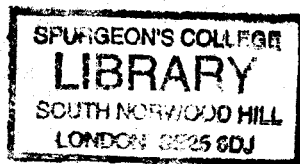


A WORD AND SPIRIT
MAINSTREAM
NETWORK



Magazine Issue 70 – March 2001

Issue Theme:
Vision and Values

Vision and Values

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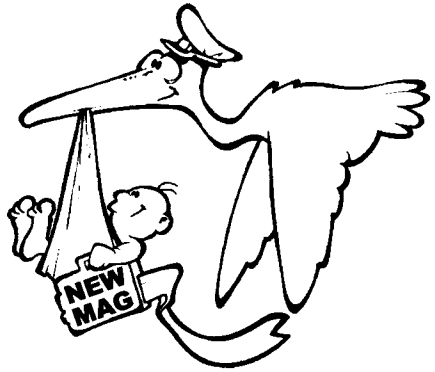
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Editorial

This is the last Mainstream magazine in this format. Our June edition will be a very different style with several new features. I won't steal its thunder before then, but I'm confident you will like it. The theme will be Preaching and Teaching for Today's Churchgoer.



This magazine

Four of the articles speak to the issue of vision and values. Mainstream has firmed up on its own vision and I outline what this is all about. Phil Butcher records the process in a small church of developing core values. Roger Standing provides helpful insights from Habakkuk about watching over the vision. And David Shearman challenges us about 'holding to vision'. He writes, 'Lessons I have learned over thirty years of ministry in one church that can help you stay clear-sighted, passionate and committed to what you believe God has revealed to you'.

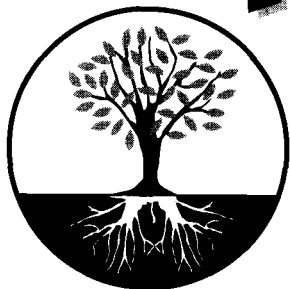
We heard many good comments about the last Mainstream conference in January, when the theme of Transforming Communities was explored. We only have space to share a couple of the seminar topics. Adrian Argile highlighted the need to grasp the meaning of grace in a world of performance, and Rob White argued for strong team ministry.

We have slightly increased our prices after leaving them static for several years (details within the magazine). As we embark on a new style magazine presentation may I ask you to encourage others to subscribe.

Peter Nodding

MAINSTREAM

IS CHANGING



When the initial group launched Mainstream back in the 1980's its focus was clear. To encourage Baptist life and growth and for more evangelicals/charismatics to occupy influential positions within the Union. The job has been done.

So does Mainstream have a future?

Over the last couple of years the leadership have given themselves to prayer. We believe that we have heard the Lord say the following:

- There is a future which must have mission at its heart.
- A national movement will only be as strong as its regional strength.
- Strong supportive relationships are key.
- Knowing God in the power of the Spirit is its fuel.

We have recently firmed up Mainstream's present vision. It reads as follows:

Mainstream : Our Vision under God

What's Mainstream all about?

Mainstream is an informal network, mainly comprising Baptist leaders and churches. We are absolutely convinced that the authority of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit must always be brought together. It's only then that we can be fully under the Lord's control, direction and empowering and have any hope of doing properly the things He wants us to do.

To make this come about we are committed to:

- Get passionate about knowing God
- Get real in relationships
- Get stuck into God's mission

And this is what our network looks like:

- Local groups where leaders get together to talk, pray and encourage each other;
- Regional meetings where we encounter God and receive significant input to resource our ministries;
- A national leadership team drawn from those leading the local groups;
- A quality magazine that addresses the issues and concerns that matter to us;
- An annual conference for teaching, ministry, building relationships and releasing gifts and ministries.

So, what do we hope to achieve?

- A network of leaders and churches with authentic relationships, sharing their experience and resources and committed to working together for the advance of God's Kingdom;
- A visible difference in leaders' spiritual lives and in God's work through the things we do together;
- Our churches throbbing with spiritual life in their worship, outreach and ministry to the poor in Jesus' name;
- The recognition, mentoring and release of emerging ministries;
- A prophetic voice within the Baptist community.

