

All Things Are Yours



"All things are yours" (1 Cor.3:21). If that is the case then why do we have problems with such a mundane thing as money? There is a need for conversions today. We need to see lifestyles converted. We need to see wallets and cheque-books converted. We need to see Church Treasurers converted! I am led to believe that there are churches sitting on huge sums of money in accounts where the highest rates of interest can be earned. Such monies have been buried in the ground and are not even available for use in the economy of the kingdom of God in the form of loans. These funds remain unsanctified while gospel work is being held back for want of finances. In the meantime the existence of these funds vitiates faith in the God who will provide for our needs too. Any uncommitted funds should be redeployed forthwith.

In both our own country and in the world as a whole, the poor churches are in need of the love-gifts of the rich churches. I would recommend that your church budgets in order to give away a fixed proportion of its income and commits itself to increase that proportion each year. For example, your church may decide to give 10% of its income to designated causes during the year, and agree to give 11% or 12% in the next year. In this way a spirit of generosity can be released among us.

There is a particular application which I want to focus upon. In the past we have witnessed the undignified rush and clamour of trying to reach the Home Mission Fund target. Yet surely the money is there somewhere. If our membership is increasing then lack of finance should not remain a continuing hindrance to endeavour. If all things are ours, who is keeping their share for themselves? What is needed to elicit a willing and generous response from our churches?

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Firstly, those who already support the HMF need to be realistic in what they give and to do so at regular intervals throughout the year. I, and my church, are glad to contribute to the HMF and to associate ourselves with the work of the Union. Our denominational structures are lightweight and we are well placed for initiating and sustaining an evangelistic strategy in this country. Furthermore, the number of ministers on the accredited list is growing and brand new opportunities for church planting need to be found to help accommodate this growth.

Secondly, those who administer the HMF need to be radical in their thinking. An approach which has served us well in the 20th century will not be effective in the 21st century. I would argue that the Associations should have much more responsibility for distributing the monies raised within their constituencies.

A move in this direction would help stimulate interest and vision among the congregations in each Association. It would also go some way to meeting the objection of some churches who have a policy of not giving to the HMF because they will only give to specific projects.

Thirdly, those who do not contribute to the HMF need to reconsider their policy. I have no doubt that much good work is being done by these churches, even to the extent of taking financial responsibility for planting new churches in their area. However, what are small churches to do when they are in need of financial assistance and have no natural connections with others except through the denomination? To whom are the hard pressed inner-city, or northern industrial, or isolated rural fellowships to look, if not to those fellow Baptists whom the Lord is prospering? I believe that all of us, whoever we are, have yet to face fully the needs of the hour and the challenge that to whom much is given much will be required. We must all take a long look at our responsibilities and ask "Lord, what do you want us to change?" 'No change' and 'small change' are not the right answers.

Terry Griffith.

Leadership Training in the Local Church.

What I am writing is really a sequel to the article "Growth in Somerset" which appeared in September's Newsletter, written by Adrian Prior-Sankey, one of my Pastoral Assistants. This article concerns the leadership training programme here at Zion Baptist Church and is written at the Editor's request. It is an indication of where we are at the moment in an ongoing process: a snapshot of an early stage in the race. It is certainly not a picture of the medal-winners ceremony!

In his recent book "Leading your church to Growth", Peter Wagner speaks much about "the notorious 200 barrier", (1) as being the major watershed in the development of a church. In essence he is saying that when a church has somewhere between 150 and 250 active members it will stop growing unless there is a fundamental reappraisal of the Pastor's role. The fundamental change required is that the Pastor must stop being a Pastor in the traditional understanding of that word. Wagner's theory is that few pastors and few congregations can cope with that change of role, and as a result few churches grow beyond "the 200 barrier". I think Peter Wagner's figure is high and that probably 150 is nearer the truth. Eddie Gibbs certainly identifies 150 as the upper limit beyond which growth cannot proceed on the traditional Pastor-people pattern of church life. (2) The corollary is now

established as a well known church-growth principle: there must be team ministries within the local church, a plurality of leadership. Delegation is in, "one-man ministry" is out! There has been so much written about I Corinthians 12-14 and Romans 12 and Paul is teaching on Body ministry contained within those chapters that there is no need to say more! Paul's vital words on this matter for us now are in Ephesians 4, however, where the function of leadership is identified as being "to prepare God's people for ministry" (Ephesians 4: 12). The insight crystallized in those few words in the mid-point verse of that letter which has been called "the quintessence of Paul" deserves our closest attention.

To say that "delegation" is the answer to the pressures of leadership in the local church is a very dangerous half truth. It must be delegation **with training**. Delegation without training is as irresponsible as it is unbiblical. Such delegation may seem like the light at the end of the tunnel for a busy minister, but shortly he may discover that the light is a train coming in the opposite direction! Time taken in training pays rich rewards, is a responsible stewardship of the minister's time, and is the way that Jesus spent so much of His time. It cannot start too soon, or else when the congregation grows larger there will be no time for such "non urgent" work, while the Pastor struggles to cope with the increasing demands on his time by a congregation which rightly sees that he is the only person in the church trained to meet their needs. But whose fault is that?!

I am homing in now on the training of these who can exercise pastoral care in the church as Home Group leaders. The leadership training programme (LTC) at Zion is still in its early days but currently consists of a 5-unit package which is presented "Open University style". Most elements in the package are available to all church members, and consciously or unconsciously most members of the church have already embarked on leadership training! By "Open University style" I mean that people work through the units at their own pace and in any order. When someone has completed all five units they have completed the LTC, but one unit "Leading a Group" is only available to people by invitation of the Pastoral Team. The fact that someone is thereby enrolled on the LTC does not simply mean that they will necessarily be appointed to a leadership role on completion of the course. On the other hand, rather as in the case of the merchant navy 'master's ticket', no-one is likely to be appointed to Home Group leadership now who has not completed the LTC. I will outline the five units in the LTC in a logical order, though from what I have said you will realize that they would not necessarily be completed in that sequence.

Firstly, the majority of people coming into membership with the church here will pass through Discipleship Class. Discipleship Class is a rolling programme; there are three classes each year starting in September, January and April and someone can join at any point and complete the sequence during the following series. The great majority of people do start with Week 1 and work through, however, and that is the ideal.

