

Spearhead August/September 1989

Rector's Letter

Two differing characters are on my mind.

First, an American born 70 years ago: Billy Graham. In recent weeks he has made the Good News of Jesus a talking point in our nation. Thousands have made a clear response of faith, several in our parish among them. A wonderful gift has made this possible, the gift of evangelism. No human skill, or power of oratory, could change lives like that.

Secondly, an Englishman born 500 years ago: Thomas Cranmer. In recent weeks we have been celebrating his anniversary. He was plucked from an obscure academic life in Cambridge by Henry VIII and made the most reluctant of Archbishops. He possessed a true grasp of the Gospel (rediscovered in his generation) alongside a breathtaking command of the English Language, and using both of these he produced the Book of Common Prayer. He was driven by a desire for worship to take place in language "understanded of the people"; perhaps he smiles wryly as some still use his Prayer Book today!

Two wonderfully gifted men have used their gifts to serve God, to the immeasurable benefit of their different generations. We can (and should) thank God for them. We should pray that these same gifts of evangelism and the encouragement of biblical, contemporary worship will continue to surface in today's church. We should use our own gifts, albeit modest ones by comparison, to serve God and benefit our generation.

P.S. Many thanks for all the gestures of support and prayer, following my description of stretching and stress in the last issue. Things are improving - but the process of delegation seems to be complicated!

Jonathan Jee's Ordination

Jonathan is due to be or ordained as Priest (or Presbyter) in Derby Cathedral on Sunday 1st October. If you would like to attend, please inform one of the Wardens or sign the list in St. Thomas'.

Billy Graham 89

When Billy Graham asked people to come to the front at West Ham, one youth pulled out of his clothing a three foot long bullwhip - a steel core wrapped in leather - and presented it to an alarmed steward. "I don't think I'll be needing this anymore - I'm going forward", he declared!

Throughout the country similar stories occurred as Dr Graham invited people to commit themselves to Christ, or to rededicate their lives. Such was the response in London that as well as the packed meetings at West Ham, Crystal Palace and Earl's Court, Billy Graham preached at Wembley Stadium on 8th July to a capacity audience.

Here in Chesterfield we had one of the 250 Livelinks around the country, and were caught up into the atmosphere of the central meetings. Here too we saw people responding to the gospel - some for the first time, others seeking assurance of Christ's love and skill others to reconfirm their confirmation and baptism vows.

Michael had been making fun of Christians at school, yet had recently begin to read his Gideon Bible and gave his life to Christ at one of the meetings at Central Methodist.

Hilda was an older lady, confined to a wheelchair - yet she too responded to God's love and within a few days found herself able to walk again too. She found abundant Life in Christ through the Livelink. For Billy Graham's message of forgiveness and a fresh start through Christ's death on The Cross meant that all are able to start the christian life - "Life with a capital L" as he called it, (although, if the publicity campaign is anything to go by, it may as well have been Life with a capital E!)

Let us praise God for working in so many people's lives, and for thrilling us afresh that the gospel is the power of God for salvation. Let us praise Him too that the budgets have been met: the budgets may have seemed large, but were far less than it cost to save two grey whales at the North Pole! And let us pray that all those whom God drew to himself will soon be integrated into the life of the local churches.

Administry...what/who?

Administry are set to revolutionise the place of good organisation in effective front-line church work....

"One of the most significant developments within the resource base of the church", said one Minister....

More than 400 churches have now joined...

Ahem....

You said something?

take it easy.

What's wrong?

You're talking about administration, right?

Right! **Administry** training day participants return to their churches full of enthusiasm and practical ideas....

You can't fool me. Administration? Wake me up when it's something spiritual.

Administration is a spiritual gift look at 1 Corinthians 12:28 ' and so long as it doesn't become an end in itself, it's a vital ingredient for effective mission and ministry. The creation story is about bringing pattern, order and regularity. Solomon's administrative efficiency was an illustration of his God-given wisdom. Acts 6:1-7 describes how spiritually-minded men with practical ability were appointed. And then there's

OK, so good organisation is important. And I gather our church have joined Administry. What difference does that make to me?

A lot! Administry membership doesn't lead to effective administration unless the resources we provide are used. Whatever your role is in the church, we are likely to have materials or training that can help you. For example, there are papers on youth work, house-groups, men's groups, being a committee member, music, church magazine production, finance, and lots more.

Well there you are: I don't do any of those things. I only look after the Sunday coffee rota.

So you're a vital member of the welcome team! And as your church are a member you can get hold of our resource papers on welcome. They're packed with fresh ideas from other churches' experiences.

Huh -I want action not print.

Well, come to our training day for welcome teams or ask us to run it at your church. Or your team can buy our DIY training pack and lay on their own event.

OK, you win. So how do I find out more?

