



# **Mainstream** *baptists for life and growth*

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Newsletter No. 2

August 1979

## **Past**

The Mainstream fringe meeting on Tuesday 24th April undoubtedly was a highlight in a very good assembly. Surely few of the 600-700 people crowding into the Westminster Central Hall could have regretted their decision to stay on after what had been for many a long and tiring day. For through drama and music, visuals and interviews we centred on the God who is at work in his Church today - not least in our own Baptist denomination. Humanly speaking the evening was excellently produced. But it was more than a production. It was an act of worship. Who could not have been moved by the concluding paean of praise as we sang 'Jesus is Lord'? It is not without interest that the leading editorial in July's issue of 'Crusade' viewed this Mainstream meeting as a significant event for the wider Christian Church.

## **Future**

The next Mainstream event is the Swanwick Conference (Mon. - Wed. 28th-30th January 1980) when Barrie White, Lewis Misselbrook, Tom Houston and Raymond Brown are giving addresses. This is obviously not a conference to be missed. Indeed many of the leading figures in our denomination have already realised this and the more than 100 bookings so far received include an interesting cross section of College principals, Baptist Union presidents (past and future!) and the like. However, this conference is not just for the 'top brass' and we are looking forward to seeing many lay people present as well. For further details turn to the last page of this newsletter.

## **Present**

But now to the present - to this edition of the Mainstream Newsletter. We are delighted to be able to offer you a group of stimulating articles on themes relating to the life and growth of our churches. With the Denominational Enquiry Group report ("Signs of Hope") on our agenda we are sure that you will be eager to read Barrie White's views. His review links up with Andrew MacRae's article on Church Growth amongst our Scottish friends North of the border. Some have wondered whether Mainstream is only interested in the big 'success' stories. Hopefully our three features on church life at Croxley Green, East Ham and Kendal Road, Gloucester, will dispel this image. We are interested in life and growth whatever form it takes. However, talking of Purley we thought some might be interested to know what Frank Cooke is up to! Hence the article on the Purley Trust.

Finally, last but not least, we have a series of book reviews. In particular we draw attention to works put out by our colleagues in Methodism (CBM) and in the United Reformed Church (GBAR).

Happy Reading!

Paul Beasley-Murray

P.S. One final word! If you have enjoyed this issue please tell others about it, for if Mainstream is to become effective within our denomination then many more ministers and members need to come on our list of subscribers to this Newsletter.

## The Denominational Enquiry and the Local Church

During the next few months many ministers and churches will be reading the Report of the Denominational Enquiry Group on the causes for 'the numerical and spiritual decline of our denomination'. The work has been carefully done and, without sidestepping the problem and weaknesses of the Baptist denomination in this country, the Report gives a number of signs of hope not least in its suggestions for practical action by the Baptist Union, the Superintendents, the Associations, the Churches and the Colleges.

The first sign of hope is, oddly enough, in the backward look given by the Group to 'Extension Work 1945-1978'. In this review there is solid evidence that the departments of the Baptist Union, together with many local churches, have grown to realise that Home Mission fund support needs itself to be strengthened by careful and thorough programmes for training Christian people. On this we can build - and must build - urgently.

The second sign of hope - carefully and justifiably hedged about with all necessary qualifications - comes at the end of Section 4 'Facts and Figures: emerging patterns'. This argument is deduced as follows from a statistical sample from our churches:

'IF the sample is truly representative of the Denomination, and IF trends continue exactly as they are at present, with the churches making and keeping neither more nor less Christians than at present, then signs of numerical stability may be expected in about five years and steadily accelerating growth thereafter'.

Naturally, the professional prophets of gloom will fasten on those 'ifs' and the warning that there are too many variable factors in both church life and that of society at large to encourage complacency. Others, like me, will be inclined to say: 'Expect and plan for death and you will ensure it, expect and plan for life and you will know, at the end of the day, that you have been faithful to the possibilities which God has for us.'

The third sign of hope lies in section 5 'Factors impinging upon the size and health of our Churches'. This whole section provides a very substantial agenda for our churches listing a number of matters about which we need to think together, Pray together, teach together and act together. The sign of hope there is that so many of the right questions are really being asked and so many vital issues are being raised.