We want you to be part of this, but what does it mean?

Get passionate about knowing God

"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better" Ephesians 1:17

Paul's manifesto in the first century continues high on our agenda. A passionate pursuit of God Himself will lead to His priorities being ours. The old hymn sums it up well: *"My goal is God Himself, not joy nor peace, nor even blessing, but Himself my God."*

Mainstream wants to be a movement, where knowing God as He has revealed Himself, is the fuel that sustains our life. There is nothing better, more fulfilling or challenging than knowing Christ Jesus as Lord. Keeping our knowledge of God fresh is paramount in days when we are tempted to rely on the latest fad or technology. It will mean seeking God for Himself, disciplined living, thorough obedience and knowing that our spiritual life comes through revelation.

Get real in relationships

The Kingdom of God is relational. Relationship with the Lord is primary, but then worked out through friendships. I am challenged by the scriptures that

exhort me to have a deep love for my brothers and sisters in Christ, and which invite me to live humbly and vulnerably before them.

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Philippians 2:3-4

Recently at a Guildford leaders meeting one pastor broke down in tears as he began to share his vision and then another made a heartfelt plea for personal support and friendship. Both were accepted encouragingly in an atmosphere of warm relationships which have been cultivated over the years. One of my members told me that she had not slept the previous night because of an action I had taken the previous day. Not the most encouraging of comments, but I was pleased that she felt able to tell me.

All of us know what real relationships can mean. The people of God are to be an integrated body who demonstrate the qualities of love, friendship and service in their knowing of one another. It is through such relationship that the unseen God is known. (1 John 4:12)

Get stuck into God's mission

A lot of ink has been spilt, and inspiring words spoken, but how much do we have to show for it? Getting stuck in is key. Alpha, yes; new ways of being church, yes; cultural relevance, yes; church planting, yes. They are all bringing their rewards.

What will make the bigger difference? It is through every member of Christ's body being light in their particular set of relationships. How many times has this been said, but not followed through?

My own conviction is that lip and life will make the difference. I am concentrating on our individual responsibility, but clearly there is a corporate aspect and the church as a whole pursuing an agreed purpose

Our lifestyle must model Christian character. It is not sufficient for us to be like everyone else who do not have the Spirit of God. When Paul spoke about us shining like stars in the universe, he was talking about character. Not grumbling, or complaining, being blameless and pure (Philippians 2:14-15). In a word, living different (holy) lives. We will cut very little ice without a commitment to being like Jesus in character.

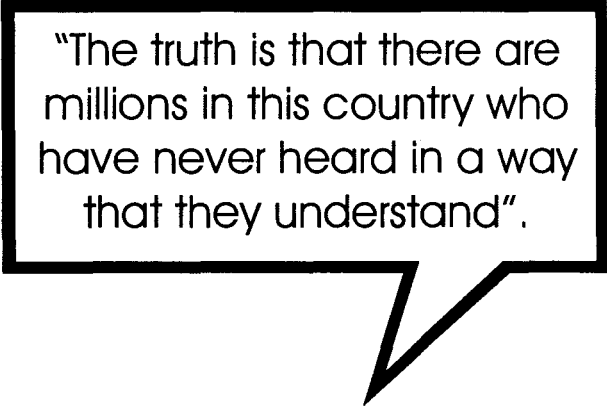
But also verbal witness. Where is the boldness to speak about Jesus Christ? Boldness runs through the Acts and especially in how they spoke. I know that we need to earn the right to speak, and have more than casual relationships with the unchurched, but at the end of the day most of us bottle out.

A friend of mine was talking to someone about Christ in a nightclub at 2:00am. The man said: 'Why hasn't anyone told me about this before?' I find these words deeply moving and challenging. The truth is that there are millions in this country who have never heard in a way that they understand. One of our teachers was passionately campaigning for people to go into secondary schools and connect with young people in language and lifestyle. This sort of verbal witness will lead on the one hand to eyes being opened to the truth and on the other Christians having to suffer the reproach, and possibly persecution, for Jesus' sake. It is clear from the Acts of the Apostles that their boldness of witness led to opposition.

