



CHRIST CHURCH PARBOLD

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026



Our 60th Anniversary 1/6/26

Lin asked for a photo of Anthea and my anniversary card from the King and Queen and then to write an article to go with it. To me, our marriage is summed up by this song from the musical "Me and My Girl".

"Life can be so awful lonesome.

If you're always on your own some - Life's an empty thing.

Life's a diff'rent thing when you've found the one and only,

Then you feel no longer lonely, life's a happy thing.

Me and my girl, meant for each other,

Sent for each other, and liking it so." (Robert Lindsay sang 1986)

Jennifer, Anthea's best friend lived next door her dad was a newsagent and Anthea's a hairdresser. I lived in the same village and went for my haircutting to her dad's shop, but we did not know each other. I went to the church youth club every Sunday which Jennifer also went to. One Sunday when Anthea was at a loose end Jennifer brought Anthea along. Six months later when I was going out with Jennifer, at one of the many parties we used to attend I swapped Jennifer for Anthea – I can't remember why – all I remember is Anthea on my knee for most the night. She had a lovely tight red dress on with a black belt. I had met the best 'jiver' in the club, she had gorgeous legs and span round like a top in her white slim backed winkle-picker shoes. It was 16th December 1961. We danced at the Mecca in Bradford, and the Gaumont in Leeds – they had a real band in those days. We still dance.

We lived in a beautiful village near Ilkley Moor. We loved to walk the moors together, we found places to be alone. We still walk – always in step.

The third mainstay of our marriage is that we talk – I couldn't stand a relationship where I would be put in Coventry. So where does God come into it? Well, I think it is a miracle how we met and shared the same loves though Anthea can be very serious and thinks I have never grown up.

We married on a Wednesday, beautiful sunshine, everyone thought we were mad – I was training to be a Chartered Accountant paid £6.3shillings and 4 pence a week – it paid the rent of our flat in Bradford, about two fellers Roger and Phil who were ok. We lived off Anthea's wage as PA to a top Bradford solicitor who was a director for Bradford and Bingley BS. Somehow Anthea managed to buy a top-class knife, then a fork and spoon each week and we saved a deposit for a house. It was a lovely time – we walked so much during my studies.

I wanted the glamour, a job with Price Waterhouse in Nottingham. It was our worst decision and a time when we were crushed. Or did God want us to be there. In December 1974 thanks to my private health care package, we discovered that Anthea had an acoustic neuroma – in simple terms a golf ball in her head. Derby Royal Infirmary had one of two top neurosurgeons in the country. 15th January 1975 changed our lives. I was warned privately that Anthea had a 50:50 chance and if she survived, she would likely be paralysed on the opposite side of her body to the tumour. She was in Derby Royal for 3 months and we had 2 children 18 months and 3 years old. She became the star patient able to walk in a straight line. I remember when Anthea came home, and I helped to bath her the first time – no hair and 5 stone in weight and in the evening the pain was unbearable for her. You get through, I cooked for the children, good meals, no ready stuff and worked. Our daughter when her mum came shopping for the first time said, "Oh Mum can I have some crisps!"

Our first holiday was to rented a house in Lytham St Annes. I remember saying, "Do I have white wine, or red with baked beans on toast." I had not drunk in ages.

Little did I know that I would lose my job and end up working in Liverpool.

Another Jennifer, Anthea's sister, guided us in the choice of a place to live. "Why don't you try Parbold. And here we still are after 34 years. I call this "RESTORATION".



Did God mean us to be here because the unthinkable happened in 1992 the tumour returned in the shape of a golf ball with a sister on either side. We needed the expertise of a surgeon at Hope hospital. How times had changed- scans were available and sonic sound destroyed the thing instead of a knife and she was home in 2 weeks. Later a lovely consultant / surgeon at Aintree finally took the pain away in her dry eye. Why should Anthea have had 18 operations and me virtually nothing – I can't answer such a complex question?

Joanna said last week at the end of the service that God comforts us, so that we might be a comfort to others. God brings comfort through other people, particularly church people. From 1975 we had not been able to dance but in 1992 ish we were invited to the Adelphi in Liverpool to the 30th birthday of Helen Gedge – the church was a really active social place then and many went including Mike who led the music in church and also a band called Midlife Crisis. He played that night – one song was Eddie Cochran's Come On Everybody – for some reason Anthea looked at me and I her and we got up and danced. I'm sure Lin remembers we cleared the floor – our dancing was restored. Then the Lord brought a lovely couple across our path who led us to many ballrooms and sequence dances. We have even danced solo at Blackpool Tower Ballroom as people watched eating afternoon tea. God is good.

