



The Baptist Union
Retreat Group is a
Founder Member of
the
Retreat Association



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www.burg.org.uk

The Journal

The Magazine of the Baptist Union Retreat Group

Summer 2017

Lent Retreat 2017 An Appreciation

*BURG held its Lent retreat this year at
Buckfast Abbey in Devon.
It was led by The Revd Dr Simon Woodman,
Co-Minister of Bloomsbury
Central Baptist Church in London.
Two retreatants express their appreciation
for the weekend*

A visual encounter with
Revelation
At the beautiful Buckfast Abbey.
The evocative sound of
Haydn's music
Adds flavour to our
Lent reflections.

All of us on a journey
On our own spiritual path,
Breathe in the peaceful air,
Feeling God's hands guide us -
To Christ deep within
And the world all around us.

Linda Chatfield



Such an interesting retreat led by Simon Woodman, opening up for us insights into Revelation. I have always found it mysterious and powerful, but not understood it. This few days has really helped to dispel some of the myths and better understand its imagery and story. For me it made the Lordship of Christ and citizenship of the Kingdom become even more central and urgent.

We were introduced to art, music and poetry with Revelation apocalyptic themes. Sutherland's tapestry, the Messiah, and Blake's poetry in the mix. We had a lovely hymn inspired by Revelation text, and shared an Anabaptist communion liturgy in the Methodist chapel.

I had bought with me Tom Wright's *Revelation for Everyone*, and will now want to get Simon's own book: *The Book of Revelation* (London: SCM, 2008).

We enjoyed time for reflection in the beautiful surroundings of Buckfast Abbey, or to make art of our own, and to eat in the refectory. We also took the opportunity to hear the Brent singers and orchestra performing 'The Seven Last words' in the Abbey. Although the music was unfamiliar, I enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on Christ's precious words from the cross.

Thanks to Simon for such challenging and intriguing input.
Heather Andrews

Retreats for Men?

The BURG Committee recently considered the possibility of a Men's Retreat.

Although it was decided not to pursue it further at the moment, we asked Simon Cooper of Refreshment UK, an organization running Retreats for Men, to reflect on the inspiration behind his work.



A few years ago, I was part of a men's group in church who decided to reach out to young men outside of the church. After wrestling with many ideas, we decided that a curry night would be the best event to draw men in.

I invited a few men from my workplace, and one agreed to join us for the curry. As a group, we spent the night chatting about sport and all sorts of things, but my friend seemed a bit subdued. At the end, he asked if we could go to the pub and continue to chat, but with just me alone. As we sat in the corner, he began to ask questions of faith and wanted to hear stories of how Jesus had changed my life. He actively wanted a *kingdom conversation* – about God, Jesus and the meaning of life.

For me, it was a wake-up call, because I had wanted to seem relevant more than considering that this man, behind the bravado he showed, was asking the same questions of faith that I had once asked, and more importantly, was seeking answers which I could offer. There are many men like my friend – and they need people around them who will have these '*kingdom conversations*'.

In Blackpool where we live, we have been working with a group of men who are only too keen to not just hear the gospel message, but to hear testimonies of people who have found their answers in Jesus. Even if at times, they seem to 'play it cool', they actively want to hear about Jesus.

For us, with these young men, we now go looking for kingdom conversations. After all, there are always opportunities to give an account for the hope we have.
Simon Cooper (Refreshment UK)

BURG Bursary Fund

Just a reminder that bursaries are available! So please don't hesitate to contact Gill Roberts either for yourself or someone you know who would benefit from help to go on retreat.



One suggestion is that you might encourage a young person to go on a retreat and apply for a bursary but there are endless options!

**BURG AGM
@ Amersham Free
Church**

Saturday 24th June 2017

Arrival and Coffee 10.30am

AGM 11am

**Followed by Presentation on
'Spiritual Direction' by
incoming BURG Chair:
The Revd Dr Tim Mountain**

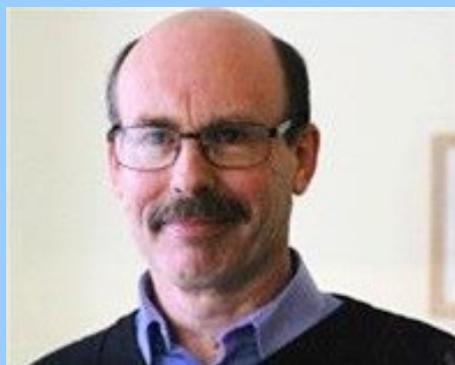
Lunch Provided

Follow-up with Tim including a Poetry Focus

Communion - We end the day around the Lord's Table 3-3.30pm

There will be a cost of £10 towards provision of refreshments & lunch.

**Amersham
Free Church**



**Autumn Retreat 2017
at St Cuthman's, West Sussex**

**20th-22nd October 2017
led by**

Tim Mountain and Anne Phillips

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Retreat Association Summer Event

*An Invitation from the
Executive Director*



Dear BURG Friends

I am writing to invite you to a Retreat Association Summer Event on Friday 14 July 2017 at The Royal Foundation of St Katharine, Limehouse, London.

Our guest speaker will be Rev Dr Andrew Walker who will be exploring Soul Matters, with opportunities for discussion and reflections from our patron Revd Graham Sparkes.

During the day there will be also be an opportunity to hear about the current activities of the Retreat Association and the Royal Foundation, to network and to browse resources. We are delighted that liturgist Emily Walker will be leading us in some songs and reflection.

Now in its fourth year, this day is a great opportunity for all those interested in retreats and Christian spirituality to meet together and find inspiration and encouragement. Our Summer Event at St Katharine's last year was fully booked and was met with great enthusiasm!

Bookings can be made either by printing off and returning the booking form with your payment or by card electronically online.

Entry is by ticket only (price £52) and places are limited so please book your place early to avoid disappointment (booking deadline 26 June 2017).

We look forward to seeing you there!

With best wishes,

Alison

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Buckfast Challenge

*Extract from a sermon preached by
Simon Woodman at the conclusion of this
year's Lent Retreat at Buckfast Abbey*



We are here, on the earth, to be good news for all, to build a vision for the common good, because if we don't articulate Heaven's perspective on the earthly situation, who on earth is going to do it?

So as we live in a world of growing fear, with the whiff of fascism in the air, with growing suspicion of the other, and fear of the foreigner, with poverty and homelessness literally on our doorstep, with mental health services in crisis at the very point where they are most needed, with social care and security facing cuts of catastrophic levels...

Maybe this is what, in the world, we're here for.

And so we are called to look beyond ourselves, to take into action our conviction that in Christ every life matters, and that Christ always has a bias to the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalised.

We are called to build alliances with others, and to speak truth to power, as we hold to account those who hold power.

We are called to engage politics and charity, to build communities of reciprocity, to run night shelters and day centres, to use our resources to see the marginalized included, the poor lifted up, and the vulnerable made strong.

We are called to build a vision for the common good, where the absolute love of God for each and every person is at the heart of all that we do.

Because it will be in and through us that utopian religion finds its pragmatic reality, we are where dreams become real and visions get built.

We are the outpost on the earth of the new world that that is coming.



As we live into being in our midst the reality for which we pray:
That the kingdom will come, on earth as it is in heaven.

This sermon will be published as an article 'Building a Vision for the Common Good', in Virginia Moffatt (ed.) Reclaiming the Common Good: How Christians can help rebuild our broken world, (London: DTL, 2017). Reproduced with permission.