Some of the most urgent questions concern:

(i) the revival of Church Meeting as the place of counsel where older and younger believers step towards maturity by sharing in decision-making under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

(ii) the renewal of our patterns of worship and the elements within them. I want here to stress the need for worship to be seen not as a process to go through but as an adventure to experience! We need association, district and local church studies of worship and the new possibilities open to us URGENTLY.

(iii) the reconstruction of our preaching and teaching programmes so that the sermon is really 'a manifestation of the Incarnate Word, from the written Word, by the spoken Word'. And let us in our teaching programmes have less froth, bubble and repetition of tired formulae and more real, practical content which relates our faith to our real everyday lives and to the joy and victory which are in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(iv) a new and more thorough going stress upon the small group as the pastoral, worshipping and evangelistic unit of the congregation.

(v) a new vision of the possibilities of the priesthood of all believers as every churchmember comes to use his or her gifts for the building up of the body.

(vi) a new holding together of evangelism and social responsibility. There is much to be taught and thought about here - whether we deal with our relations with our fellow Christians, or our understanding of the social structures within which we must work, the vast and intricate social and ethical problems of our times or, last but not least being of the very last importance, the renewed practice of prayer in a spirituality which has been caught up in a new vitality by the God who is the God of today as well as of yesterday and tomorrow!

Some ministers have spoken to me of not having a mansize job in their churches - they need look no further than this Report for a job large enough to tax all that we have and are, to use up all that God has given us or will give us! Here are signs of hope for the man who fears his calling has shrunk to a chaplaincy to a dying local community!

But the fourth sign of hope lies in the Church Growth Movement described in Section 6. This must be dealt with by other typewriters than mine - suffice it to say that, however 'American' its idiom and jargon may sometimes seem, it has much to say to us. Why, it is a sign of hope that a staid denomination like ours can find room for such matters in a Report like this. Indeed, although we must not neglect Section 8 with its recommendation for all of us - which ought to underline and expand matters already on our Church agendas - the great sign of hope is that this document can look the problems squarely in the face (and they are immense) but then can call us forward to openness, expectancy and hope. For our hope is in the God who raises the dead.

Barrie White

(Principal: Regents Park College, Oxford)

\* the DBG report - Signs of Hope - is available from the Baptist Union price 50p. Please note that Dr. Russell would welcome responses from individuals and churches to this report - not least because in the coming months he is due to draw up a strategy document, which will form the basis of next year's Assembly at Nottingham.

# Church Growth in Scotland

Scottish Baptist churches have been experiencing growth in recent years in a variety of directions, such as the deepening of Christian fellowship, the development of new work, the effective reaching of young people, and particularly young married couples. Much of this has been concealed by an increasing diligence on the part of the local churches to maintain accurate records of membership and to keep membership rolls under regular review. Doubtless a growing Denominational budget has encouraged the trend and perhaps reduces its apparent "spirituality". Today, however, it is no longer possible by such means to conceal the genuine growth that is taking place, for which we are so grateful to God. The former philosophy of survival whereby Churches planned to "maintain the witness", to "keep the doors open", to stand "for the defence of the Gospel" has given way to an entirely new level of commitment to making that Gospel known and co-operating with Christ in the fulfilment of His promise "I will build my Church".

A few swift comments about the mood of Scottish Baptist life may help to put the matter in perspective.

(a) Church Growth is accepted The case for church growth based on the New Testament is for the most part now accepted by the churches. The evidence of this is that the 1977 Assembly accepted a wide range of growth goals ranging from an attempt to increase membership within three years by 50% to a determination to increase our Denominational budget in the same period by 100%. Alongside this we have objectives for increasing our involvement in social work ministries, new church planting, effective evangelism, cultivation of youth leadership, involvement in overseas missions, and much more. Scottish Baptists now believe that Christ intends His Church to grow!

(b) Church Growth is wanted Not so long ago churches were content to remain static. If they did not decline; if they kept their heads above water; if the membership remained the same; if the death of the old was compensated for by the introduction of an equivalent number of the younger, that was regarded as progress. This is no longer so. Actively, intentionally, deliberately, and at levels spiritual, personal and statistical, our churches want to grow.

