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Vision & Values

newfrontiers
TOGETHER ON A MISSION

Contents

1 A gospel-preaching church that is loving, righteous in its lifestyle, involved in world mission and reaching the unsaved in its community by both public and personal evangelistic activity.

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A church where regular teaching and preaching of the Bible holds a primary role and where Scripture's authority is final.

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3 A church whose people are assured of the grace of God in their lives and are clear about the full New Covenant benefits of being in Christ.

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A church whose people are baptised in water and in the Holy Spirit, and brought into a genuine life in the Spirit.

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A church where God's presence is prized and where God is enthusiastically worshipped with genuine freedom for men and women to worship publicly in the Holy Spirit, to use spiritual gifts and to participate in 'body ministry'.

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A church which is a loving community, meeting both publicly and from house to house, sharing and caring for each other's needs, both spiritual and material.

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A church where Biblical family life is highly valued, where husband and wife embrace male servant leadership and joyful female submission, where

7 godly parenting is taught and practised, and where the special value of singleness and its unique opportunities are affirmed.

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A church led by male elders (one of whom is clearly understood to be gifted to be lead elder) who are ordained by the Holy Spirit, recognised and confirmed through apostolic ministry. These men are to be helped in fulfilling their calling through ongoing fellowship with trans-local ministries.

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9 A church where elders are honoured as servant-leaders, caring for the flock and providing appropriate spiritual disciplines where necessary.

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A church freed from complacency and endeavouring to grow in gospel impact, faith, prayer, generosity, action and influence.

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11 A church whose individual members are equipped for their role of service within the church and community, including the release and training of those called to trans-local ministry.

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A church which is fully involved in our shared apostolic mission to extend the kingdom of God globally through the recovery of New Testament church life, making disciples, training leaders and planting churches by all means, including wholehearted financial commitment, welcoming trans-local ministries, regularly attending corporate gatherings, promoting our publications and communicating our news.

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A church which is serving and empowering the poor within its own ranks and beyond.

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17 A church desiring and welcoming encouragement and correction from trans-local ministries in the fulfilment of these objectives.

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INTRODUCTION

BY TERRY VIRGO

N*ewfrontiers* has now been around for about 30 years, so, in Biblical terms, we have come of age and, praise God, we are still growing! It seems a good time to try and nail what really makes us tick. Others may have their views, but it's good to hear from the horse's mouth.

When we first started to work together in response to God's prophetic word to us, we drew up a number of key values which, to some degree, defined us as *Newfrontiers*. We have always been evangelically orthodox and true to the doctrines of the Reformers, but in addition seventeen distinctive priorities have helped to identify and shape us. In this booklet we will present these values.

At *Together on a Mission* in Brighton in July 2009 I spoke in three sessions, first identifying our roots as being committed to Word and Spirit, reformed and charismatic. I went on to highlight our commitment to the local church as a place for discipleship, transformation into Christ's image, corporate obedience to Christ and being a manifest temple of God's presence by His Holy Spirit.

Finally we looked to the future. Having stated our understanding that *Newfrontiers* has functioned as an apostolic sphere, I stated that our commitment in the future will be more to the growth of multiplied apostolic spheres than to the mere survival of a title such as '*Newfrontiers*'. We have no desire to become an institution. Having started as a rampaging herd of elephants, we don't want to end up in a zoo! Our hope certainly is that *Newfrontiers* will together accomplish so much more than we already have. We have much unfinished business together, with nations to reach, leaders to train, churches to plant, cultures to challenge and individuals to transform.

However, transformation will take place only through healthy church life, obedient to Scripture and flooded with the Holy Spirit's presence. The values we have highlighted draw attention to critical ingredients for sound church life, remembering that in the New Testament the word 'sound' means healthy, strong and robust, not coldly correct and tending to cautious quaintness.

Instead of bringing my own interpretation to the values that will follow in this magazine and in the three issues that will follow, I have invited a number of dear friends to bring their explanation of the seventeen values listed.

My aim is that in this booklet you will have in your hands a kind of précis of things we love and live for, and, who knows, maybe some will someday even die for.

We do mean business. We are on a mission together and let me invite you in the words of Moses, 'Come with us and we will do you good!'

“ Every local church should be ‘plugged in’ to the global mission. We are part of each other in Christ and each church is a contributing member of Christ’s mission.”

1 A gospel-preaching church that is loving, righteous in its lifestyle, involved in world mission and reaching the unsaved in its community by both public and personal evangelistic activity.

Building churches that are...

EVANGELISTICALLY RELEVANT

BY LEX LOIZIDES, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA



The command to 'go into all the world and preach the gospel' (Mark 16) is clear. The apostles were not merely to stay in Jerusalem but to take the message to other places. Jesus said, 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8).

