

A WORD AND SPIRIT  
MAINSTREAM  
NETWORK

Magazine Issue 56. May 1996

Issue Theme: SHALOM

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**Word and Spirit Network Contacts (\*)**

North:	Glen Marshall	01924 382966
Midlands:	Derek Wick	0121 378 3020
Central Area:	Andy Cowley	01923 441155
South Central:	Lynn Green	01734 786912
London:	Rob Warner	0181-947-1859
Surrey:	Peter Nodding	01483 572745
Bristol:	Nigel Coles	0117-989-2308
South East and South West:	<i>awaiting leadership</i> .	

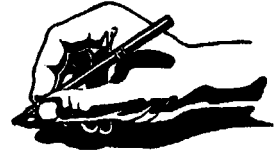
*The Executive are always happy to include new names and groupings here. Please let the Editor know of these by the end of July 1996.*

(\*) Please note that not all these groups describe themselves as Word and Spirit Networks but *all* share similar aims.

# *Letter to the Churches*

## *from the new*

### *BUGB President*



*Dear Sisters and Brothers,*

Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am glad of the opportunity to write to you and would like to address the issues of loyalty, leadership and lolly! Have you seen this prayer before:

Dear Lord, so far today;  
I have not criticised or found fault,  
I haven't spread gossip,  
I've tried only to see good,  
I've been patient and kind,  
But now that it's time to get up Lord,  
I'll need all the help that I can get. Amen.

#### **LOYALTY**

One of the greatest challenges in Christian leadership, is building loyalty into Christian living. As leaders in the local church, one of the strains upon us is attempting to keep shalom-tight-harmony in the fellowship. Criticism, negativism and fault-finding, plays havoc with the sense of well-being. Tabernacle Penarth, has regularly run a Leadership Training Course. Sessions are included on leadership, and coping with criticism. We work together, seeking how to interpret and implement the reconciliation outlined by Jesus in Matthew 18. On the national scene, it has become obvious that the concerns felt in the local church are also present at national level as well. Just as we want members to be loyal to the local church, so we should display loyalty to the wider Baptist family and to the whole Church of Jesus Christ. Our guidelines to church members properly list some responsibilities, like commitment to meetings, to other members and to regular giving. We who seek to encourage such an emphasis, should also set an example by applying these principles to the wider Baptist family.

At the Mainstream Conference in January, the keynote speakers were proud to belong to the streams where they exercise their ministry. Nicky Gumbel was proud to be an Anglican in renewal. Terry Virgo was appropriately excited about belonging to New Frontiers. Patrick Dixon and Su Rinaldi

graciously beat the Pioneer church's drum. Likewise we should not be ashamed of belonging to the Baptist Union and Baptist Missionary Society. Some people are embarrassed to belong to a denomination; they *just* want to be Christians. We understand this point of view, we have all felt it at some time or another.

On the Christian way, we meet those folk who hold the same vision and convictions. So we network together to bring Baptist principles to bear in the world. Principles such as a passion for Scripture, a heart for the lost, a life-changing Gospel, believer's baptism, the special nature of the local church and the principle of freedom need a strategy, which then has to be worked out with other like-minded Christians.

We need to network or associate together, to bring these values to bear on community life. Take for instance a heart for the lost - we need a strategy to reach them. Then we need to work that strategy out with other like-minded Christians. Two areas in particular spring to mind, loyalty to the Baptist Missionary Society and to our local Baptist Associations. The B.M.S. has been at the forefront of the development of new patterns of mission. They deserve our whole-hearted support. If Baptists are not loyal to their own Society, who will be? When candidates in our local churches offer themselves for missionary service, we should send them to the B.M.S. first. Of course, on the mission field they work in partnership with other Christian organisations, setting an example of cooperation.

I am writing this letter whilst in Asia on behalf of the Society and Union. It is thrilling to see in Sri Lanka renewal being experienced throughout the Baptist Sangamaya (Union) and its member churches. At their half-yearly Assembly there was real vitality with between 20 and 30 people professing faith and another dozen offering themselves for believer's baptism. In Nepal several denominational societies work together under one umbrella of the United Mission to Nepal. What an example this is to us and one worthy of our whole-hearted loyal support. Then there is Association life. The Word and Spirit networks operating in several regions are meeting very real needs. It is a sad indictment that Association life hasn't always fulfilled the needs of the churches.

However, my own experience in East Glamorgan has been to find a real willingness to change, as long as renewal is handled sensitively and wisely. But isn't this like the renewal that takes place in any local church. It is still true that we can do more together than we can do on our own. So let us associate together, making our ministries count by setting an example of loyalty locally, nationally and globally.

## LEADERSHIP

Ministry is a very broad term. It is of course, service. We seek to minister to the whole person, physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. No one can hope to meet all the needs of those for whom we have pastoral care. We have only so much time, strength, and dare I say, ability. Moses' meeting with Jethro (Exodus 18) illustrates this truth perfectly and the grumbling of the Greek Jews (Acts 6) amplifies it. Leaders face a crucial decision in the use of time and energy. Have you considered what the average Pastor is expected to do? Doing the work of an evangelist; following up the straying sheep; nurturing the children and new converts; shepherding the rest of the flock; strengthening the faithful; encouraging the mature; visiting the sick; comforting the bereaved; welcoming the visitor; arranging the programme; caring for the buildings and fabric; conducting meetings; preparing and preaching; planning a Christian education programme; writing letters; shaping policies; overseeing the finances; enriching worship; discovering, developing and diffusing the gifts of the members; sending and supporting missionaries etc etc.

Do you know any Pastor who is able to perform all these tasks efficiently and well? Of course not. Nor was the Pastor designed to do them all. These are the tasks of the whole church. Church leaders have the task, "To prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12). Church growth specialists all agree that the Pastor is the key person for growth in the local church. Some react negatively to such a suggestion. Nevertheless, the evidence is quite overwhelming. Where this is the case however, it is because the Pastor has learnt that he cannot perform the whole ministry of the church. The omni-competent model is an outmoded view of the minister's role. Yet it is still held on to tenaciously by some Pastors, deacons and members. The Bible's view of the church is that it is a body where all the members function together. The best Pastor is not one who relieves members of their ministries, but one who enables each one to fulfil their calling.

Referring to Ephesians 4:12 again. Who is to prepare God's people for works of service? It was the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers. Some argue if this is a four or a five-fold ministry. I say at least five. The other lists of gifts were never meant to be exclusive and neither is this. A multi-mix is observable. Some leaders are more Evangelists/Teachers than Pastors/Teachers and others are Apostolic Prophets or Prophetic Evangelists. Leaders need to set an example. She or he, need to learn to prioritise; to discover their main gifts and seek to concentrate on their development. It may be that the minister is not an accomplished preacher. The question then has to be asked, "Is there someone in the congregation who can fulfil this role whilst the Pastor concentrates on shepherding the flock?"

I know of one very successful Pastor who has taken this principle seriously. The church is growing, he is gloriously fulfilled in his pastoral role. He is a brilliant administrator, sensitive visitor, wise leader, superb counsellor, but he only preaches one Sunday a month. He has recognised that there are others in the church who can and do fulfil this pulpit ministry better than himself. In Acts chapter 6 it is plain that there were two practices that could not be overlooked by those exercising oversight in the Jerusalem church: the ministry of God's Word and prayer! The Apostles identified these as the priorities for the ministry. They resolved to devote themselves more fully to them. They were not prepared to neglect the needs of widows. Was this a wise decision by the Apostles? The history of the Church resounds in the positive. In this passage of Scripture, we see the impact of their strong commitment to God-ordained priorities and ministry. The result was an increase in the spreading of the Word of God as well as an increase in the number of disciples. So the church grew spiritually and numerically. It is my contention that church growth today is still dependent on a clear understanding of priorities in ministry.

