



## Pastor's Page

### ***On the Right Track***

So there I was at the famous Cheltenham race course sitting just yards away from the main stand. The sun was shining brightly as a gentle breeze intermittently disturbed the canvas enclosures dotted around the ancient track. "This is a great place to be on a bank holiday" thought I, "10,000 people and not a single horse in sight! You see I was there, not for a race horse meeting but, for the annual Greenbelt Christian festival. And I had specifically come to this area to hear Mark Yaconelli give a seminar entitled "Message to a dying church" What I heard over the next hour was both challenging and disturbing, but also completely inspirational (even better than "Chas & Dave" who were there too!) Let me share a little of this message with you.

Making the point, that the church often misses what God is doing Mark Yaconelli said; "The church belongs to God and God is doing the ministry within the church – our job is to notice it, to pay attention to what He's doing and then follow in response." He went on to tell the story of a female priest who used to work with 10-12 year old children in a church in inner city Chicago. This woman used to run a worship service for these children, to which they paid very little attention! However at the end of each service she used to lay her hands on them and pray for God's blessing on them. Nevertheless after 6 months of doing this with disinterested and disconnected children the woman was totally demoralised and decided to quit her job. At her final service she pleaded with the children to behave and do things right seeing as it was her last act of worship with them. But it made no difference, they talked and messed about and the woman says that she couldn't wait to get out of there. Then when the time for the blessing came, suddenly one of the children said "hey, why don't I pray the blessing over you for a change?" Then all the other children started saying, "I want to do it" "hey, I thought of it first - no let me have a go" And one by one they all started shouting out. The woman said "OK.. OK" pipe down, if you promise to go out in an orderly fashion at the end you can give me the blessing." So these 40-50 children gathered round the woman, pushing and cajoling, all trying to put their hands on her head. And then without prompting, from memory they said the blessing that she had prayed for them each week. But as they were praying, the woman said, "all I could think about was -will they go out quietly, can I get them all in the minibus, have I got the keys on me" And Mark Yaconelli telling the story added "as the woman recalled this incident 20 years later, she started to cry. He waited, and when she regained her composure she simply said; "I missed it" "I missed the blessing, I was too busy worrying about other things that I failed to realise what those children were doing for me and I failed to receive God's blessing "

The preacher hammered home the point that we too can be so busy, even sometimes with Church programmes, that we miss what God is doing! I'm glad I didn't miss this talk and I'm glad I didn't miss Greenbelt, but I'm also keen not to miss what God is doing today in his world, and also in his church. In this past week God has been at work in the Children's holiday club "Ground breakers" run by *Christ Church* people in our building. Each day 42 children came along to hear of God loves for them communicated in a most creative and interactive way. It was a privilege to be involved in this wonderful evangelistic venture.

But as we enter a new season with autumn beckoning, lets pray that we will not miss God's purposes for our lives. He has a unique work for the people of Selly Park Baptist church; our job is to discover it and do it!

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2007