(c) Church Growth is expected It is plainly recognised that all growth is from God in accordance with the teaching of 1 Corinthians 3 and 2 Corinthians 5. Our people are far more expectant now, however, of fruit to follow their co-operation with God, and this expectation determines many of the priorities now adopted by the churches.

(d) Church Growth is attempted Not only at Denominational level, although undoubtedly much of the thrust has had to come from there, the churches are aiming at growth and making constructive practical attempts to achieve it in every direction. The group leadership of the Denomination, the Executive and Council of the Union have been active in prompting concern for growth, and I have personally rejoiced in seeing dreams fulfilled at this level, as the Union has become increasingly, not a remote centralised outfit, but an active involved serving and servicing agency of the local churches, stimulating their efforts, providing guidelines, making materials available, and sharing the burden.

## The Marks of Church Growth

Without elaboration, there are at least three marks which can be discerned amongst Scottish Baptists in these days, not universally but significantly.

(a) There is a new confidence in God We do not anticipate defeat. Our people are far more sure of God and His power to save and to build the Church than they have been for many years.

(b) A new sense of the living Christ There is far more natural confession of Christ as a living, saving Presence, and experience. This is far more simply than the maintenance of an orthodox Christology. It is the confession of a living Christ who does not reduce life but enriches it beyond measure. In this connection the development of our WIN programme of lay training for evangelism, which has been promoted for the last 5 or 6 years, has had profound effect in many churches.

(c) A new confidence in the mighty spirit of God So far interest in spiritual renewal has not seriously divided Scottish Baptists. Much of the enthusiasm and the vigour of those committed to such an emphasis is being welcomed and channelled. Here and there a super-spirituality, or a resistant traditionalism can create problems, and the Devil has a way of making the most of that. The overall picture is one of greatly increased expectation that the Holy Spirit will exercise His power and enable His people, thus glorifying Christ.

(d) A new concept of the Church The Church as the Body of Christ is not regarded in any gimmicky way, but is being developed Denominationally and at many local levels along the lines of Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4. The role of the pastor as coach of a team, the responsibility of the members to be "equipped for work in God's service" and the development of the gifts of the membership of the Church, are all exciting and dynamic expressions of growth in these days which are leading to the development of the ministry of the whole Church, and are giving the pastoral ministry much greater point than ever before. In this connection the three keywords which characterise the Scriptural development of Scottish church life in these days are, I think, the concepts of Fellowship, Service and witness.

Last year, in connection with the acceptance of our Growth Goals, I wrote for the Denomination a manual entitled Growth Guidelines, which seeks to show how these and other areas of church life can be developed in a Scottish (not to dare to say an English!) context, and they have been taken up enthusiastically by many of our churches. Indeed, it is common now for deacons' meetings to spend part of their regular meetings in study and prayer around one of the chapters of Growth Guidelines.

A Renewed Commitment to Christ We are certainly seeing in many churches a new commitment to Christ in terms of Christian stewardship at every level. This is apparent in the growing involvement of church members in their caring for one another, in their offering of their talents to the life of the Church, and in greatly increased and increasing financial stewardship at local church level and Denominationally.

### The Methods

Let me simply summarise what our churches are doing in three simple affirmations. First, honest evaluation is taking place. Deacons, church organisations, and congregations, as a whole, are taking a hard careful look at themselves and their achievement over the past year, or years, and are seeking to evaluate their progress or regress honestly before God and in the light of His Word. We have provided guidelines for evaluation for the churches, which many are using to their initial discomfort, but to their ultimate benefit;

Second, real goals are being set. Instead of the old commitment to evangelise the area, or to preach the Gospel, or to reach the unreached,

etc, in vague indeterminate terms, churches are now adopting longer term goals and shorter term objectives designed specifically to achieve certain things within a limited time. They have always meant to be effective. Now they are setting specific goals towards which they are working and many are finding great encouragement.

