



ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES WALES

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Contents

....so that they may be one, even as we are one.....	2
A letter from the Chairman Phil Rees	4
WHAT SHOULD CHARACTERISE THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN A POSTMODERN CONTEXT? by Steve Morgan	6
GIFTS OF MINISTRY Part 5- GIVING by Brian Favell.....	11
TROUBLED TIMES! LORD. HOW LONG? By Brian Waters	14
A Report of the address given by Trevor & Chris Evans at the AGM on 10th November, 2001	15
News from our Members Greetings in the Name of the Lord from Margaret & Ray Dunn	17



....so that they may be one, even as we are one.....

The prayer of Jesus in John 17 has always held me. Is this an unanswered prayer? Because Jesus prayed it, it has to be answered, else how can we ask anything? It is a prayer that I have tried to echo for many years and yet the Church does not seem to be one as Jesus clearly intended. This longing for the Church to be the Church that is described by Jesus is often the only prayer that I can offer, but it means changing me and changing you and the way we do things.

The time has come to look at the Church, not just the universal Church but the Church that each of us are a part of. I believe that we grieve the Lord when we think of churches and "our church"what have we created? Maybe we should concentrate on just being Church and proclaim the Kingdom.

This issue has at its core an article on the Church. Steve Morgan promised this when I talked to him after his seminars at Flames of Fire. The report of our A.G.M. address given by Trevor and Chris Evans parallels the history and growth of A.R.M. but leaves us conscious of the need for change in the Church. Trevor will be expanding on this theme in a later issue.

There is now much prayer in Wales for Revival, many are responding to various organised initiatives to pray. Prayer for 200,000 evangelists to evangelise the whole of Wales, a Week of Prayer in May 2002, new Web-pages and support teams to coordinate this vast volume of prayer. So we must ask ourselves, "Where do we, in A.R.M.(Wales) fit in?" Do we start our own initiative or just join in, jointly or individually, what is most convenient or least threatening?

I am excited by the fact that there is now such an interest in prayer, but I am sure that I am not alone in asking, "Where do I fit in, what is my place in the Body of Christ?".

Long before I came into Renewal I sought to encourage people into deeper prayer and a real relationship with God. I knew that the Holy Spirit was there to guide and help us "organise" our church and its activities. In fact it was my desire to set up a "healing prayer group" in the six villages that had been thrust together under a Priest-in-Charge, that took me into a situation where the Lord "took over" my prayer. I was visiting a prayer group in another village that already had an established Healing Ministry, when it came to my turn to pray the Lord set my whole body on fire and the prayer was His, I didn't pause to think, the words seemed to come from nowhere. I didn't know that this could happen to an ordinary Christian, I was unable to speak of it at first as the experience was overwhelming and I didn't expect my friends and family to believe me. My vicar, although not into Renewal himself, was encouraging and lent me a copy of "I believe in the Holy Spirit", by Michael Green, "Skim though this in the next few weeks," he said! But I couldn't put it down, I read every word and looked up every reference. I have never been the same since that experience, I was left "in love" with God rather than just loving, I certainly knew now that there was NO LIMIT to what our relationship could become. I had to journey almost the length of St.Albans Diocese to find Renewal Meetings, but God wrought in me a great desire, not only to read His Word but also many

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paperbacks inspired by the Holy Spirit. The first book in this category was Colin Urquhart's new book "Holy Fire". (Hodder & Stoughton 1984) This was amazing as the Lord was speaking to me and teaching me daily, and then as if to confirm what He had shown me, the next chapter of the book contained the same message. It was as if the book had been written for me.

Since then I have read and studied much on prayer, and see it as a journey, drawing ever closer to God. Only by sitting quietly in His presence can we be drawn close, we have to lay down our agenda and be prepared for His will to be gradually worked in us. So much rubbish has to be swept out of the way, so much healing has to be done, so much relearning, so much loving.....so much more of God.....so much less of me.

I am thrilled when I can teach or encourage others but to those who find it hard to pray I say let God do the teaching, just sit in His presence and let Him have His way. If you want more of Him then He will not fail you, this sort of prayer is for us all. You may want to intercede, but feel that it is advanced prayer, the truth is that we are all called to intercede for someone or something. Only the Holy Spirit can show you how, I now see this as becoming like Jesus, even to become one with the Intercessor. So I return to John 17, that is what He wants now in 2002.

I believe that this is God's prayer initiative for us all, we start where we are with Him. He may involve us in starting a prayer group in our locality, but that has to be inspired by the Holy Spirit who must always be in charge, or He may just want us to rest in His presence. We are not wasting time, we are waiting on Him.

But to return to A.R.M.(Wales), we encourage those of other denominations to join us with no intention of making them Anglicans, we learn from them and we hope that we can bless them, but we have a part to play in our Anglican Churches as we pray for Renewal to be effective and for an increase in love and understanding. It is good that the Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics can meet in Charismatic Renewal, that can only be the work of the Holy Spirit, it is a start to becoming one, and we must let Him show us how we can be one in each village, town and city. So we must pray for the Anglican Church to be changed by God Himself, it is a task that is far too great for us to undertake and we need His Grace for it to happen. We Need you Lord.....