We are brought back to some fundamental questions. What is ministry? What is a minister supposed to do? What is a minister to be? Acts chapter 6 gives us three considerations in response to these important questions.

Leaders are Servants. In the eyes of our 20th Century contemporaries (as was true in the Graeco-Roman world) ruling, not serving, manifested the measure of a person, but Jesus instituted a radically different standard within His Church. Jesus said the measure of our greatness would be seen by a willingness to be a servant. See Luke 22:25-27.

Leaders are Stewards. We are to exercise good management in the use of our time, energy and abilities. The Apostles were concerned that their work pattern was not appropriate before God. We are to live our lives and fulfil our ministries in the manner that is "best" in God's eyes. As stewards we are not only responsible to, but accountable to God. It is required of stewards to be proved faithful. See 1 Cor 4:2.

Leaders are Specialists. That's what Acts chapter 6 is all about. We are to specialise on two matters above all. Proclamation of the Word of God and prayer. As a priority we have to ensure that in each local church, someone is set apart to do that. Similarly a renewed emphasis is needed on the role of the ministry of intercession. It is a neglected ministry. Yet the New Testament makes it clear that it is the highest calling one can know. Our Lord was a preacher for just three years, but He "...ever lives to make intercession for us." Beyond these two specialist areas we are arguing for

the restoration of the multi-mix five-fold ministry of Ephesians 4. I am often told that this is the talk of large churches. But I am convinced that these principles apply to churches of all sizes and I know of number of small churches where these principles work effectively.

## LOLLY

In choosing a *stewardship* theme as President, I was reluctant for two reasons. Firstly, the world has hijacked this Bible word and made of it less than was intended. In Christian stewardship women and men are responsible, not simply to other people, or to future generations, but to God, "From him and through him and to him are all things" (Romans 11:36). The other reason is that in too many people's minds, stewardship is synonymous with money and that's enough to put anyone off. "*Make it Count*" is about fulfilling our potential and using all that we are and have to the glory of God. If we are to be part of the army of believers who are going to help bring in the Kingdom of God, then it is going to cost. One fact is certain the lack of finance is hindering the mission of the church today. We must find new money for the care of the ministry and our continuing mission.

I applaud the decision of the Baptist Union Council to realistically increase stipend and Manse allowances over the next few years by significant amounts. This is a step of faith. It is for this reason I am putting my whole-hearted support behind the emerging plans for a Baptist Union Millenium Covenant. One aim is to target individuals as well as churches by direct giving. As leaders, can I ask you to set the lead by joining this covenant. Will you find £100 a year for the next four years to help meet the need? Can you also target individuals within your congregation who have a heart for mission and invite them to join you in this covenant? We need to teach on tithing and to practice it ourselves. One way is to ask the church to at least tithe their giving. Many of our churches give 5% of their income to B.M.S. and 5% to Home Mission. It seems eminently suitable and I invite you to consider it if you are not already doing so.

I do hope that you have been able to stay with me in this letter right to the end. Let us set an example in leadership, loyalty and the use of money.

John James

BUGB President 1996-7

Penarth.

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# Editorial:

SHALOM! It is good to welcome to the Presidency of the Union this year a long-time supporter of Mainstream, John James. His Presidential theme of *Make it Count* is clearly an important one. John explains some of what he means by it in this issue's letter to the churches. What impact does the Presidency have in the longer term however? One of the most powerful of recent years was surely that of Colin Marchant? I remember it from my Blackburn years. It seemed appropriate then to invite Colin to reflect on this several years later, not least given our issue theme! He does ..... and has certainly lost none of his prophetic edge amongst us. Thank God. The Baptist Health and Healing movement seems in good hands judging by its secretary Michael Jones' article this issue. Is it just me or does this ministry seem to be on the back-boiler in far too many churches now? Are we too busy adapting to the latest problem or pc programme or para-church training event to incorporate prayer and ministry for healing as part of our vision for the church and community we serve? Sad if so. Or on the other hand, are we still pre-occupied in our cells and congregations with what Patrick Dixon called in his memorable final address at our 1996 Conference Mrs Blenkinsop's in-growing toe-nail? How far *do* our intercessions reach in our personal devotions and our Sunday ministry? The ECONI statement is a reminder to us all of the desperate need for intercession towards Shalom as a nightmare is slowly being re-lived before our eyes by whole communities. *How long O Lord how long?*

It was my privilege to encourage James Booth towards training for the Baptist Ministry, again in my Blackburn years. It is good then to catch up with him - several years on now - in situ working with our new President and experiencing both the roses and the thorns of contemporary ministry. His article made me laugh. I hope it does you. Paul Goodliff is a fellow Minister in Hertfordshire and it has been good to work with him as we explore through Churches Together in St Albans the establishing of an ecumenical Christian Counselling network. His article, which first appeared in the Richard Baxter Institute's magazine, opens up a whole new world to some of us. As one whose size of church inevitably means having to be more of a General Practitioner, it has been fascinating to read of the specialisms that are around and to find someone seeking to bridge the gaps. We had a letter this time. Yes! It was all the more pleasant for coming from the Alliance of Baptist Youth. Much of it is reproduced here including the request for some biblical and theological expertise. An unfulfilled dream as yet for this magazine editor is to see some significant letters coming in on the themes we raise. Here is your chance, oh readers. Nearly 2000 of you at the last count.

Finally. The first meeting of the re-launched Mainstream Council was a joy to be at, not least for the sense of the power of prayer as we gathered in His Name. Towards the end of this May issue you can read something of its content and find out more about the Executive's recent meeting in the always pleasant rural setting of Gorsley. All for now. And, again, SHALOM my friends .....

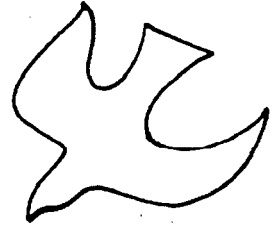
Michael I. Bochenski

St. Albans

Holy Week 1996



# ALL OF SHALOM? SHALOM FOR ALL?



Back in 1988 I carried a one-word theme into the Presidency of the Baptist Union. The word was *shalom*. It was a given theme. Given in the work of urban mission, coming out of ministry in East London, Luton and Birmingham. Seen in a series of circles rippling through the needs of individuals, relationships, congregations and communities. Realising that the one word running through them all - and holding them all together - was shalom. Rooted deep in the Scriptures, embodying the wholeness of the Gospel and holding together the nature of God, the centrality of Jesus, the experience of grace, the covenant community and holistic mission - shalom became the keyword, unlocking, giving entry, opening up. Now in 1996 the Mainstream Magazine issue is that of SHALOM. How far have we journeyed? Do we have all of shalom? Is shalom for all?

In the Scriptures, shalom means well-being, wholeness, unity, health - and much more. We often translate it as peace - but that is not enough. It is a comprehensive, kaleidoscopic, multi-faceted, in-depth word. It appears in names like Jeru-shalom and Absalom. It is an everyday word of greeting, used as a prayer in the Psalms or as a message by the prophets, and ends many of the New Testament letters - "peace be with you". Shalom is God's word - to, and through, his people - for the world. It is a word we are expected to know:-

"You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, proclaiming the Good News of peace (shalom) through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all". (Acts 10.36) The good news of shalom must always embrace the wholeness of the individual, harmony in relationships, active concern for the community and a vision for the world.