Third, systematic action is taking place. Let me illustrate from two churches only. One church which had 41 members in a reasonably new area of housing, but one of great industrial difficulty and high unemployment, decided to take lay training for evangelism seriously, and equipped more than half of its membership for personal witnessing to Christ. Within two years that church's membership has risen from 41 to 115. In another church which has an average attendance of 25 for 30 years, a dynamic young pastor has simply, but systematically, sought to discover the gifts of his people and put them to work. As new members have been received they have from the beginning been given to understand membership of the church meant commitment to its service. That sounds simple, but the results have been dramatic in that attendances are now regularly 75, and sometimes well over 100. The church has grown by more than 60% in six months in actual membership. At Denominational level we have sought to develop church growth also by more imaginative extension programmes. We have more pioneer ministers working in areas where there are no Baptists, with a view to establishing Baptist causes around the country than we have on the ministerial staff of Baptist Church House. That must say something.

We are not complacent. Many of our churches have scarcely begun to move. There are enough signs of growth, however, to convince us that God is in it and we face the future with great confidence in Him and expectancy of His power.

Andrew MacRae  
(Sec. Scottish BU)

## LIFE and GROWTH at East Ham

You have just been inducted into the pastorate the previous day, and on your first Sunday morning at 11 am you are standing in the pulpit of a large, old fashioned, grim 1,000 seater church - still waiting for the first member of the congregation to arrive! Can you imagine it? And when your congregation does turn up you can fit it into the deacons' vestry and still swing a cat without hitting anyone. That was 12 years ago.

Now you stand on a brightly carpeted floor, not a pew in sight, with light streaming through new windows onto warm colours and warm faces. It's 11.30 am and well over 150 adults and children are gathering for worship and teaching. There is movement, laughter and a really warm welcome as people move to their seats in an attitude of informality and expectancy. There are gathered before you young and old; Africans, West Indians, Asians, Malays, Chinese - and white Caucasians from all over the world; Cambridge graduates and the simple minded; professionals and window cleaners. All different, yet they all have come to love Jesus and each other. Many have already been sharing together since 10.30 am in the weekly communion service, and many will not leave until 1 pm. Today you will spend over 5 hours with your people in worship and friendship.

A miracle? Yes - God has done it all! Yet not without method.

We were a small inner-city church in London's East End with only closure to look forward to. Then Humphrey Vellacott offered his services and was called to be Pastor of East Ham Baptist Church. A man of 55 years, yet radical in his thinking, seeking the Lord's will first. This is the only principle - we began with God; not working for Him but with Him, using spiritual methods and approaches. This was no 'airy-fairy' course of action but rather turned out to be intensely practical and produced many problems. When the Spirit began to fashion a Christ-like, Spirit-filled, biblically-centred, loving fellowship, our thinking and practice was transformed. Having begun correctly our aim was determined for us, viz. the building of a community of God's people, living under the Lordship of Christ and obeying His Word, into which converts could be brought, and with which society had to reckon.

We have found the means to this end to be:

(i) the preaching of the Word Not platitudes, but specific and honest application of the whole Gospel (not John 3.16; but Matthew 5-7, 1 Corinthians 13 etc.) with its themes of sovereignty, grace, repentance, brokenness, humility, love and service.

(ii) the importance of praying together We insist on our deacons and workers being present at the heart of the church's life, and we do not burden with activities so that they have no time for prayer or their families. Our regular attendance at prayer and discussion bible study is 60 (our membership is 85).

(iii) the restructuring of the premises We like to relax together and make all visitors feel at home - hence the carpet, soft lighting, pictures and individual chairs. The floor area is divided into a worship area, a welcome area, a side room, so that we comfortably fill a space for each meeting.

We have had regular baptisms (in some periods, every two months). But the real fruit has been in the raising up of twelve spiritually minded deacons with the promise of several more. We have also been blessed in sharing our vision with other local churches. In 1976 we began to help an East London church by substantially financing a full-time minister and assistant. In 1977 we sent one of our best men (our Church Secretary, in fact) to be the lay pastor of another church in East Ham, and several members went with him to help re-establish the work there. God has taught us not to be selfish even in this respect of holding onto our members. If God wants our best members He must have them. In 1978 we called Stephen Peake to work full time with Humphrey Vellacott and are now hoping to finance another full-time ministry in East London very soon. Thus other churches are being revived as the vision spread. We have excellent preachers, joyful servants and selfless givers of money, talents, and time. Not bad in 12 years - but God has much more to do in the next 12! Our hope is that the larger churches will give unconditionally to re-establish the struggling causes, which once we were.