Have we the courage to live like Him and speak for Him?

Peter Nodding

*Peter Nodding, Senior Pastor of Guildford Baptist Church
and Chairman of Mainstream*



"The truth is that there are millions in this country who have never heard in a way that they understand".

DEVELOPING CORE VALUES

One Church's Story

The process to adopting a set of church core values in our experience was not quick! At times I wished our church could have been like "the one down the road", whose minister wrote them, leaders affirmed them and church meeting agreed them in the space of a few months! For us the process from its beginning to a formal adoption took well over two years. So hopefully this story "warts and all" will encourage all of you currently thinking about vision and values, but especially smaller churches like ours which tend to have a different leadership ethos and style from many larger churches.



As the minister of the church I was coming across people who told me that they had lost the plot when it came to church. What was church all about? What should we be doing? What are our priorities? These questions were coming from people brought up in church, as well as from a number of new Christians who had no prior experience of church. I was soon convinced that we needed to not only have teaching on what the purposes of the church were, but also some statement that encapsulated what we were all about.

In my naiveté I began by writing a one sentence general mission statement followed by a page full of the distinctives, emphases and

dreams that I thought we should have! Needless to say that when I shared it with others it got a mixed response. Some loved it but others hated it. I soon realised that for many, the idea of a mission statement was a big turn off: "Mission statements are the meaningless sentences we have at work that take years to formulate and then everyone ignores them!" So as leaders we worked at explaining why we felt a mission statement was important, changing its title along the way to a statement of purpose.

As our church is highly (perhaps over-) consultative we then went round every housegroup getting feedback on the original draft,

praying together and discussing what we felt our church was about. We also scoured the Internet to look at other churches' mission statements and values, finding the excellent alongside the unintelligible! (Surf and you'll see what I mean!) We did this not to copy them but to hopefully learn from them! As leaders we then formulated a much simpler four core value statement that covered the "unchangeables" of what we were about. We argued (sorry, discussed!) whether we should have five core values to follow Rick Warren's Five Purposes in his "Purpose Driven Church", but in the end stuck with our four!

Although much simpler than my original vision and containing statements that could equally be true of most evangelical churches, these core values seemed more acceptable to the church and provided a bedrock from which to develop and move forwards. After a bit more wrangling over wordings, the church meeting finally agreed to adopt these four core values :

1. Rooted in God's love - we worship Him. Bringing our praise, ourselves and our resources to God in thankfulness.
2. Growing together towards Christian maturity - we honour Him. Becoming the people God wants us to be as disciples together. Obeying God's word.
3. Showing God's love and compassion to others - we serve Him. Caring for all around us - shown in both actions and words.
4. Bringing people to faith in God - we obey Him. Desiring to bring the Good News of Jesus into people's lives.

We also included key Scriptures that were important to our formation and existence as a church. Alongside this we wrote an outworkings sheet that contained the current ways we were outworking our purpose, our distinctives as a church family and in mission, and seeds of where our purposes could develop the future. As a fairly small church it is easy for us to think that we are not doing enough when we compare ourselves to bigger churches nearby. However, this process has encouraged us to affirm what we already are about, what our God-given distinctives are and how they might develop in the future.

We are now trying to formulate the values pictorially (any suggestions gratefully received!) and are having teaching on them both on Sundays and in housegroups. It has been a long but vital process - a process which now really begins as we seek to live out the core values together as Lady Bay Baptist Church.

Philip Butcher
Pastor of Lady Bay Baptist Church
Nottingham

"HABBA ... WHO?"

(Four Steps in Effective Visionary Leadership)



The prophet Habakkuk was a free thinker. He was prepared to put God on the spot about things that didn't seem to add up in his situation and experience.

"How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen?" 1:2a

"Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong?"

1:3a

"Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?" 1:13

Habakkuk probably worked at the Temple in Jerusalem as an official prophet or priest sometime around 600BC, before the fall of the city in 587. Looking at how he wrestled with his own situation and sought to discover God's will for the future has much to teach us as we seek God's vision for ourselves and our churches.