I hold Discipleship Class at the Church on Monday evenings from 7.00 - 8.15p.m., the early start enabling me to run a second unit in the LTC from 8.30 - 10.00p.m. Each week's topic is accompanied by printed notes (an average of 3 sides of A4) and is available to church members on audio-cassette from the Church Tape Library. This makes it possible for someone to 'catch up' if they have to miss a session. About half-way through Discipleship Class I have an extended conversation with each person in the Class to see how the Lord is leading them with regard to Baptism and Church Membership. Discipleship Class is a 12-week series and the topics covered are:

1. What is a Christian?
2. Can I be sure I am a Christian?

3. Believers' Baptism
4. Church Membership
5. The Lord's Supper
6. Prayer
7. How to read the Bible
8. How to find God's will
9. How to deal with temptation
10. How can I serve the Lord?
11. How to win others for Christ
12. Life in the Holy Spirit

The second half of Monday evening is given over to one of the other units in the LTC, which therefore come round about once every twelve or fifteen months. As with Discipleship Class all the Monday night classes have accompanying notes, and by the end of next year I hope to have completed the process of making a recording of each session to accompany the notes. By the same time I hope to have completed the transfer of all my class notes onto word processor, so facilitating alteration and up-dating of the material. The computer then types the updated stencil ready for duplicating in the usual way. Not only does this save an enormous amount of typing time but it is a way of producing error-free stencils.

The other units in the LTC are of the same kind of length to Discipleship Class. The The Life in the Spirit seminars provides both teaching and an experimental introduction to the charismatic dimension of the Christian life. I call Weeks 1 - 6 "Open to God" and the aim of the series is quite simply to lead people into a conscious experience of the baptism in/fulness of the Holy Spirit. Weeks 6 - 10 I call "Worship Workshop", and the aim of this series is the development and use of spiritual gifts both in the individual devotional life and during open worship as a Church Fellowship. The complete 11 week sequence is as follows:-

Open to God

1. Baptism in the Holy Spirit: - the Biblical Teaching
2. - a present day experience
3. - barriers to blessing
4. (Personal conversation with Pastor)
5. - receiving the blessing
6. - go on being filled

Worship Workshop

1. The gates of thanksgiving . . . the courts of praise
2. The ingredients of worship
3. Listening to God

4. Spiritual gifts in worship
5. Discerning and developing a theme in worship

Bible School is a 14-week sequence and provides an introduction to the evangelical foundation of the Christian life - what we believe and why we believe it. The "syllabus" is our Church Confession of Faith, which is very similar to the Evangelical Alliance Basis of Faith. The 14-week sequences is as follows:-

1. The fall of man
2. Judgment
3. Jesus the Son of God
4. The new birth
5. The resurrection of Jesus
6. The ascension of Jesus
7. The Holy Spirit
8. God the Trinity
9. Eternal Security
10. The nature and existence of God
11. The Word of God
12. Creation
13. Providence and miracles
14. The second coming of Jesus

Network is a 13-week sequence of training in personal evangelism; which includes experiencing at least one arranged evangelistic visit with a church member experienced in this work. Weeks 1-4 are an introduction to our Teach and Reach (TR) programme. (Evangelism Explosion) (3).

Week 5 is an introduction to "Good News down the street" - an approach developed from TR (4).

Week 6 is an introduction to "Meet Jesus", an evangelistic approach of my own devising which we use here.

Week 7 - using a booklet.

Week 8 - counselling children.

Week 9 - follow-up procedures.

Week 10 - counselling procedures at Zion.

Week 11 and 12 - dealing with cults ("Jehovah's Witnesses" and "Mormons").

Week 13 - handling some common barriers to belief.

Next year we plan to use the new video series "Person to Person" (5) as our 1987 programme of training in personal evangelism. This will be in place of a 1987 Network programme, but our Teach and Reach programme will continue.

Finally the course "Leading a Group" to which people only come by invitation from the Pastoral Team, deals specifically with leadership qualities and skills. It is a 9-week sequence, as follows:-

1. Qualities of Christian leadership
2. Coping with the cost of leadership
3. The process of leadership
4. Leading a Bible Study
5. Leading the Group in prayer
6. Leading the Group in worship
7. The leader's relationship with individual Group members
8. Pastoral care
9. Putting it all together

This course is of the most recent development. I am running it for the second time this winter. It contains very little in the area of counselling skills, since this is an aspect of leadership which needs its own training programme and I haven't got round to writing such a programme yet!! This also represents "where we are at". A small counselling team is emerging at Zion which I hope to start extending to the entire Home Group leadership by this time next year. The counselling strategy I am using is an eclectic one, but is broadly based on the twin approaches of Biblical counselling and Prayer counselling. At the moment those I identify as having a counselling gift are being sent for a week's residential training in Biblical counselling with CWR (6), together with working through a short reading list. As an introduction to Prayer counselling we also hope to have our first couple going on a School of Prayer Counselling shortly (7), and again use a reading list. Moreover Christian counselling, like personal evangelism, is one of those aspects of the Christian life which is "better felt than tell't" You only really learn by apprenticeship training - accompanying a skilled person "on the job". Evangelistically this is why Teach and Reach is such effective training in personal evangelism. Pastorally I believe the way forward in training counsellors is probably to include a Home Group leader or his wife as an observer in a counselling session which involves a member of their Home Group with the counsellee's agreement, of course, but only in the context of a conscious restatement of the sacred trust of confidentiality.

I have reached my word limit. I have not found space to speak about "in service" training for Home Group leaders via the monthly team meetings or the annual leadership retreat, nor the whole question of input for the Pastor himself. I am increasingly aware of the crucial nature of leadership training in the local church and I have given some indication of how this currently operates at Zion for one type of leadership - that of Home Group leadership. I shall be most grateful to hear from you of effective training programmes being used in your church from which I could learn, so that "speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ". (Ephesians 4 : 15).

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NOTES

- (1) Wagner, C.P. Leading your Church to Growth pp.55f. MARC Europe and BCGA 1986.
- (2) Gibbs, E. I Believe in Church Growth p. 382 Hodder 1981.
- (3) Evangelism Explosion, 228 Shirley Road, Southampton. Hampshire, SO1 3HR.
- 4) Wooderson, M. Good News Down the Street Grove Booklets Pastoral Series No. 9.
- (5) Person to Person, P.O. Box 240, Swindon, SN5 7HA. This training programme is sponsored by The Bible Society, Campus Crusade and Scripture Union.
- (6) Institute in Christian Counselling. Write to CWR, P.O. Box 11, Walton on Thames, Surrey KT12 1BD.
- (7) School of Prayer Counselling. Contact "Wholeness through Christ", Cambrian House, Nantmawr, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY10 9HL.

