



Mainstream *baptists for life and growth*

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Editorial

Dream Dreams

"You've gotta have a dream. If you don't have a dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?" So wrote Rogers and Hammerstein in their musical South Pacific.

God's people have always had dreams - dreams that have led beyond the limits of earthly vision. Abraham had a dream of a city that he never saw physically, but he saw it in his heart and it motivated his life. David dreamed of the temple that he wanted to build and instilled his dream into Solomon, who saw its completion. A group of laymen in Antioch had a vision of a church in every major city and launched a great missionary strategy with that vision.

Yes, God's people all through the ages have had dreams. One of my great heroes is William Carey. Carey had a dream - the dream of taking the gospel overseas, to people who had never heard the good news of Jesus Christ. Alas this dream was not shared by others. For eighteenth century Baptists - as for eighteenth century Christians in general - the Great Commission had no relevance. Thus when Carey first raised the question of foreign missions at a Baptist ministers fraternal, one of his seniors told him to sit down - "Sit' down young man your an enthusiast!" But Carey refused to give up his dreams. Then came the great day when Carey was invited to preach the Association sermon in Nottingham, and Carey delivered his "deathless sermon". His text was found in Isaiah 54:2 : "Make the tents you live in larger; lengthen its ropes and strengthen its pegs". His theme was "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God." That day the first Baptist missionary society was formed, that day the modern missionary movement began.

We too need to dream if we are to achieve great things for God. The other summer I was privileged to visit the Southern Baptists Home Mission Board Headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. It was quite an experience! I was impressed by many things, but the thing which impressed me most was the Board's capacity to dream dreams. Take its long range planning document: "Target AD 2000" - its a visionary document, a book of dreams. For instance, the Board dreams of at least a million baptisms a year by AD 2000 and 2000 new congregations by AD 2000 - some dream!

We too need to dream dreams. Indeed one of the marks of the new age of the Spirit is precisely that. As Peter said quoting the prophet Joel on the day of Pentecost, "Your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams". Where are our visionaries? Where are our dreamers?

Paul Howley once said: "A blind man's world is bounded by the limits of his touch; an ignorant man's world by the limits of his knowledge; a great man's world by the limits of his vision". God wants us to do great things in his service - it all depends on our vision. If our

churches and our denomination are to get anywhere, we must be prepared to dream dreams and then strike out to realise our dreams. But where are our dreams? Alas so often we have not the time to dream dreams. Perhaps some of you are better organised than I am, but for me life is all too often one mad scamper from Sunday to Sunday. Maybe we need to learn again from the story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10: 38-41). We need time to look at life in God's perspective and see what he would have us do for him. Our prayer is that this issue of the Mainstream Newsletter - as indeed further issues - will encourage you in the process of dreaming dreams.

Paul Beasley-Murray.

An Open Letter to Dr David Russell,

General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland,
and commissioned to draw up a strategy for the denomination.

Dear Dr. Russell,

SIGNS OF HOPE REPORT

We, the members of the ad hoc group of Baptists who have been meeting to consider the application of Church Growth principles within our Denomination, submit the following points for your consideration:

1. ★ FURTHER AND CONTINUING WORK OF RESEARCH AND MONITORING NEEDS TO BE DONE BY A DENOMINATIONAL STUDY AND ACTION GROUP

We support the call in the Report for bolder strategic planning by the Denomination.

It would be tragic if the present excellent Report created a nine-day wonder and then was pursued no further.

The denomination needs a "think tank" group, of the calibre of the Denominational Enquiry Group, to continue research, to pursue questions already raised in this Report, to bring together and interpret on a wider canvas the work being done by some committees (eg Education), to continue to ask the right questions and to feed in material and insights about what God is doing and indicating about the future strategy patterns and work of our churches for growth in both quality and quantity.

Some of our Associations already have a Strategy Committee. We would urge that all Associations might have a research and action group (rather than a committee) for strategy and that these feed material and insights into a Denominational Strategy Action Group as well as draw from it.

2. ★ IT IS TIME FOR STRONG, CLEAR, SPIRITUAL AND EVANGELISTIC LEADERSHIP FROM THE BAPTIST UNION

We are sure that the time has gone for holding together and survival policies. It is time to move ahead with a new confidence in God and a new joy in the Gospel.

Our churches respond to spiritual leadership. The eighties are likely to be years of great opportunity and great opposition. Our churches want and need great leadership to match the hour.

We are grateful for all that is done by our General Secretary. He is a key figure in the Denomination and must be a spiritual leader first and foremost. We would like to see him regarded less as a headquarters administrator and more as a strategist, a "possibility thinker"

and a leader marshalling and encouraging the troops as Mountbatten did in Burma.