Easy - see your church's Administry Agent who is David Oldale

From The Inside -The Adult Confirmation Course 1989

When we began the confirmation course we weren't very sure what we were letting ourselves in for. We needed to know more about God and to be sure of our faith but the rest was a mystery. We approached the first evening warily, a little afraid with feelings similar to pre-exam nerves. The worst thought was, what if we are the only ones there? How silly we were; our first thoughts were soon dispelled. There were over thirty people feeling very much the same as us. The class was so large that Christopher split us into two shifts which were held in the warmth and comfort of the Rectory sitting room. Our thanks must go to Pam for her hospitality and the never ending, supply of tea, coffee and her famous flap-jacks!

We chose the later shift. It was easier to get to. Sarah tucked up in bed and Grandma safely installed. There were a mixed selection of characters in our group: policemen, nurses, students, full time mums, shop assistants, all with a good sense of humour and all with one thing in mind, to come closer to God. It was obvious from the beginning that we were all going to get on well together and become good friends

As the course progressed and we became more familiar (.:sing the now famous "name games"). Jesus' life began to unfold and make sense. Armed with the Bible and a book titled "To be confirmed", we explored Jesus' life from beginning to end and began to realise what it can mean to us. We found answers to our questions

and discovered without doubt, that Jesus could become part of our busy modern lives. At the beginning, before starting the course, it seemed a long time before we would get to the end but as we progressed one hour didn't seem long enough and the time flew by.

There was a lot of fun involved in the classes which blended us together, making us feed from each others' experiences and ideas. We played games and made pictures led by the ever imaginative Christopher! One of the most memorable evenings was when we were given some daily newspapers, glue, scissors and a huge piece of white paper the aim being to cut out and make a collage to illustrate sin in the world today. Great Fun!

Towards the end of the course, as we began to know and feel close to Jesus, the big question on everyone's mind was:- Do I want to let God into my life? It wasn't difficult for most of us to say yes. We owe our thanks firstly to God and secondly to Christopher for helping us reach that decision.

The big day came all too soon, but still we have the opportunity to get together once a fortnight to continue to learn and encourage each other to keep our faith.

For those of you who came to the Agape to help us celebrate our renewed faith, we thank you. We had never been to a party so large and came away with such warm thoughts about how lucky we are to be part of the biggest family in the world ... the family of God.

Tim Wilton

A Meditation Retreat

It is difficult to stop talking for more than twenty hours at a time! Three of us from St.Thomas' attended a four-day Meditation Retreat at Launde Abbey a few weeks ago, and silence was a significant part of the programme.

Betty and Wilf Wilkinson from Southwell led us into relaxation, stillness and meditation using a Benedictine form of concentration on Biblical texts. We had Bible study sessions to deepen our understanding, and the silence to deepen our ability to listen to God.

This quiet was to me initially irritating, then natural, and with effort I found that the "chattering monkeys" in my mind, could be stilled. I would ignore and then forget, the day-to-day niggles, problems, noises and irrelevances. It is only then that I could become aware of God's marvellous creation about us and appreciate His goodness. Then I could begin to listen to Him, and begin to see where I should be going.

Launde Abbey is a beautiful manor house set in a fold of fertile hills near Oakham in Leicestershire. One word can describe the house and grounds - peace - and that is what we found there.

Doug Inger

Peter Allan: An Appreciation

Saying farewell to two colleagues within six months has been a bit taxing emotionally, to say nothing of writing about them for Spearhead.

Peter Allan left us at the beginning of July and is now installed as a Team Vicar in the parish of Halesworth in Suffolk - and the search is on to find his replacement. Already we are noticing his absence and missing him greatly. Personally, I miss his friendship, his genuine care and especially his originality. He always manages to look at things from an unusual angle which makes him an unusually stimulating and creative colleague. In February 1986, a time of deep snow, when Peter wrote to accept the post of Curate, he added, "perhaps the PPC might undertake a feasibility study on the installation of a ski lift up to St. Peter's". Not all his imaginative ideas have been adopted!

When I had to write a reference for Peter, this is part of what I wrote:

I had enjoyed working alongside Peter since June 1986 and have come to appreciate his gifts, his approach to ministry and him as a person increasingly as time has gone by.

He is very intelligent and shrewd and yet manages to seem ordinary.* He likes to know clearly what is required of him and endeavours to follow that. He encourages us constantly to be clear about our aims, short and long term, and to stick to them. If he thinks that changes are necessary he does not hesitate to say so - but privately, in the right place, at the right time.

He has immersed himself in the small community of Holymoorside and under his ministry the small church has doubled in size. The whole mood there is now optimistic - a remarkable transformation...

Peter has also contributed considerably to the parish as whole, where there has been scope to use his other gifts, working particularly with young families in Family Services and leading the Healing Ministry Team. In the staff team he has contributed greatly, making it a real advantage to have been a bit "on the fringe of things", so that he can help us to see the wood for the trees. Often his ideas have been the ones that we have adopted...

