

Ploughshare February/March 1997 (scanned version from the original)

From the Rector

For some years our Vision Statement has been, in summary, "**GOING FOR GROWTH IN CHRIST**".

This still seems to be right for us, although we have not found it easy to implement. We know we are called by God to grow, in some respects we are growing, but we are unsure how to set about improving the growth rate.

Fortunately (or, rather, in the grace of God) a small, helpful book came out just over a year ago, and there have been accompanying courses held around the country. It is called "**Building Missionary Congregations**", by Robert Warren, formerly Vicar of St Thomas' Crookes, Sheffield and now the C of E's National Officer for Evangelism. Most PCC members have read the book and the clergy and some lay members have attended one or more courses.

On October 19, the PCC held a day together at St John's and a few weeks earlier the DCC of St John's did something similar. They grappled with some of the "Building Missionary Congregations" ideas and feel it is right for us to take them on board.

What is a Missionary Congregation? This is Robert Warren's working definition: "**A Missionary Congregation takes its identity, priorities and agenda from participation in God's mission in the world.**" In other words, all that we are and all that we do must spring from being involved in God's mission of love.

It's not something that can happen overnight. But the PCC have made it a long-term aim for all our different congregations. To speed us on our way, they have agreed three priorities expressed as:

1. Led by the Holy Spirit, we will pursue "whole life Christianity".

2. We will encourage and support each other to live distinctive, Christ-centred lives.

We recognise it isn't easy and we're in it together depending on one another for help. When our Christianity makes a practical difference, we shall be able to make an impact, for God, locally.

3. We will aim to become an accessible focal point for the local community

This works ahead to the re-ordering of St Thomas' and all the opportunities that will give us.

This all represents a major and exciting challenge.

Happy New Year

Christopher Frith

Our Motto for 1997:

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Colossians 3:17

Thoughts about Heaven

Two prayers written by Claire Lennon aged 10 of Quest Club

Dear God,

I know that in heaven there won't be computers, T.Vs videos, or CD players but I can live without them. I don't need to see things going wrong on the telly because nothing is bad in heaven. I don't need to listen to music on a CD player when I can create my own music. I can live without all of these things but nobody can live without you.

Amen

Thank you Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you God for giving us the talents to do things like sports, writing, reading, drawing, walking and talking. Thank you for animals and friends, food and drink and especially your love, that cares, shares, forgives and gives. Thank you for giving us your son, Jesus.

Amen

Novimost

Please continue to pray for and support the work of Novimost International in Bosnia

GIVE THANKS FOR PROGRESS IN 1996

1996 saw many changes in Bosnia. It was a year when many positive steps were taken; to rebuild a country, shattered by years of bitter conflict. It was a year when the rebuilding process was started in the lives of many young people, the innocent victims of that conflict.

PRAISE GOD FOR

- answering prayers for an end to the military conflict
- continued pressure from the international community which has led to some improvements in human rights.
- the opening of Bosnia's first ever Evangelical Bible School in November
- new mission opportunities opening up in several towns and districts
- all the humanitarian aid which has flowed through the Bosnian churches into the local communities.
- all the people who have participated in the work of the Kingdom of God in Bosnia by working there, driving trucks, taking part in building projects, sorting and preparing aid, praying and paying for the work.

PRAY FOR INCREASED RESOURCES FOR 1997

The Bosnian Christians have seen an incredible return on the resources God has entrusted to them.

PRAY FOR

- many more Christian workers in Bosnia, especially for thirteen currently in training with Novimost. the necessary finances to deploy the new workers.
- increasing spiritual maturity and leadership skills in the students attending the Mostar Bible School.
- a Director for the Novimost Sports Centre due to open early in 1997 in Mostar. continued provision of high quality aid whilst it is needed.

- Novimost workers in Britain and Bosnia, many of whom have recently been tied up with issues which have deflected them from the core ministry to which they are called.

The Novimost director writes, *"We feel (that each member of the (earn is currently being "marked" by the enemy to minimise their effectiveness. Please pray that the work can be done effectively".*

Barbara Goodacre

Touchstone and Our Community

"Touchstone is the best thing that ever happened to me".

Just a throw away line perhaps, but if you have been unemployed for many years with a family and not much going for you, it can mean a lot. At a recent "vision" meeting with Community Health Authority the was agreed that Touchstone is it unique in what it has to offer the unemployed but needs a stronger management structure to "sell" itself and develop closer community links.

We provide a working environment where users are able to experience the discipline of work, develop new skills and responsibilities, but are also personally valued for their contribution. to the community. This level of self esteem, self confidence and. support is essential for many individuals to compete in the limited job market.

However, to move forward into identified areas of community need such as;

- **Community Care and Support,**
- **Recycling Projects,**
- **Networking, linking local agencies and support organisations,**

The existing management team needs expanding and strengthening; with people who are prepared to share their business skills and. time.

"Touchstone Support Centre" is now a registered charity. This will open new doors and enable us to respond to charitable needs.

In February we leave our rather uninviting premises in Old Hall Road to link up with the YMCA in the centre of Chesterfield. Let us all take this opportunity to move Touchstone forward in a very practical manner as our local mission commitment to help those in our community.

