



St. Andrew's Psalter Lane Church
An Anglican Methodist Partnership

NEXUS

Christ in Nether Edge & Us



A focus on West Africa

June-July 2018

www.standrewspsalterlane.org.uk

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(A District Group which meets at Ringinglow)			

Welcome & Cover Illustration

Welcome to all readers of NEXUS. This issue focuses on our various links with West Africa, stretching back more than 70 years. It is a region of change as well as challenge, and the horrors of the Ebola outbreaks in the region are still fresh in our minds. In particular we focus on Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Senegal. It is good to include articles that signal real hope as well as signposting issues that need our prayers and concern. There are links to further information contained within the text and readers may find it easier to access those links by accessing Nexus on our web page <http://www.standrewspalterlane.org.uk/>

The picture is a fabric collage made by a mother and child project in Saint Louis, Senegal. Nexus is curated by Anne Hollows 07723407054, anne.hollows@gmail.com Contributions for the next edition of Nexus are most

welcome and will be needed by Tuesday 17th July

Letter from Gareth

Dear friends,

With this edition of Nexus focusing on West Africa, I thought I would reflect on a book I read recently entitled “Christian Hermit in an Islamic World”, by a Muslim writer called Ali Merad. The Christian hermit in question was Charles de Foucauld, a French priest and monk who lived from 1858 to 1916. From 1901, Charles de Foucauld lived in Algeria, first in a hermitage that he built near the Moroccan border, and then in Tamanrasset, a village in the Sahara (not quite in, but just to the north of, the region this edition is covering). Here he lived among the Tuareg nomads, sharing their lives and learning their language. On December 1st 1916, sadly, the inhabitants of Tamanrasset were attacked by an armed band, and de Foucauld was shot by mistake and killed.

Charles de Foucauld was inspired by the thought of Jesus’ hidden years in Nazareth before the start of his public ministry. He felt drawn to imitate that life, and to set up a small religious community based upon it. “What I am dreaming of,” he wrote, “is something very simple and small in numbers, something to resemble those simple communities of the Church’s early days. To lead the life of Nazareth, working humbly and contemplating Jesus, a little family, a little monastic household.” He did indeed help to organise a group of women and men who were to become, after his death, the Little Brothers and the Little Sisters of Jesus.

But Charles de Foucauld is remembered also for the way in which he lived among the Tuareg as a brother, sharing fully in their hardships and gaining their trust and affection. In some respects, he was a person of his time: a patriotic Frenchman living in a time of colonial expansion. However, he argued for justice and fairness and urged strongly that the Algerian people should be neither humiliated nor exploited by the French colonial authorities. Many of the Tuareg were Muslims, and de Foucauld was also to some degree a person of his time in his often condescending attitude to Islam. His desire was that the people among whom he lived might be drawn to Christian faith. However, he believed that people should be attracted to Christianity through kindness and

love rather than by means of aggressive conversion. Indeed, his own faith as a young man had been inspired and deepened through his encounter with Islam, as he saw the profound faith and devotion of his Muslim neighbours.

Ali Merad writes about Charles de Foucauld from a Muslim point of view and with great warmth and generosity. Merad acknowledges the influence on de Foucauld of colonialist ideas of Western and Christian superiority. However, he sees him as someone who, at a deeply personal level, was able to transcend these attitudes, especially in his countless “little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.” Merad sees in de Foucauld’s humble giving of himself and constant availability to his neighbours a genuine imitation of Jesus. He was, writes Merad, a person “consumed by an inner fire that was, for him, the love of Jesus.” More than that, he also sees in Charles de Foucauld an example of Muslim ideals. “Would it be too much,” he asks, “to think that, although he may belong to Christianity spiritually, the great hermit of the Sahara belongs in some way to Islam?”

Both Charles de Foucauld and Ali Merad’s response to him give us much to reflect on in the sphere of dialogue and friendship between faiths and cultures.

Love and peace,
Gareth



CONTEMPLATION GOD'S PEACE

From Nigeria - originally written as a hymn in the Igbo language

There is nothing that man desires so much
as God's peace.

This world's wealth does not bring such
happiness
as the peace of God.

*True peace,
that's the secret of happiness.
The turmoil of the world, the shocks of the world,
are calmed in the abiding presence
of that peace of God.*

The wisdom of the world
cannot compare with God's peace.
The honours of the world
can never be like God's peace.

Power and victory will not lead you
to God's peace.
Tricks and treachery will never procure you
God's peace.

I long with all my heart to have around me
God's peace.
What must I do to receive in my heart this gift
of God's peace?

Prayer alone will help you to partake
of God's peace.
For it is Jesus, and Jesus alone, who will
bring you God's peace.

Ikoli Harcourt Whyte 1988

Talking Point : Thinking about West Africa

With no apologies, I include this outline map of West Africa at least in part to indicate the number of countries but also to identify the very different terrain of the area. My own education was dominated by the experiences of two remarkable women: Evelyn Green, who had taught as a Methodist Missionary in the Gambia for many years, and Irene Aldridge who taught at the Methodist Girls' High School in Accra, returning home reluctantly only because of the care needs of her parents. Irene frequently bemoaned the absence of enthusiasm for education in the Methodist boarding school which I attended, in comparison with her Ghanaian students. And she changed our history syllabus to "the British Empire and Commonwealth, 1700-1939. That knowledge proved a useful foundation for various travels, particularly in West, East and Southern Africa. In Talking Point I hope to flag up some of the complexities and challenges facing this part of the world and I apologise sincerely for my lack of detailed expertise in the area.



