



ANGLICAN RENEWAL MINISTRIES WALES

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Stunned into Silence.....

This magazine is late...late because I am unexpectedly short of copy. Is it that you have nothing to say or perhaps that the world is in too confused a state to comment? Where are our prophets? Or perhaps, because we have reached Part 4 "The Exhorter" of Brian Favell's contributions on The Gifts of Ministry, I should ask, "Where are our exhorters?" With only one exception I have not planned a theme for this magazine since I became editor. I have prayed about it and asked God to direct its structure and articles. I have often marvelled at the links and continuity that I did not plan. This time as I draw together what has been provided I am very conscious that God has a message for us. I trust that we will hear it so I ask you to pray as you read and listen for His voice.

Mike Endicott has sent us news of miracles but it has meant a change of approach, he quotes Matthew 18:3. A change to a simple child-like faith, a willingness to trust Him. Brian Favell speaks of an exhorter as one who "has in his heart that assurance,.....that FAITH,..." and says, "his principal work is to stir up a similar faith in others". This may disturb you.... it suddenly sounds too easy.... But Jen Rees-Larcombe warns us not to pressure the grieving with our advice to "Trust God" when they need space to be healed slowly. As I looked at these articles appearing in the same issue and also at our chairman's letter on Forgiveness, my first reaction is that I would not have put them together. But from personal experience I can say that God led me to trust Him in a new way through Brian's illness. When I found myself being urged by a close relative to claim healing and pray urgently expecting a miracle I got very confused, but I could hear God saying "I don't want you to ask, I want you to trust." I needed to do this if I was to gain any peace, I knew that I had to give Brian completely to the Lord. It took three days during which time I went through a very necessary grieving. Then suddenly, in the middle of the night, I knew that it was done and the words "all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." (1 Chronicles 29:14) came to mind. Not only had I given Brian to the Lord but I had the assurance that he already belonged to the Lord. We have both been blessed by this "trust" that is real and which we could not have manufactured ourselves.

From that time on I knew that my prayer could truly be "Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come and Thy name glorified". As I draw closer to God I know that this is a valid prayer in all circumstances but it does not relieve us of pain and suffering. In fact God has shown me another prayer and exhortation from St. Paul, in Philippians 3:v.7-21, in particular, verses 10 & 11, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."

In early September we read again Psalms 1 and 2 and I knew that they were the text for this magazine's footnotes, I didn't know why because it was before September 11th.



On that day we went down to West Wales in our motor caravan, to look for choughs along the coast. We arrived at St. David's camp-site just before 6.00pm and so turned on the radio news. This meant that I was protected from the horror of the TV pictures and was able to look to God asking only that His will be done. I was surprised at my lack of human feelings for I am a very emotional person and prayer so often brings pain as I reach to the Lord. However I was not surprised that it had happened and thought back to what I had written in Issue 23 on Romans 8. We are the "children of God" and must allow the Holy Spirit to transform us into His likeness, we need to listen again to the words of Jesus and seek to imitate Him in our lives today. I'm not asking the impossible or even for a miracle but simply that we are obedient to his word. It is in His silence that we shall hear His voice.

Instead of asking "Would He retaliate with bombs?" I ask some simpler questions. "Why have we not loved our neighbour as ourselves?" The Christian Church should have been showing the way for the last two thousand years and it is hard now to make amends, but we do have an unfair amount of the world's resources and perhaps those who have turned to Islam have a few points on their side. How much do you know about Islam? Unfortunately those who are now attacking Moslems in the UK know little; as Christians we have a responsibility to show them the love of Christ. Please hear this correctly I am not advocating "multi-faith" because Christianity and Islam are diametrically opposed, but at the start of Islam Mohammed proclaimed One God, and much of his teaching was based on the Bible. That is where the claims of a peaceful religion can be found. We have to love the Moslems and all unbelievers into the Kingdom not "bully" or defeat them, for only the Holy Spirit will convict them of the truth and our part has to be gentle and caring, offering the prayers that God puts into our hearts. Was it fortuitous that the book I took to read again when I went to Pembrokeshire was Mother Basilea Schlink's "Allah or the God of the Bible-- What is the Truth?" ? This I bought in 1985 and I know that the 1987 edition is now out of print but Basilea Schlink's message is a prophetic one. I have come home and taken two other books from my shelf:

"Who is this Allah" by G.J.O.Moshay ISBN 0 9518386 1X

"Faiths in Conflict?" by Vinoth Ramachandra ISBN 0 85111 650 7

both are challenging me and food for prayer.