We would urge all to pray for our land, for the Union and Dr. Russell and for the appointment of the next General Secretary to follow Dr. Russell in the next year or two. The eighties are likely to be crucial years for the work of the Lord generally as well as within our denomination.

This is the time for great vision, bold action and of clear and proper goal setting.

3. ★ STRONG SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP FROM THE SUPERINTENDENTS AND THE ASSOCIATIONS

The Superintendents must be "vision men" more than "maintenance men", committed to leadership in growth in maturity, fellowship, numbers and involvement with the community.

Similarly we would like to see each Association giving leadership in the "four growths", having Strategy Action Groups for their own area to promote new life, found new churches and promote lay training.

Strong Associations are no less important than a strong lead from the Union.

We would welcome more prayer for our Superintendents and Associations.

4. ★ WITHOUT NEGLECTING SOCIAL CONCERN A PRIORITY MUST BE GIVEN TO EVANGELISM AND CHRISTIAN UPBUILDING

The Church Growth movement is concerned with social issues. Make no mistake about that. It is one of the 4 Growth headings. Further, the four headings are to be held together but they are not to be confused.

In the present Union committee structure social issues and evangelism come under one committee. This clearly demonstrates the partnership of the 2 but at the expense of confusing them. It fails to demonstrate the equal and opposite truth that social concern is not evangelism nor is evangelism social concern although the 2 are in partnership.

In fact, as psychiatrists tell us about the human beings, unless man first knows being and well-being within himself given as a gift, he cannot relate or reach out freely and warmly to others. So in a church evangelism and Christian maturing in fellowship both precede and produce Christian outreach and concern. But where social concern takes precedence the church (and social concern) quietly withers.

We would urge the Mission Department to restructure its work and committees under the 4 Church Growth headings:

Growth in Christian maturity - Christian education

Growth in numbers - evangelism

Growth in fellowship - Church life and leadership

Growth in social involvement - Social concern

All 4 (not just 2) to be seen together in equal partnership within the Department of Mission but not confused and priority given to evangelism and Christian upbuilding for the sake of all 4.

5. ★ ALL OUR COLLEGES TO TRAIN MEN TO MEET THE PRESENT MISSIONARY SITUATION IN BRITAIN

We are delighted that some of our Colleges are seeing our land as a missionary situation rather than training merely for the maintenance

of existing church structures. However at the moment courses on Church Growth or in multiple leadership and lay training too often remain a fringe interest.

We would like to see every College have the Bible Society's 5 sessions on Church Growth as an integral part of training and, more than this, for Church Growth principles to become an overall concept in planning and thinking about training.

Added to this, and also as central as any other study, we would like to see courses on management principles, lay training and team and group psychology and practice.

6. ★ LIVELY, RELEVANT, IMAGINATIVE AND PROPHETIC ASSEMBLIES

This both for the Union and for Associations. At the moment so much seems predictable and tradition-bound. The EBF Congress at Brighton with its prayer and study groups, special spots and lively music seemed to indicate a better way forward. There was there a structure for thinking and sharing, for prayer and for inspiring celebration.

7. ★ MORE HELP IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR THOSE BELOW CTP STANDARD

The Christian Training Programme is excellent but in all our churches there are those for whom it is too much. They are not of a book or logic culture.

We lack good material for these or people helping these especially for use in follow up after conversion.

Should not Baptist Union publications be centred more in the need of persons rather than in the academic field alone?

8. ★ A MORE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TO FINANCE

Hopeful appeals and shoe-string financing will not do. Here again we need positive leadership into a sense of glad Christian stewardship and great vision.

We would welcome an enquiry into the ways both of raising and spending Home Mission Fund money. We believe many appeals actually damage and stifle Christian giving whereas a great sense of mission and vision produces great giving.

A great deal of money goes from our Baptist churches into para-church work for this reason and we regret this.

9. ★ ECUMENISM MUST BE SEEN MORE WIDELY

Our ecumenism is at the moment one-sided. We feel it should include not only the WCC and BCC but also bodies like the Bible Society, the Evangelical Alliance, the Scripture Union, etc. Our links with such bodies should be as strong and as open as with the Councils.

The situation in our land today calls for more wide links, openness and co-operation than we have as well as for a clear, firm and happy stand on our own Baptist and evangelical principles.

For the Church Growth Working Group

ARTHUR THOMPSON.