Those with a knowledge of African history will recognise that the various countries have histories bound to different colonial powers: France, Portugal, Spain and of course Britain. Several countries enjoyed more than one regime. Gradually all of these countries achieved independence, but the official languages of most of the countries draw on the colonial powers, mainly France and Britain. Even in Guinea Bissau

with Portuguese as the official language, French is taught in schools as they are surrounded by French speaking countries. And many of the countries use the West African CFA franc. Some of these countries have made headlines in the last 30 years because of conflict, humanitarian emergencies – civil war, Ebola and floods come to mind, particularly through our knowledge of Sierra Leone. But these countries are also rich in resources, are increasing as holiday destinations (the Cape Verde islands, the Gambia and Senegal for example) and centres of historical and contemporary culture. The music of West Africa – particularly Senegal and Mali – is deservedly world famous as anyone who attended the recent magnificent concert by the kora player Seckou Keita with the Welsh harpist Catrin Finch will agree. Art thrives in the region, witnessed by the recent Dakar Biennale, frequented by art critics from around the world, and writers from the region are justly world famous – see the review of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s work in this edition of Nexus.

This edition of Nexus provides a glimpse of just some of the features of West Africa, past and present. Driving along breezy coastlines with glorious white beaches as I was lucky enough to do in Senegal recently, one can be forgiven for the illusion that the coastal regions at least are well developed with beautiful hotels, fashionable shops and restaurants. And indeed much of the recent development has a strong ecological theme. I stayed in one hotel where electricity (and therefore internet) was only available between 6pm and 10pm which made quite a refreshing change! Indeed, solar panels have made an almost indescribable difference to the lives of all in the region, but particularly those in rural communities. Water wells have been provided close to all homes in many of the countries and water harvesting means that the anxieties about late rains recalled later in this edition by Mary Boshier in her Nigeria days are largely forgotten.

At the same time, life remains very hard for a host of reasons. The threat from Boko haram, mentioned in the inter-faith article, is ever present, particularly in northern Nigeria. There are worries throughout the region about the potential of extreme forms of Islam. Disease is a constant fear, although progress has been made. In a rural clinic I visited the nurse was proud to report she had treated not a single case of

malaria this year and pointed proudly to the supply of mosquito nets awaiting distribution for regular replacement of those already issued. In another clinic, the nurse said she had worked hard with both women and men to reduce the number of pregnancies from an average of 12 per woman to 3 or 4. When I asked how the priest felt about this (it was a Catholic village) she said that the priest in the village understood life a great deal more than the priest in the Vatican. The impact in terms of healthier babies as well as mothers had been impressive. Child marriage is another area of concern and efforts are being made throughout the region to increase the age of marriage to 18 years.

Agriculture is developing from subsistence to the level of export in some places. I recently bought radishes from Senegal in Sainsbury's, though I never saw any in Senegal itself! But communications and infrastructure are limited in the inland areas of many of the countries in the region and some say that improvements in these areas can be a mixed blessing.

Of most concern, perhaps, are the issues faced by young people and these arrive, all too often, on Europe's doorstep. Frustration and dissatisfaction with the limitations of impoverished rural life, coupled with tales of rags to riches for those who manage to get to Europe, lead young men – and some young women – to follow suit. There is a belief that if they can just get to Libya, they will be within reach of their dream. But getting to Libya across the Sahara is only the first massive hazard. Life within Libya we now know to be fraught with appalling dangers, to say nothing of the Mediterranean crossing. The Senegalese government has sent planes to 'rescue' its youth from captive slavery in Libya and this may well be true of other countries.

What we have to address, here in the global north, is that inequality of resources and opportunities has to be tackled if young people are to aspire to lead successful lives in their region and contribute to development goals. That demands a range of changes in the ways in which we view aid and development. The people traffickers who traverse the Sahara, the Libyan coast and the Mediterranean, will always be willing to make fortunes from the misery and despair of young people. Simply turning people back from the sea just leaves them in the hands of the traffickers. There are no easy answers, but we need to

be aware of the depth of the problems that lead to the terrible images of bodies washed ashore in the Mediterranean.

West Africa is not, however just a tale of social and economic challenge. The following article will hopefully inform and redress the balance.

Tostan: a story of change and hope in West Africa

Recent years have seen increasing concerns about the problem of Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting as it is called in West Africa. It came to my attention through my professional research and consultancy work in the field of child protection: a number of areas in the UK had become aware of the risks to girls of cutting, either taking place on holidays in their countries of origin, or by 'professional cutters' being brought to the UK to undertake the acts. It is a quite awful process, compounded by lack of hygiene and often with long term physical and emotional consequences for women's health. Details are readily available on the internet.

