



ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES WALES

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Contents

"Glorify Your Name" by Mary Newsom.....	2
A Message from our Chairman Nick Jones.....	3
Flames of Fire Conference by Nick Jones.....	4
A Christian Centre in Mid Wales By Marcia Gibson-Watt and Penelope Bourdillon.....	6
Signs and Wonders of the Kingdom by MikeEndicott.....	7
Undertakers' men or pioneers by Gerry Angel.....	9
and Finally by Mary Newsom.....	13



"Glorify Your Name" by Mary Newsom

That in fact is our calling, the calling of the whole Church no matter what denomination or doctrine, what nationality or what culture.

For some time I have been thinking deeply about charismatic renewal, about healing, about power and about how it should have worked out in our churches and why there seems to have been so much confusion and failure. What has gone wrong in charismatic renewal? It would seem to be the right way forward for the Church to be led by the Holy Spirit, - by God himself. We must consider where we have failed, for it is not God who has failed.

It may be that our activities are man's activities which God has not actually sanctioned. We intend and want to do God's will but somehow cannot discern His way, and use our own logic and faulty reasoning. When we consider "healing" this seems to be particularly shaky. I believe that we should seek a theology which applies across the whole spectrum of our churches and to everything we do.

Romans 12:2 says "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Our minds must be conformed to the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16) we cannot rely on our reasoning but we praise Him for He is willing to renew our minds. But we must use our minds, they are not superfluous when the Spirit takes over. Some dismiss theology but to do so is to risk heresy. Heresy is so nearly the truth and Jesus himself warned that "even the elect can be led astray" (Matthew 24:24, Mark 13:22). We may at this time be surrounded by false prophets able to perform miracles.

Look too at Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." and Ezekiel 36:26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh"

I have meditated on these passages many times to get some understanding of Renewal. Each time I see something new as our hearts are changed slowly, "softened" as we might say.

Recently at an ARM(Wales) Executive retreat we were left to think on the verse from Ezekiel. I read the whole Chapter to put it in context, then concentrated on verses 22-38. God intends to bring Israel to repentance so that He can renew them and they "shall know that I am the LORD".

If we want this renewal it must be all of it. We will be changed in order to Glorify God and we must portray His Holiness, in other words we must become like Jesus. From the New Testament we learn that we must be "Born again" (John 3), we must become a "New Creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) the old self must die (Romans 6:5-11) and this means that we must be "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20).

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Meditating on these Scriptures causes us to believe them possible - then God will have His way and His Name will be Glorified. But I have needed to understand something of what this means, I have desired that renewed mind and that pure heart full of love, and overflowing with the Spirit of God. I believe we need to examine this whole area, it is what the Lord wants of us now as we move forward with ARM(Wales) and Flames of Fire. We welcome articles from our members which may at times conflict with what some of us feel we stand for, but these opinions need to be expressed and weighed.

One book that I am currently considering is "Jesus Baptises in One Holy Spirit" by David Pawson. The Foreword is written by Mark Stibbe who says of his friend David, "Every time we have met, there has been a very real sense of iron sharpening iron – of two people refining their theological views in the light of the friendly criticisms which each has offered." That is the light in which I want to offer this magazine, we have none of us got everything right but must be willing to read and meditate on what we have read so that we can hear the Holy Spirit speaking to us. So rather than issue any disclaimer as to the content of any article I pray with St. Paul that we will all receive a "Gift of Discernment"

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:9-11)

This issue includes articles from Mike Endicott, who challenges us in his own inimitable way and from a restored Gerry Angel. His challenge to us is different but nevertheless necessary, don't be put off because of its length, it will make you think about not only our future but also about the Church in Wales.

Mary Newsom

A Message from our Chairman Nick Jones

I write for the first time as, acting co-chair of Anglican Renewal Ministries (Wales), having been elected at the AGM last November, to replace Phil Rees. Before I explain the title, I would like to extend thanks to Phil for the way that he has chaired ARM Wales, during his term of office, it has been really good to work alongside him through that time. Over the years the main thrust of the work has been centred on the *Flames of Fire* Conference, which has seen slow but steady growth.