NEW WAY - A Decade of Evangelism

New Way is to be the national logo for the Decade of Evangelism sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance and led by its evangelism and church growth unit. The objectives of this new inter-denominational movement in evangelism is to bring together Christians of many different traditions who have a real burden for communicating the Gospel to Britain in the 1980s. The movement will not be centrally directed but will aim at co-ordinating outreach of evangelicals throughout the country. It is hoped that churches and groups of churches will carry out their own evangelism plans as the Lord directs but that they will use the national symbol to give unity and strength to the movement throughout the 1980s.

There is, today, a widespread recognition that something is fundamentally wrong with the life of our nation. This is giving rise to a growing sense of unease amongst ordinary people that is creating a new opportunity for the Gospel. New Way is being set up to provide leadership, vision, planned resources and strategy to enable Christians throughout the country to seize the opportunity that the Lord is providing.

New Way strategy is based on a whole body of Christ theology and is aimed at mobilising the total resources of the body of Christ nationwide for evangelism. The key to evangelism in the 80s lies in the effectiveness of the local church as a base for personal evangelism, teaching and fellowship. But local churches are only part of the body of Christ and cannot be fully effective in isolation. What is happening in the local church needs to be in co-ordination with other churches and tied into a national movement. New Way strategy recognises three levels of action.

1. LOCAL

Here the aim is to identify and mobilise for evangelism all the gifts the Lord has distributed amongst the members of each congregation, the objective is to teach every member how to share their faith and to restructure the local church for growth (spiritual and numerical).

The method is to use the insights of church growth to help ministers and clergy to become 'enablers' of mission other than simply 'doers'. In many churches the professionalisation of the ministry has resulted in a one man band in worship, in evangelism, in teaching, and in leadership, which has suppressed the gifts of the laity and reduced the effectiveness of the local church as a vehicle for evangelism.

2. REGIONAL

The effectiveness of the local church as the bed-rock of evangelism will be greatly increased where groups of churches are working together on a townwide or citywide basis. In order to stimulate regional evangelism 'Action in Evangelism' groups are being formed in many towns and cities. It is a major part of New Way strategy to encourage the formation of such groups throughout the country. The action groups will perform the function of supporting and encouraging local churches, sharing resources, maintaining contact with the national scene, acting as a distribution agency for the tools for evangelism as well as arranging area missions or citywide crusades.

3. NATIONAL

Even if all the local churches were fully active in evangelism this would still leave millions untouched by the Gospel in our modern highly secular society. In order to put evangelism back in a central

focal point in the life of the nation it is necessary to have a national crusade. This will capture the attention of the media and help to reach the unreached.

But unless local churches are prepared to receive new Christians, and unless they write a national crusade into their own local programmes of evangelism the effectiveness of a national outreach will be greatly reduced.

There are many signs to indicate that God is urging his people to a much bolder approach to evangelism today. There is no single blue print or master plan that can succeed for evangelism is the work of the Holy Spirit not of human wisdom. There are however clear signs that the Lord is leading his people throughout the country to a vision for a national movement for evangelism that will include many different forms of outreach according to local circumstances that the whole movement will have unity and purpose because it is rightly set within the timing of the Lord. The bed-rock of evangelism is prayer. The greatest need for our churches today is that we should be a praying people open to the power and direction of the Holy Spirit.

CLIFFORD HILL : Evangelical Alliance

Update on One Minister's Spiritual Pilgrimage

In 1976 I visited four outstanding churches in the United States, none of these "Charismatic" or a "typical" American church. Only one was in membership with a Baptist Convention. That visit had a life changing effect on me. I gained a new confidence in the truth and power of the gospel. I have always believed the Bible to be the Word of God and authoritative. But I had never seen scripture taken so seriously as in these churches. They asked three deceptively simple questions, which on reflection seem to me to embrace all the "theological" viewpoints held in our Baptist fellowship. They are as follows:

1. What does Scripture say? Here is the need to accurately observe the text.
2. What does it mean by what it says? This is the important task of interpretation (which no single viewpoint can exhaust)!
3. How does this apply to life situations - both individual and corporate?

It was this application taken so seriously, which challenged me. They showed me the meaning of "the body of Christ". I saw it in terms of people in a relationship with one another of love and care, at a level I had never seen before. I saw it in small groups, in large groups, in the leadership and in one to one relationships. New believers were being added to the church daily, not by the preaching from the pulpit, but by the sheer love of ordinary Christians who couldn't help sharing their faith in Christ who was changing their own life. They showed me how to share my faith, and in the last two years I have personally led more people to Christ than in the previous eighteen as a pastor. I now realise that much of the church life I had experienced - with much enjoyment and satisfaction - had been impersonal and institutional, where the church programme was something of an end in itself, rather than really meeting the needs of believers.