Through my work I became aware more than 6 years ago of an organisation called Tostan (www.tostan.org), operating in Senegal, which claimed to have reduced the incidence of cutting from 80% to 15%.. Through a partner organisation in the UK, The Orchid Project (<https://orchidproject.org/> - well worth a view if you are interested) I learned more about Tostan's remarkable work. The Methodist District's Methodist Women in Britain group decided to spend a year learning about FGC and fund raising for it and I was able to speak and provide information to them and eventually to forward over £2000 to Tostan, through Orchid. Once I was planning a visit to Senegal I thought that I would try to make contact with Tostan and find out more about its work across the West African region.

There is always a certain anxiety when one has championed an organisation from afar and is then finally able to encounter the real thing. Would I be disappointed? Would it live up to its reputation – at least in my eyes? I need have had no fears – on the contrary what I found was more impressive and exciting than I could have imagined.

Tostan was founded by a young American woman, Molly Melching, who went to Senegal in 1974 to study African literature written in French, but ended up working with children. She learned to speak Wolof when running a children's centre in Dakar and, working with Senegalese specialists began to develop a new type of development programme grounded in community empowerment. The fundamental principle is of respectful engagement with communities to allow them to fulfil their own potential. The model of community led change now operates across 6 West African countries: Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauretania, Mali and The Gambia, as well as in Senegal.

The programme is developed at the request of villages/communities. When Tostan is invited into a village, two classes are set up: one for adults and the other for adolescents. Community members select 25 to 30 participants for each class. Implementing the program for both adults and adolescents in the same community improves inter-generational dialogue and ensures that youth have the skills needed to participate in and sustain community development. Each participant commits to sharing their learning with at least one other person in the village. The classes typically meet three times a week for two to three hours each time. Classes are taught by a Tostan facilitator, who lives with the community, and is often from a nearby village. Facilitators are the backbone of the program. Over 80 per cent are women, and many are themselves graduates of the program. The facilitator remains in the village for three years. Each participating village provides housing, food, and basic support for the facilitator, whose long-term presence means she becomes part of the fabric of daily life. There are two phases to the community classes. The Kobi ("to prepare the field for planting") focuses on social empowerment. The Aawde phase ("to plant the seed") is concerned with literacy and economic empowerment.

Tostan trains local Community Management Committees (CMCs) to apply the knowledge and skills from community class sessions and to build capacity for community-led development. Some of their activities include encouraging residents to register to vote, organizing village clean-ups, and working with local health officials on vaccination campaigns. Tostan also helps to procure funding or technical support for community projects. CMCs that are successful in planning, implementing, and evaluating community projects are equipped with

small community development grants to support micro-enterprises and community-managed social enterprises such as mills and communal gardens, or fund community projects, such as constructing schools or latrines. CMCs continue to operate after the CEP ends and are essential for sustaining program outcomes.

The model also incorporates 'Organized Diffusion' to accelerate social transformation and foster the spread of knowledge and information beyond the classroom and accelerate large-scale positive social change. This strategy encourages participants to use their existing social networks as organic channels to spread and reinforce learning and social transformation within and between communities.

In relation to FGC, this approach has enabled groups of villages to agree to abandon cutting together. The main reason for maintaining the cutting tradition was the fear that girls would be unmarriageable within nearby communities if they had not been cut. By ensuring the groups of villages share the process, fears that girls would not marry become unfounded. On the second Sunday in May this year, 50 villages came together to celebrate abandonment of FGC. This whole approach is designed to change and develop social norms across a wide range of fields of health, education and development, including child marriage and child development and protection. There are spin off projects relating to solar power and environmental protection.

The on-going evaluation of Tostan's work, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is sophisticated and drives future developments (An interesting aside is that the Foundation offered Tostan money - over \$1 million -to develop a Gates led project. It was declined on the basis that only the communities decided what would happen. The Foundation was so impressed that they became partners rather than directors).

The vast majority of the Project staff are local people, and one of the most energetic advocates for the programme is a Mullah who spends time not only in the headquarters but out and about in the villages. I hope this may have captured the infectious enthusiasm of the staff in terms of their principles and ideas. For me, it is one of the most sensitive and respectful approaches to development that I have ever come across, with many ideas that would be worthy of implementation in UK community development. I would be very happy to share

more of the work of Tostan with people in an informal setting or house group. Or look at the web site and even read the book about the project, *However Long the Night* by Aimee Molloy.

Anne Hollows

Global Church

Sierra Leone had problems from its inception in the late 18th century. Founded on philanthropic, but ill-researched ideals, it became a refuge (some would say a 'dumping ground') for liberated slaves- though a number of indigenous ethnic groups were already struggling to share a difficult terrain and even more difficult climate. Freetown could manage its precipitous terrain while its population remained small, and its mountains tree-clad; but over time, it has grown uncontrollably, like most cities, drawing in thousands of "economic migrants" from the deprived countryside, and waves of refugees from the wars of the nineties. The trees have long gone, and after every rainstorm the sea runs red with lost top-soil. Though Sierra Leonians are possibly the least wasteful people on the planet, giving every discarded item a second and third use, still the drains and ditches become clogged with detritus, and flooding becomes worse, culminating in the terrible mudslides of 2017 in which hundreds died and thousands lost such "homes" as they had ever possessed.