As Phil prepared to step down as Chairman, he recognised that the workload of leading both the conference and ARM (Wales) could be too much for one person to carry. Even under

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Phil's chairmanship much of the energy of the executive was focussed on the conference, leaving little time to promote other work in ARM. As a result it was proposed that there be this co-chairman situation, with one chairing ARM and the other chairing the *Flames of Fire* conference. Whilst this might seem complicated, it allows for the support and encouragement of renewal in the Anglican Church in Wales to be given greater priority, whilst at the same time moving ahead with what God seems to be doing through *Flames of Fire*.

So here I am, 'I' being Nick Jones, also chair of the *Flames of Fire* conference, husband to Chris, father of three children in their 20s, and grandfather to one wonderful grandson. I have served as a clergyman for over 20 years and am presently Rector of Llanilid with Pencoed, near Bridgend, and leading New Wine leaders Networks in Wales. In addition, I have been involved in Renewal as chairman of the Diocesan Renewal Team in Llandaff for a number of years and attended ARM Conferences before serving as the Ministry Team Leader at *Flames of Fire* (formerly, Fanning the Flames) since 1996.

In 2004 many Christians in Wales will be commemorating the Welsh Revival of 1904, when the Lord moved so powerfully in Wales. In recent years I have heard Christians from other parts of the world tell of how that move of God affected their nation. As Chairman of ARM and *Flames of Fire* I feel an awesome responsibility, but I am also reminded in those thoughts of revival, of the greater power of God at work in us who are in the Body of Christ. As some have suggested the work is too much for one man, but together in Christ we have grace to achieve. I also hear much excited anticipation and hope that God will again move in power in this land. I hope for that too, but a greater desire is that when the Lord does so visit the nation in revival, He would find a people ready for Himself, ready to be co-workers, a kingdom people, holy and devoted to His service and Glory.

As we begin this new season for ARM Wales, I ask for the support of your prayers and look forward to our working together, united, inspired, equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Nick.

Flames of Fire Conference by Nick Jones

31st July - 6th August 2004

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"

(Psalm 119 v 105)

This year we look forward to welcoming back to the conference Ron & Carolyn Allen from Heartland Community Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Ron is the senior pastor of the church and has spoken at the conference on two previous occasions. After Ron's last visit here, Andy

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Booth was invited to Fort Wayne where he has since married and started a family. Andy will be accompanying Ron & Carolyn on their visit this summer and we look forward to his participation in the conference. Amongst other speakers we also welcome back Stuart Bell from Aberystwyth, Nigel James from “Big Ideas” and Bruce Collins who will be leading the morning Bible Study this year. A new speaker for this year will be Kenny Borthwick, who is a minister from the Church of Scotland, who also heads up New Wine Scotland with the “Clan Gathering” conference. Having heard him speak at the New Wine leaders conference I am very much looking forward to hearing him speak at Flames of Fire.

The conference will again offer ministry for all age groups with the crèche, Messengers and Ignite as in previous years. During the conference in 2003, a group for the 18 – 30’s (Timothy) began to meet and we anticipate an exciting programme, which is being prepared by the young people themselves.

Since the conference was first held at the Royal Welsh Showground in 1996, the Lord has led us through many challenges and through facing them we have grown. Not just in numbers but also spiritually. Recognising and giving glory to God for what He has done is important. Whilst the conference began as the Anglican Renewal Ministries (Wales) conference, many of those who have come are from other denominations. I believe this is God’s working and welcome what He has done. Bearing this in mind we have taken steps to cooperate with what we feel God has done, and opened the door further by leaving ARM out of the title. The form of the conference, being acceptable by all, will not have changed significantly; it is just made more accessible to all Christians in Wales.

As the leadership has changed, particularly in the last year, those who are, like myself, replacing others, have found working at the conference a process of development and growth. This is again something that God has been working through the conference. If, as it seems, God is doing this, how can we cooperate with His work? One of the areas we would like to develop is to allow the opportunity for more speakers from the Welsh church to share through the seminars and main stage, where applicable, examples of good practice and encouragement. This we hope would encourage both those who share and those who listen. Whilst it is always good to have high quality speakers from outside of Wales to encourage us, it would also be good to allow people from within Wales to develop and grow in this area. I believe that God will have gifted people within His Church here; let’s give them opportunity to grow in that gifting.