Along with this I saw in a real and practical way that the ministry was the ministry of the whole church. I had tried hard to be a

traditional Baptist minister, the omni-competant-involved-in-everything man, and not without some success. Now I clearly see that the job of the pastor is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Eph. 4. 11-16 came home to me as never before. Now I do not try to visit everybody regularly. I see that it results in only the most superficial relationships and ministers to the self centredness of some. Furthermore I saw that leadership (as distinct from ministry) in the local church must be plural as scripture shows, and that all the leaders must be selected according to scriptural qualifications, which require spiritual maturity first in a man and only then gifts and abilities. So I formed a "core group" for leadership. I chose five men with whom to build close personal relationships and to whom I planned to delegate areas of leadership in the church. This is now disbanded, but I learned much from the experience. Thus our close relationship revealed that some were not the men I supposed them to be. In future I shall choose men much more carefully and one at a time.

I saw that there are several different levels of bible study according to the level of spiritual maturity and intellectual ability. Instead of the traditional midweek bible study-cum-prayer meeting we formed Home Bible Study groups of ten or twelve persons, based on those three questions. The members were encouraged by the leader to share their insights and apply them, and to share their joys and sorrows, successes and failures and to pray for and with one another. Established church members have begun to experience real fellowship and spiritual growth for the first time. I myself formed a group of new believers and taught them to share their faith. They grew quickly, as they won others and some fringe folk joined and I saw them discover the reality of Christ. It was the most exciting thing I have ever done in 20 years in the ministry. But some in the church clearly felt threatened by what was happening. They seemed to me unwilling to face the challenge of this unmasked honesty in a close encounter with fellow believers. I certainly experienced much opposition from some at the centre of the church as well as much encouragement and enthusiasm from others. I have learned how important it is to go slowly and start small, and to build the necessary solid base of leadership before extending the structure. I see clearly now the need to concentrate on the essentials only. As I see it the job of the church is first and foremost to make disciples (not just "decisions") as the great commission says. I see that discipleship means growing to Christian maturity. That happens when we know and live the scriptures, when we share our faith with fellow believers in close personal relationships, and when we share our faith with non-believers. This does not "just happen". It needs to be worked hard at with planning, organisation and new structures of church life. This means applying principles of management to church life by the leaders (see 1 Tim. 3. 4,5 and 7). I am convinced that these scriptural principles will work in all churches irrespective of size or location. As I have thought about our demonination I find myself both deeply disturbed at how institutionalised we have become and how far we are from what I believe the scripture shows we should be as the body of Christ; yet at the same time I am tremendously challenged and excited at what God could do with us and for us. If only we took much more seriously our historic principles of the authority of scripture, the fellowship of believers and the priesthood of all believers, what exciting possibilities of growth there could be!

John Tucker

(Minister: Hartlepool)

Ministry in Brixton.

In 1884 a small group of people moved from Spurgeon's Church, Metropolitan Tabernacle, to Brixton, then a developing fashionable suburb. Kenyon, an 800 seater Baptist church, was built in memory of Spurgeon's property steward William Higgs, whose company built the surrounding houses and the church.

In 1972 when I went to Brixton it was known for its prison - today it is known for its large black community. The church reflected its multi-racial area having English, West Indian and African members. Like many inner city churches Kenyon lost most of its young English people to the suburbs. Today it is strong because by the Grace of God black Christians have taken their places. Our membership today is approximately 75, 50% of whom are black. This racial mix is true of the diaconate and the Sunday School staff.

Church life is enriched by different cultures although misunderstandings due to culture can and do occur; integration does not mean a levelling down but the development of a sharing community. Work patterns make traditional church life difficult e.g. our Africans try to raise a family often in inadequate housing conditions, study and work full-time. Many of our West Indians work unsocial hours in the service industries, often the wife works in the day and the husband at night so that the children are not left alone, and this leaves a narrow band of time when the family are together.

Looking at my 7 years ministry in Brixton 4 important areas stand out.

CHURCH GROWTH

For three years this has concerned the South West Group of the London Baptist Association. We feel that our American friends do not have the whole truth but parts of their message are important e.g. not ducking the question of numbers - God wants not just to seek but to find. Kenyon has set itself a goal of 20 new members this church year, (double last year's membership goal).

Personally the greatest challenge to my thinking has been the concept of the homogeneous unit. Accepted at face value it says that a multi racial church is a waste of time and 18 black churches in Brixton are in some ways eloquent testimony to this. But the danger of some church growth thinking is that it seems to say what is is good or what gives the greatest growth is best. Ephesians is important here because it stresses the now revealed secret of God - Jews and Gentiles together in Christ's Body.