WE NEED YOU LORD.....(Flames of Fire 2002)

Mary Newsom

Prayer begins at the point of Contact with God



A letter from the Chairman Phil Rees

Dear Friends,

I thought it the right moment to say something this time about unity.

Jesus prays, yearns, longs and has a passion for the unity of his people. If we know the heart of Jesus, if we spend time, even for only a few minutes a day, at the heart of the Almighty, listening to him, we cannot avoid the fact that the passion of the Lord's heart is the same as it was two thousand years ago: 'Father, I pray that they may be one...' (JOHN 17:21.) Unity lies at the very heart and depth of God's being. The unity we are talking about is not the unity of an Islamic god or a Buddhist god or any other monistic god. It is the unity which is uniquely Christian: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - at the heart of the universe, sharing together, enjoying one another together, never at variance, the Son doing the Father's will but knowing that if he asks for twelve legions of angels the Father will change his will because they work together in their intimate unity. That is the kind of unity we are talking about when we speak of the unity of God's people.

When we talk about building unity or working for unity it's almost an insult. We cannot create unity, we cannot invent it, we cannot add to it. It's something that God gives us - and when he gives it to us and we gladly and willingly receive it, the world sees something that it has never seen before. Unity is a gift that God gives us.

It's not surprising therefore that our unity is going to be one of the most important areas of defence for us and one of the most strategic places for attack from the enemy. The enemy is bound to attack your relationship with the persons you are closest to, the people you are working alongside. He would be a fool not to. We have got to discover how to live not in the naturalness of our own unities, within our churches and across the boundaries of our denominations, but in the gift that God gives us of love for one another, for the household of God as well as for the whole human race.

We don't work for unity, it is a gift. This doesn't mean to say we shouldn't seek the Lord to find out how that oneness is expressed in us. Of course we must do. Personally speaking, I don't worry about the 22,000 denominations in the world! They give us first of all an opportunity to understand the God who is a unity but a diversity, who has a variety within himself, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and yet in himself is a unity. You see any sort of unity we could achieve for ourselves would be rather bland and insipid, if it is without variation. That's not the sort of unity that the Church is meant to have. There are bound to be differences and varieties.

We want this variety because Jesus said Baptists can love Baptists and Anglicans can love Anglicans because tax collectors can love tax collectors without any grace at all, without any charis, (LUKE 6: 32-4, MATTHEW 5: 42) It's when you meet somebody different from yourself that you demonstrate whether you have got grace or not. It's when you love across the barriers of sameness into differentness. That's the demonstration of the grace of God and that

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is why it's a grace that God has to give us to love one another. You can't love people without meeting them, can you? You do have to spend some time with people and get to know them if you are going to love them. We need to obey the Lord and to love one another across those boundaries. Outdo one another in love. I don't owe anyone anything but to love them. Jesus is longing to see masses of different people in different movements in different expressions of Christianity so loving one another that they join hands and refuse to budge until they see at last this Good News carried into all the world and then the end shall come.

This unity is not unanimity, that is an agreement with every single jot and tittle of our minds. No human being will ever be completely and utterly in agreement with anybody else because we are in this great variety that God has made. It would not be healthy for us to be a clone exactly thinking the same as every single other person. That is not spiritual life. It is by disagreement and further understanding that we break through into new insights. We will not always exactly agree.

Neither is it a uniformity, that is a similar pattern that is institutionally imposed upon us all. Of course we all break bread but isn't it interesting that we are never told in the Bible how to take communion? It just says, do it. Was the cup passed round first or second, did it go round twice? Or four times like at the Jewish Passover Feast? We are not quite sure. When the Lord said, "Do this in remembrance of me", he just said, "Do it". And we all do it in different ways.

It is a relationship or family unity - your Father is my Father. If we have a common Father, we have the same life his. Are we going to fall out? Now that Father is defined in the terms of His providence and care for us, for apart from anything else He has given us His Spirit. Father goes on giving the Spirit to those who go on asking. And so if we all have the gift of the Spirit from the Father and all equally have a claim as children upon that Father, that is the oneness we begin with LUKE 11:13. Father gives to his children what is best for each - why should we be envious and fight? We can always share.

Phil

Editorial note.

What an amazing God we have. I hear Phil's message as confirming what He is saying to the Church and pray urgently that we will listen.

I trust Him to deal with the content of each issue and know that there will be links that I could not plan. Now hear this. I wrote the editorial before receiving Phil's letter.