"My Best Men Are Women"



(This article follows one published in the previous issue of Mainstream Newsletter. That article 'Do you see this woman?' was written by Trisha Dale and considers Jesus' attitude to women. Jane's article sets out to challenge our assumptions about the essential maleness of leadership. Both were written by mutual consultation).

"My best men are women" said William Booth. He, Hudson Taylor, David Watson and St. Paul, were willing to be co-workers with women. All these men were exceptional, not just for their Spirit-filled lives, or their soul-winning, but also for their ability to see that women as well as men are called to work and lead in the harvest field.

The question of women in ministry is an instance of the larger issue of how women and men ought to relate in life generally. Our commitment must be to seek for a consistency in God's view of women and then to bring our thinking and practice into line with this. Men and women are made equally in the image of God, and Jesus' treatment of women is crucial to any view of what women may or may not do (1).

'I would have given her (the church) my head, my hand, my heart. She would not have them. She told me to go back and do crochet in my mother's drawing room,' wrote Florence Nightingale (2). Dorothy Sayers in the 1940's commented that the church treated females as 'The women, God help us' or 'The ladies, God bless them' (3). There is a growing awareness that women are still being discriminated against as a group in the church, as is shown clearly by the thorough survey of Baptist 'Reactions to Women in Ministry' reported in a recent Baptist Quarterly (4).

Graham Cray has spoken of the three time-bombs that the Holy Spirit planted in the Scripture for the church, using Paul, the accused mysogynist:-

'You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek,
slave nor free,
male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus', (Gal. 3:26-28)

These time-bombs had delayed-action fuses, with the first two shorter than the last. In our day the time-bomb to destroy the inequalities between men and women has gone off.

Perversely, we choose to use other passages penned by Paul to debar women, even when gifted, from leading. By doing so we make Paul's teaching on the nature of women inconsistent with the practice of Jesus. We are inconsistent ourselves if we let women missionaries overseas do jobs that we would exclude them from here.

Resistance to the suggestion that women can and should be in leadership in Christian ministry comes in many forms. Three threats used against it have been identified by Patricia Gundry (2). The first is: 'You will lose your femininity,' This argument has been used before, in an attempt to silence the women who spoke publicly for the abolition of slavery. Such a threat is insidious, because it questions the very essence of the woman. It suggests that femininity can be lost, and that femininity is defined by what a woman does rather than what she is. This is fallacious even when applied to daily tasks; a woman who enjoys carpentry is surely not unfeminine by definition? Scripture does not give strict role models for the sexes, Godliness, the main pre-requisite of Christian ministry, is possible for both women and men.

The second accusation Gundry discusses is: 'You will destroy society, including home and family.' This emotive threat can play on people's fears, especially in an age when the family is under attack. It is true that the practice of equality for man and women would bring changes; the notion of hierarchical rule of husband over wife would be challenged. These need not be destructive changes. Women and no doubt men in both home and church are often held in unnecessarily narrow and restricted roles. The principle of mutual submission described in Ephesians 5 applies to both sexes and needs working out in family, church and society.

Gundry cites a third argument; 'You deny the inspiration of Scripture.' This argument is guaranteed to silence some. What it really means is; if you don't agree with my interpretation of Scripture you are wrong. The Christian who is committed to an evangelical view of Scripture must work within the framework of accepted principles of interpretation. Commentators do not agree on the interpretation of the relevant half a dozen passages regarding women in the church, but the contexts of all these passages are similar. There is a concern that unbelievers should not mis-interpret the freedom of the Christians. Instructions are given on the handling of this new freedom and on their attitudes to the re-established equality of men and women. If God intended to exclude women from leadership roles in the church for all time the New Testament is remarkably silent or amazingly unclear.

1 Timothy 2:11-15 has generally been used as the proof text to teach that women should not be teaching and leading churches. The traditional interpretation majors on the apparent ban; 'I am not permitting a woman to teach or to have authority over a man but to be quiet... '(v.12). Given the untaught state of women Paul had no other choice or practice but Walfred Fahrer (5) points out that v.11, "Women should learn", not v.12, contains the imperative of the passage. Jesus himself had women 'sit at his feet' and Paul is advocating this, Verses 13 and 14 stand in support of women learning since if they do not they will be prone to deception. Adam was not formed alone, but 'then' Eve to complement him. Paul's restriction did not apply to women who knew the Scripture such as Priscilla and Phoebe. Nor need it be a

permanent restriction. Fahrer states that neither the tense nor the context allow a 'once for all' interpretation.

Michael Green's comments (6) on the use of *authentein* ('have authority over' in 1 Timothy 2:12) are enlightening. He explains that this verb is used nowhere else in Scripture, but that it is used by Euripides, Philomenus and Phrynicus in the context of eroticism. Paul may be saying that he does not allow women to teach men sexual immorality.

Why has so much time been given to finding reasons for keeping Christian leadership as male, and so little time been given to studying the women active in the early church and throughout history?

The women were constant in prayer along with the twelve (Acts 1:14) and were involved in the election of Matthias. It was and is daughters as well as sons, both men and women who received the power and the gifts of the Holy Spirit from Pentecost onwards. Paul allowed women to pray and prophesy in public worship and Philip was blessed with four prophesying daughters. Paul's first convert in Europe was a woman, Lydia and other women gave their homes for the head-quarters of the early church. Priscilla, who on the majority of occasions in the New Testament is mentioned before her husband, joined in teaching Apollos. Euodia and Syntyche contended at Paul's side in spreading the gospel. In the book of Romans chapter sixteen we read of Mary, Tryphena and Tryphosa who worked hard in Jesus. The same chapter speaks of Junias who if she was not an apostle was of note among them. The ancient church clearly defined the role of deacon and widow and Phoebe was one of these deacons. She was not just a patron of the church but assisted in leadership.

As we seek for a consistency in our treatment of women we are not just seeking for a consistency in our current practice. We seek to be consistent with Jesus' treatment of women and the teaching of the early church.