Terry Griffith

(Church member and student at Spurgeon's)

## **LIFE and GROWTH at Croxley Green**

### Background

Croxley Green is situated near Watford in Hertfordshire. Fifty years ago it was a small village community, but in the 1930's and 1940's

developed to its maximum population of nearly 15,000.

Baptist witness began in 1940 through the ministry of a Deaconess, the late Enid Cavell. Three full-time brethren have followed in those pioneering steps, initially with help from the Home Mission Fund. We share with the other Churches in the community as far as we can. We are very much a local fellowship. Almost all the members live within one mile from the Church buildings.

The Church continues to know steady if unspectacular growth numerically, but many sense a spiritual quickening within the fellowship during the last three or so years. The present membership is 170. Prayer, obedience to Scripture, and openness to the working of the Holy Spirit are central to the Church's life. There is a keen desire on the part of the leadership and many members to allow the Holy Spirit to expound the whole ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in us and through us for the glory of God the Father.

We have found that such a desire brings renewal of individuals and change with inevitable tensions and a measure of pain. By God's grace we seek to love and understand one another and to avoid any breakdown in communications.

### Leadership

Following much prayer and discussion we instituted an Eldership in addition to the Diaconate, being positions of equal status but of differing function. Three lay-brethren have been recognised by the fellowship and publicly set-apart to share with the 'full-time' pastor in the 'spiritual' leadership of the Church. The Diaconate, which has appointed its own lay-chairman, deals more with practical and administrative matters. The Elders and Deacons meet together monthly for prayer and to discuss vital matters, and all proposals or decisions which need to be shared with the Church Members Meeting come from a united leadership.

### Worship

Another area of change has been in our patterns of worship. On the one hand we had a problem of accommodation and the impossibility of extending the premises. On the other was the conviction that our outreach should be to whole families and that we should provide a worship format which is meaningful to parents who do not normally attend Church.

After unhurried prayer and preparation the Church initially agreed to an experimental period of change, which later became permanent - at least for the present time! One fringe member family opted out of fellowship at this decision.

Morning worship is now at 9.30 am and includes Communion twice each month. It follows a more traditional style but includes opportunity for worship to be 'pew' as well as 'pulpit' directed. At present this is the least well attended of the three Sunday Services, but it eases the accommodation problem for that which follows.

Coffee is available from 10.30 am. At 11 am each week we have a Family Service with adults and children of Junior School age together for the whole hour. Much use is made of gifted lay leadership and of visual aids, drama, etc. in worship which is informal, joyful yet challenging too. To make worship and teaching relevant for such a wide-range of physical age and spiritual experience is not easy - but the Lord is very gracious! In the last two years there has been no loss of children and an encouraging number of parents have come, some occasionally



but others very regular. Some couples and a dozen or more Mum's have been converted and entered into the full life of the Church.

Also at 11 am we have a separate Primary Department, a Creche, and three teen-age Bible Classes. The latter join the Family Service once each month for a Brigades Church Parade. Our Youth Work is very encouraging but gives much opportunity for consolidation and development.

Evening Worship is becoming less formal. The desire of some to balance traditional hymns with modern songs and choruses is not easily understood by others. We see the need for developing a more positive music ministry, and give thanks for the way this is progressing.

### Pastoral Care

We have divided the community into seven areas, each with a pastoral care leader who is either an elder or deacon. Within each area functions a mid-week Home Group meeting and all who attend are encouraged to share in the privilege of pastoral ministry. Particular needs are referred to the 'full-time' elder for action as necessary.

In an effort to meet the practical needs of the fellowship we have a Family Circle Scheme administered by a deacon and his wife. Having surveyed the membership for practical gifts and the willingness to share them, they retain a list of offers of help available. Pastoral Care leaders or others, make needs known to them and help is provided.