Through the conference we shall seek to continue to give priority to worship of God, to offer ministry in the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, and to encourage through teaching and example rooted in the Word of God. People come to the conference to find refreshing from God. It is hoped that we can through the conference, also equip and enable the people of God in the local church, to work for and to build the Kingdom of God in their community. As a conference team we are committed to strive for excellence in all that we do, seeing it as an offering for the glory of God; to model ways of being church and good practice in ministry in the power of the Spirit; to see an imparting of spiritual gifts and ministries and to release God’s people to be the Body of Christ.

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We look forward to welcoming you to the conference, and in sharing God's ministry among us.

Nick Jones

A Christian Centre in Mid Wales By Marcia Gibson-Watt and Penelope Bourdillon

In the year 2000 Marcia Gibson-Watt and Penelope Bourdillon published a beautiful book entitled "The Four Graces". The text was mainly prayers and poems, Marcia had illustrated it with paintings of all sixty three Anglican Churches in Radnorshire.

Their intent had been to raise money for the Royal Welsh Showground in the year that Marcia's husband, Robin, was President of the Show. They were able to give £28,000 towards the new sheep pens but a further £12,000 was reserved for an Ecumenical Christian Centre to be built on the site.

A model is currently on display at the Showground. £750,000 is needed overall to build and secure running costs of the Centre. It will be used all year round as an office for the appointed rural stress officer, and there will be a central meeting room for 150 people, a consulting/prayer room, a kitchen and a WC.

The Centre will be a Christian, spiritual, pastoral presence in an expanding village on the Showground near Builth Wells where increasing numbers of organisational bodies are using the grounds to meet during the whole year; e.g. it is now the permanent headquarters of the NFU, Cymru/Wales. We therefore feel an urgency to build the Centre here uniting all Christians. We are under attack for building a new church when so many churches are having to close, but the Centre must be in the heart of the community and therefore we feel strongly it is God's calling and vision.

To get the fund-raising started Marcia and Penelope [both ARM (Wales) members] are producing a new companion prayer book., called "A.C.T.S. (1)" This time the illustrations will be of churches from all denominations and from all over Wales.

The book will be hardback with a black cover and the same size as "The Four Graces". 5000 are to be printed by the end of September, the cost will be approximately £20.

Please support and pray for this project.

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Marcia Gibson-Watt and Penelope Bourdillon



Elim Church, Llandrindod Wells. This was first a Quaker Meeting House in 1897 and is now Pentecostal.

Signs and Wonders of the Kingdom by Mike Endicott

It is a truth, whatever the discussions and arguments about these things might be today, that in New Testament times we would have fallen over miracles going up the street.

These days we don't. We don't really know why we don't, we just don't. It seems such hard work sometimes, trying to get God to turn around on his cloud, see our plight and jump down to help us. In times of grief, pastoral caring and compassion, our specific prayers are specifically answered far less often than we dare admit, to ourselves or to anyone else.

Of course, one or two exciting things might happen at a Christian conference but usually not for the other eleven months of the year.

It is, in fact, such hard work that we then go and make it a specialist church activity by calling it, unbiblically, an intercession ministry or a healing ministry. Once we have done that we can put it all in a box; we make it an optional extra that we can take or leave, most of us leaving it well alone out of fear of something we don't understand.

If, on the other hand, we are hugely enlightened Christians in leadership, we can say how wonderful these things are but then teach our people that they should be just as concerned with doing a thousand other good churchy works as well which, incidentally, are mostly not mentioned in Scripture as being a part of the ministry of Christ.

We are taught consistently on Sunday mornings that God doesn't change but he certainly seems to have done so! Jesus used to be completely reliable in matters of miracle working, healing all who came to him, but now the number of asked-for miracles is very small in practice. Consequently, we then develop enormously complicated theologies to explain their absence and then turn our people away to 'more fruitful' activities. Many of our Christian leaders have become so hypocritical that they actually earn their living in pastoral care, while

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at the same time appearing to go to greatly thoughtful and philosophical lengths to ensure that our religion collapses into communalism and the power of the Kingdom fades away. It's OK if Jesus gets a bit over-excited at conferences and does a few tricks but it's a lot more comfortable to leave him powerless outside such hot house arenas, in the daily grind of life. Out there we have to get practical!