Steps towards a Resolution

1. The mutual humanity of men and women needs to be taught and partnership called for.
2. Biblical patterns of servant authority need to be fostered. Leadership and ministries are available to prepare others for service. The Holy Spirit gifts all believers - women as well as men, singles as well as couples.
3. Neglected passages of Scripture where God's female characteristics are mentioned should be preached on.
4. We need to explore and be committed to a biblical view of sexuality.
5. Critiques of non-Christian views of sexuality used by both Christians and non-Christians should be made.
6. We need to encourage and perpetuate a commitment to self worth.
7. We need to commit ourselves to evangelising with the whole gospel. The prophetic role of the church in secular society is to proclaim verbally and visually what real humanness is. We are to demonstrate that men and women are made equally in the image of God and in our relationships together show the Oneness of God.
8. We need to abolish sexist language in prayers, songs and from our conversation. Where Scripture has been unhelpfully translated we need to make this plain. The full import of linguistics, reinforcing conscious and subconscious assumptions, is only just being realised.
9. Groupings of men and women need to be fostered at all levels. These can act as support for those seeking equality and justice but also be the place to explore the consequences of the new developments in partnership. This can also be the place to raise the consciousness of womanhood and encourage gifted but reluctant women to take their full place in the body of Christ.

Jane Hassell,
Bow, London.

NOTES

1. Trisha Dale, "Do you see this woman?" Mainstream, September 1986.
2. Patricia Gundry, Woman Be Free! to be God's Woman, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1977.
3. Dorothy L. Sayers, "Unpopular Opinions - the human not quite human?", 1946.
4. Baptist Quarterly, July 1986.
5. Walfred J. Fahrer, 'Questioning the traditional interpretation of 1 Timothy 1:11-15', 1984, (obtainable from the London Mennonite Centre).
6. Michael Green, To Corinth with Love, Hodder and Stoughton, 1982, especially pp. 152-163.



An Evangelism Action Group

It was in 1979 that we accepted the call to minister at John Bunyan Baptist Church, Cowley, towards the end of what proved to be a three year interregnum. We held, I recall, an informal afternoon's fellowship (in addition to the preaching and meetings with the Pastoral Committee) prior to the Church Meeting. At this, Jane and I were able to share something of our vision for the future and answer questions. One such was whether we would "have them knocking on doors" and the way it was put suggested clearly that a number of coronaries would not be far away if we did! There was also, though, a great-heartedness that said that if this young couple can rescue this particular Church from some doldrums and bring in some new people, then we'll back them. So in 1980, we began. In many ways, the first 2 years were spent without very conscious evangelistic effort, visiting, getting to know our people, shepherding in the fringe and concentrating on winning a number of black Christians into membership from whom, subsequently, so much good has flowed. It was not long before we realised one of the key truths of ministry. Important as preaching and worship always are, the key to much Church Growth-under God-lies in relationships. As you show a care and interest in people, so they in return, often show an interest in your Lord, your Church and you.

It was only then in 1983, that the clear need for more of an evangelistic strategy emerged. The Risen Lord was graciously keeping us more than busy without too much conscious effort on our part! Don Doubles' visit to Oxford changed all that. Helped by a Regents' Park College student, placed with us, we had begun to tease out some of the reservations and fears about evangelism in our people and to put it firmly on the agenda of our Church Life. The urgency became apparent when we had something like 30 people referred to us from the Summer Crusade within a fortnight! We were overwhelmed and I was swamped. "Never again", I determined and so I launched our Evangelism Action Group with a mixture of prayer, personal and open invitations. 1984 it was and Mission England upon us. Using an adapted version of the excellent materials provided by Lewis Misselbrook and the (then) Mission Department, over 6 sessions, I trained a dozen or so people in such basics of evangelism as a testimony, sharing the Good News and caring for new Christians. Doug Cooke, who trained me similarly as a teenager, said that his aim was to be a "spiritual midwife, able and competent to assist at a new birth". So, too, was mine. It was Spurgeon who, in "The Soul Winner", wrote: "How very sweet it is to have those around you whom you have brought to the Saviour". I have that pleasure and the course helped to show others the way as well. At least 6 of the original group now felt able to serve as counsellors if needed. Both The Good News Crusade and Mission England led to new members and at least one baptismal Service (each!) in this Church.

By 1985, we had matured enough to tackle a far more ambitious project. Working in close co-operation with a local house-fellowship of the St. Aldates' Church, we undertook a Mission of our own. The three thousand homes in the immediate vicinity of the Church were all leafleted and asked about the subjects they would like to be included in a very different sort of September Mission. 500 of these homes were also visited personally and the (adapted) Church and Neighbourhood Survey used. These surveys were then processed by computer - a fact which created interest and an article on Radio Oxford. Using all this information, a programme was worked out relating the Christian Faith to the matters and concerns which the people of Cowley had themselves indicated. A second 3000 mailing was then undertaken giving details and an invitation to the events. The 500 visited homes were also sent a personal letter from me thanking them for their involvement and including a precis of the computer results. The Mission week, in the end, looked like this:

MONDAY: GOD IN COWLEY - slides of the area past and present and local peoples' testimonies.

TUESDAY: APOCALYPSE NOW? - Nuclear and end of the world issues.

WEDNESDAY: HAPPY FAMILIES - a party for children and an any questions panel for parents and others

THURSDAY: LIFE AFTER LIFE? - and OAP's lunch followed by Christians' testimonies in retirement, loneliness and bereavement.

FRIDAY: KNOWING GOD? - a clear presentation of how to know God as He is in Jesus.

We commend this new approach to local Mission to other fellowships. It began with first listening and only later proclaiming. It had events for all ages and there were no coronaries! If any Mainstream reader would like more details of how we set about this - we think - original local Mission Tel: OXF.777540 and I will be delighted to share more specific details and ideas. A project next year for your Church under God?!

Our 1986 plans include the use of Christian videos after a short Communion Service; using Christians to introduce the carols at the Candlelight Service (!) and, in conjunction with others, using our rooms for a series of Full Gospel Testimony evenings - no posh meals but good old working class sandwiches and tea instead! After some three years of the group's existence, I have just handed over the leadership of the EAG to one of our new members (a former President of the local Full Gospel Businessman's' fellowship). So important do I consider this group, however, that I continue to serve as its Minutes Secretary. As a ginger group for new approaches to evangelism, the group has been and is invaluable. It is accepted now as a major organisation in this Church's life. The Holy Spirit, writes Rob Warner, is "always spurring the Church on to fresh evangelism". At JBBC, it is often the Evangelism Action Group He has used in this task. Complemented by what has been called "the witnessing qualities of lives lived in the divine love" and by an increasing freedom among some in personal witnessing, an Evangelism Action Group can be very much a vehicle of God for the many opportunities of local church life in the 1980's. I commend them heartily - especially if, as yet, you have no such group around you and your particular "life-boat station".

"GOD only gives us as many spiritual babies as He knows we can handle"
(Nick Cuthbert).

