

Ploughshare August/September 1993

(Scanned version from the original)

From the Rector

Summer Club, our remarkable holiday club, attracts local children in droves. As I write, excitement is mounting and it's nearly upon us. As you read, the dust will be settling and exhausted leaders will be putting their feet up.

Children deserve such a high profile. It is crucial that the coming generation discover that Jesus is Good News. It is equally crucial for the Church - if it is to survive - to welcome a massive influx of young people.

My comments about youth, in the last issue, brought some welcome response. This, in turn, prompts me to take it further.

We need to teach young people who do come how to participate in and make the most of church services. Several have pointed out that they are about worshipping Almighty God -and not about being entertained. Perhaps many have wrong expectations. Certainly, few young people and children have much knowledge of the Bible or of Christian tradition. They are not equipped to say what services should be like and what they should include. Having said that, however...

We need to have a **bias to the young**. Bishop David Sheppard wrote a while ago about God's apparent bias to the poor, which we should imitate. In order to regain lost ground, and in order to correct an imbalance, we must also veer towards youth. If young people say that worship does not seem relevant or comprehensible, we must take note.

We need to pray for the young. It isn't an easy world in which to grow up. Ours is not only the post-Christian era; it has also been described as the post-Enlightenment era. No longer is it believed that science has all the answers. So the coming generation is being enticed by all sorts of New Age directions. We must pray that they may find meaning and direction in God, revealed in Jesus.

What does this say about the shape of our Sunday services? The gap between traditionalists and those left cold by a traditional approach is widening. Is there a valid alternative to the development of two parallel styles of worship?

The Apostles Were They Good Enough?

A thought-provoking article.

Memorandum

TO:

Jesus, Son of Joseph, Woodcrafter Carpenter Shop, Nazareth

FROM:

Jordan Management Consultants, Jerusalem

Dear Sir:

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for management positions in your new organisation. All of them have now taken our battery of tests; we have not only run the results through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant.

It is the staff opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capability.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right hand man. All of the other profiles are self explanatory.

We wish you every success in your new venture.

Sincerely yours

Jordan Management Consultants

Recommended for Ordination

Jonty Frith is set to train for the ordained ministry. After a selection conference, he has been recommended for training. Having changed his university course from Engineering to Theology, he has one more year of that to go. This is to be followed by an "experience-gaining" year in a testing environment, home or abroad, before he goes to a Theological College - in 1995 perhaps.

Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International

Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International extend an open invitation to their dinner on.....

You may well ask, who are they, why do they have dinners, and what is the point of the long name.

About 40 years ago several committed Christian men sat down to talk about forming a group. Not exceptional men, just average working people, businessmen, who know the Lord and love him but haven't known how to show it.

And what would this group do? They would have meetings in restaurants and other public places, places which would appeal to men who would not normally attend a church or religious activity. They would tell other men, oral, no theories. They would tell what they have actually experienced of God to other men like themselves - men who might not believe what a preacher said - but who will listen to plumbers, doctors and farmers because they are plumbers, doctors and farmers themselves.

We need a name, they said, an all embracing name. **Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International** said one. And like you the others asked why?

- **Full Gospel** to mean that no subject would be avoided at the meeting. Healing, tongues, deliverance, whatever the men experienced, they could talk about it just as it happened.
- **Businessmen** to show it was for laymen, ordinary people.
- **Fellowship** is what it should be about, people who love to get together. No rules or committees.
- **International** to emphasise the world wide nature of the group.

The vision of these men has become a reality world-wide and has become a reality here in Chesterfield. It is a real opportunity for all men, and women to come to a deeper relationship with God.

Please accept the open invitation, experience ordinary men and women talking about how they have been healed, the miracles they have seen and experienced and the special ways that God has dealt with their lives. It's an experience I commend to all. Perhaps you would like to know more or listen to a tape of one of these people speaking at a dinner.

