

Follow yellow brick road

IT'S a chance to explore where you are in your spiritual journey - by using the Wizard of Oz as a guide.

Christians interested in checking out their progress along the yellow brick road are invited to attend a weekend seminar on August 1-2. It will be held at All Saints' Church, Commercial Road, Portsmouth, and based on material from the book *The Yellow Brick Road* by American Jesuit William Bausch.

The vicar of All Saints' Church, the Rev Len Fox, said: "I believe the *Wizard of Oz* itself was written as a subtle allegory of the disruptions in our lives that set us up on a spiritual journey in

which we are yearning for a permanent home.

"We'll be exploring the themes and the characters, and we may even watch the video so we can remind ourselves of those images."

The sessions will be from 7pm-9pm on August 1 and 9.45am-3pm on August 2. They will be led by Richard Fuller, a former art therapist, and Eric Massey, Portsmouth's community mental health chaplain.

There are limited places on the sessions, which will cost £20 per person (£15 concessions). To book, ring 023-9282 9119 or e-mail allsnts@fish.co.uk

Ghana trip was a real eye-opener

IT was certainly some experience!

Cowplain curate the Rev Barry Dugmore has arrived back in Britain after his three-month stint at an African theological college. He was the first to experience what will be an annual exchange between a curate in our diocese and a student from St Nicolas Seminary in Cape Coast, Ghana.

Among his experiences were a six-hour consecration service for a new bishop (followed by a three-hour enthronement service), teaching about John's gospel in the seminary, seeing the poverty of rural villages and breaking down in cars on Ghana's unreliable roads.

He was also given insights into the reality of child labour, the HIV/Aids epidemic and the effect of the military dictatorships that have ruled Ghana since the 1980s.

He said: "I can honestly say that my time in Ghana has been an amazing experience, a privilege and a challenge! I am so fortunate to have been able to spend almost three months there.

"One of the



The Rev Barry Dugmore (left) helps to pray for healing in a Ghanaian church

things we've got to get back to is to have a bigger expectation in our Lord who will meet our needs, and to have the confidence from our encounters with him to share our stories naturally with others. This happens every day in every situation in Ghana.

"Please continue to pray for the people of Ghana and support them in any way you can - the simplest being to buy fairly traded chocolate! The parish links will also be a dynamic way in expressing our unity as Christians with living in very different cir-

cumstances. People I met value the links so much because through them they know that other Christians care about the difficulties they face."

Barry's regular diary updates are still available to read on the diocesan website: www.portsmouth.anglican.org. The exchange was organised by the Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link (IDWAL). For more details of parish and deanery links, contact IDWAL chairman the Rev Andrew Ashdown on 023-9225 5490.

**To advertise in the
Pompey Chimes please call
Cornerstone Vision
on 01752 242261**

Parishes' solid work

I AM in the thick of the confirmation season at the moment, which takes me all over the diocese in a matter of Sundays, from Wootton on West Wight through Fratton, Portsmouth and up to Buriton, near Petersfield.

What strikes me - year in and year out - when I do these tours is how much hard work has gone into preparing the candidates, and how much they rely on the support and encouragement of their families and friends.

As I adjust the shape of my hands to fit round the head of the next person coming up for confirmation, I am struck, too, by what variations there are. It's not just that everyone seems to be a different age (how easy it was in

the last word

by Bishop Kenneth



the old days when people were about the same age!), it is that the number of different stories that could be told about how these people have come to this particular moment in their lives.

On one occasion, there was a confirmation where a husband presented his wife, a mother her daughter, and a daughter her mother - apart from variations of couples, siblings, as well as the fact that I seldom confirm without also bap-

tising one of the candidates: we have moved a long way from the days when everyone was baptised almost at birth.

One young mother came with her infant daughter to be baptised because the older brother wanted to be confirmed.

And beneath all these permutations of circumstance, good, solid pastoral work is being carried out in the parishes by the clergy and lay ministry teams - for which I (for one) am

profoundly thankful.

Is God saying something to us in our generation? One thing is sure - the church being born under our noses is very different from what some of us grew up with. Perhaps fewer are coming forward for confirmation, but they are a more articulate, more committed, and more varied bunch than before. If the rest of us are to live up to our calling, what are we doing to encourage them?



**Cathedral
Discovery
Centre**

*(at St John's RC Cathedral,
Portsmouth)*

**Books - Gifts - Resources
Cards - Music - Repository
& Coffee Shop!**

**St Edmund House, Edinburgh Road
Portsmouth, Hampshire PO1 3QA**

Tel: 02392 870348

e-mail: cdcportsmouth@aol.com

www.cathedralsdiscovery.com