Nevertheless, this problem-beset country has inspired deep affection - even passionate devotion in those who have spent time there. - the late Mary Jefferson, for example, who after a routine visit to the SL Methodist Conference, took it upon herself to raise tens of thousands of pounds for the training of women left destitute by the war, or the group from North Lancs who regularly visit to help repair schools, clinics and community buildings, taking with them supplies for the same.

On their website WWW.friendsofnixon.org.uk, you can discover how this long-standing, but still quite small group has re-equipped the small hospital in Segbwema, not once but several times over, most recently supplying (with community involvement) no fewer than 100 double latrines for surrounding villages, as well as extending classrooms for the nursing-school. SAPL church has contributed to work in this

area by raising funds for the support of people affected by the recent Ebola scourge.

Although in the current Methodist Prayer Handbook, the prayer for SL refers to " a land where many strive merely to survive.....in the morass of poverty and despair" , yet hope is present, and places of progress to be found. Self-help groups and community co-operatives are growing with the encouragement of Feed the minds and others . Book-Aid is supplying tools for literacy training . Water Aid is pressing on with the provision of pumps in the most remote areas - but perhaps the most ground- breaking of all, and the most encouraging for future development is the new Fair Trade cocoa farming co-operative, eventually to have its own logo and identity!

The future of Sierra Leone's agriculture is looking brighter, though the intransigent problems of urban areas remain. - sanitation, housing, and jobs among many others .

Please keep on praying for these hard-working, good-humoured, generous people, and that the churches, whatever their origin, may be agents of empowerment, and hubs of loving support for their hard-pressed communities.

Janet Clarke

Update on Sierra Leone

In 2006 I was privileged to go to Sierra Leone with the Lancashire District of the Methodist Church to help build a skills training centre in Kailahun in the far eastern part of the country. Kailahun is near the borders of Liberia and Guinea and had been in the midst of the civil war so education had been lacking for many years. During our time there many children were seen not going to school, when asked why we were told that they were orphans and could not afford the school uniforms or fees. This pulled on the heart strings of some of the members of the team, one man bought some school uniforms and KIK (Kids in Kailahun) was born. From our church we started sponsoring children and in 2009 I returned to Kailahun with a team to the KIK project.

I was due to go back to Sierra Leone at the end of last year to distribute shoe boxes that we had collected at Fairhaven Methodist Church. I then heard that Lorraine (who heads up KIK) was going out just prior to my expected visit so I phoned her to see if there was anything

useful that I could do. I was delighted to hear that she wanted to teach the children and young people how to grow their own vegetables. As I have my own allotment and run my own gardening business I jumped at the opportunity to return to Kailahun,

KIK has now built a school and has a group of small houses (pods) with four girls in each. The boys live in a house in the town.

Education has been very hard in Sierra Leone, first the civil war then Ebola all interrupting it. The KIK motto is 'Learn to serve'.

The idea of the gardening project is to grow food so that the children and young people have a better diet and can maybe sell some of the harvest. Some of the young people from the project and some classes from the school prepared the ground and planted seeds such as pumpkin, tomato, courgette, beans, peppers and potato roots. They were then left the task of taking care of them and watering them.

Other things that they grow are rice (I had no experience in rice growing before I went but I do now!) and cassava. They also have goats and hens. I believe that this is a great project and I hope that I can go again to see how things have moved on and give them some encouragement to do more. To find out more about KIK go to:

www.kidsinkailahun.org

Clare Harris is a lay worker at Fairhaven Methodist Church.

Shirley House Interfaith Centre

Interfaith News - Interfaith in West Africa

We are sadly aware of growing tensions between Christians, Muslims and traditional African religions in West Africa. In recent years there have been incidents of girls kidnapped from schools by Boko Haram, in the mistaken belief that educating girls is un-Islamic. Mainstream Christian and Muslim traditions in the area tend to be anti-LGBT, resulting in one area where there is interfaith action, from LGTB activists in both faiths coming together to fight this prejudice.

However, in parts of Ghana children are being raised in a 'dialogue of life' that makes religious differences a source of friendship, not conflict. For example, in child-naming, funerals and weddings, religious people of various faiths attend one another's ceremonies to share in the joys or pains of life. 'Dialogue of life' simply means coexisting

patiently and peacefully with “the other” in spite of religious differences. It is not explaining the intricacies of religious beliefs, but “sharing with openness” what God is doing in the lives of his people. See:

<http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org>

Forthcoming Events

Tuesday 22nd May 7.30 pm 'A Faith Wedding I attended' (show and share): your own, one you have enjoyed, or maybe one that surprised you in some way?

Sunday July 1st Interfaith Barbecue Lunch, 12.00 noon

Monday 17th September – Nether Edge Festival Event (Sounds of the Spirit 3?)

All our events include refreshments and new people of any, all or no faith are welcome. See the weekly pew sheet, the Shirley House noticeboard and sheffieldinterfaith.org.uk for details.