In Habakkuk 2:1-4 (NASB) the prophet sets about his task. There are four steps that he makes that we should take note of.

1. WATCH AND SEE

"I will stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; and I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me."

Habakkuk sees what he is doing as a "spiritual" equivalent of the role of the city watchman. Stationed on the city walls the watchman was charged to be attentive to what was going on outside. When he saw something that required a response it was his job to let everyone know. Habakkuk asked his questions of the Lord for his present situation. He wanted to know what God was doing and how he could work with God. So he asks and then watches for the Lord's response.

2. WRITE IT DOWN

“Then the LORD answered me and said, ‘Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run.’”

When the Lord does respond the first thing he tells Habakkuk to do is to write the vision down. That makes sense because we easily forget and, even if we don't, what we remember God telling us quickly gets overlaid with other things. Having it written down gives us the opportunity to refer back to it and remind ourselves exactly of what we sensed God saying.

Having it written down also makes it far easier to reflect and meditate upon. *“That the one who reads it may run!”* Running straight towards what God wants because we know where we're going. Not dragging our heels behind us but with a clear sense of direction and purpose because we know how we have been led.

3. WAIT PATIENTLY

“For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay.”

Our instant age expects everything to happen now and there is a danger of our expectations of God going the same way. However, timing is everything. Just because we have a vision for where God is taking us does not mean we will get there tomorrow, or even next week. The fall of Babylon that Habakkuk was looking for did not happen for another 60 years or so.

Waiting patiently, however, does not mean a time of passive inactivity until God does His stuff.

4. WORK BY FAITH

“... but the righteous will live by his faith.”

We know God and we know the direction He is leading us in. Because we know this we can live by faith and work by faith towards that goal. Moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day we live by faith in the light of the vision that God has given us of our future. Thus God's vision for our future, for the future of our Church, for the future of our family, etc, can be lived out in the details of our lives today.

Half a dozen years ago I was amazed to see these very principles of Watch; Write; Wait; and Work reflected in a secular leadership manual. While the spiritual dimension is absent Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus pick up on similar themes to Habakkuk in their leadership study, *LEADERS: Strategies for Taking Charge (Harper & Row, 1985)*. In it they analyse the leadership style of 90 business executives. They found no obvious patterns for success, no necessary character type or personality profile which guarantee success. They concluded therefore that transformational leadership appears to be the

marshalling of skills possessed by the majority, but only used by a few. Consequentially all of us have potential for improving the quality of our leadership. The four major themes that slowly emerged from their study demonstrate an amazing similarity to the principles outlined above from Habakkuk 2:1-4.

1 – “Attention through Vision”: Leaders recognise the importance of vision as a bridge to the future. It provides purpose, direction and a focused agenda. They are good askers, listeners, and observers, being sensitive to the past, and aware of the present situation, whilst anticipating the future. Their interpretation of this information into a viable and credible vision for the future empowers and energises others who “buy in” to their conception of the future. For the prophet it was the importance of “Watching” to catch the vision, (v1).

2 – “Meaning Through Communication”: Vision is not enough by itself, it has to be effectively communicated into the very ethos and thinking of a community. This is not achieved through policy documents and vision statements alone, but rather by creating a new way of looking at things, a new corporate culture. This is achieved by communicating the vision, by identifying with it and by personifying it. Habakkuk was told by the Lord to “write” the vision down to effectively communicate it, “... so that he who reads it may run.” (v2)

3 – “Trust Through Positioning”: Trust has to do with the passage of time, with one’s priorities being known and with being predictable. Such trust is the glue that bonds leaders and followers together. Positioning is the least understood part of building trust. It has to do with leaders putting themselves in the position so that their actions accord with making the vision a reality. However, these things do not happen overnight; Bennis & Nanus speak of the need for “courageous patience”, Habakkuk was told, “*The vision is yet for the appointed time ... Though it tarries, wait for it ...*” (v3).

