

Spearhead December 1991/January1992

From the Rector, Christopher Frith

Some thoughts approaching Christmas:

C – **Christ**: it's His birthday. Every celebration is in His honour - or should be.

H - **Homeless**: the Son of God had nowhere to lay His head. Thousands have the same problem now.

R - **Rich**: Jesus was truly rich - King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the only Ruler among princes. Yet, He who was rich for our sake became poor so that we, who were poor, might become rich. That's how the Apostle Paul unwraps Christmas.

I – **Icing**: why not decorate your Christmas cake as a reminder of the Christmas story? Is there room for Mary, Joseph and the Baby among the Father Christmases, fairies and fir trees?

S – **Sadness**: God has involved Himself fully in this hurting world. His Son has "born our grief and carried our sorrows".

T - **Time**: there doesn't seem to be enough but we need to make time - for others, for thinking, for prayer, for Jesus.

M - **Money**: Christmas means spending a lot. Over the Christmas period, there will also be the opportunity to give to those who desperately need it.

A – **Advent**: the four weeks or so before Christmas are important. We focus on what it means for Christ to come to us. He assures us that one day, when we least expect it, He will come again gloriously, as Judge of all.

S - **Singing**: Carols are great! Join with the herald-angels in proclaiming the news of "God and Sinners reconciled".

Have a great time.

Christopher Frith

St Peter's Harvest Supper

Crowds flocked to the Village Hall on the night. Some had been drawn by tales of the Summer Banquet in the Church, when food had been so lavish in variety, quality and quantity that it was accredited with being "out of this world". One Frenchman had come to see at firsthand how English rustics celebrate harvest. Friends, old and new poured in.

A quarter of an hour before it was due to begin, guests were sitting at tables laid with white table cloths, shiny cutlery and little pots of flowers waiting.

Back in the kitchen things were getting a little tense. The servers had their orders and appointed places, plates were warm : waitresses poised with trays : would the pie man never come? Every few minutes, a restless organiser dashed to the car park, hoping for a sighting.

Relief! He'd arrived! Only twenty minutes late! He'd forgotten the mint sauce! Perhaps no-one would notice.

The pies were carefully cut into portions, plates were passed, pies, peas, gravy : quick service at the tables by smiling waitresses.

Imagine the horror in the kitchen when, left with one portion of pie, two dollops of peas and gallons of gravy the news came, "Eleven more to be served". Minds were paralysed, but rescue was at hand: a young professional caterer had come along to help out. Quick as a flash, she nipped off to the local chippy for more meat pies and peas.

There was a goodly supply of trifle so this was served generously. It was even offered as a starter to those who had, so far, had nothing. Wilting waitresses had to have a break and a little dish of trifle to help them cope with the tension before getting back to serving coffee. Did everyone get a cup of coffee? The jar was certainly emptied.

During the endless washing up (130 plates, dishes, cups, saucers, etc) the auction took place. This was great fun. Children from 3 to 13 rushed to form a queue to deliver the goods. Despite a hectic day in Lincoln, Roy Thompson was in good form. With a flourish he brandished his steel tape and measured up the marrows. Once he'd established a price per inch for vegetables, it greatly speeded up the sale. The harvest loaf, lovingly prepared, but past its best, was rescued in the nick of time, from going under the hammer, to be preserved in the freezer for next year.

Some guests, lacking in stamina, departed before the social dancing began. They missed a treat! A well balanced programme of dances and party games ensued, providing entertainment for all.

Together with the Flower Festival, the Supper raised £330.00 for The Albanian Orphans. It was worth the effort.

Join us next year!

Dorothy Marsden-Jones.

Bible Sunday

The Bible has been described as the world's least read best-seller. Year after year its sales outstrip those of any other publication. Most churches have pew Bibles; Bibles normally occupy the biggest single section in Christian bookshops; you will find Bibles in hotel rooms, prisons, hospital wards and in countless homes throughout the country. It's not as if we find it hard to find a copy and yet a vast number are hardly, if ever, opened and actually read. For many the Bible has almost come to be seen as an 'optional extra' and nonessential to their Christianity.

However, the good news is that this appears to be changing, albeit slowly. The Decade of Evangelism, which has now begun, has caused many to stop and think: if we are to be able to share our faith with others we need, first of all, to get to grips with it for ourselves. Where better to begin than with a fresh (or perhaps even first) look at the Bible and what it has to say. It tells us about God, about his relationship with his people, about his son, Jesus Christ, of his love for us and, most significantly in these turbulent and uncertain times, of the hope and security for the future that God offers us, if we can come to him and put our trust in him.

You may already read the Bible regularly. If you do, why not make a point of sharing with others why you do this and what it means to you. If you haven't recently read the Bible, why not make a fresh start now? You'll find there's lots of help available to get you started. Both Scripture Union and The Bible Reading Fellowship, amongst several others, produce Bible reading notes to help understand and interpret the Bible. Many have found their daily reading and notes a time of immense richness and support. If you wish to know more ask at St. Thomas' bookstall or the Church Office.

Last summer Bishop Michael Marshall had a marvelous idea. He said "Why not make the whole Church a Bible Reading Fellowship". Just think of the impact we would have on the world if that were true. Let's open the Bible and let's allow God to speak to us, transform us, and enable us to do his will.

Adapted from an article supplied by Bible Reading Fellowship, original author Richard Fisher.

The 'New' Church Office

Go into St Thomas' Choir Vestry and immediately you see a new era has dawned, the era of the Church Office.

Phil Johnson has excelled himself. A brand-new fitted wardrobe along one wall houses all the choir robes. The floor is carpeted. There are curtains. You can actually see out of the newly double-glazed windows. There's a desk, a swivelling chair, plenty of work surface, cupboards and shelves, a telephone and answerphone, a photocopier, a large noticeboard, a kettle and a computer (belonging to Philip Herrick. St. Thomas' hasn't advanced quite that far yet!)

