

## **Spearhead December 1990/January 1991**

### **From the Rector, Christopher Frith**

#### **No Room!**

"Children are **important members of this Church**", says the notice board. A visitor to St. Thomas' will confirm this as the children play their parts in Family Service, come rushing in at Peace in Communion Services or gather together at the front before going off to their various lively activities.

Where do they go? They crowd into the little portacabin hidden in the trees behind the Church, while Baby Park (under 3's) is supervised in the Meeting Room. That would be fine if we had 25 children in Sunday Club - but we have over 100 on the books and tend to have 60+ most Sundays. A squash in the portacabin as they sing lively songs of worship together is fine for a few minutes. But, then they split into groups for activities.

Three different groups of Scramblers and Climbers take place in the portacabin. Explorers meet in the dingy vestries. And Pathfinders troop off to the Rectory. Facilities are thoroughly inadequate - and there is no room for the future growth we confidently expect.

No room for children, no room for development of community involvement, no room for further development of youth work or activities for the elderly, no room for proper office accommodation ... so I could go on. Something has to be done. The P.C.C. have appointed a fine firm of Architects, Buttress Fuller Geoffrey Alsop, who are working with the Redevelopment Committee on ways to address this problem. With the Lord's guidance and provision, there will be room!

#### **No Room for the Good News!**

The Bishops at the last Lambeth Conference declared the Decade starting on 1st January 1991 (decades start with year 1 and end after year 10!!!) the Decade of Evangelism. This was prompted by the African Bishops and followed the example of the Roman Catholics. Since then all major denominations have followed suit.

Anglican Churches don't usually like Evangelism. I read recently, "In a word, evangelism seems something no self-respecting person would want to be involved in. It has overtones of manipulation. In a permissive age it smacks of wanting to change the way another person is. And that is an insult. It is unacceptable."

Yet, evangelism is how the Church came into being in the first place and how it has advanced ever since. Jesus told His Church to do it and that is the end of it. We have no option but to obey.

Evangelism is simply sharing the Good News of Jesus. He means so much to us and we want others to discover this too. It has been described as "one beggar telling another beggar where to get bread." We owe it to our friends, neighbours and family to show them, if we possibly can.

As churches we need to ask ourselves vital questions like those suggested overleaf by the Bishop of Hulme, in the Manchester Diocese.

#### **No Room for Jesus!**

No room at the inn: this phrase sums up the Christmas story. The world couldn't find room for God's amazing Christmas present of His Son.

Please stop and think as Christmas rushes upon us. Can we genuinely respond with the old hymn,

"There is room in my heart, Lord Jesus,  
There is room in my heart for Thee,"?

Make room for the Prince of Peace.

Happy Christmas, **Christopher Frith**

# The Decade of Evangelism

-“That the world may believe”

-A call to pray for a decade 1991-2000

The Bishop of Hulme explains how to recognise a Missionary Church. It will have these five marks:

## 1. Wide Friendships

Ask yourself and ask others why they started coming to church. Nine times out of ten, the answer will be "through a friendship". If church members have few friends outside the church, how will your church grow?

## 2. An Open Door

The door of your church may be open (if it isn't firmly closed to keep in the heat), but for outsiders it is a daunting entrance. How can you lower the threshold for them?

## 3. Worldly Relevance

Does your church "scratch them where they do not itch"? Or what is it doing to meet the needs that people actually feel? A programme of self-preservation will not attract new members

## 4. Attractive worship

Integrity and honesty are needed more than excellence, then the visitor may say "surely God is in this place".

**5. Faith that lives.** More than the other four, this is what counts. If people experience in us the love and likeness of Christ, they will want to know more.

These are what will make new Christians in the Decade of Evangelism

## A Message to Churches from the Presidents of Churches Together in England

Every Christian has the duty and the joy of passing on to others the Good News of Jesus Christ. We are to be 'ambassadors for Christ' - sharing in his work, reflecting his likeness, and inviting others to join in the same pilgrimage.

During the next ten years we are being asked to commit ourselves in love and service to others. As Christ binds up the broken-hearted and sets captives free, we are called to bring the message of his love to all, whether poor or powerful.

The first Sunday of the year is the day on which many Christians renew their dedication to God's work. The first Sunday of this Decade also falls on the Feast of the Epiphany which reminds us that Christ is for all the nations. His good news speaks to each of us individually but it also speaks to whole communities. Wherever it is received, it brings hope to situations of division and despair, and affirms all that is just and pure. We are called to dedicate ourselves anew to spread this word, and to prepare the way for the coming of his Kingdom of justice on earth.

But the Church itself must listen to Christ. We too, need to hear the Gospel afresh, be touched by its challenge and its power and continually transformed by its message.