4 – “The Deployment of Self Through Positive Self-Regard”: Leaders work to their strengths and cover their weaknesses; s/he empowers others, especially by accepting them as they are; is thirsty to learn and understand and sees mistakes and set backs as opportunities for learning. Leaders live and work in the light of their vision as they seek to make it a reality. As the prophet saw, “... *the righteous will live by his faith.*” (v4)

It seems to me that when an Old Testament prophet and well researched, contemporary leadership “gurus” are speaking much the same language, maybe we should sit up and take notice as we probably have something useful to learn!

Roger Standing

Roger Standing, recently appointed Area Superintendent of the Southern Area

HOLDING HOLDING



TO THE

VISION VISION



“In a country of blind men, a one eyed man is king,” is an ancient saying, but a very contemporary truth. The ability to see is very important and the Bible question “What do you see?” makes the focus of our seeing and its clear expression a vital part of Christian leadership.

Vision then, at its simplest level, is the ability to see.

Vision casting is the clear articulation and transmission of what you see.

The Bible’s grave statement, oft repeated and oft forgotten, “Where there is no revelation (vision) the people cast off restraint” (Prov 29:18), provides a salutary warning of the consequences of no vision. For those who have grasped this truth, have eyes to see and a vision to pursue, the next peril is maintaining the vision, holding to it through the storms that attempt to blow us off course and the distractions that seek to take our attention away to lesser or other things.

What lessons have I learned over thirty years of ministry based in one church that can help you stay clear sighted, passionate and committed to what you believe God has revealed to you?

1. **Lessons from the laws of Natural Sight**

You must take care of your eyes. Protect them when in dangerous situations. Let tears lubricate them whenever necessary. Realise that to maintain your focus you sometimes need a change of vision. Rest your eyes, either by closing them or by looking at something completely different. Recognition comes from repeatedly seeing the same thing! What do you keep looking at?

I could take the rest of my allotted space with many spiritual applications of the above statements, believing the Bible adage, ‘First the natural, then the spiritual’, but I leave you to apply any or all the points as

appropriate for your life and situation. Reminding you only of the obvious, that if you damage your spiritual eyes, you will impair your ability to see and focus properly, and that is very dangerous for people of vision.

2. Lessons from the Life of Christ

We learn that He was very focused on doing His Father's will. From the day in the temple aged twelve, until His last breath saying, "It is finished."

For us to hold our vision we too must be committed to His will and maintain a life of obedience to His Word and Spirit.

We learn that He was very focused on 'finishing the task.' He kept His eye on His goal and enjoyed great joy in pursuing it. The American motor-racing expert Andrietta said that to drive swiftly and successfully, "You must never focus on what you are trying to avoid." You are drawn to whatever you focus on!!

We need SMART goals – **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**eviewable and **T**ime-related. Goals that help us stay focused. Goals that break the long-term destination into measurable and 'do-able' chunks, but never losing site of the finishing line and the fulfilment of our overall vision.

We learn that He was very focused on preparing the next generation. He chose twelve, so that they might be with Him (Mark 3:13-15). He put huge amounts of time and energy into their development.

Many of us who are based in a pastoral ministry spend 90% of our time with the weakest 10% of our congregation, who can often drain, frustrate and discourage the calling of God in us. Of course we must 'Heal the sick and bind up the injured' as Ezekiel 34 instructs, but many are providing an unhealthy dependency which does not develop maturity. More time spent with 'key' leaders and developing the next generation would stimulate the leader and further energise the vision. It would also provide a platform for the "whole body to do its work", leaving the leader more time and energy to 'cast the vision.'

3. Lessons from our 'Enemies'

Jesus said that He came to give us life but that the thief "Comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10).

When we in Christian leadership lose our confidence or our momentum we are less able to pursue our vision. The devil will use every device available to him to discourage and frustrate you. Often his weapons are the words or actions of well meaning members, sometimes less well meaning agents are his method. All this to distract and discomfort you –

to steal, kill and destroy. He knows the Bible truth, "Strike the shepherd and the sheep are scattered."