So why were the pavements strewn with healing in ancient days? Did Jesus and the Apostles get any money for this? Were they just born-to-it showmen enjoying their art? Did they enjoy being the centre of attention? Did they seek fame and fortune? Did they go on healing and counselling courses and become important gurus on the subject? Did Jesus teach healing at all?

No, none of these things. And yet the working of miracles was easy for them. Why? Because they simply held one thing at the centre of their hearts that the church today has largely forgotten. We tend to teach just about the signs and wonders, and very little happens. We teach that it can all be down to how filled we are with the Holy Spirit and yet very little actually happens. In those days they knew something different. They knew that if they taught the Kingdom of God correctly, then people would get healed around them. They knew that if they concentrated all their passion on the good news of the Kingdom of heaven, on its grace rather than its power, then those around them would receive its benefits without their having to try. Stick to teaching people about the Kingdom and miracles just fall off the back of the lorry. In those days they didn't seek miracles, they sought the Kingdom and they got the signs and wonders of it almost automatically.

Now, it has been recently and rightly prophesied that these are the days of Simeon and Anna. The Kingdom is not something to be prayed in anymore - it is here. It may only be the size of a baby but it is here. The church hasn't really noticed it yet, but it is here. The church may never see the Kingdom through their radiation shields of institutional doubt, but it is here.

This is not a piece of wishful thinking or charismatic caffeine. Over the last two years my eyes, and the eyes of a few others, "have seen the salvation which God has prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to his people." The number of miracles witnessed over that time as signs and wonders of the presence of the Kingdom is well over a thousand in number, not through the teaching of healing but through the proclaiming of the Kingdom of heaven on earth.

Before anyone suggests that unsubstantiated claims should not be made about the signs and wonders of the Kingdom of heaven, let us remember one interesting point. The Church has taught us for two thousand years that we are forgiven in heaven if we confess and repent of our sins. This is an unsubstantiated claim; it cannot be proved. It is a statement of faith.

It is much more than a statement of faith to say that the Kingdom of God is here; it is merely a witness to something seen and reported on by thousands who have been able to receive its benefits.



Well, it's OK to tell the pure in heart that they will see God – they're the only people who really want to, anyway. It's OK to tell the poor in spirit that the Kingdom can be theirs; they need it so badly

Undertakers' men or pioneers by Gerry Angel

Who stimulates us by asking some pertinent questions.

A chance to engage

The Church in Wales is fighting for survival, just as the Church of England has begun to do.

A PCC member of a church in Buenos Aires attended the Anglican Decade of Evangelism mid-term review in 1996. In 1997 he reported to me that the Church in Wales was heading for extinction by CE 2030. My instinctive reaction was to repeat Jesus' saying, 'On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it' (Matt. 16:18 NRSV). But reflecting further, I had to ask, 'Will the Church in Wales we know and love remain a member of that invincible Church of Christ?' The Council for Mission and Ministry published in CE 2000 a paper 'Five scenarios for the future church' which confirmed my Argentine friend's claim. In CE 2002 it published 'Ar Daith/On a journey', a consultation document to encourage all members of the Church in Wales to engage in a positive response to the crisis. No doubt more proposals will appear on future agendas of the Governing Body and diocesan synods. I want to select two key items in the 'On a journey' report with which ARM Wales might usefully engage.

The research groups responsible for 'On a journey' identified, among other things, a major calling: 'As disciples encouraging one another to live out the gospel, sharing in worship and learning, each individual is strengthened and deepened to discern and respond to God's work. For a few this will involve a practical concern for the gathered church in the locality. In most cases, though, discipleship will be dispersed in places of work, neighbourhood, family or the wider world.'

This is a call to Christian discipleship as a life-style for all members of the Church. The second key item is about ministry. 'God's life in the world is made tangible in Jesus and spread abroad by the activity of the Spirit. This suggests that all our patterns of ministry should ..be collaborative. The ordained ministries of bishop, priest and deacons, acting together, encourage local churches and all disciples in drawing out their full potential. Ministers, therefore, are not the centre of the church, but companions to the church. They support and challenge local churches to expand in their capacity for depth, range and contact in mission' (p. 11). This calls on everyone to collaborate, to work together in the mission of the Church.