The Church is busy in that it has many activities - perhaps too many! Varied children's and youth work, ladies meetings, a Handicapped elderly peoples Club, an annual Holiday Club etc. stretch resources, and yet the Lord seems pleased to bless them to a greater or lesser extent. We praise Him for His grace, and for the faithful workers who put their lives at His disposal.

We realise however, that the Holy Spirit does not yet have free movement among us. Generally speaking, there is still an absence of many of the gifts of the Spirit which He provides 'for the common good'. We recognise too the Lord's desire for us to be fully committed to Him; and to each other in love, and to His mission to the world. We believe He is leading us into a more positive programme of personal evangelism, initially with the many contacts through Family Worship and Church organisations. Please pray with us!

"We praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all (the best!) that's to come".

The Elders

Croxley Green Baptist Church

## **LIFE and GROWTH at Kendal Road, Gloucester**

We came to Gloucester in 1973, called to the church where we had had a student-pastorate during the two middle years of my four years training at Bristol Baptist College.

The church building does not have a very strategic position, being some distance from the main roads, although it is surrounded by a residential area on the northern outskirts of the city.

When my wife and I joined the church we were Nos. 29 and 30 on the membership roll. The small membership was indicative of a split in the

church in 1969. We praise God for the Home Mission Fund which, because of its recent past history and in spite of the small membership, gave the church the financial assistance needed to support the ministry.

By the end of 1973 the membership was 37, and in the following three years grew mainly by transfer, and although we still have a number of transfers has since steadily risen as folk have come to faith in Christ. The present membership is 105 - of these some 40 are young married couples and 75 are under 45. 80 have been received into fellowship in six years. There have been 38 baptisms, of which 26 were converts, 9 were 'biological' growth, and three joined us through baptism from other traditions.

Our services, although somewhat traditional have been slowly affected by the charismatic renewal - Scripture choruses, open praise and prayer, the use of some spiritual gifts - have become regular features of our worship. The importance that was placed on preaching the Word is evident in our services. We have chairs in the church which allow flexibility in seating arrangements and these sometimes surprise but stimulate our corporate worship.

Evangelistically we have used the usual methods of leaflet distribution, door-to-door visitation, children's holiday clubs etc. But more recently we have been distributing the 'Challenge' newspaper with a letter from the church to small areas of the district (maximum 300 homes). After three months we have visited the homes and those who having expressed a keen interest have been visited by an 'Evangelism Explosion' training team. We have been very encouraged by the response to this 'method' which has been instrumental in the comparatively large number of converts in the last eighteen months.

Growth has, perhaps, inevitably, brought problems. The most obvious of these is that our premises and facilities are being stretched to their limit. The church seats only 160 comfortably. Plans to alter the internal structure of the church building are under-way - but the possibilities of extension on our site are very limited.

Recognising the need to develop and maintain a relevant and close fellowship among the growing membership, we began to meet in House groups - but after fifteen months we have had to conclude them for the time-being as we did not lay down, at the beginning, clearly defined aims and objectives for the groups. Despite this, we see house-groups as a necessary feature of the continued spiritual growth of our church and its members.

Many of our recent converts have had little or no church background and this has caused many pastoral problems. One of the major problems of these converts is accepting that Christians are not perfect. Young Christians find it difficult to accept their own failures as well as the imperfections of older Christians. Preparation for Baptism and Church Membership in the light of this lack of background knowledge and consequent problems has had to be revised.

As the church has grown there have been an increasing number of people content just to attend the services with no intention of further commitment. A few of these are in the total membership, but a growing number, many from other churches, are in the overall congregation. The need for people to commit themselves to Christ AND His Church in a more definite way needs to be stressed.

The growth in membership has not always been reflected in the giving

of the Church. In 1973 the giving was about £1.50 per member weekly - that is still the situation but as will be appreciated the giving has in no way reflected the rise in inflation over the past six years. We have, as a church, to re-discover something of the biblical principles of giving so that our contribution to the Mission of the Church as well as the maintenance of our own work is in keeping with our debt to the Lord.

We are grateful to God for all that He has done for us and among us in the past six years, but are conscious of the needs of the present and the demands of the future. We recognise that if we are to continue to grow spiritually as well as numerically we will have to continue to look to Him for His Power and Grace.