Mike Bochenski,
Cowley, Oxford.

Door to Door Evangelism....

BY BERT BEESON



The need for evangelism has never been so great - as someone put it "Compared with evangelism, everything that is happening in the Church is like rearranging the furniture when the house is on fire"!

I write as one who, at the age of 59, faced redundancy and all that involves. I was told "At your age it's nearly impossible to place you". But I loved the Lord and felt He would give me a job. I am grateful for a caring Pastor and together we decided that I should carry out a little visiting while I waited for a job. Four and a half years have passed and, looking back, I believe the Lord has supplied the task He wanted me to do. At first I didn't really warm to the idea, speaking to strangers on their own doorsteps was a daunting prospect. How encouraging that at the first door the lady said, "It's so nice to see the 'real' church coming around".

The area I work in is a large Council Estate on the eastern edge of Southampton. It has flats and houses, some privately owned, and many warden controlled places for the elderly. About a third of the flats contain one one-parent families, there is a drug problem and unemployment is high.

I have found very little anti-God feeling in those I speak to but a lot of anti-Church feeling. The Church is dismissed as remote and irrelevant, a private cult and a selfish one, meeting in a large uninviting chilly building once a week.

We have to earn the right to preach the Gospel. Unless we identify and seek to meet the needs of people we will not be given the privilege of preaching the good news to them. To the hungry man, good news is a loaf of bread, to the unemployed, a job; to the lonely a friend and to the bereaved a listening ear; to those who are hurting, an understanding heart. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20v21). He served not only in words but in works. He fed the hungry, washed dirty feet, healed the sick and gave comfort to the sad. Now He sends us as he Father sent Him. Our life must be like His, a life of service to others. Our Lord did not touch down like a visitor from outer space. He took our humanity, flesh, blood and culture.

Now He sends us into the world to identify with others - without losing our Christian identity. Yet we seem to be content to shout the gospel from a distance. How different the cults are! They are prepared to whisper it in the ears of those they want to influence. In my own estate the Mormons have built a new church whose congregation has been built on a door-to-door ministry.

Jesus also said, "Love your neighbour". How can I claim to do this if I know the good news yet keep it from those I live amongst?

It is Scriptural for older men to dream dreams. My dream is that every Baptist Church will have a gifted person called to do door to door evangelism, because it enables the Church to identify individual needs. Behind every door there is a problem. We can't meet every need but we can show that the Church cares.

The best piece of advice I was given was "Go out, be yourself and tell them what Christ has done for you". Oh! I've made mistakes, but the Lord can even use these. I am finding that people are eager to listen but they are saying to the Church "If you have good news, come and tell us, don't shout it from a distance."

We have seen a steady trickle of people coming to the Lord and joining the Church. There is Jean, a lovely Scottish lady who I visited for 18 months and is now a baptised Christian. I had the joy of leading Joan to the Lord in her sitting room while her Mother, Maud listened. Maud asked me to visit her the next day and I led her to the Lord. She is now in a Rest Home and witnessing to other residents. One day I spoke for a couple of hours with Ken, Joan's husband leaving him with a booklet. The next morning he committed his life to the Lord. Sylvia was a member of the Mormon Church. I knocked on the door just when she was waiting for someone to help her find the Lord Jesus Christ. Ray and Dot are now senior citizens but gave their hearts to the Lord after a visit and are blessing us with their desire to learn about our Lord. These are a few of those who have come to the Lord through door to door visiting. If space allowed I could tell of many others.

I believe this form of evangelism has been neglected by today's Church. I know it is not the answer to all our evangelism needs but it is profitable. I hope I may have put an idea into someone's mind who has the gift of personal work.

Bert Beeson. 53 Warburton Road, Thornhill, Southampton.
Tel: Bursledon 5662.



Holy Smoke

(Being an essay review of Journey Towards Holiness by Alan Kreider, Marshall Pickering, 252pp. £4.95 1986. This book is the expansion and development of the address given at the Mainstream Conference 1984).

'Holiness' has been put in a box marked 'religious', separate from our everyday world. Our Evangelical heritage seems to see it more in personal ethics than political action; and for the charismatic, 'holiness' is more relevant as a precondition for physical healing than social transformation.

Alan kreider's book comes into this with delightful freshness, excitement and joy. His book is full of superb story-telling, apposite humour and relevant application. He tells me what deep-down I really believed all along. Our encounter with the Holy God who has liberated us, is the motivation and strength for our holy living; a holy living which, far from requiring an escape from involvement in the world, actually demands it. Corporately in the Church, we are to incarnate a style of living together, which is different from the World, and is a challenge to it as much in its political as in its sexual behaviour. This is a vision I can adhere to.

Alan Kreider identifies four aspects of holiness: 1) Living Force - our encounter with God as Wholly Other, 2) Separateness - from the World, 3) God-likeness, 4 Dynamism - power and change, the forward movement of God's plan in history.

These four occur again and again as he turns to survey the story of God's people in Scripture. This awareness of the broad sweep of history rescues us from tired proof-texting. We see instead God's intention to create a Holy Nation to be his agent in restoring this fallen world. Through the repeated story of apostasy and renewal this basic theme recurs, operating now in God's new Israel, the Church.

In this perspective, God's Grace is always seen in concrete historical acts of liberation, rather than being an abstract 'religious' category, and our lifestyle is to be a mirror-response of similar acts of concrete grace. We are to be liberators of others because we have been liberated. We are to be Holy as God is Holy - and in the same way. Therefore, the liberation from

slavery in Egypt becomes a motivation for a lifestyle different from that of the surrounding nations, founded on concrete grace (hence the Torah laws of Sabbath and Jubilee release).

At the root of their deviance and nonconformity lay the question of where their trust lay. Yahweh was the source of both (economic) Provision and (military) Protection, rather than commonsense, pragmatic and sensible arrangements for economic production, or a sound defence policy. Instead they were dependent upon continuing miraculous intervention by God. Do we really believe in the supernatural when it comes to such hard-headed issues as economics and defence?

Yahweh provided for his people and he protected them. Manna in the wilderness was hardly an example of recommended menu-planning! And its two principles - sufficiency (having no more than enough) and equality - put the brakes on any class divisions based on economics. Holy War differed from any modern defence programme, not only because it forbade any economic profit from warring against neighbouring cities (by destroying the loot!), but also in its insistence on the numerical and technological inferiority of the Israelites (viz. the ban on Hi-Tech weaponry such as Iron Chariots).

