightly, yet we permit worse bloodshed in our city!

What should we do?



Verses to think about:

Psalm 139 v 13-16. Matthew 2:16.
Luke 1:41.

Organisations active in supporting
the unborn child:

Life, Life House, Newbold Terrace,
Leamington Spa, CV32 4AE

The Society for the Protection of the
Unborn Child (SPUC)

Tim Lee

The Editors write ...

Church-state relations and responses to abortion are difficult and sometimes painful to address. We have invited comment on Tim's article, and some of the responses are printed. We would welcome further responses to go in subsequent issues of Fellowship. These may be printed anonymously, but as always we need to know the author.

Responses

Abortion: Right or Wrong

The world is not perfect, and often people have to make agonizing decisions where there are no good options. There are cases where the decision about abortion is like that. I don't believe that it is ever good, but sometimes it may be the lesser of two evils.

I find it impossible to work out all the cases where abortion may be felt to be 'acceptable'. There are many difficult cases, e.g. rape, incest, the risk of a handicapped baby, risk of injury or death to the mother. There

may be other cases which I have not had the misfortune to come across.

The pressures on doctors and nurses must be intolerable, when society demands the right to the abortion of what might otherwise have been healthy babies. The media seems to push the view that the operation is more like the removal of an unwanted tumour. Any other view seems to be ridiculed by them as extremist.

The current state seems to be that abortion is viewed by many as a perfectly acceptable form of family planning. I cannot see how this can be right.

Name Supplied



The Author's Response

These are my beliefs. I hope you share them. I would like to know whether you agree.

God breathes life

I believe unborn babies are fully human. They are known to God and are precious in His sight. I believe the destruction of our children is a monstrosity. Couples choose to make love, but only God breathes His life giving Spirit into the dust and makes a new soul. We should therefore treat all human life with great respect.

Difficult Situations

I am passionately against abortions, except for rare medical cases when the baby would not live, or the mother's life is at risk. However, there are many difficult situations, and we must have compassion for those who feel that abortion is the only way out of their 'problems'. Abortion is always a bad thing, but it is sometimes less bad than other options.

I expect that most abortions are for mothers who have never had children. Anyone who has held their own new-born child cannot fail to love and protect their tiny offspring. It is hard to comprehend that such a mother (or father) would allow the destruction of another child. If the abortion is seen as an economic

necessity, we should address the poverty.

As for the childless mothers-to-be who seek abortion, some are unmarried or under-age, others have not decided to start a family yet - perhaps the father is not ready! I believe we need a return to traditional Christian values across our nation. Marriage needs strengthening. A stable two-parent family should be seen as the ideal and normal place for raising children.

Responsible Sex

I believe the church should vociferously promote 'responsible sex' not 'safe sex'. Responsible sex means between husband and wife only. This is the only form that works. The media promotes the equivalence of homo-sexual and hetero-sexual sex. This is abhorrent to God.

The film-industry promotes the 'joys' of promiscuous and pre-marital sex (fornication) and extra-marital sex (adultery). It never shows the cost of weakened and devalued marriages, or marriages entered into too soon, too lightly, or for the wrong reasons.



Strengthened Marriages

The church should do all it can to strengthen marriage. At present couples see their vicar to arrange a date for the wedding. How much better would it be they went earlier, perhaps when they got engaged. Then they could explore what marriage means, and how to prepare for it. Do people think the church offers this service? Does it?

Faithfulness

The church should promote 'sexual faithfulness within marriage, and abstinence without', not as a response to AIDS, but as a strategy for a lasting marriage and a happy life.

Before marriage a couple needs time to learn about each other, to build a foundation that will last a lifetime. Pre-marital sex is so powerful - it becomes all consuming. It largely prevents proper preparation for marriage. It leads to shallower marriages. It kidnaps one of the gifts God has for the married couple.

If we can strengthen our nations's marriages, divorce will be rarer. More of our nation's children will have two parents and enjoy stable families where they are loved and valued. With responsible sex and stronger marriages, hopefully fewer of our children will be killed.

Amen.

Tim Lee

A Visit To Karlsruhe



[Cont. from page 7]

had severe difficulties get into work. This was done by an input of £2m into a scheme for 140 people, some of whom could not speak German or were recovering from the effects of drug abuse. It was humbling to see such an institution, the like of which is not seen in Britain. However, as mentioned earlier, it appeared to be under threat from impending cuts in social funds. A journalist was present from the local press and managed to quote

me twice in his article! I became famous over night!

Bye-bye Barriers

To conclude, I was surprised at how easy it was to cross cultures, both from Anglican to Old Catholic and from European State to European State. I am grateful to be shown that through Christ all barriers can come down, and I wonder if he himself is a Euro-supporter because of this.

Barry and Annie Williams

Good News for the Poor in Spirit

When considering abortion, it is essential that we remember compassion. Many women have had abortions, and then feel guilty about it. Perhaps the abortion was a long time ago, and no-one knows about it. Perhaps the abortion was before the woman came to faith. Perhaps the woman was not allowed to choose, and their family or GP just arranged things.

Pent-up Guilt

Many who have had abortions are scared of how their Christian friends or family would react if they knew. Conversely, secular society says that abortion is OK, that it does not matter, that it is your right, but this is of little value if you feel guilty. It is easy to become trapped, unable to discuss your feeling with anyone.



