



## Pastor's Page

### ***Gladiators, Gazebos, and Gospels***

Well what a day- It started with full English breakfast at my neighbour's house. ( I don't often get invited out for breakfast!) What a treat. And then during breakfast I got a phone call telling me that a man in a van with a collapsible children's playground (yes it was that kind of day) was waiting for further instruction. Right, thought I "this calls for a Baptist Union accredited minister to the rescue" But not seeing any close at hand I went myself! Arriving at the Recreation ground 5 minutes later I saw a number of vans with diverse equipment on then strewn across the playing fields. Approaching with caution I soon became the focus of the drivers' questions. I employed that well practiced art of saying quite a lot without answering any of their questions! Despite these delaying tactics decisions were taken and soon the show was on the road (well the field actually) Yes folks this was the Connected Fun-day, and there was no turning back now!

However, I wouldn't be telling the truth if I didn't confess that I had become anxious about the event. We had had a lot of difficulties in preparing for the day and we had made mistakes along the way (me as much as anybody). I will even confess (wait for it) at one point I was praying for rain so that we could cancel it! However on balance I prayed more for sunshine, and the Lord in his wisdom gloriously answered those prayers. But I think the moment I knew that it was all going to be ok was when the Birmingham City Mission Bus pulled up and a cheery worker jumped out of the side door. Not only did the bus look superb, a great visual addition to proceedings, but it also reminded me of the reason for us doing all this. That God may be glorified through the witness of his church.

Well it wasn't long before gazebos in their hundreds (sorry I'm getting a little carried away - about 6 of them!) sprung up on the site, with Bouncy castles, inflatable gladiators and stalls galore decorating the park. Bric-a-brac, Barbecue, and Bookshop, Ball games, Board games and Tuck shop all featured in this festival of fun. And it was fun. And if I wanted more proof that the Lord was answering our prayers I got it. One of the key organizers came up to me and another member of the planning team and explained that she wasn't feeling well and after she had finished setting up she would have to go home. My colleague said let's pray for you. (I was a bit peeved because I thought of that but didn't suggest it!!) She said thanks and after prayer went off – not home but back to her station on the site. She not only stayed all afternoon but worked her socks off during the event. Afterwards she thanked me and my colleague for praying, I tried to look pious but I don't think it worked! However, the Lord had clearly answered another prayer, as this young lady was obviously so much better than earlier in the day.

But the greatest thrill for me came late in the afternoon. We had planned to give the football winners medals but I hadn't been able to get any! Instead I suggested to the man from Sports Pursuits who had run the competition that we give them a special *Christians in Sport* New Testament. He agreed and so at 2.15 he made a little presentation. He talked in a very natural way about his work, his faith and the purpose of the fun day. Then he presented the players with a certificate and a copy of the New Testament. As I watched the guys receive the Bibles and start to look through them I suddenly saw how out greatest prayer for the day was being answered – God was truly being glorified through this event – and the story may not be over yet.....!

24<sup>th</sup> June 2007