In John 18:36 Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight....." He was going to the cross on which he won the victory with the weapon of LOVE. The western countries are right to insist that the war is against Terrorism not against Islam but the Taliban and Al Qaeda do not see it that way and they will have an influence on Moslems living throughout the world. Christians must expect to come under attack so we must live as God's children, awaiting the time when "we shall be revealed" Romans 8:18-21.

Mike Endicott is showing the way as he accepts the "new" way of child-like faith revealing His power and glory.

Mary Newsom

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A Letter from our Chairman Phil Rees

Forgiveness - a big issue.

Like many other ministers, counsellors and prayer supporters, my experience is that many people are hindered from getting healing and peace and joy because of a problem with forgiveness. In the pattern for our prayer which the Lord Jesus gave us, and which we call "the Lord's Prayer", He made it so clear. We cannot live with God here or in heaven unless we are forgiven for our sin (personal) and our part in the sin of a fallen world (corporate and institutional and universal). We receive that forgiveness as we come to Jesus at the Cross and ask and confess. Most of us who share this Magazine would testify to our new life beginning when we started to understand a little about Jesus on the Cross. We responded to God's love in Christ and now rejoice in being set free from the consequence of sin.

Then the absolute truth comes from the Lord to us, "Forgive - as you have been forgiven". We cannot have peace in ourselves, or live in a relationship with our Father, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, if we do not forgive. We must be willing as a response to what God has forgiven in us. And we must ask for his help to do it when it's difficult. It is also a condition for answered prayer. If we aren't prepared to forgive others, through Christ's blood, we quite simply cut off the flow of relationship with God. Ultimately, to be free of un-forgiveness is vital for our peace, our living as God's people, and for all areas of relationship.

The people we perceive to have done wrong, or hurt us, may or may not have recognised it and shown sorrow and repentance. If they have, a lovely relationship can be restored and can often be better and stronger than ever. Perhaps they have not - and we can do nothing about it. We must still let them go, without resentment and get healed ourselves.

A part of the process will be to learn to forgive ourselves for things in the past, even when it is still painful to remember them. They may not be completely blotted out from our memories, but God can take away the acute pain and panic.

What I've shared with you is about our personal lives. There is another area which will be familiar to clergy and elders and to all church leaders. Often sin and selfishness and strong-will in a person will disrupt the life of a local church or charitable organisation or a para-church group. We have the same responsibility to cut them loose from our resentment and sorrow at the harm caused. Often they will not see it, and will refuse to be disciplined. But because we are perhaps leaders with responsibility, shepherds of the flock, we will not be happy to let the same people cause havoc in another flock when they leave us. We do sometimes have a responsibility to warn other leaders of what may happen. Then they must deal with anything that arises with the knowledge of the past. This is not un-forgiveness, but wisdom.

Phil.

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Flames of Fire 2001 Some observations from Vice Chairman Michael Bennett.

I felt that we were especially blessed this year in a number of ways. The weather was good until the Thursday, so it made life better for us all, especially those camping; we didn't have the floods of last year. It was good to see so many young people, well over a hundred with both Big Ideas and with the Messengers, so we had over two hundred young people, a sign that bodes well for the future.

I was conscious this year of more people attending with deep spiritual needs. It is always a privilege to minister and the Ministry Team, under the leadership of Nick Jones, exercised a wonderful ministry. It was wonderful to see people set free to serve the Lord in a deeper way. We had a goodly number of Day-Visitors including some people I had met at the Roman Catholic Renewal Conference in Carmarthen the week before.

It is my privilege to arrange the early morning worship which I know is greatly valued by those who attend. As always, Chris Daniel provided the music with great sensitivity and I and many others are very grateful to him for his ministry. I am also very grateful to Joan Hardie for her help as sacristan.