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Time and time again Jesus stimulated the understanding of his hearers by asking them questions, not by providing answers. 'Who do you say that I am?' he challenged his disciples. The living God inspired Peter to reply, 'You are the Christ' (Matt.v16:15-16). My question is this, 'Does ARM Wales have a humble but distinctive contribution to promote collaboration in Christian ministry and Christian discipleship in life-style?' Are we to be pioneers, or will we stand by, happily doing our own thing, watching the church go into further decline like undertakers' men at a funeral? I am not making the arrogant suggestion that ARM Wales is the sole agency for resolving current or projected problems. But do we have a contribution to make which is distinctive? Can we be pioneers?

An act of God

Blaenannerch near Cardigan and Moriah Chapel in Loughor are receiving more publicity now than they have for years. Evan Roberts, a ministry candidate of the now Presbyterian Church of Wales, was awakened spiritually at Blaenannerch in 1904, a century ago.

'...at Blaenannerch Roberts underwent a profound experience of being anointed by the Holy Spirit. He returned home to Loughor and began to hold prayer meetings at his home church, Moriah. On successive nights these meetings drew ever larger crowds, and within a matter of weeks the revival had spread across Glamorganshire with tremendous power. The most significant feature of the revival was its concentration on the gift of the Holy Spirit; the meetings, even when Evan Roberts was present, were conducted with complete spontaneity. People were urged to pray, testify, confess or sing as the Spirit moved them... Yet the revival was by no means limited to places visited by Roberts: it was a national phenomenon and it was calculated that it led to some 100,000 conversions,' (R Tudur Jones).

Of course, this is the answer. How often we have prayed, 'Lord, do it again in Wales'. How often we have quoted as good practice the faithful praying few, to whose prayers apparent responses were the D L Moody campaigns in Britain and the Hebridean revival! And yet, these remarkable interventions of God into human affairs are not negotiable; the Lord is sovereign, and we have to wait expectantly, as we plead. In the meantime.....

Eight years after 1904 Bishop Edwards of St Asaph published 'Landmarks in the history of the Welsh Church.' His chapter on revivals describes Griffith Jones, Methodist Societies, Whitefield, Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland, 'curate of Llangeitho' in Ceredigion. Quoting a negative eye-witness of ecstasy at revivalist meetings, Bp. Edwards comments, 'Though men like Rowland, as many of the revivalists in our own generation, accepted such manifestations in good faith to strengthen the influence of the movements with which they were associated, it may reasonably be doubted whether this hysterical self-abandonment is a genuine token of moral regeneration... Yet these unhappy events must not cause us to lose sight of the real merit of the work of revivalists among such people as the Welsh' (p 200). Faint praise indeed! Today would members of ARM Wales risk the opprobrium meted out by Anglo-Catholic, Evangelical and Liberal Church leaders on 'manifestations of the Spirit' among Charismatics



in the 1970s? Yes, we would bear the reproach, if the prize is worth the pain. But in the meantime the challenge of collaboration and discipleship are on the Church agenda.

History cannot repeat itself

Much renewal in the Church in Wales has been partisan. I heard often as an ordinand and assistant curate in the 1950s and 1960s that the Church in Wales, unlike England, is not divided by churchmanship. But since Disestablishment the largely broad-church, stoles and frontals, jumble sales and prize-draws image of so many local churches was spotted, in some dioceses more than others, by clear marks of robust Anglo-Catholicism. Later in the last century the existing handful of distinctly Evangelical churches was replaced by a growing movement of younger Evangelical clergy, laity and, consequently, churches. When ARM Wales began, its members were drawn from Catholic, Evangelical and Liberal cultures. This reflected the Church of England whose early Charismatic leaders included the Catholic Humphrey Whistler, the Evangelical David Watson and the then Liberal Colin Urquhart. Because of its 'unity' ARM Wales was well-placed to attract large numbers to its movement for renewal in the Church in Wales. But history cannot repeat itself. Any attempt to recycle in the 2000s the Charismatic emphases practised in the 1980s offers no solution. People can repeat mistakes and re-play old tricks, but the historical context and its culture has moved on. Wales in 2004 differs from Wales in 1980, certainly 1904. In the 1960s UK church culture was humanist, in love with all-powerful Science, and impersonal. Theologically the traditional understanding of God was either dead or had only a human, political, face. Sanctuaries and naves were used exclusively for worship, not for conversation. Historic churches had a large 'fringe' to renew, with many clergy and laity hungry for something more. Charismatic Renewal reintroduced a supernatural God exercising extraordinary, supernatural power. His human face was intimate, concerned to serve the needs of individuals who now came out of church feeling good and excited, instead of bored. God the Holy Spirit had inspired them not only to chat but to laugh in the sanctuary. But today the market has changed. 80% of the UK population is supposed to believe in the supernatural. The 'me' culture of TV adverts sets out to make everyone feel good, all the time. There is plenty of generosity around as charities – secular and religious – have become boom industries. The church fringe has been decimated to the point where more UK Muslims attend a mosque each week than Anglicans attend a church. Alpha and Soul Survivor are examples of new growing Christian movements, and even the Church Commissioners in England are talking about putting into new ways of 'being church' some of the money usually spent on cathedrals. It is a new situation in which we are being called to collaborate and live out Christian discipleship.

