

UNLOCK WALK 22 in 2005

WILL TAKE PLACE ON

SATURDAY 23 APRIL 2005.

The route of Unlock's 22nd walk was a closely guarded secret – we can exclusively reveal some clues: apparently Paddington Bear would be able to find his way – at least round the Basin. Two depots will be "community churches" – an increasing type of church arising from church planting (or resurrecting). The canal will play a large part in the route, as will two major markets and also agencies to do with the Muslim community. **Contact: UNLOCK**

THE LAST WORD

Reflection on an election

Three billion dollars (give or take a few) were spent on the campaign trail, the votes were cast, and we all know the outcome. Maybe we Brits will never really understand U.S. Presidential elections. But we need to understand something the media never grasped, as it simplistically portrayed the poll as a fight between The Evangelicals and The Rest. The New York Times came closest when it reported on how George 'Dubya' Bush had a genuine life-changing encounter with Christ when his life was at a low ebb – we can all rejoice in that – but has clearly struggled to apply that faith to the issues underlying terrorism and injustice.

'On 1st February 2002 Jim Wallis of the Sojourners stood in the Roosevelt Room for the introduction of Jim Toney as head of the President's faith-based community initiative. Moments after the ceremony Bush saw Wallis. He bounded over and grabbed the cheeks of his face, one in each hand. "Jim, how ya doin', how ya doin'!" he exclaimed. Wallis was taken aback. Bush excitedly said that his massage therapist had given him Wallis' book, 'Faith Works'. His joy at seeing Wallis was palpable – a President, wrestling with faith and its role at a time of peril, seeing that rare bird, an independent counsellor. Wallis recalls telling Bush he was doing fine, "but in the State of the Union address a few days before, you said that unless we devote all our energies, our focus, our resources on this war on terrorism, we're going to lose. Mr. President, if we don't devote our energy, our focus and our time on also overcoming global poverty and desperation, we will lose not only the war on poverty, but we'll lose the war on terrorism."

Bush replied that that was why America needed the leadership of Wallis and other members of the clergy.

"No, Mr. President," Wallis says he told Bush. "We need your leadership on this question, and all of us will then commit to support you. Unless we drain the swamp of injustice in which the mosquitoes of terrorism breed, we'll never defeat the threat of terrorism." Bush looked quizzically at Wallis. They never spoke again.

Report from Stephen Weatherly-Barton (with extracts from the New York Times)

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