One of my tasks is to keep a spiritual eye on the staff, many of whom find it difficult to come to worship because of their duties. We would meet at the end of each day for prayer, and the Wednesday night was most memorable for the strength and depth of worship as we prayed against the darkness that was affecting some of the young people on the camp-site.

Our speakers gave us all food for thought. Some points were made that did not please everyone, but no-one could say that any of the speakers were dull as they provoked different reactions in different people. In fact, considering that we had nearly a thousand people through the doors of the conference, it would have been surprising if we all agreed with every word.

What was very evident was a wonderful spirit of prayer and praise. As usual we had fine music from Bob Pitcher and his group, and people I have spoken to since the conference have remarked on how uplifting the music ministry was.

The speakers were well balanced from the homeliness of Jennifer Rees-Larcombe to the theological issues raised by Christina Baxter, and from the sound biblical theology of Gerry Angel and Stuart Bell to the challenging prophetic issues raised by Roger and Sue Mitchell. It was good to meet Joel Edwards and see the new openness which has emerged in the Evangelical Alliance under his leadership.

The night of All-Age worship was truly memorable with the puppets (how the adults loved them too) and the young people ministering alongside the adults. Truly a most blessed time

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and much credit must go to Dick Shenton, Val Rowlands, Roger Waggett and all who worked with them. We hope that there was something for everybody who came, to build them up in faith. One high point for me was blessing the children at the Sunday morning Eucharist. To me it was a true Eucharist in that all were one at the Lord's table regardless of tradition and denomination. When God's Spirit moves wonderful things happen and it was a privilege to pray with people and see the Lord move.

It was good to see Mike Endicott with Yates and to experience Mike's very special ministry. It was good also to see Tony and Shirley Nam and we pray that Shirley may make a good recovery.

I believe that the Lord touched many lives during the week, there were traumatic moments but when God's Spirit moves it is like a steel-making furnace that I once worked on in Sheffield. The metal is heated and the impurities float to the top of the molten metal. However when that happens they can be raked off as we used to do with a long tool called a ravel. God has been busy with His ravel removing the impurities and making fine steel out of his people. His Flames of Fire have melted stony hearts and raised up new people for Him. I hope and pray that this may continue and that Flames of Fire will grow more and more, and go from strength to strength in the Lord.

Prepare the Way of the Lord - there's work for us all.

Some notes from Christina Baxter's Evening Address at Flames of Fire

Christina started with a reading from St. Mark Chapter 1 verses 1-20. Here John the Baptist is proclaimed as the one who feels unworthy to untie the thong of Christ's sandals for "He will come and baptise with the Holy Spirit". Nevertheless Jesus comes to be baptised by John, an "odd" person living in the desert. She focussed on Jesus' baptism and asks why did he, the "one without sin" need to be baptised? She spoke of Jesus' humanity, of his identifying with us and repenting for our sin, the sin of the whole world. We should never stop repenting and asking God to restore us and renew us and here Jesus has shown the way, all our sins have already been repented of by him. Continuing with the reading we see that the "Place of repentance is the place where the Holy Spirit comes." As we repent God wants to send more of His Holy Spirit, to receive more we must start on our knees in repentance, for He longs to send the Spirit.

Jesus as a man needed to spend nights in prayer, he needed the Spirit of God and so do we. When the Spirit comes we can hear God tell us that we are His children, His beloved and we can call Him "Abba", hear Him say that He is well pleased with us.

The baptism of Jesus tells us of our identity with him, of our purpose and of our way to be renewed and refreshed. And as we stand in Christ in the Jordan we too are ready, like John the Baptist to "Prepare the Way of the Lord". It might be a small or invisible part that we have to

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play but it is our part, no matter how “odd” a person we may be there is space for us; but as for John the Baptist the call is for obedience.

Jesus baptised the Church at Pentecost and again and again throughout history when the power of the Spirit has been experienced. We need to ask for this blessing for our churches and leaders. But what will it mean for us?