WHAT SHOULD CHARACTERISE THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN A POSTMODERN CONTEXT? by Steve Morgan

Introduction

Graham Cray comments that one of the best descriptions of post-modern culture is that of 'shopping' [i]. The world and all of history is likened to a vast supermarket where people pick out the ingredients they like and assemble them into their own version of life's meaning or purpose. In the face of this it is Bosch who issues a timely word of caution. He wisely notes that the Church should respond to the paradigm change of post-modernity by reform and not replacement [ii]. He urges, "Neither extreme reactionary nor excessively revolutionary approaches...will help the Christian Church and mission to arrive at greater clarity or serve God's cause in a better way." [iii]

A Starting Point — Mission as 'Incarnation'

Shenk describes the Church's normal relationship with every culture as one of missionary encounter [iv]. He describes this encounter as one of incarnation. By this he means that the Church's mission must embrace a full identification with the culture that is balanced by the motive of disclosing God's love and will for humankind. I would like to explore what Shenk describes as 'missionary encounter of incarnation' for the Church in a post-modern context. I hope to be able to show that within the theology of the incarnation there are both challenges to the Church and encouragements for a variety of differing expressions of mission in post-modern contexts.

Historical background

It is widely acknowledged that the Church in the West is having major problems in being able to engage effectively with postmodern culture [v]. This has to be set within the context of the contention that since the formation of Christendom in the 4th century the established Church very rarely acted as a critique of culture. Prior to the formation of Christendom, the Church was a powerless and persecuted movement on the margins of society. After the formation of Christendom, the Church became a powerful institution that could impose its beliefs and practices upon society. A paradigm shift took place with regards to mission. Murray notes that mission in a New Testament sense became irrelevant after the formation of Christendom which followed the conversion of Constantine. The Church now saw its missionary role as one that involved ensuring doctrinal conformity, enforcing Church attendance, enshrining moral standards in criminal law, and eradicating choice in the area of religion [vi]. Kee disagrees with Eusebius and others [vii] who thought that the establishment of Christendom was a God-given opportunity to assert the Lordship of Christ over all areas of life and society. Instead, he saw Christendom as the domestication and perversion of Christianity, the 'fall' of the Church [viii]. Although the truth may lie somewhere between these two positions, Corrie rightly notes that the established Church has largely contributed to its marginalisation as a result of the debilitating effects of the inflexibility and rigidity of institutionalisation, clericalism and traditionalism [ix]. These three characteristics are a major legacy from Christendom and their



continued presence within the established Church are some of the principal reasons why the Church has had difficulty in engaging effectively with culture.

Our Post-modern Context

Leslie Newbigin long championed the view that our contemporary society is pagan. He claimed that this paganism was born out of a rejection of Christianity and is far more resistant to the gospel than the pre-Christian paganism. He wrote, “We are in a radically new situation and cannot dream either of a Constantinian authority or of a pre--Constantinian innocence”. [x] I believe that Newbigin found in the incarnation of Jesus starting points for relevant and effective mission today. He strongly rejected the Pelagian heresy that envisaged a triumphalist Church acting as God’s viceroy on earth until the conversion of the world had been completed [xi]. Instead, he challenged the Church to rediscover and promote the gospel as public truth. He claimed that this could be done effectively if the Church would rediscover the role of servanthood that was exemplified by Jesus in his incarnation. Jesus declared his Lordship through his servanthood (Mark 10:45). It was Jesus as the Suffering Servant who accomplished the will of his Father. Newbigin makes the important point that the mission of the Church must exclude exercising the kind of power which “the rulers of the Gentiles exercise” (Luke 22:25-26), whilst at the same time rejecting the notion that the Church’s mission is simply a response to the aspirations of the people. Jesus entered into the individual stories of people’s lives and gave them a revelation in words and deeds that pointed them to discover for themselves who he was.

Newbigin believed that there was only one way in which the Church could be fully open to the needs of the world and at the same time have its eyes fixed always on God [xii]. Lie contended, “The only hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.” [xiii] If the gospel is to be effectively incarnated in a culture it must be proclaimed by the Christian community through a profile of servanthood within that community. Such an incarnational approach to mission looks for the entry points, the doors, in the lives of people and communities. As the Church enters these doors it enters into the individual and community stories, listens to their voices, and then seeks to incarnate the love, healing, hope, and forgiveness of Jesus.

The Challenge to the Established Churches

Bosch quite rightly insists that the Church must listen and understand its context before it can discover a contextual missionary strategy of involvement and identification [xiv]. Stuart gives an example of this perspective from Melbourne, Australia. He recognised the centrality of the doctrine of the incarnation in the discovery of an effective mission strategy in a postmodern context. He maintains that the Church, as a Christian community, should be incarnational in the sense that it should present itself in a contemporary and culturally accessible way. [xv] This represents a significant challenge to the Church in at least two important directions. Firstly, it has to be acknowledged that much of Church life at the local level is still that of a self-contained community that is introverted and regards itself as a ‘counter-culture’. Corrie is surely right in claiming that present hierarchical structures of the Church are an anachronism



that are a stumbling block to effective mission to postmodern people [xvi]. One of the features of postmodernism is a lack of trust in powerful authority structures, institutions and hierarchies, and so the Church needs to rediscover the profile of servanthood and provide less authoritarian leadership and more flexible structures. To this end postmodern contexts for mission will respond more readily to grass-roots action, small groups and networking.