Idolatry arose when this crazy faith in an invisible God ran out, and the commonsense gods of the surrounding nations seemed a better bet in safeguarding their national future. They even ousted Yahweh from his throne and demanded a human, military king "like the other nations". This idolatry of power led to three areas of sin for which they were finally punished by exile - social injustice, militarism and rotten worship.

But God's plan for a Holy Nation is continued in Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom, on earth, now, and the setting up of a new trans-national, multi-racial and counter-cultural community of God's people - the Church.

The Gospel didn't reject the political hopes of the Old Testament in favour of a 'spiritualised' message. Rather the political unit which is the focus of the plan has shifted from a local geographically-based ethnic group to a trans-global, international community. And this nation, like any other, needs an economic base. So we have Jesus' proclamation of Jubilee (1k.4.18f) - and its implementation by the early church (Acts 2.44f; 4.32ff). Such practical economic 'koinonia' is essential to the kingdom, since no political unit can exist without a sufficient material base, and no individual will find it easy to live a deviant lifestyle if his or her means of subsistence is wholly dependent on the surrounding society. And this sharing follows on from, and is empowered by, the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost. The Charismatic Spirit is thus a Political Spirit - the power for an alternative society, a new polity.

As well as Provision, there is also Protection. Since this Kingdom welcomes Samaritans and Gentiles, and even sees a role for the Roman oppressors (Rom.13), then there is no place for the Holy War. Or rather it is transformed into enemy-loving and mission. We get rid of our (and God's) enemies not by killing them, but by loving them and recruiting them for the same Kingdom that we belong to. (Rom.12.17ff). In view of this, what place can there be for nuclear weapons operated by Christians being used against Russian cities where there are more believers than in many of our own? What becomes of our international, transglobal community then?

The problem is obvious, we have lost our holiness. Since Constantine we have compromised with the status quo in return for some dubious benefits. Our society is somehow deemed to be 'christian', and yet christian ethics (at least as 'Christ' taught them) aren't applied to it. Jesus' teachings about wealth and enemy-loving are considered unrealistic in the public realm, applicable only (if at all) privately and personally. This is because

we identify with our earthly nation, or class, or ethnic group rather than with God's new Holy Nation. Although this hasn't stopped us, inconsistently, trying to impose our sexual morality on society, while because of our stake in the system we ignore the twin sins of unrestricted economic growth and militarism. our social criticism is limited to the 'moral' rather than the 'political' (as we call it). In other words, to those issues which defend, not those which threaten, our (compromised) way of life.

Alan Kreider's book calls for a return to real holiness, to risk-taking and deviance; an authentic holiness reflecting the fourfold pattern of its origin:

1) Our worship, whatever its style, must be a genuine encounter with the Living force of the Holy One, wholly different from, and originating outside the confines of, this unjust society, and thus able to declare judgement on it through our prophetic words and actions. 2) Rather than being accommodated to the spirit of the age, we need to embrace separateness, not geographically but in a nonconformist lifestyle. 3) In our attempts to be God-like, we must not limit it to devotional Quiet Times, but begin to really imitate Jesus in his enemy-loving, prophetic proclamation of God's subversive Kingdom. 4) And because the Kingdom is dynamic, on the offensive against injustice and sin, we will be calling individuals and political structures back to holy obedience.

This means being involved in society as both salt and light. Giving flavour and enhancing life, and this corporately as the church, a "cluster of lights". It is not a task for isolated heroes or saints, rather it is a calling of the whole body as we present an alternative model of political life and speak prophetically to the world about its sin.

This is a vision that gets me going, and Alan Kreider goes on to detail practical suggestions for how individuals, families and churches can begin to implement it. How does it affect my choice of career, of living place, of insurance policy? Do my decisions reflect trust in God or the commonsense consensus of the 'nations'?

Nevertheless, despite my enthusiasm for the book, there are two issues about which I do have some questions:

1. "Journey Towards Holiness" articulates the Anabaptist position on the relation of Church and Kingdom. The Church, not the 'nations', is the agent for the realisation of God's Kingdom project. Alan Kreider rejects the traditional danger of withdrawal from social involvement which this option has sometimes given rise to, but a dilemma still remains.

It may be theologically true that the Church is the agent of historical change, but is it true sociologically? is it true in fact? If politics involves immediate practical change in such things as minimum wage legislation, and decent pensions, rather than eschatological visions, who is likely to achieve such measures - a political party or the Church? Who is really the agent of historical change?

Also, Alan Kreider says that we cannot apply principles such as Sabbath and Jubilee to contemporary politics, rather we proceed by means of 'stepping stones' towards our final goals. This is a problem, because it doesn't seem obvious how we apply such concepts. From the book it looks like the primary application is to those people who are in covenant with Yahweh having been liberated by Him, rather than the heathen nations. So how does it apply to a secular State which disavows any ecclesiastical allegiance?

Some Liberation Theology takes the view that the Kingdom is present wherever equalisation happens in the world, regardless of who achieves it. And reformed theology maintains that since Israel functioned as both a political

and a religious entity, then the norms embodied in Torah apply, though differently, to both Nation and Church. Some such theory may well be needed to show us how Alan Kreider's book applies to both the Holy Nation and the secular State.

2) Because 'Holiness' is the calling of believers corporately in the Kingdom Community, the Church, Alan Kreider's book immediately poses the question of recruiting people for the Kingdom. However, he gives relatively little space to this.

Even though he does talk about sharing our faith in Jesus, about public witness and mission, this is a very minor theme; and understandably since his intention is to recapture the language of 'Holiness' and 'Kingdom' from those who have excluded the 'political' from christian discourse.

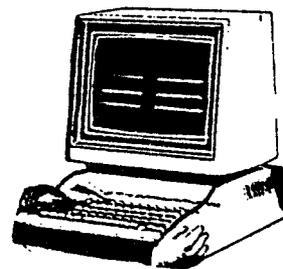
However, his whole theme does cry out for such a treatment - the call for an evangelistic project to enable the economic practice, the creation of an actual, empirical community of converted people who will incarnate this deviant Kingdom lifestyle. The Anabaptist view necessitates an evangelistic thrust to build that Holy Nation of the redeemed. But where Alan Kreider does refer to 'public witness', for example, he has in mind political protest, rather than direct appeals to join the Kingdom. Now while the 'evangel' of the Kingdom does clearly include such social action it also includes the latter as well.