It is true that, like best evangelise like, e.g. young black to young black, but what happens if you do not have a particular group in your church? A Christian living in the inner city is constantly faced with cross cultural communications. Kenyon's greatest challenge is to evangelise the young white working class people in the area.

THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Whatever our theology our worship has been affected by this movement of the Holy Spirit. Our traditional services have insights that must not be lost but we gain new elements. At Kenyon tensions have arisen some times through cultural differences and the mistaken belief that when the Spirit moves there is no way you can control yourself. We have discovered a number of musical gifts especially amongst our new converts and these have added much to the services.

SHARED MINISTRY

This has been very important. First in an informal way through a gifted West Indian deacon who does a tremendous pastoral work in his community and amongst the older white people. He has helped me to understand the West Indian community and is now doing a short evening course in pastoral counselling.

Secondly for the past eighteen months I have had a pastoral assistant - Joy a girl in her mid-twenties who has given two years full-time to Kenyon whilst deciding the Lord's will for further full-time service. There is no financial commitment to her by the church but individual members give what they can in money and goods. Joy has a music degree and has been responsible for drawing out the church's musical gifts. She does pastoral visiting of the elderly, personal counselling including baptismal preparation and follow up, helps plan family services and writes in the church magazine. In her spare time she studies for a Diploma in Theology at Spurgeons!

SOCIAL CONCERN

Brixton has many problems not least unemployed black teenagers. After years of difficulty our traditional youth work has got off the ground - junior B.B., Brownies, Junior Youth Club and Youth Club. At the end of 1978 we saw a real opportunity to work in our area which has so few amenities. We applied to Inner City Partnership for £147,000 to remove our gallery and put in a floor, to create a fully equipped youth centre, nursery and Senior Citizens luncheon Club. We were turned down but have since decided to apply to I.L.E.A. for a full-time youth worker. We still have the plans and the vision. To do the basic flooring of the gallery would cost £45,000. This is a lot of money to us but less than the price of a family house in near by Streatham and we are looking for alternative sources of finance.

There is much to thank God for especially in the last eighteen months through older West Indians returning to the Lord and young people being converted. We have also had the first transfer in of a young Christian from a church in this country for at least seven years! Opportunities and needs are great. There are many overseas students in Brixton, potential leaders to be reached for the Lord. Like most inner city areas there are many elderly people who feel lonely, afraid and shut-in, and one parent families. Ours is a society under stress with inadequate housing and lack of open spaces. We feel that as a church we have a base on which to build but we still need more dedicated Christians who are prepared to live and work in the area showing God's love in the difficult situations which constantly arise.

STUART LOOK.

Harvest Coffee House

Swalecliffe Free Church (Baptist) has its building at the eastern end of Whitstable on the North Kent coast. We feel that the Lord has given us a 'vision' for our Church, which we have expressed in a printed document circulated to every member of the congregation. For the purpose of this article it is only necessary to mention a real concern for evangelism to be part of that vision. We seek to have an ongoing programme of evangelism and the opening of a shop named "Harvest" is now a part of that programme. The sequence of events which led us to open "Harvest" began when one of our elders, who has the responsibility

of co-ordinating evangelism within the Church, was looking for a restaurant in which to hold a Men's Dinner, with vague thoughts of a temporary summer coffee bar in mind. In his search he happened to 'chance' upon a closed restaurant, situated on the seafront, with all the equipment available for running a restaurant.

Two weeks hard work was necessary to get "Harvest" ready for opening but we commenced business at the beginning of July for an initial period of ten weeks. The whole process of opening and staffing the shop has proved to be a valuable, practical experience of the body life of the Church. A whole range of ministries came to the fore in terms of cleaning, decorating, design, art work, menu preparation, repairs to catering equipment and so on. It has also proved to have real advantages, though previously unforeseen, in terms of fellowship. Staffed by volunteers from within the Church (though we now pay a part-time manageress, again one of our own members), many individuals in the fellowship have found themselves working with and praying with other members of the congregation who previously they may have seen, but not really known.

But the real purpose of "Harvest" is evangelism. It is actually called a Coffee House, although it also serves good value lunches and has an evening trade as well. It would probably be right to say that it would be regarded by most people as to some extent 'up market' and therefore tends to attract folk other than young people. However, adjacent to the coffee house is a snack bar and we are now seeking to develop this more for the young people. To a background of soft lights and sweet Christian music, warm and friendly waiter and waitress service is offered to all who come in! On the tables there are leaflets which explain that the shop is managed and staffed by local Christians who see the work as part of their involvement in the local community. This is often enough to prompt questions and from there it is possible to take opportunities to witness to the truth of Christ and the gospel. Very occasionally the obvious christian influence in the place, as expressed by our leaflets, causes people to bolt for the door and the ice cream parlour with Italian influence just down the road but much more common are the observations by non-christians that there is a peaceful atmosphere or something different about the place. We also have a bookstall selling tapes, records and books in a far corner of the restaurant and have been genuinely surprised at the amount bought; some of course by Christians, but much by non-christians.