Turnbull quotes from the social commentary *Britain Towards 2010* in highlighting three changes that are important for the church to understand as it prepares its mission activity. The first is that there is a growing gap between institutions and people. The second is that organised social culture is giving way to network culture. The third is that rational thinking is threatened by polysensorial experience. Although Turnbull is fairly pessimistic about such changes, I prefer to see these changes as a God-given opportunity to rediscover a practical theology of mission in a postmodern context. Institutions tend to become self-preserving and can marginalize both individuals and smaller interest groups. Network culture can be a much more fulfilling experience for individuals than that which is to be found in large social institutions. Rational thinking has tended to scorn spiritual experience, whereas today, there is resurgence in society for spiritual encounter. Steed affirms the importance of experiences for postmodern society. People want to have experiences that work for them. He goes on to say that, "If Christianity can't stand the test, then we have not grasped anything about how the Holy Spirit transforms belief into event.[xvii]" Steed also notes that postmodern people want a pathway that includes giving dignity to emotions and intuitions, relationships and a place for the spiritual dimension once again.[xviii] He is right to claim that these features of postmodern culture provide immense opportunities for the gospel.

Warren makes the interesting observation that one of the marks of the emerging Church is that of the understanding of what a 'community' of the faithful can mean in a postmodern context. He claims that, "the power of Christian community resides in the transparency of its mixture of transcendence and immanence." [xix] Here again we see the significance of the incarnation in that the Church, as the Body of Christ, is also called to reflect transcendence and immanence. Warren claims that the transcendence of God is experienced because the Christian community points to the Trinity of Divine community. Jesus prayed, "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you May they be brought to complete unity to let the world now that you sent me..." (John 17:21&23). There is a dynamic here that points to the truth that the effectiveness of mission is related to the extent to which the Church community reflects the unity that is to be found in the Trinity. In the past, the denominational churches have tended to organise their own independent programmes for local mission. One of the challenges for the Church today is to recognise that there is only one Church in each town and city and that is the Church of Jesus Christ. The denominational fragmentation and competition within the one Church is very often a testimony to disunity and one of the causes of impotency in mission.

When Warren writes of incarnation as immanence he suggests that this is expressed because it is in intimacy that personal relationships of love are encountered in which spiritual transformation can be experienced. [xx] Steed affirms this by stating that postmodern people are frantically searching for community, whether it is on the Internet, relationships with people of like mind and who share common interests or through casual sex .[xxi] The Church will



need to respond to this by developing real community and genuine relationships amongst its members and not just be a club of like-minded people who only meet together for an hour or so once a week. If this community is to have a transforming mission dimension to it, it must seek ways in which those inside the faith community can discover entry points into every sphere of cultural engagement.

New forms of Church

Murray and Wilkinson-Hayes relate a striking example of how 'Church' can be rediscovered. [xxii] 'Living Proof' in a deprived area on the outskirts of Cardiff is heralded as an outstanding example of a church developing as a result of Christians responding to a considerable local need without imposing an establishment package upon them. In 1984 a house group started some traditional church-based youth work amongst a group of disenfranchised young people. It started as a community project and grew until they were running clubs six days a week. In 1993, following a visit to New Jersey, they started to teach life skills on how to care for each other. Their catch phrase became 'everybody is special'. The children noticed that the staff met regularly for prayer and some of them asked if they could join them. Living Proof 'weeks' were introduced and a growing number became Christians. The leaders of Living Proof wisely discerned that these youngsters would not fit into any of the local churches and so they started their own meetings. A church was birthed and the leaders had to be trained. The leaders have now been ordained and the church is recognised as an Anglican Church plant with an inter-denominational congregation. The leaders have been allowed to enfranchise all the members to discover their own style and practices and to formulate their mission strategy. No traditional forms of sacramental ministry or ecclesiology have been imposed and the work continues to flourish.

Here we see an incarnation principle at work. A small group of Christians entered the stories of a marginalized group of young people. Their 'preaching' was in the form of listening to the young people, caring for them, and meeting some of their perceived needs. In so doing, the young people began to ask questions as to why they were being loved in this way. When they began asking these questions they also began to enter into the stories of the Christians' faith journeys. These Christians had incarnated their love by their actions. They solicited a response that resulted in many wanting to know the person who initiated such commitment to them. I believe that Sunderland is right when he wrote that, "When people sense the relevance of our stories they will begin seriously to ask questions about whether the underlying belief in God is also true" .[xxiii]

Lessons for today from yesterday

In that the Church in this post-Christendom era has been transposed from the centre to the margins of society, we may find useful resources for mission in the movements that were not part of Christendom. These movements operated from the margins of society and are becoming increasingly influential in many Churches today.