The pent-up guilt remains an unresolved burden on your soul.

For these, and many

other reasons, we must be sensitive to those who still feel the pain of abortion.



No Need to Pretend

Yet for the woman or man feeling guilty about an abortion, there is good news. Jesus came into the world to bring forgiveness, to reconcile all people to God. We are safe under the umbrella of His love. Here we can receive forgiveness, and a fresh start. Here, we do not have to pretend that the abortion never happened, or that it does not matter. Here we can be honest with ourselves and with God. Here we can leave behind our guilt and shame.

All Fallen Short

It is important to remember that we have all fallen short of the glory that God intended for us. Repentance allows us to be cut free from the past, and to grow in glory.

When can we next have a day of atonement?

Name Supplied

All in the Same Boat

Abortion is a very sensitive issue, by which some people may feel very hurt. They may have had an abortion for medical reasons, following a period of agonising decision. They may have felt completely trapped by circumstances beyond their control. They may have had an abortion before they became a Christian when it was presented as the obvious thing to do.

In many cases, the hurt comes from feeling guilty; not being able to forgive yourself; being afraid of what others may think, and possibly not being able/allowed to grieve for the lost child

No Worse the Others

The gospel which Jesus preached was one of forgiveness and reconciliation. We should not deny the hurt and the wrong, but face it, and realise that God still loves us, and understands. He is far more eager to forgive than we are to ask for, or to receive forgiveness. It is also important to realise that 'all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God'. In the old 1662 version of the Communion service the church would all say "We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed ...". Discussion of all of us as sinners who need forgiveness is often

avoided. This makes the self condemnation of those who have had abortions even more harsh. But we are all in the



same boat. God does not classify some things which are sub-optimal as being worse than others: "Though your sin be as scarlet, you will be white as snow". Jesus said. "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone".

Part of accepting forgiveness involves forgiving ourselves. The *De-siderata* says "Be gentle with yourself, you are a child of the universe with as much right to be here as the trees and the flowers." This is very difficult to do, and I don't know how to help people caught up in self-condemnation.

However, it is still important to make a stand against the trend in society towards regarding children as disposable. It is a very wrong attitude, which must be challenged. Unfortunately there are always going to be people who are hurt, whenever the issue is raised. Sadly, if we were to remain silent on sensitive issues, we could never hope to change things for the better.

Name Supplied

Just Visiting

Our journey took us East, although our destination sounded a more occidental location. Cricketing and sports gear were in evidence from photos to bats, one of which was almost hijacked by the youngest member of our family as we left after a couple of hours.

On arrival, music was emanating from the lounge, although for once our mission was to make a different sort of disc spin more sweetly. The occupants of the house had a well developed sense of humour judging by the cards posted on the fridge door in their family dining kitchen. By the corner of the dining table were some wind chimes which sometimes fascinate one of our family, who can now reach the chimer by standing on one of the chairs. On this visit however, he was more interested in having his Thomas the Tank Engine book read by a much better orator than his parents!

Some far flung places were in evidence in the pictures and items hanging on the walls - a brass etching of Durham Cathedral is one of our favourites, another is a long oval piece of painted wood on a string, used as a signalling instrument in another continent.

The Visitees were:

Phil and Sue Andrew
Jonathan and Claire Etheridge
David and Janie Beales
Jermey and Julia Fletcher
Tim and Joy Lee
John and Helen Pinnington

The Visitors were:

Phil and Sue Andrew
Jonathan and Claire Etheridge
David and Janie Beales
Jermey and Julia Fletcher
Tim and Joy Lee
John and Helen Pinnington

If you can work out who was visiting whom, ring 664938 and you may win yourself great notoriety and an insignificant prize!

In the last issue, Sandy Cutts correctly guessed that Steve and Laura Parr visited Mrtian Kennard.

Contrary to statements in the last issue, Karen Padley is *not* a nurse at the City hospital and does *not* lead Wollaton Priory Housegroup. Sorry!

Who, When & Where

- ❖ St. Nic's is an Anglican church located on Maid Marian Way, Nottingham. We are near the Castle and the Broadmarsh Shopping Centre.
- ❖ Services are held at 9:15am, 11:15am and 6:30 pm each Sunday, with creche and children's groups running during the morning services. Pre-service praise starts about five minutes before each service.
- ❖ The regular pattern of services is as follows, but this may be changed around festivals.

| | 9:15 am | 11:15 am | 6:30 pm |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Week 1 | Holy Communion | Morning Worship | Evening Worship |
| Week 2 | Morning Worship | Family Service | Holy Communion |
| Week 3 | Morning Worship | Holy Communion | Evening Worship |
| Week 4 | Family Service | Morning Worship | Evening Worship |
| Week 5 | Morning Worship | Morning Worship | Holy Communion |

- ❖ There is an additional Holy Communion service at 8:00 am on the 4th Sunday of each month.
- ❖ Our Rector is Rev. David Betts (411383). For general enquiries, the church office's number is 524600.

Copy Date

Items for the next issue of Fellowship can be:

- ❖ left in the pigeon-hole at the back of church,
- ❖ sent to The Editors, Station House, Station Road, Lowdham, Notts. NG14 7DU (664938),
- ❖ or given to Dave or Fay Moore or Tim or Joy Lee at church.

The next issues are planned as follows:

Copy date 24th July for 7th August

Copy date 4th September for 18th September