In Mark’s gospel we read that Jesus was driven out into the wilderness by the Spirit, where he was locked in combat with Satan. We are assured of a victorious life but we must expect opposition. Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit went to the Cross to win the final victory. We gladly accept the victory but we do well to recognise that being filled with the Spirit means engaging in warfare as He calls us. We are not alone but in Him, with other Christians, knowing that resurrection follows the cross, that victory is in Him and achieved through Him. It means that we recognise that we will pass through tribulation, persecution, trouble and temptation.

We come trembling, are we sure that we want to preach the gospel boldly in all the places God may send us? There are jobs for us all and there will be fruit from it and joy in it. So it is: **REPENT, BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT AND GO OUT AND TELL OTHERS.....** God enabled Jesus, he preached and did miracles and prepared the way for us to follow in his footsteps. There is then no limit to what He can do.....

SPACE to GRIEVE by Jennifer Rees-Larcombe

I’ve been coming to Flames of Fire for the last four years, but surely this last one was the best ever?

Those summer days in Buith have become an oasis for me, because I feel I have been walking through a desert. The journey of grief and adjustment to loss is a long one, and so slow it is hard to measure your progress but each year Flames has felt like a mile stone in my recovery.

Perhaps because I work for “Beauty From Ashes”, an organisation which seeks to support people going through change and loss, I was asked to give a talk on that subject at Buith, aimed at people in churches who long to help their grieving friends but don’t always know how to.

Recently I was at my best friend’s funeral. When her brother greeted me I asked how he was coping, ‘Fine,’ he said brightly, ‘we Christians don’t have to grieve do we!’ I said nothing but I heartily disagreed. Christians are human beings, and when we lose someone we love, all humans grieve, but I think many of us, especially those in renewal, feel like my friend’s brother. Refusing to allow our grief to take its normal course can be dangerous, because buried



feelings can show themselves in physical or emotional illness, or pop up years later when some other event brings them all to the surface.

I think we Christians can find grief more difficult to handle than our secular friends because of all the uncharacteristic emotions that are so completely normal after a major loss.

We are astonished and ashamed at how angry we feel because we do not understand that anger is a normal reaction. 'How could he leave me to cope with all this mess alone?' someone said to me recently, when she knows perfectly well her husband couldn't help dying! When well meaning, but tactless friends say the wrong thing and we over react, we feel a failure as a Christian! And because we know that forgiveness is vital, we really struggle endlessly with our resentment against anyone who caused our loved one's death or gave them less than perfect medical care beforehand.

Then there's fear. During the grief journey, which can last five years or longer, fear is normal, and shows itself in a range of ways. Constant butterflies in the tummy, loss of confidence, inability to make decisions, fear of being out of the home, and a terrible sense of insecurity. Friends say, 'You shouldn't get into such a state, Dear, just trust Jesus. If you worry you don't trust, if you trust you don't worry.' Of course they are right, but during grief fears are normal and have nothing to do with faith. But when our fear of being trapped in a crowd keeps us away from church for a while Job's comforters soon accuse us of losing our faith!

Christians are prepared to accept sorrow, and 'a good cry' is seen as necessary, so long as it is only one! Crying in church every Sunday for months is soon labelled as weakness. Worse still, when that normal sorrow turns into depression, as it does for most people at some time during the first five years after loss, Christians feel a terrible sense of failure. We ought to be leaping for joy and singing hymns loudly, not feeling the whole world has turned grey and life is just too much effort. A major shock followed by grief and the stress of unwelcome change can temporarily effect the chemicals in our brains, we need medical help, but a doctor told me that Christians are notoriously bad at asking for it. 'We could give them a few months on antidepressants and they would be fine again,' she explained. 'Nowadays they are not addictive and don't turn people into Zombies, they simply act like a plaster cast on a broken leg. But dozens of slightly depressed Christians try to cope alone, maybe for years, because they feel that depression is wrong, and having to take pills would prove their weakness, but we could get them right so quickly.'

The other thing that grieving Christians find it acutely difficult to handle are all the doubts and questions. All humans ask 'why did this happen to me?' but Christians have the added pain of asking 'why did GOD allow this to happen?' Did I sin? Was it Satan attacking? Or perhaps God is not as loving or as powerful as I always thought.' These questions rattle our faith at a time when we are least able to deal with them. The normal numbness that follows a bereavement, can last for months, robbing us of our sense of God's presence, until we wonder why He has abandoned us when we needed him most. Of course He is always there, even when we cannot feel Him, but sometimes we simply have to choose, with gritted teeth, to take His word for that!