Rather than being discouraged, make his opposition fuel for your passion. E Stanley Jones said, "When life kicks you, let it kick you forward." David understood in 2 Samuel 5, when the Philistines attacked him, it was because he was anointed. All anointed people are attacked. Discouragement will come. You will sometimes be frustrated. People don't always see the vision as easily and as quickly as you would wish. Leadership is by definition sometimes a lonely business with lack of support. These are the hazards of our journey, like bunkers to a golfer, always there but usually avoidable. You have a vision, you are anointed, you will be attacked. It is important that, as David, you turn the valley of giants into your place of breakthrough.

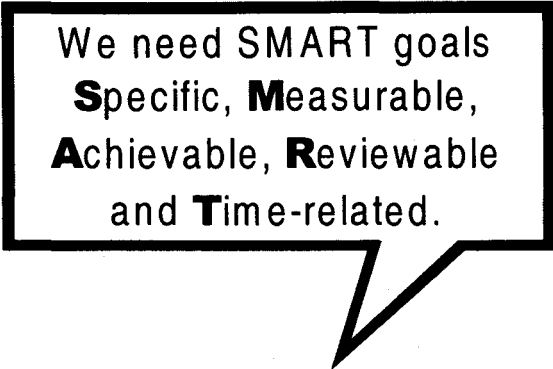
4. And Finally...

Having dealt with our enemies and followed the example of Jesus, we hold to our vision by :

- Encouraging ourselves in the Lord.
- Knowing the power of a God of encouragement.
- Using the gift of prophecy to provide strengthening, encouragement and comfort.
- Having friends who encourage and build us up.
- Believing that He is the Alpha and Omega who says, "It is done."
(Rev 21:6)

Holding fast to our certainty that whatever God has promised He will bring to pass - sometimes soon, often later!

David Shearman, Senior Pastor of the Christian Centre in Nottingham (AOG)



We need SMART goals
Specific, **M**easurable,
Achievable, **R**ewivable
and **T**ime-related.

Grace in a World of Performance

For the past 20 years I have been on a grace journey ever since I was told in my Spurgeon's interview that I appeared to be 'too gracious'. Their observation, I believe, was more of a comment on my temperament than on real grace.

In recent years several books have been written on grace, but I still find it incredibly difficult to define. Grace flows out of God's nature; it is the heart and soul of God and the oil that lubricates our relationship with Him.



Gracious personnel at work

What is Grace?

Grace is undeserved (Rom 6.23), unearned (Eph 2.8,9), unfair (Mt 20.1-16), and cannot be repaid. We may say that it is irrational. However, if it wasn't for grace we wouldn't know God and if it wasn't for grace we couldn't walk with Him.

Most of us will have experienced a graceless moment. The Kursk Mother being injected whilst confronting the authorities stands out as one such moment. However such moments are faced each week within our churches. On observing Advent candles a member complains on the way out about confession, candles and Catholics. Is this prayerful concern for truth and error or a graceless moment? A member challenges girls about the length of

their skirts. Is this prayerful concern for spiritual welfare or a graceless moment? Another member comments to a minister after the morning service, 'I've heard some bad sermons before, but yours was the worst!' Is this prayerful concern for dedication in sermon preparation or a graceless moment? The list could go on and these have all happened.

How do we meet the challenge of finding someone to do a job within the church without exerting emotional blackmail on the congregation so that people can't say 'no' without feeling guilty?

A Performance Based Life

The Weakest Link is the latest popular TV programme, which reflects very well our society. Anne

Robinson exudes sarcasm and has many cruel and hard-hitting phrases. Everyone is trying to be the strongest link and win the pot, but there is only one winner. The many losers are flattened on the way. Performance is what counts.

Our whole world is geared this way. At work we earn our salary, have appraisals to see if we are performing well, which means earning the business money. In education certificates are given for achieving a certain standard and we have league tables for schools. Children have to gain parents' approval and B's are pointed out and A's overlooked. Our culture wants to look good, feel good, make good; in other words to perform well. The 16 year old who wanted breast implants epitomises this.