My wife is very understanding she never expected to marry a vicar – she appreciated that I wanted to train and become a Reader but you should have seen her face 20 years ago when, after retirement, I said, "I have been looking at two collared doves in the garden and the Lord said, 'I want you to wear a collar for me John.'" So here I am a minister or in training for 35 years.

The Lord caused us to meet a couple on the escalator in M&S Wigan some years ago. The husband had just been given the news that he had terminal cancer. We became very close we offered comfort and now the wife as she lives alone has become a big part of our Wednesday Communion – it would not be the same without her.

We have just had our most perfect holiday on the Iona, my first cruise. It would not have happened if God had not brought a certain person, a dear friend of Anthea's across our path. She had tried the ship a year ago.



When our time is up we have asked our children to spread our ashes on our very special spot on Ilkley moor. Sadly, we can't manage to walk the moors any more – but we can still walk for miles, praise the Lord. But until then we will keep going to our other favourite spot:

Some little church with a big steeple (Parbold Christ Church),

Just a few people that both of us know

And we'll have love, laughter,

Be happy ever after,

Me and my girl.

(Sorry for the length of this article but 65 years is a long time!)

LATEST NEWS FROM BRAZIL

Hi Lin,

Thanks for your email, sorry for the delayed response. I was in Malaysia, we had a missions school there where we had many students from around Asia to train them and prepare them for the mission field. There was also a good number from the Chinese underground church which was encouraging to see and they were also a real inspiration to us as we heard about their faith being lived out in very sacrificial circumstances.

Back here in Fortaleza things are going well. We are reforming the 1st floor of our church building which is in the slum on a corner where lots of the drugs are sold. It will be used to be able to have rooms for our children's work at the weekend and during the week. We will also be building a kitchen space so we can make food on the premises for the children. I enclose some photos.

Thank you very much for your support and prayers

Blessings from Brazil

Andrew

GREETINGS FROM CULCHETH

Brian and Frances McGucken are still Keeping in touch and praying for everyone at church. Recently Brian sent this latest photo of Frances who I think you'll agree is a very happy one. They are both keeping well and Brian thanks you for all your recent prayers.



A REFLECTION OF WELL

Significance of a Well (Be'er)

In the Hebrew biblical language, *be'er* means "well," a place where water is drawn from underground. Many of the wells mentioned in Scripture highlight moments of revelation from God. They are also places where people of God meet and where we see God's provision, often in wilderness environments. We can read about these wilderness journeys particularly in the lives of the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. From their experiences, we can see that wells are indeed very significant. They become a symbol of hope rising up from parched ground.

Many of Israel's most important biblical accounts take place around wells:

- Hagar encounters God beside a well (**Gen. 16:14**).
- Abraham's servant finds Rebekah near a well (**Gen. 24:11–27**).
- Jacob meets Rachel at a well, beginning the story of Jacob's, or Israel's, future twelve tribes (**Gen. 29:1–12**).

In each of these divine encounters at wells, God turns what might appear to be ordinary experiences into moments of encounter, revelation and destiny.

***If you are not familiar with these three accounts, read the Bible references above.**

Another significant "well" moment appears in John's Gospel, when Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. What began as a place of daily labour becomes a moment of revelation (John 4:5–15). There, Jesus speaks of "living water," or in Hebrew, *mayim chayim*, offering the Samaritan people a spiritual renewal far deeper than the well beneath their feet. At this well, Jesus, the Messiah, reveals that true worship and life which flows from the Spirit of God.



In the ancient world, a well was essential for survival: water, community, livestock and crops all depended on it. A well was at the very centre of daily life. Spiritually, wells taught people that God alone was the provider—not by changing their wilderness environment, but by ensuring that there were springs of water available from which to draw this life giving resource.

When we read about wells in Scripture, we should be reminded and encouraged that the well is indeed very significant. Remember what Jesus said: by the Spirit of God, we have become like living wells in a thirsty world, from which people can draw wisdom, knowledge and the revelation of God.

Rev 22:17 *"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life."*

John 4:14

"whoever drinks of the water that I will give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become in them a spring of living water welling up to eternal life."

Final thought: where in scripture does it mention God providing water from a rock? What teaching can you identify from that event?

Hope you are now feeling refreshed, cheers!

Phil

THANKS

Thanks to all who have contributed this time. Future editions will explain more about the charities we support and will be an Autumn edition. If you wish to contribute anything to that please contact Lin Milne on stemilne@aol.com



EducAid
Learning for life in Sierra Leone



Greetings to everyone at Christ Church, Parbold from us all here at EducAid in Sierra Leone.