It would be good to report a string of converts, but "Harvest" is a link in a chain; building bridges into the community and so establishing a christian presence perhaps more winsomely than our church buildings sometimes do, and giving us contacts to follow up. There are certainly those who have come along to the church services after visiting "Harvest" and we have, for example, a man who was previously a total cynic now studying the Bible in a house group, after being contacted through "Harvest". We have a number of special ventures on the premises and recently about twenty-five non-christian men came to an evening meal there, followed by a film of Chuck Colson's testimony and this followed in turn by a strong evangelistic message. In that atmosphere everyone was very relaxed and it gave us excellent opportunities afterwards to continue in conversation with men whose curiosity about the gospel had been genuinely aroused.

We have now felt it right, with adjustments to the menu, and to the opening hours, to carry on the work through the winter. It is our prayer that though this particular method of evangelism the gospel will be proclaimed and men and women will be born again into God's Kingdom.

JOHN HOSIER.

BOOK REVIEWS

Effective Biblical Counselling by Lawrence Crabb Zondervan £3.25

Non directive counselling came as a reaction to brash advice giving and taught us to listen sympathetically. But it did no more and much is now beginning to be issued from a balanced Biblical point of view.

Jay Adams' books are well known in this country and were a good beginning but the best books I have met are those by Lawrence Crabb, Basic Principles of Biblical Counselling and now Effective Biblical Counselling.

This book seeks to help Christians at three levels:

First, to help all church members to get past the shallow and trivial in fellowship and "to get on with the job of one-anothering"

Second, to help those (elders, pastors, deacons, teachers) who have pastoral responsibility to find a scriptural strategy for handling ordinary problems

Finally, to help the few gifted people who can be equipped to handle the deeper and more stubborn problems.

As always, when you seek to study Biblical principles to help others you are confronted with a new vision of yourself, your own needs and the grace of the Lord to meet them.

The Lost Art of Disciple Making by Leroy Eims Zondervan £1.95

The Lord did not commission us to make converts. He told us to make disciples. Much of the dullness in our churches is due to the failure to build every member up to maturity and to develop the gifts and leadership that is dormant there.

This book, by an international representative of the Navigators is extremely simple and practical but again and again hits at the important points where we fail.

Our churches are organised for everything except the things we were specifically commanded by the Lord to do. I would like to see every church with clear methods of discipling on the Eims lines. I would also like to see a minister appointed for every 150 members and the second minister to be specifically for teaching and training in evangelism and discipling - preferably someone from the fellowship itself who has been shown to be fitly gifted.

What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest? by J. Engel and W. Norton
Zondervan

This book is now four years old and still reprints but is not well-known in this country as it deserves to be.

"First we need a Spirit-led, research-based strategy to reach people with the Good News and to build them in the faith as they grow to spiritual maturity. Equally important, this strategy must be designed and implemented by a properly functioning Body of Christ".

This book helps build an effective communication strategy and also gives and explains the famous 'Engel scale'.

How to Evangelise the Jesus Way - a practical handbook for sharing your faith.

by Ross Pilkington. Scripture Union 95p.

An unusual and excellent book for small groups of every kind who wish to learn "the middle way between the insensitivity of much evangelistic counselling and the passivity of non-directive techniques".

This book was first issued two years ago under the title of 'Life-Style Evangelism'.

The Open Secret by Lesslie Newbigin SPCK £3.95

These "Sketches for a Missionary Theology" come from Newbigin's lectures in theology to those preparing for missionary service.

As always with this author, the material is Christ-centred. Mission he defines as proclaiming the Kingdom of the Father (faith in action), sharing the Life of the Son (love in action) and bearing the witness of the Spirit (hope in action). A chapter on Church Growth is perhaps the weakest and the last chapter on 'The Gospel among the Religions' is the best.

An excellent book although lacking an obvious chapter on the nature of the church.

Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow by Peter Wagner Regal Books £2.40

Like all Wagner's books this is easily readable, interesting and practical. I put it top of the list of the many books on spiritual gifts along with Bridge and Phyper.

The Measure of a Man by Gene Getz Regal Books £1.15

Gene Getz is an unusual pastor who has under God built an unusual church, (Fellowship Bible Church, Dallas). He is a deeply Biblical man and his book Sharpening the Focus of the Church is fairly well-known in Britain.