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For some people this side of grieving can mean a total loss of faith, we even lose the comfort of Heaven! Again this is normal and we simply have to remember that even if we no longer believe in God He still believes in us! If we wait patiently and don't start looking for some deep-seated sin, the clouds will lift and we'll see the Son (sun) once again.

So, be kind to your friends if, like me, they are walking a path through the wilderness. Don't give them endless advice they haven't asked for; don't write them off as poor witnesses when they talk or act in ways that surprise you and listen to them even when you've heard the same stuff hundreds of times before. Just be there for them, love them and give them time, they'll come through it in the end. I realised suddenly this summer that I have reached the far side of my wilderness, the grass looks green again and the sky is definitely blue! As Bob and his wonderful music group led us in worship this year I knew Psalm 40 was real for me. 'He lifted me out of the slimy pit.... He put a new song in my mouth.' Thank you Flames of Fire, and I'm coming back for more next year!

The Way Forward for the twenty first century Christian by Mike Endicott

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. "
(Luke 12:32)

For twelve years we have battled away in the ministry of Healing and Wholeness, the last eight being involved on a full-time basis in and out of the Well Centre. Those years have given us our 'fair share' of miracles but never, never enough.

We have been quite adequately employed in the wonders of Inner Healing, the healing of memories and the building of personal wholeness in Christ but how we have yearned to see the lame walk!

Now, in 2001, God is displaying his goodness with a new season of the Holy spirit, not in gifts of joy or of revival conversions but of miracles! He is freely demonstrating the signs and wonders of his kingdom once again.

The intervening prayer battle has not been against evil or lack of faith or tragedy or lack of leadership support but has been fought on the downward slopes of fading hope.

The modern church as a whole has become so cerebral in our thinking on the things of healing, often developing unbiblical theologies to justify suffering and attending numerous lectures entitled 'Why am I not healed?' and so on. We read Christian self-help books and water down

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the power of the cross into counselling techniques and ineffectual styles of ministry. Faced with the challenges of the healing miracles in the Gospels we have become masters of the 'Ah, but...' dismissal technique for covering over our own lack of trust.

Slowly and surely our church mentality is allowing the word 'Healing' to merge into the idea of some sort of general Wholeness, and then re-defining the whole ministry as being limited to bringing people one step nearer to Jesus. Wonderful though that is, there has to be more in the kingdom.

Like what, for example? Let's get simple about this.

In the Garden of Eden there was no sickness, no pain and no tears. That's all at the beginning of the Bible and Jesus knew all that stuff – he was around in those earliest days.

Our glimpses into the coming heaven at the end of the Bible show a world which is exactly the same and we who believe will be given it - no sickness, no pain and no tears.

When Jesus walked this earth he healed everyone who asked and then said he never did anything that he did not see the Father doing and wanting to do. Then he told his disciples to go out and do it themselves.

Simple conclusion – God wants to heal people – he's going to do it all anyway one day so we might as well ask for it now!

Is that cheeky, asking for it now? Well, we do it every Sunday after all, without even knowing that this is exactly how Jesus wants us to pray.

Our Father, which art in Heaven etc, give us this day our daily bread.

The original Greek actually translates as 'tomorrow's bread' but someone got it slightly wrong and the church has been cursed with a wrong understanding ever since. Jesus is telling us to ask the Father today for the fruit of heaven which will be coming to us tomorrow anyway - no sickness, no pain and no tears. Give us today tomorrow's bread. That's what he did when he healed the sick - he gave them today something that was on the way anyway in God's good time.

Is this all too child-like an approach?

Matthew 18:3 'And he (Jesus) said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven'.

So we did.

In the middle of July 2001 we caught a distant glimpse of the first signs of a new season of miracles. These were few in number but wonderfully impossible to the human expectation!

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By the time we arrived at Builth Wells at the end of August to give a seminar on Physical healing at the Anglican Renewal Ministries Conference the whole shape of ministry had changed. Within five minutes of our starting to speak the miracles began and kept up in a steady stream throughout the afternoon. The glory was so thick that it was difficult to teach from the Bible but we managed somehow, although few heard. All that were there can witness to the work of God in that place.