Steve Woolley

(Minister: Kendal Road Baptist Church,  
Longlevens, Gloucester)

## Upstream - Mainstream

Although very much a mainstream man, after over 27 years in the pastorate, Frank Cooke of Purley launched out into an upstream ministry almost 2 years ago. It meant leaving the familiar ship-like structures of the pastorate, and swimming upstream to try and fulfil the calling which had come to him. The calling was to make the Bible plain to as wide a circle as possible, but especially to those who have not had the benefit of any theological training.

Although he is still a member of staff at Purley Baptist - The Ministry at Large in fact - and although he still preaches some of the time at Purley, he has now relinquished full pastoral responsibility, and is engaged full-time in developing ways of making the essential message of scripture plain, in more and more ways.

He is backed by a small Trust called The Purley Christian Trust here in the UK and an associate organisation has been established in the USA called "Frank Cooke's Word for Today Ministries"!!

Since diving into this new work two years ago, Frank has had three books published, (another is being printed), two booklets, \*and numerous lesson notes and study courses.

He works with such bodies as Scripture Union in both tape and printed page. He gives special courses of lectures at conferences, he has a weekly radio programme on TWR called "Take Five" and for much of last year, was the presenter of Capital Radio's live hour-long phone-in programme "A Question of Faith".

His great vision is to write and see produced video cassettes for home TV Bible Study, covering every book in the Bible. He wants to arrange residential courses for special groups: eg. Ministers' wives, and is promoting a scheme of study linking the next generation of missionary visionaries to the inner city to discover an ongoing strategy of evangelism.

The headquarters of The Purley Christian Trust (from where information and further details may be obtained) is

"THE TRUST HOUSE"  
4 OLD LODGE LANE,  
PURLEY,  
SURREY CR2 4DE

\* Books etc. by Frank Cooke

- "LIVING NOW" £1.50 A selection of daily messages - "Real and Relevant".
- "JESUS RULES O.K.?" £1.50 A new look at the Sermon on the Mount.
- "THE FAMILY OF GOD" £1.50 A new handbook for church members of any age.
- "WORD FOR TODAY" £0.40 Messages from Frank's radio ministry.
- "GOOD NEWS BEGINS HERE" (Free) An introduction to the Good News Bible for beginners.
- "START THE DAY" 1 CORINTHIANS (S.U./PCT.) 2 Tapes. £3.95
- "THROUGH THE YEAR WITH FRANK COOKE" (To be published in October 1979)  
A relevant message for every day of the year.

Norman Webb

The Purley Christian Trust.

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CROCHETS AND QUAVERS BBC Publications £2.50

Now this really is a good investment for family services, youth work and Sunday School. Many of the 72 items have been around for years, but these are interspersed with many new compositions. Here is a balanced mixture of praise which has variety vitality blended with simplicity. The directness of the lyrics is matched with a helpful concentration of the central themes. There are words set to well known folk tunes such as Geoffrey Marshall - Taylor's 'Jesus Christ is here' to 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord'. There is a robustness and bounciness in such songs as 'Thank you Lord for this fine day' and Alan Pinnock's 'He gave me eyes so I could see the wonders of the world'. It is open to question whether the compilers have an adequate balance between the theology of Creation and Redemption.

There won't be enough on the person and work of Christ to satisfy the connoisseur whose standard yard-sticks are hymns of Watts or Wesley. Here are intelligible concepts for young people in a collection of very singable songs. They have great merit when set alongside many hymns written for children in the 19th Century.

The music scores are a model of clarity. Simple guitar chords and parts for melodic instruments are printed above the piano accompaniment. A record RBC 317 and a cassette 2 CM 317 are available from record retailers.

SINGALIVE - by Donald Swann and Arthur Scholey. Collins £3.

These are unique songs for celebrations, dramatic presentations or just for a good children's choir item at an informal occasion. The catchy melodies, so characteristic of Swann, include a number of differing rhythms and singable tunes. This is not a strict meter collection of hymns but one or two items would ably grace any special youth celebration - 'Oh praise Him' is especially commendable.

Pat J. Goodland.