Features of the Celtic movement are seen by many to be relevant for today. Its foci on mystery and personal experience within small communities that care for and nurture the individual are access points into postmodern society. The Anabaptist movement flourished despite persecution from Christendom. It offered a different perspective on what a Christian community should be like. In its best examples it had a radical view of discipleship, justice, discipline and holiness that embraced every member of the community and gave each member a real sense of personal worth and meaning to life.

Conclusion

If the gospel is to have a transforming effect upon postmodern society, then the Church will have to develop a plethora of missionary strategies that will embrace a variety of expressions of community and leadership. Many of these expressions will only need to be temporary as the Church responds flexibly to changing cultural contexts. Murray warns that the new churches and the fresh theological insights that will emerge will need to counter the tendency to ecclesiological ossification that turns structures into strictures. [xxiv] What will be critical to these models is that mission involves improving the lives of others. This will mean entering into the stories of community needs. It is an incarnational approach in that it means being prepared to leave our own securities and preferences in order to relate meaningfully to different and changing contexts. Bosch affirms this in stating that by its very nature contextualisation points to the experimental and contingent nature of all theology. [xxv] So if our mission in postmodern contexts is to be meaningful and effective we are going to have to discover in our generation what William Temple meant by the Church being the only organisation that exists for those who do not belong to it. Newbigin describes this as the challenge to the local congregations to, "renounce an introverted concern for their own lives and to recognise that they exist for the sake of those who are not members, as sign, instrument, and foretaste of God's redeeming grace for the whole life of society." [xxvi]

[i] Cray, G. undated *From Where to Where?* p2-12 Church of England Board of Mission. London

[ii] Bosch, D. I *Transforming Mission*. p366 Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York.

[iii] as above

[iv] Van Engen et al (eds.) 1993 *The Good News of the Kingdom* Orbis Books. Maryknoll, New York. Shenk, W.R. 'The Culture of Modernity as a Missionary Challenge'. P 198

5 Osborn, L. 1995. *Restoring the Vision* p165 Mowbray. London

[vi] Murray, S. 1998 *Church Planting* p.115 Paternoster Press. Carlisle.

[vii] Verduin, L. 1976. *Anatomy of a Hybrid* P101-102. William B. Eerdmans. Grand Rapids, Michigan

[viii] Kee, A. 1982. *Constantine versus Christ: The Triumph of Ideology* SCM Press. London

[ix] Corrie, J. 1998. *Mission Theology in Context* 26.3 The Open Theological College. Cheltenham.

[x] Newbigin, L. 1989. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* p224. S.P.C.K. London

[xi] as above p.224-5

[xii] as above p.226

[xiii] as above p.227



- [xiv] Bosch as above p222.
- [xv] Stuart, M. 1986. 'Building the Kingdom in Sunburnt Soil' Transformation 3(3) p. 20
- [xvi] Corrie, J. 1996. Evangel 14(2) 'A New Way of Being Church? Liberation Theology and the Mission of the Church in a Postmodern Context' p52.
- [xvii] Church Growth Digest. Autumn 2000. pp 8-10 Steed, C. 'The Identification Principle'.
- [xviii] as above
- [xix] Warren, R. 1995. Being Human, Being Church. p.92. Marshall Pickering. London
- [xx] Warren as above p92
- [xxi] Steed, C. as above
- [xxii] Murray, S. & Wilkinson-Hayes, A. 2000. Hope for the Margins. pp.8-9. Grove Books Ltd., Cambridge.
- [xxiii] The Bible in Transmission. Summer 2001 pp.6-7. Sunderland, C. 'A Mission Agenda for the 21st Century'
- [xxiv] Church Growth Digest. Autumn 1999. p.8 Murray, S. 'Contemporary Trends and Their Implications for the Church'.
- [xxv] Bosch, D.J. as above p427
- [xxvi] 26 Newbigin, L. as above p233

GIFTS OF MINISTRY Part 5- GIVING by Brian Favell

(see Romans 12.4 - 8)

Our first reaction to this one is likely to be "Can this really be counted as a motivational gift - a gift of the Spirit?" And on being assured that it is so (and Paul certainly thinks so - see Romans 12 verses 6 - 8) the next reaction could be, "Fine! Where is a Giver? Lead me to him!"

Which may be good clean fun but it's altogether off the point. The Ministry of Giving is nothing like that. So what IS it about?

In a few words, it is about the motivation to entrust personal assets to others for the furtherance of their ministry. Which means of course that a Giver will have something to give. He (or she) will have money or possessions. He will have a God-given ability to (very crudely) make money. Coupled with that will be the ability to use it wisely.

Putting it another way, a Giver will be a person whom God trusts with material things. So he is going to be careful with money - he won't just splash it around according to the way he feels.

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He is very conscious that he has been given the stewardship of God's money, and so he is going to be even more careful with it than if it were his own.