I doubt whether Alan Kreider would disagree with this, especially as it is implicit in his main argument. This is really a question I myself am trying to think through. There seems to be a division among those who talk about the 'Kingdom', between those who emphasise the political and those who stress the evangelistic; and both can claim the Anabaptist mantle. What we really need is an approach which combines the two in a fully-orbed vision of the Kingdom for today.

Alan Kreider's book goes a long way towards doing this, recapturing the social and corporate aspects of our calling to holiness. If we actually use the book to dig deep into Jesus' teaching and then together begin to do it, it will mean a radical change in most of our churches. I wonder if we're ready for that?

Steve Latham,
Hackney, London.

SECRETARY'S SCRATCHPAD

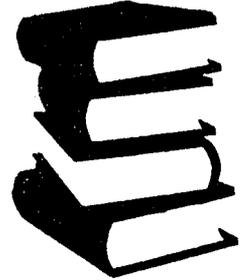


I am writing prior to attending the Brighton Conference on Prayer led by John Wimber. Such conferences do point out some things about our faith which are important. We must be glad for the emphasis on prayer in our day. If there is anything that bothers me about Christianity in Britain today, it is the danger of shallowness. Unless we begin to teach and train new Christians to take up the traditional disciplines of personal and corporate devotional life, we shall inevitably breed a generation of Christians whose faith is unlikely to survive under trial.

Of course, our corporate church life is vital for producing and encouraging us in the pursuit of our relationship with God. I was recently sent a copy of an excellent book entitled "THE CHURCH ON THE WAY" by Jack Hayford. It describes how God took a small pentecostal church in California and, through the openness of the Pastor, transformed it by conversion growth into a major means of preaching the Good News. I found it very honest and helpful to the extent that a copy was purchased for each of my church leaders.

Finally, following what I wrote in the last newsletter about the changing patterns of ministry, I have noted with concern that about 50% of newly established "team ministries" end in failure. Usually one of the co-workers cannot cope with the demands of a whole new set of circumstances, relationships and work patterns that emerge. I would be grateful to hear from churches that have moved from single full-time worker to multiple ministry even if it was unsuccessful. It would be especially useful to know details of what kind of team was formed, why it worked (or failed) and what effect this had on the church and its witness.

David Slater,
Kingsbridge.



Reviews

1. David M. Howard - The Dream That would not Die Paternoster 1986, £6.95.

What on earth is WEF? The initials stand for the World Evangelical Fellowship. It's purposes are: to further the Gospel, to defend and confirm the Gospel and to enable fellowship in the Gospel to take place across the world. Its founders were committed to the belief that a worldwide forum where evangelical views could be discussed and published was essential. It was never meant to be a mere talking-shop, but a place where evangelical unity in action could take place. It aimed to foster the cause of evangelicalism in third world countries and also to express evangelical social concern in needy parts of the world.

Sadly, in spite of numerous gifted leaders and many attempts to find an organisational structure which would enable it to grow, the WEF has always suffered from a shortage of funds and has never really assumed the place in the worldwide Church that its founders hoped for. It is today probably more alive than it has ever been and its Theological Commission is certainly making an impact with a stream of worthwhile publications. In spite of the vision of national leaders and jet-setting, it is unlikely ever to capture the imagination of the Church as a whole. This is not to condemn the idea or to question its merit, it is simply to face the reality that organisations at such a level seem remote from ordinary church members. The weakness of WEF was further complicated by the emergence of a new World Group following the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation in 1974. Since then the Lausanne Continuation Committee has operated in a similar area to WEF with perhaps more clout than WEF ever had. I, along with others have questioned the wisdom of two such world organisations and have argued through the British Evangelical Alliance on a number of occasions that they should get their act together.

Sadly that still does not seem to be a possibility.

As one who has had lots of questions about the work of WEF, I am grateful to David Howard for his clearly written history of the birth and growth of the WEF. It arose out of the British Evangelical Alliance, came into existence as a separate group in 1951 and has played a very useful role in encouraging many of the younger Evangelical Alliances in third world countries. Those who seek to understand the role of evangelicalism around the World will find this an indispensable guide. In reading the history, it was interesting to note once again, the significant role played by John Stott and Gilbert Kirby. Only eternity will reveal just how much these British Christian Leaders have contributed to the Church worldwide.

Derek Tidball,
Plymouth.

THE CHURCH : God's Agent for Change Edited by Bruce Nicholls, Paternoster/WEF Theological Commission, 1986 299pp. £7.95.

Thirty-one papers presented to a theological conference may not sound very exciting. But they are. They all relate, as the title makes clear, to the nature and role of the church. We may well feel that we know all the answers. It is, after all, our understanding of the local church which serves, in part, to distinguish us from others. But there is much in this collection which would stimulate and challenge us.

Four things make it good reading. First, one or two papers deal in a substantial way with relevant issues. Outstanding among them is the paper by the Yugoslavian Pentecostal theologian (!) Peter Kuzmic on the church as a community which witnesses to the kingdom. Kuzmic's clear mind always makes him worth reading and this is certainly no exception. If you are confused about all this 'kingdom' talk, and there is plenty being said today to confuse you, then this would be a good place to start getting out of the confusion.

Secondly, it deals with some hot potatoes which we all have to handle. The discussion on the relationship between the church and the parachurch society and the discussion about the 'electronic church' (the church of the media) are good examples. Neither issue is dealt with in a one-sided way but both issues are faced in a way I have rarely seen before.

Thirdly, the book is composed of papers which are biblical or theological expositions and papers which are case studies and applied examples. Those looking for the one might be tempted to look at the other also - and that can't be a bad thing!

Fourthly, contributions come from all over the world. Only a few come from the western world (including an honest report from St. Michael-le-Belfry, York and a helpful survey from Joseph Ton about Romania). The rest challenge our parochialism and help us to see just how narrow our concerns about the church so often are.

Naturally, any collection of articles contains some good and some bad. But it is worth the few weak contributions to be helped to think again about the nature of the church. Have we really got it right?

Dr. Derek J. Tidball,
Plymouth

Cheryl Forbes - The Religion of Power Marc. 1986, £1.95

This is a profoundly disturbing book. Cheryl Forbes believes that the Church as a whole and Christian Leaders in particular have swallowed the World's view of power, and use it to seek to dominate one another. The book is certainly effective in making us look at ourselves and in exposing all sorts of hidden motives and methods by which we exercise power over others. It takes to task the success-orientated leadership techniques which are common today in the church but it also shows how we may even use our piety and our sex in the power struggle. It certainly does not let us off the hook lightly.