How you can help.

- Become a member (annual fee £5)
- Apply for affiliation by your organisation
- Regular covenanting to the charity (Touchstone Support Centre)
- Invite Touchstone to speak to your organisation, Church PCC etc.
- Offer of time/skills for a few hours per week
- Assist with publicity
- Provide work for our maintenance team

Chairman: Revd Michael Fermer

Treasurer: Jim Mitchell

Link Mission Partners

Christmas greetings from the Lines family reached us too late for the last "Ploughshare". It was a more positive letter even though the three children caught chicken pox soon after Mandy's recovery.

Brazil is their holiday destination at the end of January. The chance to take a break, build up their strength, recharge their batteries and relax away from it all must seem very attractive.

When they return moves will be afoot for some changes in their role in Paraguay, and we look forward with interest as to what these will be. As they are part of our church family may we continue to remember them in our prayers.

The following is an article from "Share" magazine by Andrew Lines

THE NEED AND THE VISION

The need was for systematic Bible teaching, overlapping with the preparation of lay and ordained leaders in the Anglican Church of Paraguay. The vision led to the creation of the Anglican Centre of Biblical studies (CALEB), which started in April 1992. Mission partner Andrew Lines explains some joys and disappointments of this key ministry.

THE AIM

The CALEB ministry has built on the work of earlier trail-blazers while moving forward to meet the new needs in Paraguay. Like other similar ministries, it takes its guiding principle from 2 Timothy 2:2, and thus its aim is: **to prepare leaders who in turn will prepare others.**

THE PRACTICE

Until now the formal work of **CALEB** has covered the eight city congregations or groups in Asuncion, and has been largely conducted at a central location. We use any appropriate materials to fulfil the above aim. The courses have all been adapted from existing materials. Courses on Mark's Gospel and Romans have given the opportunity for the students not only to study the material but also to lead the study at least once during the course. This has given an opportunity for some one-to-one discipleship.

We have also tackled the general ignorance of the Old Testament in an Introduction to the Bible Course, We have slightly changed the emphasis this year - in addition to the Introduction we are also running an Advanced Lay Leaders' Course. This consists of a number of different modules covering such things as Doctrine, History of the Anglican Church, the Pentateuch and study videos of lectures by Michael Green.

The advanced material is being used in another new venture this year. This is a Pastors' and Other Full-Time Leaders' Course whose aim is to provide a "watering hole" and in-service training for those in full-time paid ministry. Mandy and I also have an intermittent teaching ministry in the area of marriage.

THE JOYS

The Lord has been very gracious in allowing us to see some visible fruit from CALEB'S short existence. One of the most exciting things was working very closely in the initial few years with two Paraguayan colleagues who have subsequently been ordained. Agustin Maiden and Alberto Romero tested and earthed the teaching, actually did some of it and forged a close bond of friendship that continues to serve each one of us. (The three of us are known as the three A's!)

Other joys have included seeing people think for themselves with growing confidence, growing in the knowledge of the Lord, the application of this knowledge back at home and in the teaching of others. Perhaps the most significant thing for me has been the personal challenges brought about by regular exposure to God's word.

THE DISAPPOINTMENTS

These we have to face and evaluate. A number of students have left the church and one who was helping me to teach the courses has even disappeared without a trace. Some students are not serving others in their local congregations. CALEB has also in some cases taken the responsibility for basic discipleship away from the local congregation. As yet we have not been able to respond to the pleas for help from the more numerous and needy indigenous congregations of the Chaco.

All this combines with the frustration of irregular attendance due to long, unreliable bus journeys and frequent, torrential rain storms that make the streets impassable. Further difficulties include trying to come to terms with the legacy of the decades of dictatorship, when rulers governed unchallenged by the passive and subservient masses. Now, in the churches, rulers tend to govern unchallenged by a passive and servile laity.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Whilst continuing with the Bible teaching whenever possible, we also recognise we are not indispensable. When we are no longer around, unless we are replaced by other mission partners, it is unlikely that, the Paraguayan Church will be able to afford a full-time worker for the CALEB programme. We thus need to try to encourage local congregations to develop working programmes of leadership preparation. The needs of the Chaco must be addressed while they still want help. We would love to see a recognition that teaching is a key part of pastoring at local level, with a consequent improvement in the quality of preaching and teaching.

"As Jesus went ashore he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things." Mark 6:34

Andy Lines

A Psalm

Oh Lord, my enemies are all around me.

Hidden in pressures and frustrations.

Hidden - yet before my eyes.

Hidden in the busyness of my days, trying to prevent me from seeing you.

Hidden in the crowds of merry makers around me, in the bright lights, tinsel and glitter. trying to prevent me from hearing your voice.

But I know you are there - holding me.

You will not let me go.

How precious to me is your nearness.

Your nearness that brings peace -warm, enfolding, strengthening peace.

Your strength ensures my busyness is not a burden to me.

My thoughts turn to you and my heart sings with joy, bursting with praise.

Hidden no more - my enemies.

Plain to see before my eyes - and count as nothing.

For the victory, my Lord, is yours and I praise your name.