That lets a lot of us out, doesn't it? Including me. Most of us are not Givers in the sense that giving is our prime motivational gift. We regard money as our own to do with as we like - and don't we splash it around when something takes our fancy! Nevertheless we all need to read on a little further: first because we DO have some money and in our own small way need to learn how to use it responsibly in God's name just as a Giver does; secondly because we need to understand how a Giver ticks, otherwise we are likely to think he's doing it all wrong.

Stewardship is a key word: awareness that what we handle is God's money and not our own to do with just as we like.

A Giver is able to make wise purchases and good investments. To us on the outside, it may look as if he's just got that knack which makes money stick to him. Indeed it may look as if he is much too concerned about money, so that by comparison we almost feel proud of our tendency to misuse it and let it dribble away. Nevertheless the truth is that most of us are far too hag-ridden by material things: we can't be trusted to acquire them wisely and use them well; we like them too much.

But there ARE people - a very few - who can be so trusted: and as with the servant who was given ten talents, God gives them more and more to handle for him as they prove worthy of his trust.

Just as a Giver uses wisdom and good judgment in gaining possessions, so he uses them in giving them away. He does not give in response to emotion but in response to a need that he sees and understands, and he is concerned that his gift will be used effectively and not wasted.

He likes to give in such a way that others are thereby led to give as well. That way his gift is doubly effective - even though an outsider may think he is being mean in not giving more, because he can afford it.

A Giver listens to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, not to high-pressure appeals from organisations or individuals; indeed such appeals are more likely than not to turn him off. He is aware that money too readily given can frustrate the work of the Holy Spirit within the recipient by providing an easy way out of a problem when - for instance - the Spirit is pressing for a radical change of direction. It is not always God's will that an organisation which has done his work well in the past should continue to exist or go on working in the same way. But a Giver will be alert to see needs that others might overlook, and he will enjoy meeting them effectively and without fuss.

Because he relies on the guiding of the Spirit he will not act entirely on his own: he will use others to test the Spirit just as we learn to do in other ministries. And if his leading is not exactly confirmed he will back off and pray some more. Although what he has to give is



material rather than spiritual his responsibility is just as clear as that of, say, one who heals: he cannot give something 'just to be on the safe side'.

Because he is aware of the need to follow the Spirit's leadings he finds great joy when a gift turns out to be an exact answer to someone's specific prayer; his obedience to the Spirit is thereby confirmed and made manifest.

A Giver is concerned that what he does should exactly suit the need: if someone needed a car he would not give a Range Rover if the most suitable car were an Escort; nor would he insist on the Escort if the need were for a Range Rover!

Although he will aim to work quietly and unobtrusively his ministry is never impersonal; he is entrusting personal assets to others for the furtherance of THEIR ministry and by doing so he becomes a part of their ministry himself - he is involved.

When we look at a Giver we may feel (as I have said) that he is hooked on money and possessions, but the fact is that he is so little hooked on them that God can trust him with them, and trust him to give them away where they can be best used for God's work. He is concerned to see that God gets value for money, but the care he takes in doing it may look to others (even the recipient) like an attempt to dictate the pattern of work it is given for.

His carefulness - even of his own spending - can make him look stingy to those who don't see the way he works: so can his refusal to be pressurised. He will not forget that he is only a steward of God's property, but others (possibly friends and acquaintances) might rather easily forget it and feel themselves hard done by because their own pet ideas don't get any special treatment from him.

THE MAIN DANGER for him is - as always - pride. Pride in the scale of his giving, pride in what he has to give, as if it were his own doing and not God's provision.

They are rare people, Givers. But there are an awful lot of us who are not equipped to be Givers yet need to give on the smaller scale that matches our - maybe small - means, and we need to learn the techniques. So don't skip this and think it's not for you. It is..... and for me too!



TROUBLED TIMES! LORD. HOW LONG? By Brian Waters

REVELATION is a Biblical book that has interested me for many years. I've read and studied it, consulted commentaries and other literature about it. It is very difficult to keep a balanced view about its contents in a series of books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B Jenkins ('Left Behind' series, Tydale House Pub Inc U S A.) Revelation is brought alive, in a very well written series of fictional stories. As Christians we must take John's vision seriously; and accept that we could indeed be living in the END TIMES.

The first three chapters of Revelation present no problems, they are clearly about John's own time period. Chapter four prepares us for the change in his vision, as he is permitted a view of God's throne room in Heaven. The vision deepens in chapter five when God, holding a SCROLL, and THE LAMB (Jesus) enters the throne room and is permitted to take and open this scroll (Ch 5: 1).

THE SEALS

Chapter six sees Jesus break open the first of the seven seals, and reveal their contents. As the seals are broken and the contents made known, events leading up to the return of Christ in Glory are foretold.

SEAL ONE - "A VOICE LIKE THUNDER" orders out a WHITE Horse and its RIDER to go and be ready to complete THE CONQUEST on behalf of him who sent the rider out (Jesus) (Ch: 6 1-2).