SURVEYS OF THE KINGDOM Packets of Cards. Harvestime Publications.  
Church House, North Parade, Bradford, BD1 3HT

Some of Hugh Thompson's Bible Surveys, which have appeared in the Restoration magazine, have now been republished on quality cards. This is a useful format for leaders. They are selective in subject matter, concentrated in content and didactic in style. Particularly helpful for committed Christians, the two packets submitted contained seven studies each on two main themes. 1. Aspects of Discipleship. 2. Community in Action. The subjects include leadership under Christ, Structure and Strategy, Marriage, Family Life, Stewardship of Money, Unmarried and Growing up together.

This is meaty material which needs to be carefully chewed and served tastefully or the average group will suffer indigestion.

Pat J. Goodland

(Minister: Ross-on-Wye Baptist Church)

### Church Growth

Book. See how they grow Fount (Collins paperback)  
Price 85p Edited by Alan Walker

Dr. Walker, the much travelled Director of World Evangelism for the World Methodist Council, provides us with twelve stories of church growth within local situations. Their brevity does not diminish their value as a book of encouragement, to all who struggle with new ideas and challenges. This collection of accounts presented by witnesses at the blunt-end of the growth movement are as fascinating as they are varied. Faith, hope and love are stimulated, as God is shown evidently at work in His church, from East Germany to South Africa and from Baltimore to Alabama. A helpful book for discouraged Church members.

Pat J. Goodland

### What is Evangelism?

By Bert Worrall GEAR Monograph No. 1  
Price 25p  
Obtainable from the Rev. Malcolm Smith, 11 Mayberry Grove, Middlesborough,  
Cleveland, TS5 5PU

Here is good meat for ministers fraternals and church house groups. There are four basic sections. I was particularly interested in Sections 2 and 3. Those under Section 2 entitled 'We must take account of our hearers and their assumptions' Bert Worrall says that for most people consciousness of sin occurs from a closeness to Jesus and so we must seek to introduce unbelievers to the living Jesus before we ask for an awareness of sin. In Section 3, entitled 'The Message comes Through the Church' three guidelines are offered for ways in which the local Church can be active in evangelism without putting on special efforts.

This is really a bargain and is highly recommended.

### Methods of Mission

Methodist Publishing House Edited by Brian R. Hoare

This is a practical, down to earth book full of ideas for evangelism.

The following list of headings gives a guide to the contents:

Mission in the City - Mission in Rural Areas - Children's Missions  
and Holiday Bible Clubs - Evangelism in a Pop Culture - Cliff  
College Missions - One Step Forward - Lay Witness Missions -

Celebrating the Faith - Saying it with Music - Film Evangelism -  
Using Christian Literature - Personal Evangelism - Planning for  
Growth.

Almost everything is applicable to the Baptist Scene.

Paul Beasley-Murray.

MAINSTREAM CONFERENCE - THE HAYES CONFERENCE CENTRE, SWANWICK, DERBYSHIRE  
JANUARY 28th to 30th 1980

Over 300 Baptist ministers and church leaders will be starting the New Year in fellowship with one another at the 1980 MAINSTREAM conference. From tea-time on the Monday until lunch on the Wednesday they are promised a feast of good things.

The main conference addresses will be given by the Rev. B.R. White, M.A., D. Phil., on the theme of Spiritual Growth; the Rev. Tom Houston, M.A., on Principles of Church Growth and the Rev. L. Misselbrook, M.A., on Local Church Growth. There will be opportunities for informed prayer, meaningful worship and lively discussion. The 'late night extra's' are in the capable hands of the Rev. Paul Beasley-Murray and Douglas McBain. The latest training materials will be on display alongside a well stocked bookstall to enable conference members to "continue in the things that they have learned".

Over a third of the total number expected have already booked. It is not too late to add your name to the list. £2.50 secures a place. Out of the kindness of our hearts the conference committee have decided that the new V.A.T. rates will not affect the total conference fee of £14.50!

Jack Ramsbottom

MAINSTREAM CONFERENCE  
Booking Secretary

MAINSTREAM CONFERENCE BOOKING FORM

Send to: The Rev. Jack Ramsbottom, 2 Lovelace Drive, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2LY

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