Caroline Cripps

Memories of Nigeria : Mary Boshier

I arrived at Shagamu Girls' School, a Methodist boarding school, in October 1947. Shagamu is a town in South Western Nigeria, not far from the city of Lagos. The school had classrooms, offices, dormitories and dining room on four sides with the chapel in the centre. I shared a bungalow with two missionary colleagues. There was no running water, no electricity, but there were beautiful grounds with hibiscus bushes, Flame of the Forest trees and oranges, grapefruit and lemons.

The day started early at 6 am: an African colleague and I were in the dispensary dealing with girls who had a touch of fever or other illnesses. The busiest morning was the first day of term. Some girls came from villages where the only source of water was polluted and they had to be treated for worms – left untreated they could kill.

The school water was clean. It came from four big tanks sunk into the ground and filled up during the rainy season. As the dry season began, there were weeks and months without rain. The ground became hard and, as one water tank after another was emptied, we hoped that the rains would not be late. They were late one year. The heat and humidity became worse. Then one afternoon, bathed in sweat, I was taking an English lesson when there was a stir in the palm trees and down it came, a deluge sounding thunderous on the roof of my classroom. All the girls

were outside dancing their delight in the rain. If I had had the energy I would have joined them. As suddenly as it had started, it stopped and there was the glorious smell of wet earth. The next day a miracle: the path to the school was lined with purple and gold crocus. They lasted 36 hours.

South-west Nigeria was no Safari park, although one night, driving home I saw in the headlights two slim legs crowned with feathers. So should I overtake an ostrich, or would it be wiser to stay behind? The problem was solved when we reached a junction: the ostrich went one way and I another. There was the occasional snake, birds and lizards, from tiny geckoes to foot long skinks. Geckoes were known as 'the white man's friend' because they ate insects – and there were lots of those! Some ate clothes, some books and driver ants would demolish chickens, hens, ducklings, leaving behind bones and beaks. Then there were mosquitoes. Their whine was unmistakeable but they were not easy to see until they were bloated with blood – usually your. As Archbishop Tutu said “Anyone who thinks small things don't matter has never been inside a mosquito net with a mosquito’.

Badagry has been an important post at the time of the slave trades. In the centre of the town was the massive tree to which unfortunate slaves had been chained and shackled; leg and neck irons were still on show. The Methodist church was named after the first Methodist missionary to Nigeria – Thomas Birch Freeman, son of an African father and English mother. The strip of land across the lagoon was eerily quiet after the noisy town. There were no signs of life as we walked along an avenue of palm trees. We did not talk as we walked along the 'slave trail'; the last part of the journey at the end of the trail was the ocean and the waiting slave ships.

It was holiday time and the girls had gone home. One of my colleagues had gone up country to visit a friend and the other was in Lagos so I was on my own. A messenger arrived with a letter- I was invited to a meeting in the town. There was no indication of the reason for the meeting but I thought I had better go. The hall looked full and I was shown to a seat between two gentlemen, one of whom was a church member. When I looked around I realised that not only was the

only woman present, I was the only white face. When the meeting began I realised it was a political meeting. And the subject was 'Independence for Nigeria'. "We have come of age, it is time for us to take charge". There was no anger, just quiet applause as each speaker spoke of Nigeria's readiness for independence. When one speaker said "it is time for the British to go" the gentlemen around me assured me that did not mean me; I could stay.

I stayed and saw independence celebrated 11 years later. I often wondered why I was invited to that meeting.

(You can read more about Badagry, a fascinating but terribly sad place at <https://guardian.ng/life/travel-and-places/a-tourist-guide-to-badagry/> ed).

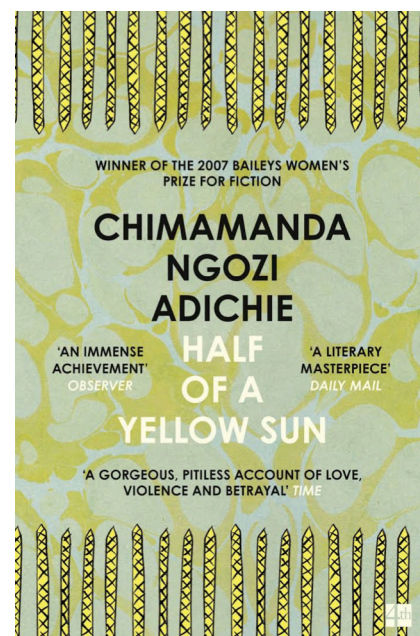
Readers may also be interested to know that Pam Dearden also taught in Nigeria between 1947 and 1949.

By the book: Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

"May we always remember."

The second book by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (after the excellent *Purple Hibiscus*) is set among the very real historical events of the Nigeria-Biafra War of the late 1960s and its bloody aftermath, when Western powers continued to play out their colonial chess games using the people of Africa as pawns.

Adichie tells the story through three main characters – Ugwu, a university lecturer's houseboy and conscript into the Biafran army, Olanna, the lecturer's lover and member of the country's business elite, and Richard, an Englishman who grows to love Biafra more than his birth country. Their stories are entwined with the struggles of the country.