The result is self-reliance, individualism, pride and self-sufficiency. There's pressure to attain perfection and to always prove oneself. People tend to 'wear masks', feel they are entitled to things and look for scapegoats. Consequently, along the way we meet hurt, humiliation, fear, anger, depression and low self-esteem. Why? Because we can never perform as we would ultimately like. Performance heaps on people enormous burdens.

A Grace Based Life

Not only are we called to enter God's community by grace, but we are also to live in grace once we have entered it. Prayer, bible study, witnessing, service are not Christian works of

performance, or at least they shouldn't be. They are our love response to all God has done for us, a heart response.

We all have two needs. Security - am I loved and accepted? Significance - am I useful, purposeful and worthwhile? When we grasp the full significance of the gospel, we find that these are fulfilled in Christ and we are released to be grace givers and we don't need to run round trying to prove ourselves. Consequently, we are happy to rest in God, in whom He has made us. We focus on responsibilities not rights. We are happy to be transparent and acknowledge when we do wrong. We allow ourselves to be wronged without looking for revenge. We give people space and allow them to say 'no'.

The result of this is that sin becomes the enemy and not people. Life is less stressful because we are not constantly needing to prove ourselves. We rest in 'who we are', not on 'what we do'.

David Seamand in his book 'Healing Grace' contrasts the servant and the child. The servant is accepted for what he does, his workmanship, but the child for who he is, his relationship. The servant is worried each day and wonders if his work will be pleasing, whereas the child is secure in love and in the knowledge of being in the family. Peace of mind comes if the servant proves his worth in his work, but the child is secure in his status. If the servant fails his whole position is at stake and his job may be lost, whereas the

child will be corrected and disciplined and finds confidence in belonging. It is great to be a child as I don't have to perform and produce, and my position as a child is secure.

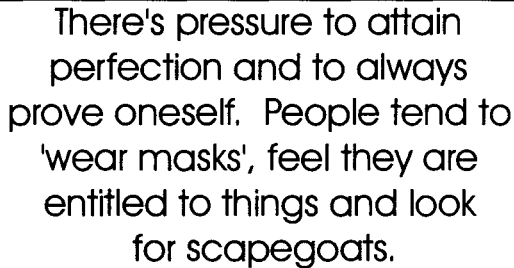
Yes, there are dangers and the world of grace opens the door to laziness, licence, not trying, opting out, etc. However, because I belong to a love, grace community, I will want to demonstrate that love. It isn't earning or achieving; it is demonstrating my sonship and its freewill.

Paul speaks (Eph 1.7,8) of how God's grace has been lavished on

us. 'Lavish' means 'to bestow or spend abundantly' and a thesaurus helps us grasp its extent - overflowing, open-handed, liberal, extravagance, 'to loosen one's purse strings', 'to spare no expense', heaps, bags, piles, lashings, oceans, oodles.

I am on a 'grace' journey and the Gospel I preach is constantly moulded by that journey. Join me in walking in grace, in revelling in grace and in throwing it around. It will truly transform communities. Grace - a great place to be.

Adrian Argile, Pastor of Rawtenstall Baptist Church, Lancashire



There's pressure to attain perfection and to always prove oneself. People tend to 'wear masks', feel they are entitled to things and look for scapegoats.

This is the briefest of outlines of the seminar I led at the Mainstream conference, 2001. I acknowledge some insights from John C. Maxwell.

TEAM MINISTRY



Team Ministry - much talked about, much sought after, much glamourised, but little ever really being practised.

What it isn't

- good idea of an exhausted person lumbering others!
- a collection of people working for the same organisation.

What it is

- Scriptural - plurality of leadership is the Scriptural norm.
- harnessing a group of people, with their strengths and weaknesses, into a unit for the effective fulfilment of vision.

The pros

- share the load
- share the difficulties
- ameliorate the weaknesses
- tune vision
- fine-tune strategy
- combined strengths bring compound growth.

The cons

- subjects your vision to scrutiny
- you don't get the glory
- sometimes you have to wait longer to act
- difficulties in a team hurt more.

Our abilities

If we are able in the following areas we have the potential to release that ability corporately :

- self-awareness enables other-awareness
- individual conscience enables collective conscience
- independent will enables interdependent will
- creative imagination enables creative synergy.