Having engaged in a rigorous critique of our present practices, Cheryl Forbes then goes on to show that the way of Jesus was to reject worldly power and to tread the path of powerlessness. I confess that I found her attempt to construct an alternative biblical view less successful (am I allowed to use that word?) than her demolition job was. I was left with any number of questions about how she viewed some parts of scripture and not least the Apostle Paul. I was also left with many questions as to how her concern should be practically applied by me in the ministry of the Church.

It was not an easy book to read. Some of it clearly applied more to the United States than to the United Kingdom. I was also lost from time to time by its frequent literary allusions, but perhaps the real reason why I found it difficult to read was that it clearly was touching a raw nerve. Is my ministry based on a secular view of power? Am I worshipping a man made idol? Or am I truly following the path of Jesus Christ? If Satan tried to tempt Jesus with the wrong view of power, he certainly has been successful in tempting us with it on numerous occasions. We should be grateful therefore for the onslaught which Cheryl Forbes has mounted to bring the idol of power down.

Derek Tidball,
Plymouth.

The Sermon on the Mount D.A. Carson. Price: £4.40 Paternoster

If you have never seriously studied Matthew chs. 5-7 I wish to recommend this book to you. And even if you have, it is one of those passages of Scripture which it is impossible to have too much of, so challenging is it to our personal values and to the church of our day.

In an immensely readable style and in 6 chapters covering just 130 pages Dr. Carson excels in balance and precision of exposition without masking the radical nature of this startling manifesto of the kingdom. His treatment contains a number of helpful little insights, such as the note of 'being approved' inherent in the word 'blessed', and the 'cloak' (5:40) being regarded by the pious Jew as an unalienable possession (Ex. 22:26). In fact, the setting of the sermon in the context of the whole of scripture revelation is done in a masterly manner, especially in such a short compass, and the difficult statements (such as that on swearing) are all dealt with in a sensible way.

The value of the book for me, however, lay not in new insights but in simply being reminded of the basis of true spirituality. This is the crying need for those who are working pastors in today's church.

Nor does the book suffer from Americanisms (except one: what is "a hard slap from a wet noodle"?) but, as with the NIV text used for quotation, is aimed at an international readership. Here and there the book contains simple line drawings to illustrate certain truths. In danger of being trite, they are on the whole helpful and could be used for sermon illustration or counselling classes.

There is one blemish in that the book, based on a series of addresses to CICCUC in 1975, was compiled during the Watergate scandal in America and makes reference to Nixon several times (once to bracket him with Stalin and Hitler) - something which robs the book of timelessness.

Servants of God Christian Brethren Research Journal No. 37. Editor: Harold H. Rowdon. Price: £3.50 Paternoster.

This series of papers on the use of full-time workers in Brethren churches holds some interest for all those involved in christian ministry in any denomination as it deals with common issues related to full-time and paid staff.

One thing these papers do reflect is the extraordinary change over recent years in the attitudes of many Brethren assemblies to the whole concept of full-time ministry, particularly the pastoral ministry. Because these papers are written against a historical background devoid of such features, they display considerable attention to the historical perspective, the Biblical warrant and the problems of adapting to full-time ministry in the local congregation.

There are contributions from a variety of authors with a variety of backgrounds, making for variety in approach. The book contains the findings of the so-called Brown-Pearce Survey conducted in 1982/83 among a number of full-time workers in Brethren churches. Personally, I found the six appendices the more interesting reading, touching on issues such as selection and terms of service, whether to be self-employed or employed, the role of the wife, and relationships within a group leadership. All these are thoroughly relevant and live issues in any local church situation.

It is not the kind of publication one would sit down and read from front to back, but it does contain sufficient material related to the practical concerns of full-time or part-time ministry possibly to be worth buying if you are currently deliberating over such things.

Oliver Vellacott,
Wilton.

Living at High Noon Gordon MacDonald. MARC £2.50.

The author has written a helpful book on the 'drama of mid-life'.

I liked his style. he begins with a football match between staff and students at a summer camp. He sees in the game an illustration of the physical and mental changes which mid-life brings.

I liked his emphasis. Mid-life is a time to review our lives, when we can sift what is positive and negative, what is good and bad, what is worth keeping and what needs changing. With practical examples he deals with things like the needs of marriage and family life at this period in life.

I like his conclusion! Most important of all is what we are like on the inside. As we allow ourselves to be changed by God then there will be strength for those outward changes which will come with age.

I am now more thoughtful at forty!

Stuart Cook,
Bury St. Edmunds.

Books Received.

Altogether Lovely: Characteristics of the Lord. David Rushworth Smith, Rushworth Literature Enterprise (The Baptist Church, Westbury Avenue, London N22 6SA). £2.50. 78pp. And,

Revival: (as above) £1.50 152pp. Part of a wide-ranging series of Bible study notes. Thoroughly evangelical, displaying wide reading. Very detailed exposition of texts arranged under themes. Often displays an independent turn of mind. Always practical. High-class duplicated A4size. Well worth asking for catalogue of similar notes on topics including Marriage and Divorce, Dynamic Evangelicalism, Divine Supernatural Abilities etc.

David Rushworth Smith gets a chapter to himself in Peter Hocken's Streams of Renewal: The origins and Early Development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain, (Paternoster press, #7.95, 288pp. P/b). Takes us upto 1965 and is a fascinating companion volume for Andrew Walker's 'Restoring the kingdom' which deals with Restorationism. An extremely well researched book with over 80 pages of notes and documentation. Particularly emphasises the ecumenical potential of the charismatic movement as seen by the early leaders. Essential reading for modern evangelical Church History in U.K.

Food for Faith: A course for converts and others who want to grow in faith and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. By Lewis Misselbrook. Available from the Baptist Union of Scotland, 14 Aytoun Road, Glasgow, G41 5RT. The sub-title says it all. 45 topics in A4 loose leaf format. A year's worth of small-group material at £1.50. Typical outline is suggested daily scripture readings, explanation, questions for discussion.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones Preacher: John Peters, Paternoster, £2.95 160pp. A succinct and workmanlike appreciation of the 'Doctor' - his life, significance, controversies and influence on individuals. A quote about his preaching method is a gem - "My training in medicine and surgery are always with me. I look at a text, diagnose the condition and decide where I am to make the first incision. I cut deep through the layers of the tissue until I reach the heart of the problem. I deal with it and then rebuild and sew up". An excellent starter for the main course of Iain Murray's two-volume biography.



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