The novel's themes are love, loyalty and betrayal – to family and friends, to cultural identity, and to country.

This is a powerful, evocative book, written with elegance, wisdom, and passion. Adichie was hailed by her countryman Chinua Achebe as “a new writer endowed with the gift of ancient storytellers”. This beautiful and haunting novel, with its assured and eloquent writing, is required reading for anyone interested in the past and present state of Africa, and the possible future. Please read it, and then read everything else by Adichie!

Jean Allen

Food and feasting : Senegalese Yassa

Some people consider this to be Senegal's national dish. It can be made in exactly the same way with chicken or lamb but, having spent two weeks sampling the fabulous fish in Senegal I am passing on this recipe for fish Yassa.

Serves: 4

1 teaspoon coriander seeds

¼ teaspoon black peppercorns

2 small dry red chillies (arbol are nice, but hot!)

2 large yellow onions, sliced into moons

4 tablespoons lemon juice

6 tablespoons cider vinegar

2 tablespoons whole-grain Dijon mustard

1 pound white fish, whole or fillets (I used tilapia)

Salt

2 tablespoons peanut oil

3 cups broth (chicken or vegetable broth works well)

¾ pound yellow potatoes, cut into 1-inch cubes

Crush the coriander, pepper, and chillies with a mortar and pestle.

Toast until fragrant in a large sauce pan, then transfer to a large bowl.

Add onion, lemon juice, vinegar, and mustard, then tuck fish into the mixture until covered completely, and marinate for about 1 hour.

Heat oil in pan over medium-high heat. Remove fish, salt each side, and

cook for a few minutes on each side. Remove to a plate.

Remove the onions from the marinade, and then add to the pan. Cook, stirring occasionally, until browned. Pour remaining marinade into the pan along with the broth. Nestle potatoes into the pan, cover, and simmer over medium-low heat, until potatoes are tender, roughly ten minutes. Add fish back to pan to warm. Serve over rice, quinoa, or another grain.

Gardening Notes: Summertime

June and July are busy times in the garden. I was chatting to my neighbour at the allotments. Margaret comes from Zimbabwe. She tells me that Maize can take 2 months longer to grow here than it did where she was born. It surprised me she could grow it at all! All the crops she grows here are very much the same as in Zimbabwe. But the amount of land per person is about a quarter the area. We do it here as a luxury. For Africans it is for real, don't grow, don't eat. The biggest problem she met here is slugs. "How do you cope with these?" I advised her to water in the morning if possible and to put any she kills into her compost bin.

Other than that and advice about the last frost, she needed no more help from me. Most of the world's farmers are women.

Picking raspberries needs to be done every other day or you will spend too much time taking out the mouldy ones. If you have any currants left you must have got the nets on in time. Check gooseberry bushes regularly. If you see a half eaten leaf you will have gooseberry sawfly. This exquisite little inconvenience will strip the bush of leaves if not removed with ruthlessness and a good eye. The caterpillar will hide below the leaf with just its head visible.

Cover any bare ground you might have with a mulch. This will deter weeds and keep the ground moist until ready for the next crop. Add the grass cut from your lawn to the compost bin in layers. This stops it forming a sludge and enables the pile to heat up and so rot down efficiently. This year my sweet peas are growing on the contents of last year's bin. So far so good. There is still time to catch up with plants that fell victim to the cold or slugs but don't be conned into buying "bargain



items” that have been dried out at the supermarket.

If you must cut the hedge, do it carefully as hedges often contain nests at this time of year.

Remembering that for us gardening is a luxury, why not go and see some of those grown by others. There are open gardens locally as well as the big places like Chatsworth and Hardwick. We went to an RSPB nature reserve in May. The trip centred on a site called Old Moor in the Dearn valley, close by Bolton and Wath-on-Dearn. I had never seen so many different sorts of wild duck. Avocets were nesting. (I was in western France last time I saw them!) And we were charmed by the sight and sound of a cloud of lapwings bubbling and swirling up and down the sky. All this, just this side of Barnsley on the site of old coal workings.

Bill.

Eco Church

Your eco-correspondent had the privilege of being eco-minister at our eco-service on April 29th. We feel it appropriate to have this service annually as our main Act of Worship, and it was a joy to have a good congregation, appreciative of the increasingly necessary call to be good stewards of all that is God’s creation.

Our parish, exceptionally because it is hardly a mile from the centre of one of England’s largest cities, does have a deep environmental awareness. This has increased particularly over the last few years because of the “Great Trees Issue”. This is not however a specific cause for our eco-group, but is one that many of us support perhaps through our membership of NENG or by our readership of EDGE or through our keeping up with this now significantly national issue.

Graeme Benson, a member of our congregation, through his video-journalistic expertise is working hard further to raise widely the whole profile of this issue. SAPLC has no formal relationship with NENG or its magazine EDGE which normally gives considerable space to our trees, but a listing in May’s issue leads me to more of our news and an event which our eco-group is organising and hosting: “Wed 30th May, 4.00 – 6.00p.m. *Carbon Footprint Drop-in. What is a carbon footprint? Can I save money? Drop in to Shirley House (31 Psalter Lane) and have a look at some carbon footprint calculators and find out how you are doing. Everyone*

welcome. Refreshments provided. A Sheffield Environmental Weeks event.”
Do come along if you can.