Those who had lost courage to ask for prayer were healed, those who had been blessed in healing ways in the past and somehow lost it had their healing resurrected. People sitting quietly in the room were healed without even being prayed for. Medically incurable complaints disappeared, torn muscles and ligaments grew back into divine order. The lame jumped up and down and the deaf began to hear. Some could not take in the enormity of what lay before them and some just cried with joy all the way through in the holiness of the moment.

Give glory to God! – we are now into October as I write this and the anointing swirls around, if anything growing even thicker and more gloriously fruitful!

Will the ‘Ah, but’ philosophers win the day? This is God’s season – let him have his way!
Amen

GIFTS OF MINISTRY Part 4 - EXHORTING by Brian Favell

(see Romans 12.4 - 8)

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible begins Romans 12.8 with "He who exhorts..." The King James Bible says "Or he that exhorteth.....". The Jerusalem Bible says "..... let the preacher deliver But J. B. Phillips in his own translation of the New Testament puts it, "If your gift be the stimulating of the faith of others, let us set ourselves to it". That sounds a bit more like something we can get our teeth into.

Have you met someone who ALWAYS sees the bright side of a situation? Not just a mindless optimist but the sort of man who drives you round the bend because when all you want to do is to wallow in your problem, he talks of nothing but the wonderful blessing you're going to get out of it once you've stopped wallowing? He just might be an Exhorter.

An Exhorter is someone who has so clear a vision of God's good purpose in anything and everything that he sees troubles and handicaps ONLY as stepping stones to the achieving of that purpose, the receiving of God's gifts. So naturally if you're in trouble the last thing he will do is sympathise: he's too busy praising God for what you're going to gain out of it. And if you



listen to him it won't be long before you have begun to praise God too. An Exhorter's vision of God and his ways is infectious; that is the nature of his gift.

Look again at J. B. Phillips above: "If your gift be the stimulating of the faith of others..." he says. And the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews says, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen". An Exhorter has in his heart that assurance, that conviction: and he has it so strongly that our everyday problems and troubles cannot shake it. He has FAITH, and his principal work is to stir up a similar faith in others.

Of course he can do this through sermons, if he happens to be one of the elect few that our Church of England licenses to preach sermons. But it is likely that he will work much more effectively one-to-one. His work will not be counselling in the normal sense: he does not necessarily minister in any obviously practical way; nevertheless no one can talk with him and not go away heartened and strengthened.

I say that an Exhorter may not minister in an obviously practical way: that does not mean he won't give practical counsel. He will: but it will be geared to your need for stronger faith and deeper spiritual life, not to the immediate answer to your immediate problem. His reaction to your problem will be to have you take your eyes off it and look instead at what God is doing. And if you do it his way, you will then find that what you were so upset about has ceased to be a problem!

An Exhorter is deeply involved in human life: he is not a man of theories standing aloof. When you talk to him you are part of his family and he wants to be part of yours. His strength is that he is not overwhelmed by human problems because he sees God's design clearly; his ministry lies in helping you to the same vision and the same faith. And he CARES whether you see it or not.

He will observe your growing pains (and his own) - those trembling steps taken along the line of Jesus' will and prompting - then point to passages of Scripture and say, "See: it's all here! THIS is what's happening!"

He is overjoyed by an obvious response to his ministry - by steps taken and things done in obedience and faith - and grieved beyond reason if there is no such response.

IF YOU SEE AN EXHORTER IN ACTION and don't understand the pattern of his ministry you may well be put off. The practical steps that he urges may seem to have no real relation to the problem: they may seem absurdly over-simple; his insistence on them may seem unsympathetic, even dictatorial. Nevertheless he has a real ministry, a real gift from the Lord, and if we shut our ears to him we will be hindered in our walk with God.

Of course he has his own temptations: Pride, as always, in the work done through him; becoming discouraged when visible results are slow in coming, and conversely not knowing when to stop ministering to someone who wants a spiritual Aspirin rather than a permanent cure.