Here he studies the job description for a leader in the church as in 1 Timothy 3.

A good book for study at alternate deacons' meetings or for small groups concerned with leadership or Christian character.

LEWIS MISSELBROOK

What Happens When Women Pray by Evelyn Christenson Victor Books £1.35

Good and encouraging reading for prayer groups and those thinking of starting prayer groups. There is little new and the context is American (where people are much more church and Gospel orientated than here) but the author writes interestingly and sets out the basic principles clearly.

Faith is Not a Feeling by Ney Bailey Campus Crusade £1.95

Faith, says Ney Bailey, has little to do with our feelings. It is simply taking God at His Word and acting on it. Her book is a collection of her thinking and experiences about faith and makes good and easy reading.

M.E.M.

Stewards of the mysteries of God edited by Eric James
(Darton, Longman and Tollard) £1.95 - 88 pages.

This collection of eight papers prepared for a conference of Anglican clergy last year, seeks to reflect on the role of ministers today. The best essay is that of Professor Lamp, who gives lucid exposition of the Pauline meaning of the term "stewards of the mysteries of God". This book would have been far better had the other authors sought to build on Biblical foundation. As it is Lamb's essay explodes much of the remaining contribution!

PAUL BEASLEY-MURRAY

The Wound of Knowledge. Christian Spirituality from New Testament to St. John of the Cross by Rowan Williams
(Darton, Longman Todd) £4.95 - 193 pages.

Rowan Williams takes us with a new eye along a road marked out by Paul, John, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzen, Augustine and finally to Luther and St. John of the Cross. For mainstream Baptists this may be a difficult read but perseverance will bring its rewards.

PAUL BEASLEY-MURRAY

Not Mad, Most Noble Festus: Essays on the Renewal Movement
by David Parry, O.S.B. (Darton, Longman & Todd) £1.80

The reaction of Festus, the Roman Governor, to Paul's Christian convictions and fervour can be paralleled today in the reaction of many people to the current renewal movement in both Catholic and Protestant churches: can the beliefs and behaviour of those involved be well-grounded, or are they evidence of some kind of madness? David Parry writes as a Roman Catholic to fellow Catholics (and others) firstly to inform them and dispel some of the widespread ignorance and prejudice, and secondly to reassure them: the movement is not to be feared but welcomed. He does so carefully with wisdom and balance, and from his own wide experience of the renewal movement.

In the first of his four essays, entitled "This Charismatic Thing", he asks us to take a closer look at the renewal that has been taking place in Catholic churches since 1967. He lays a very healthy stress on the grace of renewal, a feature which is often overlooked (though brought out very well in Tom Smal's Reflected Glory). "Essentially the Charismatic Movement proclaims, not a new doctrine...but rather an advent. It announces that the Holy Spirit is abroad in our world today...." (p.4) "Charismatics feel themselves to be less a movement than a coalescence of persons who have felt themselves moved... by the gratuitous action of God's Spirit" (p.8) He sees "the grace of renewal (as) the beginning of a new spiritual state" (p.15), and recognises that this should touch the different parts of man's make-up, including his emotions. The evidences of divine power we should look for are in the first instance "deep, interior personal changes", and also the giving of spiritual gifts. However, "It is more important to see the charismatic gifts as part of the larger picture" (p.19). The experience of renewal should lead to a new responsibility to spread the Gospel, and a new sense of responsibility to one's neighbour (after the initial joy, if not at first).

In the second essay he deals more specifically with "The Priest and the Charismatic Movement". The best person to explain the current renewal to an ill-informed priest is another priest who has himself

been renewed. An experience of renewal can be a great blessing to the priest in his personal spiritual life, in more effectively performing his duties as a priest, and through him to his people. After all, "We cannot have too much experience of God" (p.42). He encourages the priest not simply to read books, but to go to meetings where he can experience the renewal at first hand - helpful advice to any minister who has to make an assessment of a particular local church, or group, or movement.

Although the third essay deals with the effects of the Charismatic Movement on religious communities, it has many relevant things to say to the Protestant. The problems (and blessings) likely to come to a community when the Spirit works in renewing power are simply those which the local church is likely to encounter writ large.

The helpful remarks at the end of the essay directed to the prayer group in a monastery or convent that 'gets stuck' leads to the last essay on "The Charismatic Prayer Meeting". Here the author makes many practical points, drawn no doubt from his own experience.

This book contains many good things and in the brief compass of 100 pages gives a useful insight into what the Spirit is doing increasingly among Catholics (and Protestants) in this country. Baptists may look askance at one or two specifically Catholic references, but overall would profit greatly from this slim volume.