Our influence

Within Team ministry we have the opportunity to help in developing other leaders, rather than followers.

Leaders who develop followers

- >need to be needed
- >focus on weaknesses
- >develop the bottom 20%
- >treat the people the same for “fairness”
- >hoard power
- >spend time with others
- >grow by addition
- >impact only people they touch personally

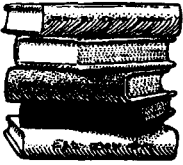
Leaders who develop leaders

- > want to be succeeded
- > focus on strengths
- >develop the top 20%
- >treat their leaders as individuals for impact
- >give power away
- >invest time in others
- >grow by multiplication
- >impact people far beyond their own reach

What is needed

- liking the others!
- same vision
- trust
- respect for others’ views
- patience and understanding
- use the kaleidoscope (the vision is enhanced when shaped by the way that the others see it)
- cabinet responsibility

Rob White
Senior Pastor at Poynton Baptist Church



BOOK REVIEWS

Hope from the Margins: New Ways of Being Church

Stuart Murray; Anne Wilkinson-Hayes

Grove Books Ev 49 February 2000

The author's assertion is that culturally we are led by success; and therefore as the church we tend to look for that by focusing upon "wealthy, large and prosperous churches". Yet conversely God often "seems to work in the margins, in unlikely places, in powerless communities".

Therefore at the heart of the book are thirteen short stories of God at work in the margins. Five of the examples we may not even consider to be "church" - indeed one of the questions constantly posed and explored in this short book is, "What is church?". The authors' definition is "... worshipping groups who have a strong sense of community and shared life at their core. They are primarily geared around mission and service and they have, to greater and lesser extents, a fairly distinctive lifestyle". There is food for thought in that definition alone!

Having told these stories and explored how these might be church, the book then explores two further areas : firstly, how these stories challenge some of our preconceptions of church and secondly, some of the potential shortcomings of these examples.

In all I found this a stimulating and thought provoking read. If you share the authors' belief that the church in Britain is in serious trouble, then there is some encouragement to be found. Many of the stories are located in "difficult" environments, they concern ordinary Christians living out Kingdom values whilst fully engaged with their local context. However, by its nature this is also a book that raises more questions than answers!

Christopher Densham

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Hertfordshire*



THE AWAKENING BY FRIEDRICH ZUENDEL

Plough Publishing House : www.plough.com

This is the story of pastor Johann Christoph Blumhardt's battle against the demonic powers that held a church and

community in "spiritual lethargy". It takes place in Mottlingen, Germany, from 1838-44 and tells about a mighty wave of

repentance and revival that hit the village in the years following the dramatic deliverance of Gottlieb Dittus and her family.

Set against a widespread disbelief in spiritual forces of any kind, the book tells the story of Blumhardt's reluctant discovery of a demonic root to a series of disturbing illnesses afflicting one of his most respected parishioners. At the end of a two-year fight against a variety of demonic spirits, the final spirit departed with the shriek, "Jesus is victor" that was heard by the whole village, and precipitated a powerful work of God impacting the whole region and resulting in Blumhardt's censure by the sceptical church authorities.

This is a very balanced account with no hype or exaggeration. In fact, Blumhardt never wanted it written, and preferred to focus everyone's attention on the revival that followed, not the battle itself - which is the rightful focus of the account. This is the first time this enthralling story has been available in English and is well worth a read.

I came across this book just after we had used the Transformations video within our small groups and it helped to bring a helpful perspective on the spiritual battle that undergirds the messy process of spiritual renewal within a community. I found it so insightful that I bought a copy for each of our Intercessory Team.

Oh, and Tony Campolo says : "Anyone who has doubts about spiritual warfare must read this book. It rings true, and it points the way to victory." And Dave McPherson comments : "As the pastor of many who survived the Columbine Massacre, I have seen that spiritual awakening can only spring from spiritual battle. There is hope here for every community trying to break the spell of stagnation."

Must be good then!

*Craig Millward
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