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Finally, it has been said that Exhorters are THE prayer warriors. Once you have discovered that God can be expected to answer prayer - that prayer is not just a matter of getting something off your chest to God whilst expecting that he won't answer back - then in times of need you look round for someone whose prayers are manifestly answered more fully, more powerfully than your own. An Exhorter is likely to be that kind of person. He will help - though of course that doesn't let you off from doing your own homework as well! If you are learning to ride a bike you don't give up pedalling just because you have someone running alongside to steady the bike and catch you if you start to fall.....

SOMA – Sharing of Ministries Abroad

SOMA - Sharing of Ministries Abroad, is an Anglican based mission agency that sends teams from one country to another to minister in teaching and in prayer with church leaders about the Renewal in the Holy Spirit. Their aim is not evangelisation but discipleship, in accordance with our Lord's great commission in Matthew 28:19,20.

SOMA's Mission Statement runs as follows: "We seek to assist in the renewal of the Anglican Communion worldwide through the Holy Spirit, by sending teams on short-term mission". Their problem is that they have been too successful! The demand for SOMA ministry is now overwhelming, but unfortunately it is subject to certain limitations. Firstly is time and quality; they simply cannot send out teams willy-nilly. Team members must be of the right calibre and must undergo special training before they can be let loose on an unsuspecting Christian community. Secondly, they must have good team leaders who have had the right experience.

The third limitation is finance. Since its formation in 1978, SOMA has been run on a shoestring; or what they call a pilgrim lifestyle. They have always been given just enough money to continue their work, working out of a converted stable in the yard of a smallholding. They get no finance from any official Anglican body. All their funding comes through the generosity of churches and individuals who share the vision. Each team member is responsible for the cost of his or her travel and accommodation to and from the place where the mission begins. The other costs of the visit are theoretically the responsibility of the host diocese; but frequently SOMA has to raise some of the funding independently.

We are actually talking about SOMA UK, because there are now branches operating from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, Southern Africa, and USA - as well as UK. The only full-time member of staff in SOMA UK is the National Director, Revd. Don Brewin; and he is so over-worked that they are urgently seeking to appoint a full-time Associate Director. Apart from Don there are three part-time staff members: an Administrator, Mary Cloake, Don's Secretary, Barbara Butters; and a Financial Assistant, Tony Price.

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Apart from their mission work, SOMA UK has, over the last few years, been developing a number of training resources to assist in their partnership with dioceses and Christian leaders in different parts of the world. Their latest publication is a training manual called: "Renewal for Life", and it is aimed at seeing dioceses renewed and becoming centres of mission. The basis of this course is that renewal in the Holy Spirit is not some fringe activity experienced by charismatics but part of a Christian's normal relationship with the Lord which:

- defines our lifestyle as pilgrims in this challenging period in world history
- takes seriously our relationship with God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- seeks to be like Jesus, and to continue the ministry of Jesus in today's world
- allows the Holy Spirit to fill and overflow our lives, empowering us for service
- enables us to begin to live with others in a manner the world longs to see
- releases congregations to live as the body of Christ in today's world
- challenges us to work for the transformation of our communities
- opens us to "respond in a different spirit" to injustice and exploitation
- urges us to pray and work for the restoration of the created order into God's pattern.

This teaching illustrates how closely the aims of SOMA UK are aligned with those of ARM (Wales), and why we have provided SOMA teams to Uganda and Kenya.

This year SOMA UK is more active than ever. Two teams are going to different dioceses in Zambia, and a team is going to Southern Nigeria to teach on "Community Transformation". Initially this mission was to be to four dioceses but now the number has increased to 15-25 dioceses! A Youth Team is going to four dioceses in the Church of South India, and another team is going to the diocese of Machakos, Kenya.

Next year plans are in hand for visits to India, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda.

We collected all this information and more at a "SOMA Awareness Day" in Llandudno in October. Sadly only a handful of faithful supporters turned up to hear Don Brewin, Brian Waters and two Ugandans Johnson and Francis speak about all the exciting work the organisation is doing. Now there is to be another "Day" in Newport on Saturday 17th November, do please go to it and encourage your friends and colleagues and vicars come along as well. SOMA UK needs all the help and support it can get. You can find them on the Web use our link

Brian Newsom

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The World Prayer Centre

(Editor's note. In our last issue we included a report of "A Day to Stand" held at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. It was organised by The World Prayer Centre which is led by Ian Coles who had the vision for this centre, he is also part of the Pray for Revival Team.