MAURICE MARKHAM.

Ezra and Nehemiah Commentary by Derek Kidner. IVP £2.40 paperback.

The Tyndale series of commentaries need little introduction to many of our readers, their format, scholarship and accuracy have been consistently good.

Derek Kidner's previous contributions to this series have 'whetted the appetite'. This slender volume is no disappointment. It is full of helpful comment and is a masterly guide through the absorbing Old Testament books, which have long been the subject of critical controversy. Today's Church faces many of the dilemmas which confronted the people of God in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Kidner provokes us to consider God's pattern then and now.

PAT GOODLAND

The Little Way by Bernard Bro. O.P. Darton, Longman and Todd £2.95.

In an 'Instant-age' when 'instant holiness' through subjective experience, at little cost to the seeker is often suggested, this book comes as refreshing, challenging, spiritual elixir. The spirituality of Therese of Lisieux is legendary. This young Carmelite who died at the tender age of twenty-four years, is the subject of this altogether beautiful little volume. The way to God and reality for her were shadow and sunshine, suffering and severity. It makes holiness practical and its attainment possible for the ordinary wayfaring man. Real and rational in life and in death, her simple eloquence portrays a realism of faith for which many crave.

A good stimulating book for Baptists to read and re-read methodically and prayerfully.

PAT GOODLAND

Partners in Praise
(Galliard)

Words edition 85p per copy
less 10% over 50 copies.
Music edition £5.50 per copy

Obtainable from Stainer and Bell, Ltd., 82, High Road, London N2 9PW

All-age and family worship services are a part of Church Life. Modern translations of the Bible and contemporary language in prayer and preaching, often make our older hymns with their Archaism and flowery Victorian language stand out like the proverbial 'sore thumb'. Comprehension stakes are often lowered as we sing together. Moments when we should be participating in worship become nonsensical to all but the initiated in the 'language of Zion'.

The four editors of 'Partners in Praise' have attempted to fill this enormous gap with a modest collection. These should be viewed as a supplement to our regular hymn books. By helpful indexing, many suggestions of suitable traditional hymns which will be found in most denominational hymn books, are listed. This is an aid in choosing 'subject' hymns for a service. The hymns in 'Partners in Praise', are grouped under five major headings: Approach to Worship, The Lord Jesus, Christ and our discipleship, Church and Community and Promise and fulfilment. The aim is to give the church suitable hymns which adults can sing without condensation and which children can comprehend according to ability. I believe they have in large measure succeeded.

The 177 hymns and songs are for the most part new and contemporary. The format is clear, the music comprehensive with four part harmonies, vocal backing lines, keyboard and guitar chords and encouragement to use a variety of instruments. A French harmony, a Fijian tune, a Caribbean arrangement are but a few intimations that hymnology is not limited to Western idiom. Inevitably not all these songs will find acceptance. Some are scanty in theological content, others are harnessed to a musical pattern which is transitory. This is a good workmanlike offering, which will bring new meaning to our corporate family worship. The editors are to be congratulated for giving us material which the whole family can enjoy as they express their worship in song together.

PAT GOODLAND

Mainstream Secretary

The Executive is pleased to announce that the Rev. David Coffey, B.A., Minister of North Cheam Baptist Church, has accepted our invitation to become Secretary of Mainstream. David can be contacted at 51 Wickham Avenue, Cheam, Surrey, SM3 8DX. All matters related to subscriptions and newsletter mailing are still being handled by our Treasurer, the Rev. Peter Grange, and all such enquiries should be addressed to him.

START THE 80's AT OUR FIRST CONFERENCE !

Just to remind you of the details :

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

We are glad to report that 215 ministers and church leaders have already booked for the 1980 Mainstream Conference. There is still time for you to book or encourage a representative from your church to come to the January Conference. If you cannot come yourself PLEASE PRAY that it will be an inspiring and profitable time with positive and practical results as we move together as Baptist churches into the 80's.

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

Do you now feel you would like to make the effort and come?! It is not too late to add your name to the list. £2.50 secures a place. Out of the kindness of our hearts the conference committee have decided that the new V.A.T. rates will not affect the total conference fee of £14.50!

Jack Ramsbottom

MAINSTREAM CONFERENCE
Booking Secretary

MAINSTREAM CONFERENCE BOOKING FORM

Send to: The Rev. Jack Ramsbottom, 2 Lovelace Drive, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2LY
I enclose a cheque/PO for £2.50 as a booking fee for the MAINSTREAM 1980 Swanwick Conference.

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