

Dear all,

Last Friday

The **Great British Garden party** was another great success in every sense. A great time was had by all in the sultry heat of early evening, we reached out into the ex-pat community, and we raised between **5000 and 6000 Euro** to support the work of the church. Numbers were hard to ascertain. All I know is that the place was packed and we drank our way through 120 litres of cold draught beer amongst all the other drinks available. One of the funniest things (in hindsight) was that when I ordered 200 Euros worth of salad stuff I never expected that we would end up with the European Lettuce mountain delivered to our door (and *nothing* else). The misunderstanding arose because the order was obviously lost in translation. All's well that ends well though - Camelia Platt came to our rescue with supplies and a team of willing hands to prepare the salad. I think the Dutch pancakes and cheese were very well received this year.

There were quite a lot of children and Sarah and Leo and another friend kept them busy with entertainments, balloon hats and face painting. John did us proud again taking the money on the door and then conducting the auction, only giving up the Microphone to the British ambassador, Robin Barnett, to auction the main prize of the cruise on the Black Sea in the yacht of the Antenna 1 news anchorman Lucian Mindruta and his wife. Thanks obviously go to our favourite DHM, Philip Hall, for hosting the event and everyone else who contributed to this being yet another successful evening for the Church of the Resurrection. The photographic record of the event will as ever be on a website near you very soon indeed but we already have pictures and text on John's Blog site which you can access by going to <http://www.churchoftheresurrection.eu> and then clicking on the "COR Blog" button.

Important note: If you have ticket money from sales you made to friends and work colleagues still with you - please make sure it comes back to the church ASAP. Many thanks

Last Sunday

During the service **Andy and Maureen Pearce** celebrated 25 years of marriage by re-affirming their marriage vows in our church. Maureen said she was more nervous this time than she was 25 years ago, and it was quite an emotional occasion.

Congratulations to both of you.

Another surprise was meeting some old friends of the COR because **David and Valerie Hornsby** were passing through Bucharest. Valerie's name is brought to mind to me every month because the church mobile phone bill is in her name - a contract taken out 8 years ago! - yet no-one seemed to know who she was, even though they did sterling work keeping the church going in their time. It is great to finally put a face to the name. Another welcome visitor was Alan Palmer. In a testament to how quickly the congregation in Bucharest changes, Alan only recognised two people from among the 50 or so present on Sunday morning - with such a high turnover it is easy to see how our "collective memory" (of people like Valerie for instance) is quite quickly lost. Talking of high turnover, we marked in a very simple way, the leaving of Bucharest of **Rene, Jo and Neve Kinberger**. Not so much goodbye as Au revoir, as Jo will continue to be the webmaster of our site, and we do actually hope to see them

again. Initially they will be moving to Brasov for a couple of months before returning to Vienna.

Next Sunday

Holy Communion at 10am as usual. As Lillah is not here to oversee the **Produce sale** the baton is again passed to us to rally round and bring along cakes and other produce to sell. Don't be shy! Also this is the time of the school holidays and Frans our Sunday school teacher will be away for six weeks. The provision of a **Sunday school** over this period will therefore be suspended, but the kitchen space with crèche type activities will be available for our younger members.

Thought for the day - Lost in translation.

The great Lettuce debacle from Friday evening brings me neatly to the topic of translation. Jonathan Dunne from the Sofia congregation - who is a translator and poet - maintains that we the church are actually translators - translating the word and will of God to the human race. In more prosaic mode everything I say or do can be, and I suspect often is, lost in translation. The words I routinely use can hold very different meanings and connotations for different people. For example - what I mean when I say the word "catholic" can actually be heard in a variety of different ways, as can words like "evangelical" or "spiritual" or "sacramental" or "salvation". In fact whatever I think I am conveying by using those terms can actually be heard in a very different way to that which I intended - they can be lost in translation. We need common working definitions of all these things in order to understand each other properly. This explains partially at least why I take such trouble to explain in working English as clearly as possible the words used in the gospels in sermons and the meaning of different terms and words. On Sunday, I told people that Israel actually means "struggle with God" in a literal translation of the Hebrew term, something that someone told me they had never heard before. When you realise the translation of these titles and terms their inner meaning both for the Jews (and for Christians as the new Israel) is allowed to blossom, but the translation has to be made first to make it understandable.

This brings me to the Bible. William Tyndale was the first person to translate the Bible into English. In 1536 he was publicly executed and burned at the stake. His crime? He was accused of wilfully perverting the meaning of the scriptures and his new testaments were ordered to be burned as "untrue translations".

In time, after various forays into translations, the King James version of the Bible was produced and it became known as the authorised version. It was wonderful in its simplicity, dignity and power and its turns of expression that entered common English usage - but was it an accurate translation? Well no, it wasn't. It had grave defects. The discovery of many more ancient manuscripts and the advance in Biblical studies means that it became apparent that the defects were so many and varied that it needed to be revised. Also, the English language has changed over the intervening centuries. In the KJV "let" means "to hinder", "prevent" means to "precede", "communicate" means "to share", "conversation" means "conduct", "comprehend" means "overcome", "allege" means "prove", "demand" means "ask" and many many more. You see how misunderstandings of scripture would happen very easily.

Modern translations of the Bible are not "neutral" either. They always in some way reflect the convictions of the people who worked on and edited the translation. The NIV - New International Version (commonly derided by non-conservatives as the "nearly infallible version") reflects the conservative convictions of the editorial team

that compiled it which means that whenever there is a choice to be made between words and terms (and there are hundreds of choices and decisions to be made) they naturally pick the ones that reflect their own conservative theological stance - which is why when I studied the Bible at Leeds university the NIV was banned.

And what is a *true* translation? - a literal word for word translation of the original Hebrew or Greek words which whilst being strictly accurate is nevertheless opaque or is a paraphrase (like the Good news version) more true, because whilst not being true to the original words gives a spiritual meaning behind the words that is more understandable to the modern reader?

If we are translators and interpreters of God's "word made flesh" to the world, we need to be aware of the fact that we are translators of an English text that has been translated from the original language in which they were written (NT Greek), which has been translated from the oral tradition of the original language of the apostles (Jesus and his followers spoke Aramaic) whose memories were an interpretation of a life lived in Palestine by a man who never wrote down a single word in his life - Jesus. We pray that what Jesus embodied and tried to teach and show the world is not "lost in translation".

The **prayer for today** is from a 14th century work called "The Cloud of Unknowing"

*You are wisdom, uncreated and eternal,
the supreme first cause, above all being,
sovereign Godhead, sovereign goodness,
watching unseen the God inspired wisdom of Christian people.
Raise us we pray, that we may totally respond
to the supreme, unknown and ultimate and splendid height
of your words, mysterious and inspired.
There all God's secret matters lie covered and hidden
under darkness both profound and brilliant, silent and wise.
You make what is ultimate and beyond brightness
secretly to shine in all that is most dark.
In your way, ever unseen and intangible,
you fill to the full with most beautiful splendour
those souls who close their eyes that they may see.
And I, please, with love that goes on beyond mind
to all that is beyond mind,
seek to gain such for myself through this prayer.
Amen.*

Love and Peace

Martin