There's a warm, friendly feel but also a sense of calm, efficient purpose. Behind the desk you will find the Rector's Secretary, **Julia Potter**. She has done the job since Jill Trunkfield moved to Edinburgh last December, and like Jill, is

a member of St. John's as well as St. Thomas' evening congregation, whenever possible. She was in the confirmation group in 1990.

The other resident in the office is **Philip Herrick**, who has settled so well as Ministry Co-ordinator. His brief is under God to make our Church run smoothly, with every member playing his or her part as is appropriate. Already, Philip's contribution is making a considerable improvement and the clergy, in particular are appreciating it.

The Place of Laity in Evangelism

Report on the Lay Conference held at Lady Manners School, Bakewell on 19th October. 1991.

Gavin Reid

Ordained in 1960. Seconded to work on Decade of Evangelism issues, Member of General Synod started by defining "Evangelism", a word loaded with connotations.

"Evangel" (Greek) - to share the Good News centred on the story of Jesus.

"Ism" - the activity which helps the Good News to be known and understood.

Evangelism is therefore the process of helping people to discover and know the Good News of Jesus.

Some questions and answers which provide us with clues to making this happen:

1. Why do people come to listen?

- ◆ already agree (come to share with others)
- ◆ invited by **friends**
- ◆ curiosity

2. Who got them there?

3. What happened before?

4. What happens afterwards? - need for ongoing friendship.

Gavin then obtained the following statistics from half the 300 delegates attending.

Ways to Faith:

◆ through family	36.07
◆ through evangelism	4.37
◆ through drama/film	0.57
◆ through reading	7.07
◆ through Church	26.07
◆ through Christian friends	14.51
◆ through Christian Union (Coll)	5.3%
◆ through other ways	7.07

65 to 80% of Christians took significant steps towards their faith before the age of 13 years.

These statistics show that the major factors in becoming a Christian are relationships with fellow Christians and a building up of faith, over a considerable period of time. This is highly significant in our approach to any programme of evangelism.

Doing

- ◆ stepping stones on the way to discovery
- ◆ from non to **pro** Christian
- ◆ becoming **pro** seeing Christ in others

W Witness

I Invitation

N Nurture

are important aspects of evangelism

- ◆ Do you or I reach out towards others?

- ◆ Do our churches have "Entry Points"? and are we "outsider friendly"?
- ◆ Do we go out into the community?
- ◆ Do we provide the opportunity for them to come to us?
- ◆ Could we meet in the middle ground; houses, pubs, work or daily life?

Need for guidance and prayer:

We know not how O Lord, but put our trust in you.

Christina Baxter, Vice Chairman Synod House of Laity

- Teacher at St. John's College, Nottingham.

Throughout her address Christina referred to the story of Naaman (2 Kings Ch. 5) to illustrate how a motivated Christian (a slave) used a God-given opportunity to share her faith and the consequences which ensued.

How do we perceive our own faith? Are we struggling up a ladder to heaven? No, we are already loved and accepted by God's grace. Therefore we must live this love out in our lives when the right circumstances present themselves naturally.

1. **Spirituality** - we have the integrity of our faith. Wherever God has placed us as laity we should use opportunities in work or in our social life to build up relationships from which we can proceed to share our faith.
2. **Kingdom perspective** - to be effective we must have a corporate approach to prayer or others, particularly in world-wide issues. Also, we may have hard decisions to make in sharing our faith in places of work, standing up to criticism for which we need guidance and confidence through prayer.
3. **Corporate approach**- What is a church without fellowship? So with evangelism. To achieve this we must know our own capabilities and that of our colleagues, so that we can share responsibilities and work together in activities for elderly or other needy groups.
4. **Taking a risk** - We may need to take risks and step outside the circle of our own security. We have security in God, which in turn brings freedom to expand our contacts and experience.
5. **Long term perspective** - don't expect a rapid response. The majority of people come to their faith gradually. However, there is a need to be persistent, we may never know how we have influenced others.
6. **Prayer** - to be effective in sharing our faith we need a bedrock of prayer in:
 - a) Church
 - b) of friends
 - c) of the heart

God will show us the way to share the good news of the gospel with others.

In his summing up Bishop Peter said that his Initiative for 1992 will be for "young people and the Church". Young people represent the potential for the future. Statistics show that many return to faith in later life provided they have experience of Christian fellowship. The church needs to give priority here.

Adrian Marsden-Jones.

(Spearhead) We Are The Best

It must be true, because it's in the Derbyshire Times Spearhead has been judged the best Parish Magazine in the Diocese.

You can understand, I hope, that this brings a great deal of personal satisfaction, not because of anything I have done, but because Spearhead stems from a living Church, with a lot of great people doing a lot of good things. And it is good that the local newspaper can report something like this success, because it reveals the church in action.

Spearhead is the product of cooperative effort; from contributors, editor, distributors and readers. Technically it owes a lot to the skill and efficiency of our printers, G.T. Print. They always do an excellent job with our sometimes amateur efforts, and they are to be congratulated and thanked.

My specific association with Spearhead is over, but I will continue to help in a minor way. Please keep the material rolling in to **Sue Ward**, the new editor. She will welcome help, and is ready to hear from you out there. You are out there, aren't you?

Doug Inger.

Spearhead - a winner!

Spearhead has won a competition for the best Church magazine in the Diocese of Derby. At Diocesan Synod in November, in the Council Chamber at Matlock, **Doug Inger** editor for 15 years, was presented with the award by the Bishop of Derby.

Our new Editor is **Sue Ward**. Like Doug, she is a librarian, like Doug she deserves our support and our prayers.

Christopher Frith