Your name that is Wonderful'.

Your name that is 'Holy'.

HALLELUJAH!

Hope for Eastern Europe

As a New Year begins we reflect on our mission work for Romania over the past four years. We truly give our wonderful God all the glory, honour, thanks and praise for his love, faithfulness, provision and direction in his work to help the poor, sick and homeless people on the border of the Black Sea.

Our Lord has certainly placed these people at the centre of our hearts. I trust and pray we will continually be led to pray and support his precious children in a caring way. It's so wonderful to experience love in action and share together in his work. In this particular issue, I really feel led to share two urgent needs.

The first is the plight of Emmanuel Mission in Bucharest. Just over a year ago we were first led to these very dedicated Christians reaching out in God's love to homeless children still living in the gruesome sewer system under the streets of Bucharest.

My heart was deeply touched and shocked by the appalling conditions and desperate needs of these forgotten children. Mission worker Marian Simeon personally led Matthew and myself into the streets to experience what conditions were like first-hand. She shared her vision to help these children come to know and experience the love of Jesus. We later prayed together and promised to share the vision to open a feeding/ support centre to befriend clothe and feed the children. (On our return we left a small amount of financial aid to encourage them and give them hope).

A joint fund-raiser held at the church of the Annunciation with our friends from Zion blessed them again this summer, however we really need to encourage them more positively so that Pastor John and his team can reflect the light of Jesus into these hurting lives.

On our return we were very encouraged to find that they had managed to rent an old derelict cinema twice a week. Here Pastor John shares the gospel and helpers hand out a warm meal one day and a small sandwich on the other day. We took lots of photographs. The children were very excited to receive visitors from England who told them that God loved them and they were really special children. Jesus was truly their saviour and the truth would set them free - if they received them into their hearts. Jill Browne and her team called again this October whilst transporting the Christmas parcels for the children and lepers in the Constanta region. They also left some financial aid and a consignment of good quality shoes collected by our team.

The second plight, is that of Dr Nicholae and his orthopaedic hospital on the border of the Black Sea. We were led there on our first visit to that region three years ago, and we have felt led to support and pray for their needs on a continual basis since then.

It is a very large hospital with lots of potential where conditions are out-dated and terrible. This very dedicated surgeon is a Christian who loves his people and devotes his life to their needs. Through listening to God we felt led to pray for Dr Nicholae to visit England to share his needs and have an opportunity to meet people in his profession who could help him. God has answered that prayer and arrangements are being made for him to visit England in March. The church family at St Thomas', St John's and St Peter's who have been praying for him, will have an opportunity to welcome him during that time.

Thank you Lord for your love - we pray that Dr Nicholae's needs for his hospital patients and staff will be truly met in the wonderful name of Jesus.

Is your heart moved with compassion - do you long to help? If you feel led to support either of these needs, you can do something positive today by organizing a fund-raising event, for example, inviting a few friends for a coffee morning. Save a set amount on a regular basis - then contact **Pam Gratton**
Remember the words of our Lord Jesus - *"It is more blessed to give than to receive"*.

Thank you in the name of Jesus.

Pam Gratton

Christ in the Peak

Ray Hearn has painted three pictures, entitled "On Curbar Edge", "On Millstone Edge" and "In the White Peak". He has written articles to accompany them and this is the first.

ON CURBAR EDGE

Jesus said: *Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Matthew 7:24)*

The silhouette of a man and a woman standing on a rock on Curbar Edge against a background of Light is a symbol of the complete oneness of the Christian with Christ.

Jesus is the Christian's Rock. His teaching, like a fortress, protects and shields us even though we are exposed to the storms of life. His Cross and Resurrection rescue us from darkness and transport us into the Light of His glorious Life.

Our Life is hidden in Christ. Christians live but the life they have is Christ's. We have no other life than the Rock from which we were hewn, just as a house has no existence when separated from its foundation. The house is individual and distinctive, having its own features, just as we all are, but rooted and founded in our foundation rock. The light in the picture is a combination of memory and photographs of sunrises taken from the balcony of our apartment in Roquetas da Mar, Almeria in February, 1996.

Jesus, our Rock, is a living stone and we are living stones. The rock symbolises our stability and identity but the light portrays the promise of Jesus that He came to bring abundant life to all who will receive Him and trust Him with their lives.

***"On Christ, the solid rock, I stand.
All other ground is sinking sand"***

The Cross in My Pocket

I carry a cross in my pocket
A simple reminder to me
Of the fact that I am a Christian
No matter where I may be.

This little cross is not magic
Nor is it a good luck charm
It isn't meant to protect me
From every physical harm.

It's not for identification
For all the world to see
It's simply an understanding
Between my Saviour and me.

When I put my hand in my pocket.
To bring out a coin or key
The cross is there to remind me
Of the price He paid for me.

It reminds me, too, to be thankful
For my blessings day by day
And so to strive to serve Him better
In all that I do and say.

It's also a daily reminder
Of the peace and comfort. I share
With all who know my Master
And give themselves to His care

So, I carry a cross in my pocket
Reminding no one but me
That Jesus Christ is Lord of my life
If only I'll let Him be.

Anon.