## **The wholeness of the individual.**

We are not whole and nor are the people around us. We live with hurts, damage, alienation and disease. We all have a "not yet arrived" feeling. But we want to be integrated, healed, together - in a word, whole. That is why the Biblical greeting is "shalom" - are you well? how are you? That is why our human yearnings and God's concerns come to a focus in Jesus. He is the shalom person. He is whole, carrying and offering healing, forgiveness and wholeness to all. In Him we see shalom, from Him we receive shalom:- "Go in peace, and be healed of your trouble". (Mark 5.34) This concern for personal wholeness is seen in the command to heal every disease and sickness, to cast out evil spirits, to go out to the lost and to bring the dead back to life. We have learnt this lesson well. In our churches the evangelism that leads to conversion, the stress on personal faith, prayers for individuals and pastoral care have been joined by the

direct healing of “signs and wonders” and the development of counselling services. We start here. We are rooted here by tradition and spring alive by the Spirit. Shalom is as ancient as “The Lord bless you and keep you ... and give you His shalom” (Numbers 6.26) and as contemporary as our own prayer-lists.

### **Harmony in relationships**

But shalom is much more than the individual. It has to do with the harmony of relationships. Shalom is experienced, not talked about; known, not read. It is experienced and known through relationships. That is the central thrust of shalom. It has to do with solidarity, togetherness. All else flows from this. Shalom is all about harmony in relationships - whether that be person-to-person or the “I-Thou” of faith. That is why “The Peace” in our worship is so powerful ... “For Christ Himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people”. (Ephesians 2.14). That is why the congregational lifestyle (at its best) makes known shalom. That is why hundreds of cells, groups and church-plants are springing up across the country to express the togetherness and unity of the people of God which is shalom. Shalom is relational. We are learning! The recent Urban Congress in Liverpool began deliberately in the relational, rather than the structural. The ecumenical movement only moves where relationships precede agendas. Churches come alive where fellowship is strong.

### **Concern for the community**

But, in Scripture and in practice, shalom is never a private possession of the individual believer or the gathered congregation. 'Shalom is for the community, the town and the city. It has to do with people and place. That is why Jeremiah urges the exiles to Babylon to “Seek the shalom of the cities”. (Jeremiah 29.7) and why Luke tells us that on Palm Sunday: -“He came closer to the city, and when He saw it, He wept over it, saying ‘If only you know today what is needed for peace’”. (Luke 19.41/42). Jeru-shalom, then and now, has the name but not the reality of community-shalom. I believe that shalom is the keyword for the community or the city. It speaks to every human situation. Shalom to the lonely, to the groups, to the neighbourhood. If we really mean business in the urban world we have to work at the fullness of mission - holistic mission. In Bible terms it is putting together Psalm 122 (the prayer for shalom in the city) and Luke 19. 38/42 (the Palm Sunday entry of the “Prince of Shalom” to Jeru-shalom).

Many individuals are driven by this dream. In cooperative commerce, political involvement, professional vocation or community activism they “seek the shalom of the city”. In our denominations we have seen the Anglican “Faith in the City”, Methodism's “Mission alongside the Poor”, the much smaller Baptist “Against the Stream” - and more recently the TEAR Fund/Evangelical Alliance “UK Action”. But is this still seen as an “optional extra”, a postscript tacked on rather than an integral, constant flow of shalom that has to do with justice and jubilee, politics and the poor? We should be excited by what God is doing in our cities and

communities. We should understand that church planting and homeless projects, resurrected churches and poverty programmes, house groups and street demonstrations are all strands in the tapestry called Shalom.

### **A vision for the world**

Yet shalom is greater still than personal salvation, relationships or the community. Shalom is a vision for the world. That all humankind in all places will become whole and complete through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Shalom - that is shalom for the world. That the entire earth which groans in travail will be set free from its warfare, pollution, divisions and sin and understand God's offer ... "I offer shalom to all, both near and far! I will heal my people". (Isaiah 57.19). We have yet to grasp that controlling vision of global, universal shalom. We are still the interim people, people standing between the D-Day of the coming of Jesus and the ultimate V-Day when the King - and the Kingdom - fully and finally comes. We are all engaged in a battle of shalom for the planet. Joining with the Friends of the Earth in concern for the environment, backing Amnesty in their work for "prisoners of conscience", supporting the World Development Movement, giving to TEAR Fund or Christian Aid, continuing to send missionaries to the unreached - all these are complementary strands within the movement for global shalom that flows from the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Paul sets this out in a verse that always stirs me to the depths - "Through the Son, then God, decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through His Son's death on the cross and so brought back to Himself all things both on earth and in heaven". (Colossians 1.20). That is shalom for all - and all of shalom. This shalom is God's gift - which we receive and share. Shalom is God's nature. We know that. We say that. But somewhere on the road we have lost great chunks of the meaning of shalom. For many of our congregations shalom or peace is still only an interior feeling, a consequence of personal faith. For many of our social activists shalom is often all to do with programmes and politics and the vision and spirituality of shalom is lost in the secular busyness. Shalom is central to Biblical faith. George Knight, the OT scholar, in his "Law and Grace" spelt it out:- "The shalom that Christ offered us, then, is a whole, new, perfect and complete way of life, made known to us in our own personal life and in our communal life alike, made known to us here and now within the Covenant People that is his church, yet valid through its essential reality for the whole of God's great creation, and so also for the world to come".

### **Shalom is earthed.**

Richard Foster, writing in "Money, Sex and Power", said shalom is ...

"A full-bodied concept that resonates with wholeness, unity, balance. Gathering in (but much broader than) peace, it means a harmonious, caring community with God at its centre as the prime sustainer and most glorious inhabitant". I live now on a shalom see-saw, alternately lifted in celebration and bumped by

concern! Gladdened, in the urban scene, by the continuing and creative emergence of shalom-carrying initiatives but saddened by the evidences of a diseased society seen in poverty, unemployment and powerlessness. Celebrating the vitality and cultural "togetherness" of new Black and Asian congregations but concerned about their isolation and the backcloth of racism. Hearing the stories of charismatic renewal and the Toronto Blessing but wondering how far we understand that the Spirit is always given for ... ministry, service, mission. Watching individuals receive the gift of shalom in Christ even while other believers falter and fail.

Welcoming the TEAR Fund/Evangelical Alliance "UK Action" but wondering about the struggle to keep holistic mission alive and alert. Glimpsing the quality of students engaged in contemporary Ministry or Church Planting courses and then praying that resources will be available to support their God-given calling. Globally, rejoicing at movements towards peace and unity in Northern Ireland and Israel and then almost despairing at the return to violence and hatred. Denominationally, lifted by the signs of life and initiatives like "Against the Stream" but then perplexed by the amount of paper and time consumed in identity debates or denominational consultations or by our failure to build a balanced and resourced Mission Department!

I know what I want! All of shalom - and shalom for all. I know what I want to see - God's great gift of shalom changing individuals, restoring relationships, embodied in our churches, streaming into our committees, and drawing together the whole earth. Sing it, pray it, and work for it ...

Shalom, my friends  
God's peace, my friends  
Go with you now  
And stay with you  
In all you do  
Shalom, shalom.

Colin Marchant

East Ham, London





# 'SHALOM' THE PERFECT REMAKE

Health and Healing  
in relation to Christian wholeness.



## *Where does health and healing come on your Church Agenda?*

During the 1980's, the so-called "Wimber Wave" hit many of the British Churches. The death of David Watson, the Anglican evangelist and Bible Teacher, seemed to open the door to John Wimbers' unique style of 'popular healing forums'. This focus put healing back onto the church's agenda, and challenged us all to examine our own personal walk with God, and to experience the renewal of the Holy Spirit in our lives. During the last 10 years writers such as Richard Foster and Leanne Payne have brought an emphasis on inner healing (practising the presence).