Finally, it is wonderful to hear that Rodney Godber’s enormous efforts to negotiate “green energy” deals from utility suppliers have born fruit. From now on, our electricity will be taken from non-fossil fuel resources (wind, solar etc.) where possible, and our gas will soon come through an organisation which is able to “offset” the inevitable carbon dioxide emissions. Both of these come with wider Church recommendations, and are important eco-church considerations. A minimal increase in our total utility bill is involved (<0.5%) and this is also good news.

On this note, may you all know a warm summer
Blessings.

Anthony Ashwell

Church and Community

Knit and Knatter

Mondays 10-12 noon Knit and Knatter. In Shirley House. Contact: Alison Gregg, 266 5638.

Parent and Baby Group: New baby in the family? Join our friendly group of parents - Mums and/or Dads with babies up to 12 months. Friday mornings during term time 10.00 – 11.30 at St Andrew's Psalter Lane Church. It's a chance to meet other new parents in friendly relaxed surroundings. Refreshments teas, coffees, other beverages and home made cakes. Cost: £1. 50 per family per week Contact Muriel on 2551473 or Jean 2550198

17th Sheffield Monday Brownies

Mondays at St Andrew's Hall from 5.45pm – 7.15pm. If you are at all interested, please contact Chris Venables. 07950 432487 for further information.

Church Family

We remember with gratitude

Stella Jefferies, a former member of Endcliffe Methodist Church and SAPLC and resident of Southcroft, who died recently. We hold Stella's family in our prayers. (There will be an appreciation of Stella's life in the

next edition of Nexus)

Our thoughts and prayers are with

those recently bereaved:

Jeremy Groves and the family, following the death of Jeremy's father
Kenneth Groves, following the death of his father, Kenneth Groves
Pril Rishbeth, following the death of her sister Sam

those with health concerns:

Chris Lowry

George Glover

Lisa Solk, daughter of Margaret and Trevor Mann

Joanne McManus's mother Margaret Abbey

Congratulations to

Debbie McShane, daughter of Mary and John Kenward, who has been appointed Principal of Park Academy, Sheffield, to take-up the post in September.

Young SAPLC

Sandcastles: Our monthly service for younger children and their parents/carers is on the second Sunday of the month at 9.15. All church members are welcome to attend these services and share in the worship with this part of the church family.

Junior Church: (Pebbles 3-5, Stones 6-10,) is during the main service at 10.30. Children between 2 and 3 can join in the youngest group (Pebbles) with a parent/carer)

About our services

Sunday Services

Normal pattern: 10.30 am Service: 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays Holy Communion service; 2nd and 4th Sunday, Morning Worship

Monthly services: 2nd Sunday – Sandcastles at 9.15 am

4th Sunday – Holy Communion at 9.15 am (using Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer)

2nd Sunday – Holy Communion at Southcroft, 6.30 pm

Please note that the bread used in our communion services is gluten

free. Both fermented and unfermented communion wines are used.

Wednesday Services

At the 10.00 Communion service on Wednesdays, we reflect together on a piece of spiritual writing. This may be from one of the Christian traditions, or sometimes from another tradition of faith. The person leading the service will make copies of the piece of writing to give out to everyone. Come and enjoy an oasis of reflective calm in the middle of a busy week, and join us for coffee or tea afterwards.

Annual Church Meeting

The meeting held on Sunday 15th April dealt with the usual business of reports from the church's committees and organisations, as well as its financial affairs. The reports had been published in abbreviated form and given with an invitation to the Meeting to all attending church, and most full reports had been available for reference for 2 weeks before the Meeting.

Finance: the Treasurer's summary included:

- the surplus included a very generous donation of £10,000 from Horizon Methodist Church, some of which was to be used to install screens in the worship area
- Reserves were up to the required level
- the financial position of the church has been strengthened
- charitable giving has been reviewed and increased

St Andrew's Hall: David Body reported on the negotiations taking place with the Scout Group, which manages the Hall, on the renewal of the lease. He hoped that this would be an opportunity to strengthen links with the organisations using the Hall, and stressed the importance of ensuring that the Hall was retained and used as a community asset.

Minister's report: Gareth Jones focussed on the objectives identified at the Awayday (19th March 2017), which had been narrowed down to three on which we were concentrating:

- Open Church - we had experimented with keeping the church open during the week; very few people visited however, so the decision was taken only to continue with this on specific occasions.
- Food Bank support – this had led us to think about how we use

our church garden.

- Welcome/Openness to all – this links with our continuing reflections on what it means to be a church in which all people can feel welcome and at home, in keeping with our membership of the Inclusive Church network.

We wanted to be outward-looking as a church, and have many links to others - the Deanery and Diocese, Circuit and District, the Nether Edge Quakers and other faiths through the Shirley House Interfaith Centre. And we have seen this year a development of the Anglican Mission Partnership to which we belong. Gareth stressed the importance of our regular Worship, which is at the heart of our activities and community involvement.

