



Branching Out

www.themustardtree.com/branchingout.html

The Newsletter of the Mustard Tree Community Church, Longwell Green Spring 2009

Compassion at work

“When I turned 8, life got much worse. I was sent to live with relatives in Kampala, Uganda. They beat me and treated me as a slave,” said Sheiba to young people in Longwell Green.

“I knew my parents were trapped. They had to feed my four sisters and brother and could not keep me. But then they heard about the work of Compassion. Compassion arranges for the poorest children to be sponsored. A youth group in America would sponsor me!”

the change begins

“I came back to the village and saw my family again. It was amazing. Then I was given a school uniform, books and pens and started to attend school,” said Sheiba.



As they listened to her story the youth group at the Mustard Tree Community Church were beginning to see the impact their money would have on a boy in India that they now sponsor through Compassion.

Sheiba, now 29, has since graduated from University in Uganda and gained an MA from a London

University. She is currently working for Compassion in the UK before returning to Uganda.

The changes have filtered through to Sheiba's wider family too; her parents were able to move from the tiny hut into a house sufficiently big to accommodate a family with six children.

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You are warmly invited to...

Good Friday Walk

Friday 10th April

Easter Service

Sunday 12th April 10:30am

At Longwell Green Primary School

Further Details: 932 5458 or www.themustardtree.com

When the going gets tough

“When the Credit Crunch hit in October last year I started to feel a bit nervous about the future as my workload dropped off,” said John Doherty, who has worked as a local self-employed electrician for the last five years.

The current recession brought back familiar feelings for John, who was made redundant during the last big recession in the 1980s. He was in his early 20s having just completed a 4 year apprenticeship as an electrician in his home city of Belfast. After 4 months unemployment John left Northern Ireland and travelled around Spain, France, England and Luxembourg doing voluntary electrical work, before going on to Belgium to take a two year Bible college course.



John became self-employed.

“When I was worrying about the effect of the Credit Crunch on us, I remembered how we had needed to trust God for our livelihood in Belgium. My faith in God kicked in and I decided I should trust God for enough business to provide for my family. My workload has picked up a bit since then and, although none of us can be certain about the future, I know I can trust God.”



John travelled to 50 churches in the UK to raise support for working in Belgium. In the 49th church John met his wife Ruth Cains, a Cadbury Heath girl, and together they spent the next 14 years in Belgium, where John worked as a church leader, before returning to Bristol in 2002.

“Despite having been out of the electrical trade for 20 years, I got a job in only six days,” remarked John. After two years experience and further electrical training,

Compassion at work (cont)

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Sheiba recently visited local schools in Longwell Green and Wick, and youth groups at the Mustard Tree Community Church, to share her story, bringing to life what Compassion is all about.

help from Longwell Green

Compassion works in 25 countries including India. In January 2009, John-Mark of Pearsall Rd and Phil of Elderwood Drive visited a work that the Mustard Tree Community Church supports called Partnership India.

While they were there they saw the latest plans for Partnership India to work with Compassion to help the poorest children in Ethamukkala. Partnership India is buying a plot of land next to their Centre and will

build basic resources for Compassion to begin helping the poorest children in the village by providing school uniforms, cooked meals, shoes,



games and help with homework to name some practical examples. It could be that families in Longwell Green can begin to sponsor these very children, giving them the chance to escape the poverty trap and help their families do the same.

Compassion is a child development organisation. It helps children in some of the world's most impoverished communities. Each local church based project aims to lift children and their families out of poverty by giving them access to healthcare, education, social and emotional care and vocational training. As a Christian organisation, it also aims to give children the opportunity to find out more about the life of Jesus and his relevance to their life today. In all, over one million children and their families are currently helped through Compassion in 25 countries.

For more information about sponsoring a child through Compassion or one of many other UK charities visit www.sponsorachild.org.uk

Why pay more?

The chocolate was calling me. But which one to choose? I imagined the taste of some of my favourites. Then my eye fell on the Fairtrade option. I hesitated. Unknown taste, bigger price? But my whim could influence a family's future. I chose it, paid for it and believed I had helped another human being.

The Dutch were the first to begin Fairtrade (importing coffee from Mexico in 1988). Other countries caught on and by 1997 an umbrella organisation (Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International or FLO) was established to unite labelling initiatives and establish worldwide standards.