SEAL TWO - Now a red horse and rider comes out with authority to "TAKE PEACE FROM THE EARTH". The suffering of humanity will increase as law and order break down, with killing on a world-wide scale. Note there has not been peace in our world for over one hundred years. Somewhere, usually in more than one place, there has been fighting with each conflict worse than the last (Ch. 6: 3-4).

SEAL THREE - This time the horse and rider are black. A reading of these verses indicate famine on a massive scale, making it a calamity for humanity. In our day most of the world's population have insufficient food, many millions starving (Ch 6: 5-6).

SEAL FOUR - This sees the coming of the pale horse and rider, with authority to kill on a vast scale ("SWORD, FAMINE, PLAGUE and WILD ANIMALS"). This is clearly happening now - WAR, TERRORISM, AIDS, GERM WARFARE and NATURAL DISASTERS regularly happening. Never before has humanity been threatened from so many different directions at once (Ch 6: 7-8).



SEAL FIVE - The souls of the Faithful people departed now in Heaven cry out to God "HOW LONG?" They are asking how much more suffering is to be allowed. They were told it would continue for a little while longer (Ch 6: 9-11),

SEAL SIX - This seal has clearly not yet been acted upon. The events revealed on opening this seal are still in our future But for 'how long' - WEEKS, MONTHS? Another generation? We do not know. But it must be clear, that the first four seals are part of our history, or are being acted out now (Ch 6: 12-17).

Seal five as we saw, concerns Heaven not Earth and its History. Have the faithful already asked this question 'How Long'? We don't know, but we could at this very time be waiting for events listed under the sixth seal.

Chapter seven shows a scene in Heaven of all the faithful - Jews (Ch 7. 4-8) and Gentiles (Ch 7: 9-10) standing before God's throne. Chapters 8-13 describe for us the terrible events that will happen on earth in the final time period before Jesus returns in glory, building up to the thousand year reign written about in chapter 20. The new Jerusalem (Ch 21) and something of life in Heaven (Ch 22).

Why wait until the seventh seal is opened (Ch 8)? By then conditions on earth will be awful, and the fate of many decided. We who claim to be a part of God's kingdom on earth NOW, most assume that Seals 1-4, and events related to in Seal 5 are in reality part of history. We must prepare the world for the opening of the sixth Seal and its events. There is a move of the Spirit world-wide now. This is obvious to most Christians (see the TRANSFORMATION VIDEOS). Time could be very short indeed. Current events worldwide are ominous to say the least. If we truly witness, and the sixth seal is opened, we will be ready. If it is yet to be delayed more, at least God will be glorified by our efforts at evangelism. Don't become a victim of the church of LAODICEA, of being LUKEWARM (Rev Ch3 : 15-16) We need to act now.

A Report of the address given by Trevor & Chris Evans at the AGM on 10th November, 2001.

Brian Newsom

Chris started by thanking Phil for giving them this opportunity to share what is on their hearts, saying she hoped that it would help and encourage others. She felt that God was saying to her; "Tell it as it was, tell it as it is. Look back a bit to see what God has done." We ourselves often don't see what is happening in our family, or church, or even in the Cathedral - but others come back to them, and they do see these things.

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Her journey to where she is now - married to a cleric for nearly forty years, had not been spectacular, there had been no drama. She had always believed in God, but it was a beach mission, when she was a child, that made her fully committed. Little events in our lives shape our future. She can see God's hand in everything. She intended going to college, but she met a boy who showed her the university, and she liked it so much that she worked harder for her A-levels and so got to university instead. In her first term she joined the C.U. and there she met Trevor - an Anglo-Catholic whose churchmanship was poles apart. After they were married, with two children, and Trevor Vicar of Llandudno, where they were very happy and thought settled, the opportunity came to move and take on the parish of Llanidloes. Just at this time they were introduced to the Fisher Folk, and they developed a thirst for what they had. Later they visited David Watson's church, St Michael-le-Belfrey, York.

Then came ARM (Wales). They took the stale crumbs of their music group to the first conference at Dolfor, with an attendance of 30-40, and see how it has grown to around a thousand! Chris started the Bethany Books shop in Llanidloes, and now that experience has been very useful in the Cathedral. God has somehow used everything that has happened to them, however ordinary. Just as Archbishop Rowan told them : Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and something will happen. Now they have 20 months to Trevor's retirement - what will happen next? Then Trevor took the floor. He said that he was always sure that God was calling him to the ministry, but he allowed him to do science first and then theology. He went to Mirfield because he came from Dolgellau, and that is what all the clerics there did, and he became an Anglo-Catholic.. But through Renewal he has lost his labels (or did he say marbles?).

At first Trevor and Chris said they wouldn't go to Llanidloes, but then they said yes to the Bishop and yes to God. It was at York that he first really tasted Renewal - he saw people actually enjoying being Christians and he knew what God wanted. But at Llanidloes some friends came into the church and prayed for them to be filled with Holy Spirit, and they entered into Renewal with the congregation. They also had their friends Dennis Parry and Trevor Blackshaw close by in neighbouring parishes.