To put you in the picture I am reprinting some of their brochure Change your world.

I hope and pray that this Centre will become a real focus for prayer in Britain and enable us to link with other Christian groups throughout the world.)

Why a World Prayer Centre ?

The world is changing. Evidence of globalisation is all around us. While to many the world seems out of control, God is fully in command of all that is happening, and is consistently and surely working out His purposes. And He is calling His Church to take up its global mandate with renewed vision and purpose. The World Prayer Centre is part of the new thing that God is doing around the world. As the Church begins to strategise and think globally, so we must pray globally. A united and consistent flow of strategic prayer is needed now:

- * to open the way for us to reach the remaining peoples of the world who have not yet heard the good news of Jesus.
- * to equip the church to reach out with love and grace to a hurting society.
- * to enable us to meet, with the authority of Christ, the challenges and opportunities of national and international power structures.
- * to strengthen the Church to meet its end-time calling.

A new concept for our time

Change Your World

Our mission statement 'change your world' reflects our profound conviction that prayer makes a difference.

The main focus of the World Prayer Centre is to encourage and develop strategic prayer, both corporate and individual, and to demonstrate the Kingdom of God in the 21st century. We believe God has given us four foundation stones on which to build - prayer, world mission, concern for the family, and love for the poor.

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Already, we have a large World Prayer Room at our current office base, and we are extending our prayer network around the country and the world. Work with parents and families is increasing all the time, bringing hope and practical help to enable people to stand amid the incredible pressures faced by families today.

Building the vision

In due course, the World Prayer Centre will be housed in the building which was seen by Project Director Ian Cole of Pray for Revival, in a God-given vision in the early 90s. Other Christians have also seen the same vision. It will, as far as we know, be the largest permanent prayer centre in the world, and a project quite beyond anything the UK church has been called to in recent years. The fact that God has placed It in the UK is something to celebrate, and we believe it will be a blessing to the whole nation.

A strategic information hub

Equipped with satellite links and the latest global communications technology, the World Prayer Centre will gather and disseminate strategic prayer information from around the world. Churches, prayer groups and individuals will be able to focus on strategic prayer needs and targets, both for the church itself and for its global commission. The World Prayer Centre will be a centre of excellence, and a place that many will want to visit. Its attractive steel and glass structure will house a huge range of resources and amenities.

A place for prayer

Prayer facilities at the new centre will include: a 4000-seater dished prayer auditorium, dedicated prayer rooms for each continent of the world, plus rooms for Israel and the UK, 86 individual private prayer rooms and a chapel for visitors' use.

A place for the family

Families will be able to use the purpose-built family centre, young people's action zone and day care facilities. In addition, there will be a leisure pool, a well-equipped fitness room and a variety of restaurant facilities. Families of all kinds will benefit from the support and positive encouragement which are part of the very fabric of the World Prayer Centre.

The World Prayer Centre will release many exciting possibilities for reaching out to a world desperate for the love of Jesus. That ministry is already under way, and will continue to grow.

Present strategy

We have launched a prayer strategy to move the project forward, which is open to all who would like to pray. The strategy is built around two streams. The Ezra stream concentrates on strategic world issues in the areas of mission, the family and the poor, and on the development

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of world vision; whilst the Nehemiah stream forms the foundation of prayer for the development and construction of the World Prayer Centre building, and the establishment of the ministries of the Centre

Why Birmingham?

Birmingham - at the heart of the nation - is already an international hub. It hosts the nation's foremost conference and exhibition facilities, and is ideally situated for national and international travel. Birmingham has always been England's industrial powerhouse, with worldwide export markets. Now we are creating a powerhouse of prayer - prayer which will touch people's lives in profound and life-changing ways.

Please be part of it

The World Prayer Centre is, we believe, a call of God on the UK. We intend to meet that call, and invite you to partner with us. For more information please contact:

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