## *Where does health and healing come on your Church Agenda?*

While agreeing with those who count healing as an integral part of the Gospel and not an isolated subject, I do believe it is necessary for Health & Healing to provide a stimulus to 'God's finest purpose'. As far as the word 'healing' is concerned it seems more popular today to use the word 'wholeness'. The emphasis with this word is in the whole person (the total person). The healing journey takes the same route as the wholeness journey. The need for/of healing is necessary because of the break from the God image of Genesis 1v26 '....let us make man in our own image' to the fall of man recorded in Genesis Ch 3. It has been God's clear goal to bring man (individually and corporately) back to himself. That healing process was achievable through obedience to the law (Micah 6v8 "He has shown you O man what is good, and what the Lord requires of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God"). The New Testament opens up for us the ultimate healing gift, that is Jesus our Saviour and Redeemer (Luke 2v25-27).

## *Where does Health and Healing come on our Church Agenda?*

This questions must in some way be answered, according to our understanding of healing in the scriptures. If we are of the view that healing is part and parcel of the Gospel proclamation and that its activity is a demonstration of God's power, then healing is an integral part of the message and witness of the Church. This will then influence the churches and healing will become a natural manifestation of God at work through His Body. If, however, healing is emphasised less within the church, it is likely to take on a minor role. What I am seeking to share in this article is a desire to put healing back onto a firmer footing, for churches to consider health and healing to be very significant in the

demonstration of God's power amongst us and to really be in touch with the heart which God has for such a needy, hungry and lost world.

There are basically three areas of interest I have in seeking to answer this question: 1. The nature of Man. 2. The inner gift of peace. 3. The fullness of hope.

## 1. The Nature of Man

### a) The Perfect Make

In the beginning relationships were perfect. God knew man. Man knew God. Man knew woman. Woman knew God. Perfect 'Shalom'. Everything God had been made for good. The world was a perfect place; beauty, colour, power. A perfect marriage - two people made for each other - deeply in love - potential bliss. A child is born - a perfect moment - the magnificence of that tiny body. A friendship is made - hearts shared - trust is built. A perfect church - where everyone loves one another. A perfect community where others are counted better than ourselves. When God made us he did so with His characteristics within us. A capacity to love, to relate to others, to create and to be at peace.

### b) Broken Image

Man fell from that perfect relationship with God. The world has, ever since, shown signs of imperfection. Pollution, famine, broken marriages and families, war, disunity in the church. There are those dark moments of man's wickedness - Hungerford, 'James Bulger', Dunblane. Man's rebellion has created a veil between God and man. Ephesians 4v18-19, describes graphically the fallenness of man. They are darkened in their understanding alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart they have become callous and have given themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness. In Romans 7 Paul cries "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" There are many other passages in both the Old and New Testaments which remind us of what it means to live with a 'broken image'.

### c) The Perfect Remake

Jesus said to his disciples 'Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt 5v48). The distorted world and fallen world has no hope, apart from God. Just as the potter takes the clay and moulds it into a perfect vessel, so God takes us and remakes us into his own image. Paul says 'That we may present everyone perfect in Christ'. The RSV translates 'perfect' as mature - meaning completeness, maturity - whole person. Health and healing is involved in the process of the perfect remake, restoring 'the image'. Wholeness is that which was (in the beginning), which is, (in the process of being made), and which is to come (when all is complete).

## 2. The Inner Gift of Peace

When I am at peace with God, myself and others what does this say about health and healing in my life?

- a) Phil 4v4-5 The liberty of joy and the presence of God are paramount to full health and healing as God intended. This involves that perfect walk and inner peace which comes through our oneness with the Lord.
- b) Phil 4v6 When anxiety becomes dominant it will cripple the mind and seek to affect the body, to the extent of paralysing spiritual freedom. The provision of prayer enables the anxious person to release their pain and find relief.
- c) If my life is to be one of a continuous healing process then the state of being AT peace is an essential condition of growth. Paul writes (Phil 4v7) "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

## 3. The Fullness of Hope

What place does health and healing have in our church today? It brings to us a reminder of the nature of hope. Christian hope is secure because of the resurrection of Jesus. There is always hope. The ministry of the church is dependent on that truth. Your prayers will be affected by your view of hope. Healing is not healing without hope. To hear the words from the throne "I am making everything new" is our ultimate hope.

- a) Health and Healing has a place in the church today because it offers potential for the unredeemed world. The healing message of hope invites a needy people to the sufficiency of God. Jesus' words 'Come to me all who are weary and weighed down with trouble and I will give you rest'. On another level the coming of God's Son into the world has provided a way for a world groaning and writhing in pain and emptiness, to find a *Saviour* who fully identifies and stands with them.
- b) Health and Healing has a place in the Church in its message of hope for personal enrichment and fullness. Jesus said "I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly." This is the life which is beyond the mediocre. There is more to healing than mending the physical body. Healing is the provision of God's power to live a life marked out by the Holy Spirits' presence.
- c) Health and Healing offers hope to the church in a world where evil reigns. This hope is based on the victory which is ours in Jesus. The church is in the front line of the battle to confront and overcome the evil one. The ministry of healing declares authority over evil through the completed work of Jesus.

At the heart of God is a deep love for the world to find life in him. Gods' call to the church is to take the tool of the Gospel, with our inheritance of love and the

Holy Spirit and to march forward fearless, bold and expectant to a world in need.

## **Where is Health and Healing going in the next few years?**

### *Where does Health and Healing come on your Church Agenda?*

As people look for that inner peace the church moves with God's healing power. As we gather the church together to grasp the challenges of the year 2000 and on, we will need increasingly to be aware of the Christian teaching on Health and Healing. Already, issues are before us, which require us, to give answers. The popularity of 'new age' philosophy, the enormous interest in the use of alternative medicines, the yet undiscovered boundaries in genetic engineering and the rise in interest of "spiritual healing" and occult practices. The question is does the church offer anything different. For God's church to effectively impart God's healing power to the world there is a need to find a new confidence in the source of healing - that is in God himself, all sufficient One.

Rev'd Michael C Jones      Sec. Health & Healing Group of Baptist Union.

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# **A TIME TO LISTEN AN EVANGELICAL RESPONSE TO THE ENDING OF THE IRA CEASEFIRE**

From ECONI Evangelical Contribution On Northern Ireland 16 February 1996

## **INTRODUCTION:**

We share the sense of outrage and sadness expressed by so many at the decision of the IRA to end its cessation of violence and the subsequent bomb attack in London. Our prayers are with the victims and their families and those for whom this incident has reopened wounds and reawakened fears. At this time of great fear, God's people need to reach out as peacemakers, working to build trust and prepared to take risks on the road to healing. Faced with the present situation we cling to faith in a sovereign God Who has not been taken by surprise and Who identifies with us, weeping over our turmoil, offering salvation and healing. Psalm 33.11; Matthew 28.18; Isaiah 45.22; Hosea 11.8; Luke 19.41-42.

Confronted by evil, we hear the word of God from Psalm 37:

God will judge wickedness: "Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the peaceable. But all sinners will be destroyed; the future of the wicked will be cut off". Psalm 37. 37-38. God calls His people not to give in to the instinctive human responses to evil: "Trust in the Lord and do good".

"Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret - it leads only to evil". Psalm 37. 3,8. God calls His people to live lives of faith and obedience in the face



of evil: "The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom, and their tongues speak what is just. The law of their God is in their hearts; their feet do not slip. Wait for the Lord and keep to his way". Psalm 37. 30-31, 34

### **A REAFFIRMATION OF ESSENTIALS**

We believe that the use of violence for political ends in these islands is immoral and indefensible. There was no justification for the violence of the past and there is no justification for the return to violence now. We recall and reaffirm our comments in September 1994 that: Christians must respond as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ who calls us to love our enemies. Matthew 5. 43-48

Christians need to demonstrate God's calling to be peacemakers and agents of healing, being ready to live up to our profession as a Christian people on the long road to healing ahead. Proverbs 15. 4; Jeremiah 8. 15; Matthew 5. 9; Revelation 22.2. God's requirement of all the people of Northern Ireland is that we reject violent actions, aggressive words and hostile attitudes in all our relationships in the community. Hebrews 12. 14; James 3. 17-18

### **A REFLECTION FROM EXPERIENCE**

In response to the IRA ceasefire in 1994 we said, *While the past activities of the IRA give no basis for confidence, Christians should accept the genuineness of their statement unless evidence to the contrary emerges.* Clearly, that evidence now exists and calls into question the commitment of the IRA to peace or democracy. However, the experience of the last 17 months demonstrates that the vast majority of our community want a lasting peace. It has also become evident that there are those in the Republican movement whose commitment to a peaceful resolution of our problems is genuine. They need to affirm a commitment to the rejection of violence and the acceptance of democratic principles, but they also need our encouragement and support.

### **A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENGAGE**

All of us have to take responsibility for creating and sustaining the kind of society in which violence can no longer flourish. It has been too easy for some of us to turn away from the conflict in our community and get on with our lives, while leaving the resolution of our problems to others. This is immoral - none of us has a right to turn our backs on the wider community.

Engage in Repentance. The desire for peace is real among the great majority of the people of these islands. The efforts of many of those involved have been undertaken in good faith. This should not be a time for recrimination. Instead, we need to search ourselves, accepting our responsibilities, especially those which are ours as disciples of Jesus. We need to recognise our failings and renew our commitment to work for the goal of peace in our community. We need to be open to the future under God.

Engage in Relationships. Since the IRA and Loyalist ceasefires, many new relationships have been established which have helped to break down misunderstanding and mistrust. With the ending of the IRA ceasefire it is imperative that what has been gained through the building of these relationships should not be lost. Instead, there is an even greater incentive to pursue and develop these relationships and to reach out and create new relationships where none currently exist.

Engage in Prayer. At this time we must respond as people of prayer. We pray to a God who makes himself known as our Father and to whom we are encouraged to bring all things. We pray to a God who hears and responds to the cry of his people. Matthew 6. 5-8; Luke 18. 1-8; Ephesians 6. 18; Psalm 91. 15; Isaiah 65. 24; Acts 12. 5-11

“The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD. He is their refuge in the time of trouble. The LORD helps them and rescues them; He rescues them from the wicked, and saves them because they take refuge in Him”. Psalm 37. 39-40

Issued by the Steering Group of ECONI:

Denis Bambrick, David Bruce, Joe Campbell, Arthur Chapman, Ken Clarke, John Gillespie, Norman Hamilton, David Hewitt, Ruth Hutchinson, Ken Irvine, Cecil Kerr, Gary Mason, Gordon McDade, David McMillan, Brian Moore, Janet Morris, Trevor Morrow, Derek Poole, David Porter, Gwen Montgomery, Alwyn Thomson, Michael Wardlow, Ethel White, Michael Whitley, Ken Wilson, Sarah Young

ECONI, 12 Wellington Place, BELFAST BT1 6GE (01232) 325258

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## Dancing in Discord

A trilogy of time-bites in the life  
of downwardly mobile shepherd.

**Monday** 5:00 am, I awake to the sound of our two and a half year old son banging on our bedroom door, again. "Daddy drink, Daddy drink". My wife is doing her best 'in a deep sleep' impression, but I suspect that she is as awake as I am; still she got up last night. Reluctantly I crawl out of bed, does he not know yesterday was a long day! The thought occurs to me that maybe Ministers suffer more from Monday morning blues than most people, due to all the nervous energy expended on the Sabbath.



8:30 Breakfast is over, quiet time ruined, went into auto pilot after the Bible reading and started to mentally prepare a sermon, began to think of who really needed to hear this message, and added illustrations that would make it very clear to them, awoke with a start to my hypocrisy and realised I would be late for our centre meeting. 12:00 Three hours gone and what has been achieved. The pastoral team finished at 1:00. That wasn't so bad apart from the lingering thought that we would discuss all the same matters at the Elders meeting tonight, and some of them also at the Mission Team on Wednesday.

I tried to escape but I couldn't get out of the building before people grabbed me for a WORD. (Next week I'll wear a disguise, or adopt my 'I'd love to talk, but I'm rushing to an emergency look!') Why do they say 'Could I have a word', it is never just a word, its usually lots of words, I thought verbosity was confined to theologians and lecturers, but many of our lay people are becoming just as accomplished! Two out of the four people who just want a word, complain about something that is not my responsibility, so I try to halt them in mid flow, pointing them to the appropriate committee or Elder, Ah but they reply, the committee took fourteen days to reply to Mr Brown's letter and he is furious, and then here comes the justification "as one of the pastors I thought you should know". Suitably burdened I leave the building, the Monday morning feeling is worse, and I am hungry. The important decisions of the day crowd into my mind. Should I have Rice Krispies again or beans on toast. I had beans on toast for breakfast so I opt for Rice Krispies.

1:00 Home Communion, the elderly lady at 57 Beans Street is in good form, she makes me a cup of tea talks to me about Manchester United's home victory over Southampton and cheers me up no end, her knees are sore but she remains cheerful, communion is real. 2:00 Nursing home, elderly gentleman deaf as a post, I have to show him the little cups and the Bible before he understands I am bringing him communion. I am not good in nursing homes, they disturb me. 3:00 Home, did some paperwork. As a church we must go through a rain forest all on our own. A letter from Michael Bollero floats to the top of my in tray, inviting me to do an article for Sound-River magazine, essential reading for "Evangelical Baptists". I must get to this soon, time is running out, but my creative juices are not flowing at the moment so I shuffle it back to the bottom of the pile. On the corner of my desk my probationary studies seem to smirk at me as yet another day passes without progress.

8:00 a friend called round at seven and pretty much invited me to share the Gospel with him, had the most wonderful hour, told him every outstanding intervention of God in my life, he listened thoughtfully, turned out in the end he was trying to work up courage to ask me to marry him, (you know what I mean). Of course I will. I am late for the Elders meeting but in a buoyant mood, as expected we talk about all the same things as this morning but I am indefatigable

I am an EVANGELIST. I know what John meant when he said that we write that our Joy may be complete (1 John 1:4).

**Wednesday** (what a stupid way to spell it). Went for a run first thing, I always seem to pray better, when I am running, I am more honest. Legs are wobbly on return but presence of God is strong. Why do I ever get down? It occurs to me that I used to be more balanced than I am at present, I seem to swing from mood to mood like some crazed neurotic. Maybe its part of the training! I haven't always been moody, have I? I know what it is, its sleep deprivation! I do some more paperwork, my desk appears, and my office is starting to appear tidy. I finish a talk on sects for the Christian Union, and manage an hour's reading but it does not feel like work! The post arrives, newsletters from several missionary societies and para church organisations, all of them very thoughtfully include a covenanting form with a standing order mandate. More paper into the wicker out-tray.

Lunch, up to the church. It's called *happy hour* and it is; it was supposed to be a meal for the homeless and the Ministers, but most guests are not strictly homeless. A strange fellowship is enjoyed, the dividing line between the lost and the found is blurred and true friendship starts to form. Then its time for a visit to a local School Christian Union for a talk on sects, only three turn up! Last week we did sex and there were eleven. (That's a talk on sex!) Back up to church to prepare for a visit from another school tomorrow. Arrived home to a message on answer phone - school visit cancelled. Eight messages in total, two people phoned twice.