**Churches Together in England** has begun a new way for Christians to work together in our country. It is right that our first common undertaking should be to evangelise. We wish to join with you in making the next ten years a time in which our priority is to live, to proclaim and to teach the gospel. Let us also pray that we may all grow to a deeper unity formed by the Spirit, so that the world may believe in Christ, and through him come in worship to the Father.

His Eminence Cardinal George Basil Hume,  
*Archbishop of Westminster*

Revd Dr John Newton,  
*Ex-Moderator, Free Church Federal Council*

Revd Desmond Pemberton,

*National Superintendent, Wesleyan Holiness Church*

Most Revd and Rt Hon. Robert Runcie,  
*Archbishop of Canterbury*

## **Reflections from Libby (our Pastoral Worker)**

*"Act justly...love mercy and...walk humbly with your God"* Micah 6:8  
(Our 1990 Church Motto)

This verse has always been one of my favourites, and it is even more so now because it will always remind me of my year in Chesterfield.

When I first arrived in Brampton I was aware of how inadequate I was, to be in the position I found myself. However I may have seemed, I was very unsure of myself and certain that I would not be able to cope with all the new things I was trying to adjust to. Twelve months on I still feel very much the same. I am inadequate to be serving God in any way. I am still unsure of my own capabilities and by myself I cannot cope. However, a year in Brampton has reinforced the fact that, when I walk humbly with God, He will see me through anything.

God has been faithful to me in a remarkable way during the last year providing me with more than I ever imagined in every sphere of life. That the Lord should so cherish me perhaps should not be such a surprise; after all, He promised that he would do so for all His children.

What was entirely unexpected was the way I was cherished by God's people. I was accepted and loved in a remarkable way from the moment I arrived. I hope it is not out of place for me to take this opportunity to thank especially the Friiths, the Jeess and the Porters for all their encouragement and the great example they have been of how to live in full time ministry. I pray that George and I (and our family if/when we have one) can follow in their footsteps. Also I must thank the Hoares and Joan Kirby for their outstanding bravery in opening their homes to me. Every person I met, every relationship I established, was special and each one a source of enjoyment and learning - the knowledge of these is the most valuable thing I take with me from Chesterfield.

There were some marvellous highpoints during the year during which I flourished - Gift Day, Holy Week, Pathfinder Camp to name a few; there were also some very difficult times: they too turned out to be periods of great growth. I am very pleased to have been in at the beginning of the St. John's day time Open House and the monthly 'Communion and Cuppa'. I pray they continue to encourage those involved as much as they encouraged me. It was great to be part of long established groups Quest, Pathfinders, Open House, the Drama Group - I discovered a great deal from others' experience and expertise. So many memories are treasured of so many occasions and encounters that I cannot begin to recount them all. I hope it will suffice to say I am honoured to have been with you for a year and I cannot imagine a better place first to taste full time ministry.

Thank you.

**Libby Lane (nee Holden)**

## **Goodwill Starts Here**

It is strange the power that what we say has over what we think and do. As Christmas draws near you start saying nice things to people by way of greetings and farewells.

For most of the year you can get by with a grumbled 'Morning' or 'Bye'. But in those last few days you start to say 'Merry Christmas' 'Have a good time', 'God bless' and so forth. What is more you start to mean it. You actually do feel that you wish people well, that you want them to have a good time and be happy.

Somehow we commit ourselves to a different way of looking at things the Christmas way. We commit ourselves by apparently trivial things, that way we greet people, the way we respond. And because we all do it somehow the nature of the world changes.

I would just like to suggest, then, that if we really want to see a better future it has more to do with small changes in a lot of people than big decisions by a few powerful ones. And just as there has to be someone to give the first Christmas greeting so there has to be a first someone to take the first step to a better world.

So I wish you all a very merry and joyful Christmas. There, I've done my bit. Now whose turn is it next?

**Geoff Turner**

## Letter to the Editor

### Should the Churches in our parish tithe 10% of their income from Gift Day?

As a member of St. John's D.C.C. I have recently taken part in the annual procedure for allocating ten per cent of church income to Missions and Charities.

It has always bothered me that a committee should be regarded as a normal channel for the allocation of charitable giving -there is a stronger case for it with missionary giving, perhaps - but I felt this had become a really serious problem when the P.C.C. started to discuss the distribution of £7,000 or so in January 1990. This sum was available because the P.C.C. treated the proceeds of the Gift Day in October 1989 - which had as its object the building of a Church Centre at St. John's - as ordinary income and therefore subject to ten percent deduction.

In January the P.C.C. was on the point of allocating the £7,000, and a small subcommittee was formed. After many weeks of hard work fact finding, canvassing opinion, visiting, discussing and praying they recommended to the P.C.C. two projects which seem to have found fairly general approval. These are the local scheme in Holmewood and the distant one in Peru.