There are men in this church who are members of the FGBMFI who would be willing to tell you more. Ask the staff or contact the church office. Finally I ask you to pray for the work of the FGBMFI as we work to bring all men and women to a greater knowledge and love of the Lord, and may His blessings be upon you all.

Yours in Christ

Roger Smith, Businessman

Homelessness

Ecumenical and Local Churches Housing Coalition Takes Up the Call for Crusade

Churchgoers across Derbyshire are being called to take part in what Archbishop Carey recently called a "moral crusade to rid society of the evil of homelessness".

An ecumenical group calling itself "The Housing Coalition" has been formed in response to this call. The Coalition is now extending the call to parishes and other Christian communities throughout the county.

Nationally, the churches have already made their mark in the political arena in which so much policy affecting the availability of housing is made. In December, 3,000 church members from across the denominations and the country went to Westminster to lobby their MPs. Over 90% of the MPs agreed to undertake some sort of follow-up action and 103 signed an Early Day motion expressing support for the policy objectives of the church lobby.

At the local level the call is for a two-pronged approach: prayer and action. In addition to continued lobbying and awareness-raising, the Coalition hopes to encourage increased provision of essential facilities for the homeless, action through Housing Associations, and greater flexibility in the use of glebe land and other church-owned properties.

The hope now is that this modern "crusade", founded as it is in Kingdom values (particularly the teachings and example of Jesus in His relations with His own society's outsiders), will grow through the development of a network of local link representatives.

Some statistics

1. In 1991, 145,790 households were accepted as homeless: this amounts to about 418,400 people (double the figure for 1981).
2. The official figures do not include households without children, most single homeless nor those officially "intentionally homeless". CHAR estimates that there are around 2 million single homeless in Britain.
3. In 1991, 75,400 households had their homes repossessed in Britain.
4. In 1979, 98,771 new council houses were completed; in 1990, 25,177 new houses were built by local councils and Housing Associations together.
5. The underlying causes of homelessness among young people have been shown to be broken relationships, unemployment and low pay, innocence, ignorance, abuse and fear.

Nightstop Scheme

What would be your response if you were asked to provide a bed for a completely unknown homeless teenager? Could you even countenance it? What are the risks? Why should it even be necessary, can't the local authority deal with them?

These questions and many more were discussed at a meeting of the Churches' Association for Social Work. C.A.S.W, held at the Annunciation Parish Centre, on Tuesday 15 June. Mrs Hilary Wilner, the co-ordinator of a successful **Nightstop** Scheme in Leeds, outlined the details.

Nightstop provides overnight accommodation for single homeless youngsters between the ages of 16-18 years on a one night only basis in private homes. With the gap between homelessness and available rehousing ever widening, the numbers of vulnerable youngsters on the streets is steadily increasing.

Nightstop hosts do not work in isolation, but in close conjunction with local statutory and voluntary organisations such as the Housing Department, Social Services and Child Care groups. These agencies then contact a well co-ordinated rota of host volunteers who are prepared to accept these vulnerable youngsters for one night only, as part of a structured programme of rehabilitation.

Knowledge of the Leeds experience quickly dispelled our inhibitions and proved very reassuring. Far from being difficult to cope with, these teenagers have been extremely appreciative of the support offered at a very desperate time in their lives. It does not mean looking after mentally ill youngsters or those involved with drugs or violence, these are the sole responsibility of the statutory bodies.

What next? Well, the meeting certainly proved what can be achieved with a well structured scheme which can respond to a very desperate need in our society. This emergency service, run in conjunction with other support groups, identifies a practical role where the churches in Chesterfield can help by providing voluntary hosts and possibly funding as well.

C.A.S.W. will be taking the whole issue on board, arranging consultations with support agencies and looking particularly into the establishment of a suitable hostel in Chesterfield, without which the scheme would not work

Matthew 25:34-40

"In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"

Adrian Marsden-Jones