Sound-River article still needs doing. What will I say? Title suggested 'From Probation' - gripping thought, what *will* I say? Do I be a whingeing toad, and complain about all the things that Bible college didn't teach me, or the fact that the probationary system isn't standardised, or that the Ministers' fellowship isn't! No that doesn't appeal. Perhaps I could be really positive and prattle on about all the new initiatives our church has started, with some subtle inferences to my great talent. No people can always see through that. I will just have to try and say something profound that will be meaningful to everyone. Tracey suggests an article called "The church as the other woman in Manse marriage breakdown!" She has always had a good sense of humour my wife. Have you any ideas Lord? My probationary studies smirked at me again!

10:00 Mission team over. We had a really honest talk; it turns out everyone is sick of meetings so we are going to have less. We haven't actually cancelled any yet, but still progress has been made, I hope. Tracey is in bed when I arrive home, I think that if we had a dogs' house I would be in it!

**Friday.** Did a funeral at the crematorium for a non-member today, everyone thought I was very nice, (why does that annoy me so much?) I nearly forgot one of the hymns but recovered well. Back at the house everyone was very grateful,

but I do not expect to see them in church the following Sunday. I go home very depressed; tell God in the car that I am going to stop being a minister, I am sick of being ignored; felt God saying He was! Put some music on to drown Him out. It's Keith Green singing about the children of Israel wanting to go back to Egypt when the going got tough in the desert. It's not fair. God always speaks to me clearly when I don't want Him to. I am still angry at home, I tell God why. Tracey is sick of me going to meetings, so am I. My greatest concern is for the lost but they don't seem to want to know and I want to go back to a secular job and a normal life! (I was washing up at the time). A strong thought comes into my mind, look up Jeremiah 42. Whenever I want to do this I always get something bizarre, still I do so. Chapter heading says "The Flight to Egypt Forbidden" Why am I laughing? Its Friday ..... but Sunday is coming.

Appendix 1 The consequences of this article! according to Ladbrokes

Letters offering advice 4/1

A visit by the Area Superintendent 2/1

A call elsewhere 1/17

Nomination for BU Presidency 1/2057

Nothing at all. Evens

Appendix 2 James Booth is the Assistant Pastor at Tabernacle Baptist Church in Penarth (Wales), the home church of incoming BU President Rev John C James. James is married to Tracey and they have a little boy called James. He (James the 1st) studied at Oxford and knows a little Greek and Hebrew. The Hebrew makes his suits and the little Greek runs a kebab van.

*Correspondence will not be entered into unless it is a very large envelope!*

James Booth

Penarth

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# THE POWER AND THE GLORY:



## reflections on the conflicts of interest between local churches and church-based counselling centres.

### Introduction :

One of the fastest growing developments in local church ministry in the last 20 years is the proliferation of counselling centres and ministries in Britain, mirroring the explosion of counselling in the secular world. From the early days of the London based Westminster Pastoral Foundation (WPF) the Church Army Counselling Service, the Clinical Theology Association (CTA), and Care and Counsel has emerged a nationwide, though patchy, counselling movement. Many pastors have seen in this ministry an answer to their pastoral overload, either by becoming a counsellor themselves, and aspiring to more effectively helping wounded people, or by establishing a counselling ministry in their church staffed by members of their congregation, trained or otherwise. There may also be a loss of nerve on the part of some pastors who trade the birthright of pastoral ministry for the pottage of humanistic counselling in the hope of more effective helping skills. Ken Leech a decade ago rightly saw in the search for counselling skills among some clergy a symptom of their own profound loss of direction and purpose in our secular age: 'So we have seen the retreat of many clergy into the 'caring professions' where they can at least feel needed and useful, earn their keep for a job well done, and retain something of their priestly role on Sundays and after office hours....So the pastor becomes concerned primarily with the non-copers, with the broken and the casualty, with 'crisis intervention' and problem solving.'<sup>(1)</sup> In a similar critique Eugene Peterson, the North American Pastoral Theologian, writes that American pastors are: '.....abandoning their posts...at an alarming rate. They are not leaving their churches and getting other jobs. Congregations still pay their salaries. Their names remain on the church stationery and they continue to appear in pulpits on Sundays. But they are abandoning their posts, their calling. They have gone whoring after other gods. What they do with their time under the guise of pastoral ministry hasn't the remotest connection with what the church's pastors have done for most of twenty centuries.'<sup>(2)</sup>

Morgan Derham opened up some of the issues concerning a counselling ministry in the local church, in an article in 'Ministry Today'. His aim was to contrast the secular philosophy, goals and processes of modern counselling with the kind of counselling that Richard Baxter practised in Kidderminster: perhaps best described as spiritual formation and direction.<sup>(3)</sup> In this paper I want to build on some of Derham's issues and see how we might avoid some of the more destructive effects of the conflicts that arise when a counselling ministry or counselling centre is incorporated into the local church. I write from some experience of the tensions

that can be present between church expectations and the role of counselling. Currently I am the Minister of a Baptist church which does not operate an organised 'counselling ministry'; I am a counsellor and a tutor in counselling; and a part-time hospital chaplain, (where confidentiality is a legal requirement of my contract of employment). I have also been a supervisor and overseer of a church/community-based counselling centre linked to the church where I began ministry and from which I moved two year's ago. I had to work hard then to know what my role was at times and am aware of the views from both sides of the debate, having variously espoused them both at times!

## 1. Understanding

Some critics regard counselling as a Trojan Horse for the secular humanism that has so ravaged the church in our day. '*Let counselling into your church and before you know it there will be all manner of godless philosophies and attitudes in the congregation,*' they say (as if there are not enough anyway!) Paul Vitz, in his book '*Psychology as Religion. The Cult of Self Worship,*'<sup>(4)</sup> has exposed the way in which self is deified in the philosophy that underlies many of the counselling theorists. In this view counselling is about encouraging 'self actualisation' or the elevation of self, whereas the Christian message is deeply suspicious of the self in all its radical ambiguity, (capable of wickedness and sanctity) seeing in the self, people's attempts to live independently of God. It is selfishness that is at the root of so much destruction of relationships and so the Christian is called to love God and to dethrone self from its place of pre-eminence in order to allow Jesus Christ to be Lord.

Clearly a pastor holding such negative views of counselling is unlikely to initiate a counselling ministry along such lines, but he or she may arrive in a church only dimly aware of the existence of such a ministry and find a profound conflict between the values of that ministry and those of their own pastoral care of the flock. Certainly we dare not baptise uncritically the beliefs of, for instance, Rogerian therapy into our pastoral practise. However, we may find some of their insights and skills appropriate and commensurate with our Christian belief, and many pastors have found their pastoral skills enormously enriched through acquiring listening and counselling skills from a variety of sources, such as CTA, Westminster Pastoral Foundation, St John's College, Nottingham, Relate or CRUSE.

Others come to regard counselling with almost idolatrous reverence. Nothing must contradict the value system and therapeutic processes of whatever counselling guru they follow, regardless of the established teachings of the Church. Counselling all too easily becomes a pseudo religion, and in common with all religious attempts to reach God on human terms, it stands under the radical judgement of the God who speaks his final Word in Christ. Here Karl Barth would no doubt include 'counselling' in his category of religious systems condemned by God. Here the minister will want to remind himself of the role

he/she is called to fulfil as guardian of the flock of God under his/her care and act with understanding and sensitivity to integrate the Christian message with whatever of the secular philosophy can be redeemed, rejecting that which is not merely inappropriate, but rather untrue. Rather than either dismissing secular counselling altogether, or accepting it uncritically, it is the pastor's responsibility to attempt some integration of a Christian world view and value system with the skills and processes that secular counselling has developed and shown to be of assistance in the processes whereby men and women grow in their humanity and emotional health.