Forward with the Word of God

An early defence of the Church of England before Welsh Disestablishment or the formation of self-governing Anglican provinces overseas was a 'reformed church always open to reformation'. The authority for such reformation was the Crown/Parliament and the Christian Bible interpreted in the light of ecclesiastical tradition by the exercise of the mind/reason. I want to turn to the latter for illumination on the call to collaboration and discipleship. 1Corinthians is a good place to begin. The most pressing issue Paul deals with in this letter is



the failure of the Corinthian Christians to regard different people who ministered to them as collaborators. He describes them as people claiming to belong to distinct groups under distinct household names, 'Paul', 'Apollos', 'Cephas' or 'Christ'. Paul spends four chapters undermining the attitude underlying such division.

Collaboration

He identifies two principles regarding collaboration: first, Christ is the only household name, the sole agent in ministry and the only one to be given any credit. Second, ministers belong together under Him. Salvation, baptism, power in preaching, divine wisdom and church planting begin and end in Him. The ministers are described in various ways, deacons (3:5), co-workers of God (3:9), underlings (sailors' assistants) of Christ and household administrators (usually slaves) of the mysteries of God (4:1). The last are not bosses but trusted servants to be called to account on the Day of Christ (4:2). Paul ends the description of his and other leaders' roles with a catalogue of the human pressures and stress he endures for the Corinthian Christians' sake (4:9-13). But he remains their 'father', for all his sufferings on their behalf (4:14-15).

Two principles stand out: first, a consciousness of the centrality of Jesus, the living Christ, in all 'church activity'. Why do we do what we do? Our conscience replies, 'It's my job, my ministry, my church, my vocation.' Paul calls us to replace 'my' with 'our', and 'our' with 'His' Alpha markets 'Jesus', not 'Church'. While we love the Church in Wales, she is neither our motive nor our *raison d'être*, even if our salary cheques appear with her name on. And Alpha is theologically sound at this point. To collaborate with each other, to have his discipleship as our life-style, we need to re-learn to live for Him and to attribute all we do to Him and His power.

The second relevant principle emerges from the words used to describe the relationship between Paul, Apollos and other leaders. Deacons – those who wait on others. Co-workers of God – those who work together under God. Christ's sailors-assistants, who probably spent most of their time in rowing gangs driving the galleys. House-keepers/administrators of God's mysteries, called to account. The attitude needed for seeing ourselves in the light of these images is the type of humility ascribed to Jesus in Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 2; seeing others' needs as our *raison d'être*; working with others on principle, not just because a particular job requires it; open to change because we are 'under God, under Christ' and not in total control of our situation; a bottom-dog team, and handlers of precious goods who cannot get away with any shoddy work. There is little in our self-advancement culture to help us adopt such attitudes to Christian ministry. We cannot judge them right or wrong on utilitarian grounds, because they will secure certain ends for us. We cannot judge them good or bad for preferment, CVs or career paths. We can take comfort from the fact that they motivated one of the most effective evangelists, church-planters and teachers in the history of the Christian Church. But this cannot be our reason for adopting these attitudes, since Paul's ministry is, humanly speaking, dead and gone, never to be replaced. Our only motive has to be that this is His Word; if discipleship means anything, it means that we follow Him.