Gareth explained how his own responsibilities had changed as they have every year - this year he had taken on pastoral charge of Highfield Trinity Methodist Church on London Road, and had become Co-Chair of the Sheffield Branch of the Council of Christians and Jews.

Elections: Judith Loveman and Anne Hollows were re-elected as Stewards; Muriel Roberts was re-elected as Warden but no nomination for second warden had been received. John Booler later offered to stand as Warden, and was elected at an Extraordinary Church Meeting held before the service on Sunday 29th April – Thank you, John!

Any Other Business: concern was expressed about the lack of young people in church. Imogen Clout, our Children's Minister, said that we now have very few families with children who are part of the church and prepared to come to the 10.30 am service on Sundays, but we have families who come to Sandcastles once a month at 9.15 am. The congregation is always welcome to come to Sandcastles, and perhaps if more people came and were more welcoming to the Sandcastles families they would be more likely to come to our 10.30 am service. It was suggested that a compromise on time, for example 9.45 am, might be a way of getting everyone at the same service. Another speaker suggested holding services or events that would fit in with the lifestyles of families with children, for example on Sunday afternoons or Messy Church.

Membership of the ECC for 2018-2019 is: Revd Gareth Jones, David Body (ECC Chair), Bill Atherton, John Booler (Churchwarden, Circuit

rep), Imogen Clout (Reader, Deanery Synod), Caroline Cripps, John Cripps (Property Steward), Joseph Dey (Treasurer), Rodney Godber, Alison Gregg, John Harding (Local Preacher), Anne Hollows (Steward, Circuit rep), Mary Kenward (Local Preacher), Clare Loughridge, Janet Loughridge (Secretary), Judith Loveman (Steward), Chris Lowry (Deanery Synod), Rachel Morris, Judith Roberts (Reader, Pastoral Secretary), Muriel Roberts (Warden), Circuit representative (Katrin Hackett), Circuit Superintendent (Rev Phil Borkett), Minutes Secretary (Anna Harvey), Society of Friends representative (Robert Spooner)

The Tuesday Café

The Tuesday Café, our café for people living with memory loss or dementia and their carers opened in the middle of March. The café takes place in the narthex in church on Tuesday mornings between 10.00 a.m. - 12 noon . We intend that it will be open every Tuesday of the year (except Christmas Day!) The café offers hot drinks, biscuits and homemade cakes, music, memory activities, and the opportunity for a chat. The café already has a good group of volunteers from the congregation and we are also grateful to those who have offered to bake for us. If you know anyone who might be interested in coming to the café, do please take flyer with all the information. If you are interested in helping, please speak to Judith Roberts.



Summer Fair, Saturday 23rd June, 11 am – 2 pm

This is held jointly with Clifford School, and this year will be held at the School. There will be activities, refreshments, a raffle and lots of stalls, etc.

Please come along to support the fair on the day

CHURCH DIARY

JUNE

Saturday 2 nd	9.30 am onwards	Working Party	
Thursday 7 th	9.30 am onwards	Working Party	
Monday 11 th	7.30 pm	Property and Finance Meeting	Interfaith Room

Sunday 17 th	12 noon – 4.00 pm	NENG Farmers' Market	
Saturday 23 rd	11.00 am – 2.00 pm	Summer Fayre	Clifford School

JULY

Sunday 1 st	12 noon onwards	Interfaith BBQ	Church garden
Tuesday 3 rd	7.00 pm	Leadership Team Meeting	Narthex
Thursday 5 th	7.30 pm	Eco-group meeting	Narthex
Saturday 7 th	9.30 am onwards	Working Party	
Tuesday 10 th	7.30 pm	Church Links meeting	Narthex
Thursday 12 th	9.30 am onwards	Working Party	
Thursday 12 th	7.30 pm	Property and Finance Meeting	Interfaith Room
Tuesday 17 th	7.30 pm	ECC meeting	Narthex
Saturday 28 th	All day	Sheffield Pride	Endcliffe Park

June 3rd	First after Trinity	
10.30 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Anthony Ashwell</i>
June 10th	Second after Trinity	
9.15 am	Sandcastles	
10.30 am	Morning Worship	<i>Imogen Clout</i>
6.30 pm	Holy Communion at Southcroft	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
June 17th	Third after Trinity	
10.30 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
June 24th	Fourth after Trinity	
9.15 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
10.30 am	Morning Worship	<i>Judith Roberts</i>
July 1st	Fifth after Trinity	
10.30 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
July 8th	Sixth after Trinity	
9.15 am	Sandcastles	
10.30 am	Morning Worship	<i>John Harding</i>
6.30 pm	Holy Communion at Southcroft	<i>Revd Graham Wassell</i>
July 15th	Seventh after Trinity	
10.30 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
July 22nd	Eighth after Trinity	
9.15 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Gareth Jones</i>
10.30 am	Morning Worship	<i>Imogen Clout</i>
July 29th	Ninth after Trinity	
10.30 am	Holy Communion	<i>Revd Anthony Ashwell</i>

Last words: A West African Proverb
Hem your blessings with thankfulness so that
they do not unravel

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