It is no surprise that the three values that research has shown are indispensable to the effectiveness of the counselling process: (i) genuineness, (ii) nonpossessive warmth and (iii) accurate empathy are themselves heavily freighted with theological concepts.<sup>(5)</sup> For 'genuineness' we approach truthfulness and openness; for 'nonpossessive warmth' read agape love and with 'accurate empathy' we are aware of continuity with the category of Incarnation whilst aware also of the very real discontinuity between those two categories. In this counselling relationship client and therapist together discover a wholeness that is greater than that of either individual, in a way reflecting something of the image of the God of Trinity, the God who is Persons-in Relationship, intrinsic to our createdness. That 'wholeness' is best summed up in the quality of love. The person of the Father has no separate being apart from the Son and the Spirit, who is the bond of love. From that eternal relationship God has stepped out of Himself into the created order in the person of Jesus Christ in a way that is genuine and true; full of grace that does not seek to rob us of our individuality, but seeks to perfect it; and in such a way that God has become incarnate, taking frail human flesh.

Being aware of the differing perspectives of counsellor and evangelist is also vital, as Derham makes clear. Counselling is not 'an evangelistic programme designed to make converts'. This proves problematic when there are tight constraints on finances, (and when in church life are there not tight budgets!) The temptation is to put money where 'results' will be most likely, with 'results' meaning the thorough conversion of people, especially their wallets. If rents on premises and salaries are required then counselling can become expensive for all but the wealthiest churches and such ministries become vulnerable to the vagaries of budgeting decisions by PCCs or Diaconates. On the whole church leaders are only vaguely aware of the nature of counselling and have expectations of church growth that are unrealistic. Perhaps the best context in which to place counselling is in the area of social responsibility as an arm of the church's care in its community. Here the ministry can be offered for its and Christ's sake, rather than the membership's sake. It comes to express Archbishop Temple's dictum that the church exists for the benefit of its non-members.



## **2. Boundaries**

### **(i) Confidentiality.**

Ministers often have a proprietorial interest in 'their' members; they will speak of 'my congregation' or 'my leaders'. That sense of ownership may well derive from the strong commitment that they feel toward their congregation and a passionate belief in their responsibility before God for the welfare of those in their charge, a sense of having to give an account (Hebrews 13:17). Or it may have its roots in an unconscious desire for power and control over others that is symptomatic of a neurotic craving for significance and status. They may want to know what transpires in the counselling exchange between 'their' member and the counsellor. Derham makes clear that 'Not even the pastor has the right to know what goes on in the counselling relationship.'

Counsellors almost universally operate with a strong ethic of confidentiality and will not disclose information on their clients to anyone other than their counselling supervisor, although the matter is more complex with the subject of sexual abuse. This can lead to the disempowering of the minister that can be disconcerting to him or her and lead to a conflict with the counsellor unless those boundaries are well understood and accepted.

### **(ii) The Minister as Counsellor.**

Derham is emphatic that counselling should not be done by the minister. In an ideal world I would agree with his view, not least because of the enormous potential for role confusion, but many pastors find themselves in my current situation with no trained counsellors in their congregations, although there are some in the early stages of training. Here the pastor either ignores those situations where counselling is appropriate, or he/she rolls up his/her sleeves and embraces the task. The pastor following the latter course needs above all else a wise supervisor to help avoid the extremes of role confusion between spiritual guide and non-directive counsellor and an awareness of the transference issues that may be present. In these circumstances the need for clear, established boundaries between minister/counsellor and client/member are vital. A colleague of mine maintained this balance by not dealing with a person who he was counselling in their role as youth leader. For the duration of the counselling one of the elders provided the link between the youth leader and the church leadership. The issue of the duration of the counselling relationship is also problematic in this context. Generally, the longer the duration the more inappropriate it is that the minister is the counsellor, but very often at the outset of a counselling relationship the anticipated duration is unknown. Short-term (6-12) sessions can work satisfactorily, but longer relationships are better conducted by another counsellor. One possibility is the establishing of a reciprocal relationship with another minister/counsellor to see members from one another's churches, thus avoiding the conflict of roles.

### 3. Integration

Many counsellors in local churches feel alienated and marginalised. Perhaps the greatest gift a pastor can give to counsellors in his or her church is the same gift that they give regularly to their clients: unconditional acceptance. I still belong, though loosely now I have moved, to a group of Christian counsellors who felt themselves so marginalised and judged in their local churches that they call themselves the 'heretics'! It has often been remarked that the longer one works with the hurting and wounded people who come for counselling and walk with them empathetically through their pain the looser is one's grip on some of the more rigid dictums of evangelical doctrine of persons. I am not talking about the Christological or soteriological areas of the faith so much as the anthropology and psychology of persons. The more I walk this journey the less inclined I am to speak of the depravity of my clients and the more I feel the glory of their wounded humanity. Yes, I have read Romans, but what I want to celebrate is the image of God in every client, and not just to isolate the fact of its brokenness and marring by sin. Through counselling some have come to accept their glory, and not just their fallenness; God's grace and not just His condemnation of their sin. Many Christian counsellors wrestle at the boundaries of faith and experience and find their uncertainties condemned by others in their local church as loss of faith and sinful doubt. Blessed are they if they find acceptance and security from their minister, for then they will remain open to God and vulnerable to the Spirit as they encounter Him in others.

If acceptance of the counsellors is an invaluable part of the minister's role in the process of integrating a counselling ministry in the local church, then conversely, the counsellors must be patient with the rest of the congregation and avoid at all costs a sense of superiority. St Paul's admonishment to 'consider others better than yourselves' (Phil 5:3) applies to pastoral counsellors too! Brian Thorne, a Christian person-centred therapist, writes 'With those who are more damaged, however, the experience is often one of frustration, stuckness and even of powerlessness. It is in such relationships that it becomes so blindingly obvious that I am not a powerful magician who can work miracles by offering acceptance, genuineness and empathy. I am learning increasingly to accept my stuckness and powerlessness so that I can get somewhere near the humility that is necessary if I am to become a channel for a power greater than my own. If I can let go of anxiety and simply relax, I experience what I can only describe as a new resource which becomes available to my client and to me. ....to those familiar with the disciplines of prayer and worship, it will not be difficult to see the process as akin to that of resting in the presence of God.'<sup>(6)</sup>

Perhaps this experience is not so different to that of pastors everywhere as they wrestle with intractable pastoral problems. Some integration and acceptance of pastors and counsellors can be encouraged from shared faith, experience and understanding of their respective roles. At the same time, a blurring of the roles

rather than genuine integration only brings confusion. Peterson argues that it is high time pastors rediscovered the discipline of spiritual direction as the heart of our calling, together with prayer and the reading of Scripture. 'Being a spiritual director, which used to loom large at the centre of every pastor's work, in our times has been pushed to the periphery of ministry.'<sup>(1)</sup> Perhaps if we valued, trained and supported pastoral counsellors in the local church, pastors might be set free to fulfil our essential role in the church as prayerful companions along the pilgrim's way of faith.

One way of listening to one another as counsellors and ministers might be to form a study/reflection group so that counsellors can become more aware of the theological dimension of their work, and ministers more aware of the basic issues in counselling that would inform their own pastoral ministry as well as help them to understand better the perspectives of their counsellors. A recent attempt to build just such a framework is Bridger and Atkinson's 'Counselling in Context'<sup>(8)</sup> but older texts such as those of Jacobs<sup>(1)</sup> or Hurding<sup>(10)</sup> and its secular counterpart, Individual Therapy<sup>(2)</sup> would also prove useful to the ministers in particular. Similarly, counsellors wishing to understand better the pastoral calling of their ministers would benefit from reading Eugene Peterson's trilogy.<sup>(3)</sup> As always in church life, careful listening to one another on the basis of mutual trust and openness pays a healthy dividend in growth towards that effectiveness in ministry and mission that is the goal for so many, and helps to avoid the ruinous conflicts that rob the church of its integrity.