Discipleship

The remainder of 1 Corinthians can teach us a lot about discipleship, as well as collaboration, in our pluralistic, no-blame culture. 'To Corinth' meant for Paul's contemporaries to practice whoredom. Although this 'sin city' had earned its reputation before its destruction in BCE 146, long after it's rebuilding in BCE 44 the word 'to Corinth' appeared in Greek dictionaries. 'Sex in the city' and 'Footballers' wives' are only two current TV programmes which would have gone down well in Paul's Corinth. His fifth chapter calls on Christians to aim for a higher moral standard than their Jewish or pagan contemporaries, even if they have fallen short already. He warns against sin in all its forms, mentioning theft, greed, verbal abuse and sex outside heterosexual marriage (ch.6). He makes heterosexual marriage or celibacy the recommended options for human relationships (ch.7). Even the highest motives should not allow a Christian to engage deliberately in the ritual practice of another religion (ch.8). A minister has a right to a fee, wages or a salary, but not if this casts doubt on his or her commitment to the Gospel or if it restricts the minister's freedom to preach the Gospel to any or everyone (ch.9). Chapter nine repeats the call to godliness (ch.5) and to an exclusive faith-commitment to Christ. The distinct and inter-dependent roles of men and women are discussed in chapter nine, along with instruction on the right preparation and conduct of the Lord's Supper, the precursor of the Eucharist. Collaboration is spelt out in detail in chapter 12, and its heart is the freedom of the Holy Spirit in Christ to exercise the various spiritual gifts distributed to different Christians. God's ownership of His gifts and the interdependence of gifted Christians makes collaboration happen. He is in charge; we need one another, show one another that we are all valued and needed and respect the fact that others have gifts that we do not have. Chapter 13 celebrates the fundamental attitude of collaborators: the service of others, as demonstrated by the love of Christ, our trust in Him and our expectation of His coming. The overall principle of building up the church community regulates ways of exercising different spiritual gifts in public (ch.14). The magnificent chapter 15 informs the Christian's attitude to the future. Sci-fi, futurism and rapacious political ambitions present scenarios of the global future which promote unease and despair. The Christian disciple has a unique witness to a future glory offered to those who believe in Christ, for free, not in return for a destructive voluntary martyrdom. This Christian hope motivates a present stability, 'Therefore...be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord' (15:58 NRSV). In chapter 16 Paul encourages regular Christian giving and greets people by name in the church. He ends, 'My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus,' (16:24), and that's how I am ending too.

and Finally by Mary Newsom

Prepare the Way of the Lord was the theme for the 2001 Flames of Fire conference. We were inspired by such passages as Isaiah 40:3, Isaiah 35:8-10 and Mark 1:1-11.

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As I look again at the message of John the Baptist, I feel that it is often lost in the story of the Baptism of Jesus. This prophet came “preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”, but his message to the church has only been half-heard, “I have baptized you with water; but he (i.e. Jesus) will baptize you with (the) Holy Spirit.” Many committed Christians have somehow missed, or explained away, the fact that there are two separate baptisms. For many of us these two baptisms were years apart, that was not usually the case in the early church described in Acts.

Charismatic Renewal has failed to show the way from the Word of God. David Pawson in his book, “Jesus Baptises in One Spirit” * homes in on four essential events in our Christian walk.

Repentance of sins Believing in Jesus as Saviour and Lord

Being baptised in water Receiving/being baptised in Holy Spirit

He shows how it is that the Church has only half-heard linking the baptism in Holy Spirit with either baptism in water (as do many sacramentalists) or with believing in Jesus, i.e. being born again (as do many evangelicals). He has deliberately left out the definite article in Holy Spirit and points out the need to look at the context to see when and where it should be included.

John the Baptist would not have known about the Third Person of the Trinity. David’s book is written by one who searched both Old and New Testament scripture to study and find the Holy Spirit because he needed to know for himself.

And that brings me to the theme for this year’s Flames of Fire.

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” (Psalm 119v105)

We have to be willing to study the Word of God, there are many books to help us but the best help is the teacher sent by Jesus. “The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26)

When we have received the Holy Spirit we will want to know more of His Word.

* Hodder & Stoughton 1997 0-340-69398-3

Mary Newsom