He has done a first-rate job here. He shall remember a good preacher, a good story-teller, a good counsellor, a good husband and father, a good friend. We pray that God will bless Peter, Pauline and Robin and make them all really happy and useful to Him in Suffolk.

Christopher Frith

* When Peter saw this, he thought it should be the other way round: "He is very ordinary, and yet manages to seem intelligent and shrewd"!!

St John's News

A very important meeting has just taken place at St. John's when time was given to considering a revised plan for the proposed Church Centre and alterations to the present Church to increase seating by one third. We are lucky in our Architect, Derek Scattergood, who makes every effort to take on board any suggestions we make.

After much discussion and placing our decision before the Lord in prayer, the D.C.C. adopted the proposed plans. With the blessing of the P.C.C. Mr Scattergood was instructed to draw up the plans and submit them for planning approval.

At St. John's we take courage from knowing that we are not alone, we have the support of the whole Parish and we thank you for that. One hundred years ago this year our forbears had the faith and the courage to open a Mission Church in Walton. We owe it to them to take up the challenge, to reach out to a growing population in Walton and give them the encouragement to come to faith in the family of Christ.

Car Park

Spearhead for Oct/Nov 1987 contained the story of attempts to provide a car park for St. John's, ending with the statement that discussions would take place with the County Council. In May 1988 the Council prepared a plan for the diversion of Walton Back Lane to a new junction with Matlock Road A632 opposite Walton House.

This scheme not only eliminated most of the verge now used for parking by the congregation but needed small areas owned by the Church, both in the field to the north and all along the Matlock Road frontage, where a visibility splay is proposed.

The County Council could use compulsory powers to obtain the land so the Church Council agreed to the scheme with several conditions, requiring an equivalent area in exchange, a car park for 40 cars to be laid out with access to the new road and a drive to the church door, accommodation works including new hedges and a higher wall along Matlock Road to do away with the iron fence (featured in a Spearhead article in 1986), and cash compensation (assessed at £6,500) to be paid to the Diocese.

Planning permission for the road diversion and car park was granted on 6th July 1989 and negotiations for the land are in progress so that it is hoped that the car park will be available in 1990, five years after it was requested by local residents.

J.M.Smith

Walton Mission's Centenary

On Whit Sunday 1989 St. John's Church celebrated the centenary of the first service in the earlier Mission Church. Three 'services were held attended by a total of 191, including 40 children. To make room for the 10.30 Family Service (the best attended of the three) the 9.00am congregation crossed the road to take coffee and centenary cake in Allison House Farm, at the kind invitation of John and Elaine Clayton. The earlier church stood adjacent to the barn of this farm.

Bishop Bill Flagg, General Secretary of SAMS, addressed the 9.00am service. He stood between the memorials to the Reverend J. B. Jebb and Mrs. Jebb (whose daughter presented the pulpit to the church) and Mrs M. L. Humble. Together Mr and Mrs Jebb and Mrs Humble played major roles in church life both in Walton where they lived and Brampton at the Parish Church for 90 years after 1846 when Mr Jebb became the second Vicar of St. Thomas Brampton. Prior to 1889, Mrs Jebb provided a room for Sunday School and Evening Service and Mrs Humble was already in charge of the Sunday School.

There is however no memorial to the Reverend Charles Edward Little. His period of two years and one month as Rector of St. Thomas is the shortest of any of the 14 incumbents since 1831. His short term saw great progress. This is recorded well because in January 1888 he initiated the St. Thomas Brampton Parish Magazine. Only five months after his arrival a Mission Room was opened in Lower Brampton which eventually became St. Mark's Church with its own parish. In April 1888 the magazine reported that two cottages had been purchased at the corner of Holymoorside Lane which were to be converted into a Mission Room for, Walton. There was also to be expansion at the parish church, the foundation stone for the Chancel and organ chamber being laid on 29th August 1888.

All this building and conversion work led to financial problems. When in October 1888 Mr Little announced his resignation due to Mrs Little's health he promised to stay "until the Mission Room at Lower Brampton is out of debt and the Mission Room at Walton finished and ready for use, and out of debt, which will be some time early in the New Year." He proposed to give a series of lectures to raise funds.

In the event the Reverend C.E. Little left in July 1889, having seen the work on the Walton Mission Room completed and opened for service but "having had to pay a large sum (£31) for the Brampton Mission Room I am unable to do as I had hoped, viz to pay for it myself." From subsequent magazines it appears that the outstanding debt was £12. Entertainments were organised in the new Mission Room to provide the money. The gifts with-which the Walton Mission Room was equipped included a lectern from Mr Little's new parish of Egloshayle, Cornwall.

It is interesting that a hundred years on there are schemes to extend the three churches in the parish. Fortunately the present Rector's wife appears in good health.

J M Smith