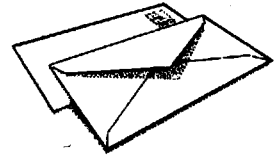
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Paul Goodliff

Stevenage

# Letters to the Editor:



I was pleased to read about the renewed commitment and emphasis of Mainstream to the Baptist denomination. It's encouraging to learn that the "Word and Spirit Network" is not planning to leave the Baptist Union behind. Having up to now been involved as an ABY Rep, it has been disconcerting to see too many churches take the "easy option" and pull out of Baptist life altogether - withdrawing (effectively) the life, experience and witness other Baptists (though they may not realise this) really desperately need.

Compared with present BU structures, the advantage of the "Network" seems to me to be the way it begins from the "bottom-up" rather than being imposed from above. That is, it's an expression of individual churches seeking to work together regularly rather than a nebulous structure (the Association) which in its present form cannot possibly cope with meeting the needs of all the churches contained within it. However, at the same time Associations can provide a means to communicate to a number of churches over a wide area as Rev Tim Keightly demonstrated when he organised the Herts contribution to the Glasgow '88 World Youth Conference. I feel it would be best if both Network and Association could support each other in a way which combines the advantages of both.

Such an aim is finally taking shape in the Alliance of Baptist Youth. Our President, Brendan Quinn is heavily involved in organising "Thingies" in Birmingham. This is a monthly "Celebration" of 200+ young people which has successfully launched similar "Thingies" events in Oxford and Cambridge. ABY Kent has begun to meet monthly and here in Winchester Baptists are involved in an Anglican initiative "Soundwave" inspired by Hertfordshire's "Soul Survivor". It is hoped that ABY can become a resource to encourage and enable the establishment of similar events. For myself, it's also good to find a growing awareness of the gospel message in relation to worldwide peace and justice.

On a different (but, I feel, related) subject, over the last year I have been following the controversy over the so-called "Toronto Blessing". Sceptical of the media's ability to give the truth I once ventured into St Andrew's, Chorleywood to see for myself. The only real problem I've had (apart from being unnerved by the intensity of the phenomenon) is relating it to experience in the Bible. Terry Virgo is right in expressing the need to explain rationally to the rest of the church what is actually happening. However, I have found many references in the Old Testament to a similar experience which seems to be called "prophesying" (GNB "ecstatic dancing and shouting") which includes "falling over" (eg Numbers 11: 25-30; 1 Samuel 10: 5-13; 1 Samuel 19: 18-24; Kings 1 and 2 have hints of similar happenings among the "prophets"). Is there any way in which the "prophesying" of the New Testament Greek can be related to the full meaning *cont. on p31*



of "prophesying" in the Hebrew? Does the Greek Septuagint translation of our OT reflect this possible link? eg the often quoted phrase: "They spoke in tongues and prophesied". To me this sounds a much more promising argument than other explanations I've heard which, at worst, sound dubious and contrived to fit the experience to those who are sceptical but sincere Bible-believing Christians.

What are your views on this?

Steve Blunden

Alliance of Baptist Youth Peace and Justice Officer

*Over to our readership - Editor!*

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## News from the Council and Executive.

The Council met for the first time before the 1996 Conference began at Swanwick. The Council agreed to serve as a ministry team at the Conference, and to be available for personal consultation during it. It is also the intention that the Council will help the Executive evaluate its work and vision and act as a forum for fresh insights and ideas both for Mainstream and the Union. One Council goal is to help each other break out of the pernicious culture of independence into new forms of interdependency. Among the issue of concern raised and prayed over were: the pressures younger Ministers are being subjected to; the self-imposed loneliness of too many leaders; the need for a culture change towards interdependency; the significance of the failure to appoint a new Head of Mission; the priority of mission; the need for effective local networking and the need for new models of trans-local ministry across the Union.

The Executive met in Gorsley towards the end of March and had an excellent time. The 1996 Conference was felt to have been one of the best ever for a range of reasons, including filling Swanwick. Cassettes are still available from Sherborne Sound. See order form elsewhere in the magazine. Plans for the 1997 and 1998 Conferences were shaped. *If all goes according to plan the flier going out with this magazine will reveal more.* Good news was received from several of the Word and Spirit Networks and plans to try to develop these in weaker regions were agreed. A provisional agenda for our next meeting with the leadership at Baptist House was drafted. The denominational consultation was discussed and the impressive range of those invited applauded. Plans for the Human Sexuality Consultation were finalized. The Consultation will take place at Regent's Park College, Oxford on Tuesday September 17th with Dr David Cook of the Whitfield Institute and Dr Margaret Gill of the Acorn Christian Healing Trust as the keynote speakers. Dr John Weaver will serve as the day's facilitator. The cost for the day will be £15 including lunch and afternoon tea. Timings and details are available on request from Glen Marshall (01924 - 382966). Some preliminary thinking towards a European Mainstream Conference was done. We received encouraging financial, magazine and secretarial reports. We slept and ate well.

Then we went home!

The Editor .

**The Mainstream Executive as at January 1996 are:**

Chair (North): Glen Marshall, 26 Belle Isle Avenue, Wakefield WF1 5JY 01924 382966  
Chair (South): Rob Warner, Wimbledon Baptist Church, 30 Queens Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8LR 0181-947-1859  
Secretary: Lynn Green, 3 Marks Rd., Wokingham, Berks RG41 1NR 01734 786912  
Treasurer & Conference Administrator: Derek Wick, 12 Barnard Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 6AP 0121 378 3020  
Magazine Editor: Michael Bochenski, The Baptist Manse, 18 Gurney Court Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire. AL1 4RL. 01727 - 856537.  
Roger Sutton - Altrincham, Cheshire.  
Rob White - Poynton, Cheshire.  
*Please pray with us as we seek to increase the Executive to ten with God's choice of people.*

**The Mainstream Council of Reference as at January 1996 are :**

John Brewster - Retford	Dave Cave - Evangelical Alliance
Ian Coffey - Plymouth	Mike Fuller - Coventry
Stephen Gaukroger - Chalfont St Peter	Jim Graham - Chalfont St Peter
Terry Griffith - Bexleyheath	Steven Hembery - Crawley
Steve Ibbotson - Leeds	John James - Penarth
Vivienne Lasseter - Burnley	Rupert Lazar - West Croydon
John Lewis - Skipton	Peter Nodding - Guildford
Ron Overton - Colchester	Michael Quicke - Spurgeon's College
Roy Searle - Northumbria	David Slater - Kingsbridge
David Spriggs - Evangelical Alliance	Roger Standing - West Croydon
Susan Stevenson - Chatsworth, London.	Peter Swaffield - Berkhamsted
Jane Thorington-Hassell - Bow, London	Derek Tidball - London Bible College
John Weaver - Regents' , Oxford.	Harry Weatherley - Thatcham
Nigel Wright - Altrincham	

*The Council meets again at Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church on Wed July 10th and at Swanwick, Derbyshire on Monday 13th January 1997. At the July Meeting we will be considering, inter alia, the denominational consultation and plans for a European Mainstream Conference.*

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**MOORLEY'S** Print & Publishing  
23 Park Rd., Ilkeston, Derbys DE7 5DA  
Tel/Fax: (0115) 932 0643

using the Editor's data sent on disk.