This particular story thus has a happy ending. But I am writing now to alert church members and the P.C.C. to a very much larger problem which may arise if the present policy is continued. When in due course a Gift Day for St. Thomas' own re ordering/building project is held, there could be a ten percent levy amounting to £100,000 to be disposed of. Do we really want this particular responsibility? What possible objective criteria are available to any group charged with the task of spending £100,000 in such a way as to give fair consideration to an unlimited number of deserving causes? Does not the sheer scale of the problem in this instance point to the general truth - that individual members of the church are perfectly capable of making their own charitable giving decisions and do not need committees to relieve them of the trouble?

Yours sincerely,

**Michael Doughty.**

The Editor has asked me (the Rector) to comment on Michael Doughty's letter. It raises profound issues that are good to grapple with, two in particular.

First, **how do we find the right balance between seeing our church as a collection of individuals, making their own responsible decisions, and seeing it as a single body, the body of Christ, trying to act corporately?** I tend to think we should prayerfully aim more for the latter. In the case of supporting projects beyond our parish, it is obvious how much more potential there is for making a noteworthy contribution when we act corporately - and this can and should be a continuing involvement - than if everyone gives in a different direction.

Secondly, **how do we as a church practice what we preach and set an example to our members?** All church members are encouraged to give back to God (through His Church) a proportion of what a., receive. Some years ago, the P.C.C. adopted this same biblical principle and decided to tithe its income. This in no way restricts members from giving away more, we hope many will. But it builds a giving-away attitude into the whole life of the Church and its effect seems to be wholly constructive.

Michael asks if we would really want the responsibility of giving away £100,000 in the case of a million pound project. I have a hunch that, after taking a deep breath, we would! Certainly, after asking a similar question to the P.C.C. before

the Gift Day in 1989, Michael had the uncomfortable experience of discovering that the Council almost unanimously endorsed the principle of giving away 10%.

I heard recently about a Church attempting to marry the two ideals of corporate generosity and individual responsibility. When members indicate the total of their giving, they also say what percentage they would like to be given away beyond their own parish, and to whom. Perhaps we should investigate something like this. I have another hunch that we might end up giving away more!

A final point: God is no one's debtor. He has a wonderful way of ensuring that the truly generous never go without. Many of us have proved this time and again. What is true for individuals must surely be true of Churches.

**Christopher Frith.**

## **Jill Trunkfield –the Rector’s Secretary is Leaving**

Jill Trunkfield took on the job in January 1988 - a very brave thing to do. It was a new role in the parish, with great scope for hard work and improving the way things happen. Jill took to it immediately. Her calm, smiling efficiency has made such a difference to the life of our churches. The high standard of presentation of the weekly newsheet for instance would be hard to rival in any church in the county and this is largely due to Jill.

She is moving to Edinburgh where her husband Malcolm is in charge of catering at Herriott Watt University. We pray God will bless them and their children Paul and Lisa; they will all be missed at St. John's. We are most grateful to Jill for her service over the last two years.

## **Our Link Missionaries, Andy and Mandy Lines**

As Christmas approaches, Andrew, Mandy, Alex, and Sandy are in our prayers. Support them as they prepare to spend Christmas in Spain away from their loved ones, and help them to know that we in Chesterfield are thinking of them and wishing them well.

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## **Opting Out**

There are 566 members in our Church .

But 100 are frail and elderly so that leaves 466 to do all the work.

But 80 are young people at college so that leaves 386 to do all the work.

But 150 are tired business men so that leaves 236 to do all the so that work.

But 150 are busy housewives so that leaves 86 to do 311 the work

But 46 have important outside interests so that leaves 40 to do all the work.

But 15 live too far away so that leaves 25 to do all the work

But 23 say they have done their bit for the church

So that leaves you and me to do all the work

And I'm exhausted so good luck to you!!

**(From another Parish Magazine!)**

## **I Asked for Strength, I was Made Weak**

I asked God for strength,  
that I might achieve,  
I was made weak,  
that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked for health,  
that I might do greater things,  
I was given infirmity,  
that I might do better things.

I asked for riches,  
that I might be happy,  
I was given poverty,  
that I might be wise.

I asked for power,  
that I might have the praise of men,  
I was given weakness,  
that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things  
that I might enjoy life,  
I was given life  
that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for  
but everything that I had hoped for.  
Almost, despite myself,  
my unspoken prayers were answered.

I am among all men,  
most richly blessed.'

Anonymous Confederate soldier, from 'The Oxford Book of Prayer'

## **A Mountain Top Experience**

The coach winds its way, slowly, through picturesque Swiss, Alpine villages, along narrow roads and round hairpin bends. Always climbing, we frequently catch glimpses of the mountain peak. When we had first seen the mountain Hans, our guide, had said, "That is where we are going - to the top!"