Greetings to everyone at Christ Church, Parbold from all the EducAidians !

Well, we have weather here in Sunny Parbold, and now, 25th June, that is akin to that in Sierra Leone, so it may be appropriate to use this Newsletter to describe a little of the history and work of EducAid, Sierra Leone.

About EducAid

I have been fortunate enough to visit EducAid in Sierra Leone on a few occasions and thoroughly enjoyed each visit, but I don't pretend to know everything about the history and work of EducAid but I'll do my best to summarise. By the way, Val has banned me from going back to Sierra Leone, and anyway, I think that I do not have much to offer given my advanced level of maturity ! But I would love to go back !

Educaid has its origins in two students, James Boardman and Swithun Mason, visiting Sierra Leone in 1993 as part of a University College, London, trip. One of the students was the brother of Miriam Mason, as she was at the time. The two university students, seeing the needs of the children, organised friends and family to help them fund a sponsorship programme to support students in Sierra Leone.

The educational provision in Sierra Leone at that time was not in a position to use the money to benefit the children as the students intended.



Miriam visited Sierra Leone and became involved. In 2000 she started teaching children, as a volunteer, on the veranda of a rented house. This was the origin of Lumley School, and from that humble beginning, EducAid was born and thrived. The organisation was only able to thrive due to voluntary contributions by donations such as those made by Christ Church in Parbold.

Lumley School
now
EducAid now

provides education for about 700 pupils and full time care for a considerable percentage of that number. The education and care is free, the fees being expected from each pupil/student being - Excellent Attendance, Excellent Effort, Excellent Behaviour. It is noteworthy that many of the teachers working in the EducAid schools and supporting teachers in state schools are former EducAid students; EducAidians through and through. Many of EducAid students go on to higher and further education leading to degree level studies and beyond; as an example, one EducAidian recently qualified as a medical Doctor.



Educaid, ever evolving, then started to work with other schools in Sierra Leone to assist in developing strategies to improve learning and teaching. As the quality of teaching in the state schools improved, guided and supported by Educaid staff and visits by state school teachers to the EducAid Schools, so the learning of the pupils improved.

In 2022 Miriam Mason-Sesay, by now known as the Country Director, was awarded a Doctorate by Durham University, after studying part time and basing much of her work on EducAid. She became Dr. Miriam Mason-Sesay - or Doctor Miriam. Impressive as this was, and is, it was only a means to an end for Miriam as she works to benefit and extend the work of EducAid in improving the quality of education for pupils in state schools in Sierra Leone.

Having the hard won status of a Doctorate opened new possibilities for Miriam, and the EducAid staff, to work with officials and elected representatives of the Sierra Leonean Government and being able to work on an even wider scale.

There is much more to write but I will conclude with the thanks of Dr. Miriam and all the staff, pupils and students of EducAid for your on-going and generous support. Nothing could be achieved without the goodwill, support and practical help of volunteers.



Dr. Miriam Mason-Sesay,
Country Director, EducAid Sierra Leone
Pronouns: she/her

m: +4477 6635 3908 / +232 3079 1875
a: Charity Number: 1163161
w: www.educaid.org.uk
e: miriam@educaid.org.uk



MERCY RESCUE TRUST

This year is the 20th Anniversary of the foundation of Mercy Rescue, by a young lady named Naiomi. Following a trip to Trukana in the North of Kenya with her church. Her church was on a relief mission to take food there, during years of harsh famine. When trying to leave the villages families were pushing babies into their arms, with the words save our children. They were named Mercy and Bill, both doing well in college.

They were followed quite quickly by Hope, Dorcas, Bill and Moses. In the first instance a place for them was found in Kitale owned by Hope for the Nations. They stayed there for about six months when a larger property came available to rent and they moved.

These six are still with Mercy Rescue and now in university except for Dorcas who has just qualified as a beautician and is now working. Mercy Rescue have set her up with everything she needs to become independent. Mercy Rescue are committed to care for all children who are not fostered or adopted, to support them until they have finished college, university or found a job to support themselves.

Mercy Rescue continue to support children who are now with their biological families in providing basic food and hygiene parcel each term, as most children are now in high school. Over the past 20 years 459 babies or toddlers have been rescued., so far this YEAR 15 babes have been rescued, and 8 babies placed with adoptive or forever families.

I'm not one for asking for donations but if you can spare anything at all or would like to sponsor one of the children please speak to me and I will give you the details.
Thank you for all your support and prayers.

God Bless

Barbara