It guarantees a fair price for producers (e.g. bananas, cocoa, sugar etc) in the developing world. This fair price is agreed on by producers and consumers and covers the cost of sustainable production. Fairtrade encourages farmers to invest in environmentally friendly programs and requires sustainable farming techniques.

a fair experience

“The chocolate orange and coffee varieties of Divine chocolate are my absolute favourite,” says Esther Cole, a supporter of Fairtrade. “One thing I find hard about supporting Fairtrade,” said Esther, “is that often

supermarkets only stock a small range of products. This means it is all too easy to buy an alternative and it can lead people to think there are not many Fairtrade products out there.”



Products may also cost slightly more, but maybe it is that free trade products are generally too cheap to sustain the lives of those who make them.

a fair status

Fairtrade recognised children's capacity to understand and stand for justice so they created a scheme whereby schools can achieve Fairtrade status. One prerequisite to this is the commitment to use Fairtrade products. There are now 2,500 Fairtrade schools in the UK and this year twenty farmers from developing countries will tour some of them.

Universities can also attain Fairtrade status. Esther and others students successfully campaigned at Lancaster University for this. It meant that university clothing now uses Fairtrade cotton and the shops sell Fairtrade products (including rice and pasta). They also challenged students to understand that Fairtrade is only the first step towards making free trade fair.



News in brief

Off the streets

Could you build a 'go anywhere' wheelchair, on a budget? John-Mark Molyneux hopes to go out to Kenya and help with this exciting project this June.



“Seeing disabled people able to go nearly anywhere on these prototypes is exciting. But improvements and developments are needed, and we hope to help by working with them and promoting awareness of the project,” said John-Mark.

A video clip is available at: www.aimint.org/eu/wheelchairs.

Hope on the streets

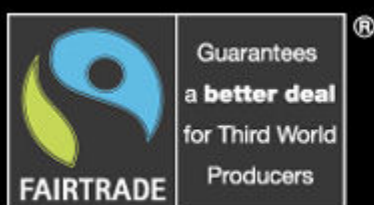
Gardening, litter clearing, plant potting, car-washing, community BBQ and bouncy-castle fun. All on one day - May 16th. The Mustard Tree and Suburbs church will be out on the streets again this year to offer hope in practical ways. If you know somebody who needs help email us: johnmark@themustardtree.com

Sleep on the streets

While most of us were snug in our beds Andy Lampard spent the night of 27 February sleeping rough on the streets of Bristol.



Andy was one of 72 people sleeping out to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people. In the process they collected over £8,000 in sponsorship for homelessness charities in Bristol.



Living bigger

“I put the phone down and tears of relief poured down, I don’t often cry,” said Steph as she recounted the moment they told her she had got an offer from the University of her choice.

“I have always wanted to be a doctor. I see it as a privilege to be able to help people and I am fascinated by the science and workings of it all,” said Steph as she reflected on why she feels so drawn to Medicine.

a bigger picture

But her passion for this was brought into perspective when, in the summer of 2007, she felt God impress on her that she can live for a bigger cause than just her own career and desires. “It was like God helped me step back, realise that He is with me, working all things together for good, but also challenging me that life is not just

about me fulfilling my dreams. Whatever happened, God would be there with me and if I ever did Medicine, I could do it for Him and others, not just for myself.”

Despite believing this, the pressure was nearly overwhelming on the day before the interview. Steph travelled up to Cambridge for the two interviews the next day.

the gift of hope

“The first one went well. It was a fairly relaxed discussion and I was able to follow it completely,” said Steph. “But the second interview was really hard. The interviewer showed no expression at all and happened to choose my worst topic possible. I thought they would reject me.”

Steph waited a month to find out their decision and finally the letter arrived. It was a ‘no’ from that college, but on the same day another college phoned to say that they would like to make her a conditional offer with no request for



a further interview.

“Looking back I can see God’s hand in all this and it helps me to want to trust Him more,” said Steph.

The Last Word

Christianity begins where religion ends... with the resurrection.

Herbert Booth Smith

Coffeetots

Tuesday 9.30-11.30am
under 3s
parent & toddler
group



contact: Anita 932 5458
coffeetots@themustardtree.com

Golden Blend

Thursday 1.30-3pm
coffee, chats and quizzes
contact: Stephanie 932 5876



footprints Pre-school Playgroup

Mon/Wed 9.15-1.10pm
Fri 9.15-11.45am
Fun learning
environment for
3&4 year olds.



contact: 987 3395

The Mustard Tree Community Church

www.themustardtree.com

Sunday 10.30am
Longwell Green Primary School
Join us for lively worship and
relevant Bible teaching for all ages.

We are part of the Christian Church of Longwell Green, the
Evangelical Alliance, and the Bristol Celebration Churches Network.
contact: Anita 932 5458