Soon we are at 4420 feet above sea level and approaching Schwagalp. It is hot, around 30 degrees C, and we are already higher than the summit of Ben Nevis, but only just over half way up the mighty Santis. The rest of the climb will be by cable car.

Rising above us another 3710 feet, the mountain range is awe inspiring. Vegetation gives way to barren rock, with patches of snow shimmering in the August sunshine. It is majestic, staggering almost, and in a way, intimidating. Some of our parties decide they dare not go any higher, choosing instead, the comforts of the restaurant.

My thoughts move away from the mountain to its Creator. The Psalmist wrote, "the mountain peaks belong to Him." This mighty mountain is so majestic and awesome how much more majestic and awesome is our God!

It is time to board the cable car, one hundred passengers at a time, and begin the ascent. What begins as a gentle climb soon becomes a very steep one. My ears "pop" at one point, as when an aircraft takes off. The ride takes 15 minutes, but in that time we ascend some 3710 feet. Disembarking from the cable car we walk the short distance to the very summit.

From a height of 8130 feet above sea level we look down on a magnificent world. It is hot, yet the air has a chill - like standing in front of the open refrigerator door on a hot day. Any exertion is accompanied by the need to take in great gulps of the thin air - but what really takes our breath away is the amazing panorama spread out before us.

Santis is the highest mountain in Switzerland and from its peak we look down on six countries; Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Italy and France: but for the heat haze we would have seen the Eiger and the Jungfrau.

The coaches, nearly 4,000 feet below us, are like tiny insects, and people are quite invisible. The earth is like a giant patchwork quilt of greens, yellows, browns, greys and blues. Below us large patches of snow, broken by an almost indiscernible line of footprints, glisten in the sunlight. Overhead birds scavenge for food. Clinging tenaciously to cracks and crannies are beautiful tiny white flowers, and bunches of delicate blue harebells. At our feet, even at this altitude, are tiny insects.

Looking across, and down, at other mountain peaks, at the sky above and the earth below, I think of the Creator. I have never seen anything so beautiful, so immense, so majestic, so powerful, or so moving. This is all His handiwork, and it is very, very, good. How great God must be! And the One who created all this is my heavenly Father! Wow! I bow, for a moment, in worship, there on the summit of Mount Santis.

**Keith Chappell**

## **Church Family Weekend at Cliffe College**

Fun and Frolics (ask Rosie Welch)!  
Fellowship and Fatigue (ask 99% of the boarders)!

Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, Chesterfield....well to be totally honest this title didn't quite grab me - would a weekend filled with "Missionary talk" be for me? Would everyone else be considering becoming Missionaries in Bonga Bonga (ask R.W. again!). How many of us felt like this as we drove towards Cliff College (Cliff who?) on the foggy Friday evening?....(come on )lets be totally honest!).

Personally, driving home on the sunny Sunday afternoon, there was a feeling of great sadness, the weekend was almost over. I can say in all honesty I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of the two days. Just as one weekender put it "stimulating".

Philip and Margaret King, our guest leaders, took us through six interesting and thought provoking sessions, which involved groups sharing two case studies and occasionally taking part in role plays. We discussed our awareness of Andrew, Mandy and Alexander Lines -how well do we actually know them? - do we remember them in our prayers? - do we understand the practical day to day problems they'll be encountering? And what do we do to support our other overseas worker, Sandie Mitchell? Yes, we were all gently prodded.

Philip challenged us on where St. Thomas' were up to concerning Mission within our own parish. Perhaps our next motto, to follow "Come and See", should be "go and share".

The evening entertainment was oozing with talent, involving our oldest member through to the youngest. A quiz, which proved the theory that one doesn't have to be super brain intelligent to be a Christian. We enjoyed hilarious drama sketches and witnessed a Curate dressed in pyjamas, cuddling a teddy bear and sucking his thumb, a Rector, who was a bit of a "smoothy", dressed in a rather fetching pink bedspread. The 'two Sarahs' produced a rousing sing-along mentioning 'little Sophie Green' who had decided bed was the more sensible choice.

The children in our party, collectively called 'the Chimpanzees', had a great time in their own sessions including videos, a treasure hunt, football and teaching. They were a happy crowd who worked hard and mixed well, which brings me to one of the many things I took from the weekend. It was very evident how the Church Family was just that - a very close family, strengthening existing friendships and developing new ones, talking with people we hardly knew but had seen in church often.

The 'breathing space' on the Saturday afternoon was refreshing - one group invaded the nearby Craft Centre, another strolled by the river and the 'energetic crowd' scaled the dizzy heights of Curbar Edge - expertly led by Sherpa Dawson.

So Cliff College (who's Cliff?) proved to be a well organised weekend, truly enjoyable, with an interesting programme, set in a beautiful corner of the Peak District.

What date did you say the next one was? Let's keep that date free.

**Claire Brassington.**