When Trevor leaves Bangor Cathedral in 2003, he is confident that it will be in a better state - structurally if nothing else. Originally he hated the cathedral, because when he was ordained, at the high altar, he was out of sight of his family and friends; but now he loves it because it gives him opportunities not available when he was in charge of a parish, and he has a bigger view of the diocese. He believes that we are on the threshold of a major change in our way of being Church. We are far too dependant on clerics, in particular in Bangor diocese, where there is a shortage of Welsh-speaking clerics. It is time for all members of the Church to share in ministry. Trevor said he has been thrilled to see the way ARM (Wales) has grown in recent years, and he has enjoyed being at the Flames of Fire conference without having to be involved in the organisation. But he is concerned that people tend to think that Renewal belongs only to the Evangelical wing. ARM (Wales) belongs to the middle way and we should minister to the whole of Wales. There followed a general discussion in which speakers agreed that we should drop all churchmanship labels and endeavour to share Renewal with Welsh-speaking parishes



and chapels. Finally the Chairman thanked all the speakers for their contributions and closed the meeting with a prayer and blessing.

News from our Members Greetings in the Name of the Lord from Margaret & Ray Dunn

In the Beddgelert area of Snowdonia, some Christians from the Church in Wales, Evangelical Fellowship, Roman Catholic Church and the Welsh Chapel now meet together twice weekly for prayer, fellowship and Bible Study. Numbers are still sometimes low, and visitors on holiday also join with us. We have also joined with the Roman Catholic afternoons of fellowship. Some of us also go to an interdenominational monthly Ladies' Prayer Breakfast, and some are attending the Anglican Lay Readers course. We pray for renewal and revival in our area where these meetings have not been customary. Life in a dispersed rural community means that we all have to travel for fellowship, but we find that we are blessed by the Lord when we do make the effort.

We enclose the testimony of someone who has recently moved to our community.

FROM GUINNESS TO GOSPEL

I was eighteen and just getting a taste for Guinness, when my sister became a Christian and started telling us about Jesus Christ. We were totally unaware that her friends at church were praying for our family, but within a short time they began to see results - my mum gave her heart to Jesus as she too became a Christian. This success must have sparked off some encouragement among her praying friends, and they set about more earnestly praying for the two remaining members of our family - me and my dad. Within a few weeks my sister handed me a book, a friend had asked her to give it to me. It was called 'The Day Christ Died'. Later I snuggled down in bed and began to read. It was a struggle! It was boring! I found myself skipping pages and only glancing at some chapters. My eyelids grew heavy and I was starting to feel drowsy as I reached the last chapter. Here things were a little different, no history, no life in Roman times, no social traditions, instead it began to explain in a simple way how all men have sinned and are therefore cut off from God and that this is why He seems so far away. My droopy eyelids lifted a little and I read on - God is Holy and He is Just, therefore there is a punishment for every wrong we do and unlike our worldly Law courts, nobody ever gets away with it! At this point I started to get interested and continued to read on as it explained that God loves all of us so much that He prepared a way by which sinful man could be forgiven. When I began to read of just how God achieved this, I felt something begin to change inside me. The resistance to God, the rigid determination to find fault and explain things away, the urgency to push thoughts of God out of my mind and say this isn't for me, all began to fade. What I was reading was a simple truth - God loves me! And that God loves me so much that He went to the trouble to find a way so that I could be forgiven - He offered his own son to



take the full punishment instead of me! WOW! Now this really touched my heart, I just melted inside. Although I looked on myself as a tough 18 year old, here I was in tears saying I was sorry to God. I promised that if He came into my heart to help me, I would try to do right from now on. I now know that nobody talks to God like that without it rattling the gates of both Heaven and Hell. And sure enough something happened - I was half under the blankets reading, when I suddenly became aware that somebody was standing at the foot of my bed! I would like to be able to say that I sat up in bed and there was Jesus, or an Angel standing at the foot of my bed. But I confess, I was so scared. I just daren't look! Both me and the book disappeared under the bed covers and stayed there until morning. But I do believe it was an Angel that visited me in my room that night.

Once word got round that I also had become a Christian, then that was it! Faith soared and prayer continued in earnest. It was only a matter of time now before my father, who was an alcoholic and small time crook, would also fall to his knees and say he was sorry to God. He too was about to experience, peace, forgiveness and joy in his life. Sure enough a few weeks later he did just that.

Now I wasn't a particular bad lad, so on the outside there wasn't a great visual difference, but in my dad's case it rocked a few boats, shattered a few plans, shocked relatives and local churches, it also resulted in quite a few miracles and started a mini revival.

This is how my family became Christians. From the moment each of us said we were sorry and we asked God to help us in our lives, things changed and they have never been the same since. So those of you praying for friends and family, let this be encouragement for you, prayer really does work.