OUR MISSION IS GLOBAL

The gospel, the evangelistic message concerning the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, is supposed to move. It's supposed to reach those who are not yet followers of Christ. It's supposed to break through spiritual obstacles and release new worshippers, freed by the cross and resurrection of Jesus, brought to life in him and made members of a new and joyful community. It is, indeed, a 'going' message.

Every local church should be 'plugged in' to the global mission. We are part of each other in Christ and each church is a contributing member of Christ's mission in the earth.

As a family of churches we eagerly pray for and support each other in church planting efforts wherever they happen. We cheer and pray not only for those who gain early successes but also for those who are planting in settings that are more resistant. We are united for the good of the nations through the preaching of the gospel.

OUR MISSION IS LOCAL

This going emphasis is not exclusively about other nations, cities or communities. It also includes us serving our neighbours evangelistically. This challenge came home to me when I was working alongside veteran *Newfrontiers* church-

planter Don Smith, as we planted Kings Church in Eastbourne, UK. He jokingly teased the church about their nervousness in evangelism saying, 'No-one wants to reach their neighbours! They're all too busy on a mission to Mars!'

As church planters we felt keenly our need to make genuine contact with the people of our town.

The very front edge of our mission as a family of churches is communicating the gospel message to non-believers. Church planting is not, in itself, the sharp tip of the harvesting machinery, evangelism is! And each local church should carefully strategise to reach their town.

It is vitally important therefore, that each individual believer, whether part of a church plant or in an established church, be willing to serve those around them evangelistically. Some of the most fruitful 'soul winners' are not extroverts but people who simply have the genuine care of others as their motivation. Others are like unstoppable fire-brand gospel proclaimers! Hallelujah! Let each serve according to their gift.

EVERY LOCAL CHURCH IS A 'CHARACTER WITNESS'

Our goal is to plant healthy local churches, where friendships are a reality and where the members are genuinely growing in grace and Christ-likeness.

Paul, writing to the Philippians, uses very tender terms as he describes the kind of community he hopes they are: 'If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose' (Phil. 2:1-2).

We know that Paul was a robust and heroic leader, often suffering in the course of his evangelistic and apostolic work. But he paints a picture of godly harmony and tender love when he describes the church.

The weapons of our warfare are spiritual and, therefore, church communities that are marked by love and godliness are attractive to those outside. Quite often the testimony of someone's conversion includes their experience of feeling loved by the church community. This is unexpected and utterly disarming, and it paves the way for them to hear the message. >



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EVERY LOCAL CHURCH IS A 'SPEAKING WITNESS'

I had the privilege, a few years ago, of spending some time with someone I consider to be an expert in evangelism. He was familiar with *Newfrontiers* work and I was eager to hear his evaluation of our evangelistic health.

He identified an 'evangelistic assumption' in our public meetings. The assumption was that if we got the gifts of the Spirit right then people would come to Christ. It would just kind of happen! He felt this was reinforced if we evaluated a meeting purely on the basis of contributions rather than whether the gospel had been communicated. He had identified the need to address the non-believer.

WHAT WOULD SPURGEON SAY?

In the mid-1800's, CH Spurgeon spent several weeks visiting the great Bible-believing churches in his area. He was under deep conviction of sin and was desperate to get right with God. His testimony was that, while he heard great preaching on the privileges of Christians, of their present comfort and future happiness in heaven, there was nothing for him!

Finally he visited a little Primitive Methodist Chapel where someone simply applied the Scripture to the non-believer and, that very day, Spurgeon was born again. He left that meeting a 'new creation'.

But wait! That's not the end of the story. Spurgeon himself became a preacher. So what kind of church did he build? What kind of messages did he preach? His practice was to speak directly to the non-Christians who came. Often, in the early years, many messages were purely evangelistic, but his life-long practice was to preach to both believer and guest alike. And the church grew!

I suppose a question for us is, 'Would the pre-converted Spurgeon hear the gospel message if he had attended our church service last Sunday?' We dare not suggest that he ought to have picked up gospel clues! Rather, we need to recognise that we are on a mission in every public gathering of the church. Really, your only church meetings that are not potentially evangelistic are the elders' and staff meetings.

BE ENCOURAGED – THIS IS A VALUE WE ARE GROWING IN!

Many of our churches hold special evangelistic services on certain Sundays, often called 'Guest Services'. Without a doubt, we are becoming better at them. Just through the Guest Services connected with our *Front Edge* conferences, 2,010 people have made commitments to Christ, the majority of these being for the first time. That's over 2,000 people, in local churches, alongside their friends, giving their lives to Christ. And many have been healed!

ALWAYS ON MISSION

Apart from special Guest Services, you will know this value has taken root in your local church when your members are regularly bringing guests and when guests are regularly coming to Christ. You'll know this value has taken root when any believer in your church can say, 'It doesn't matter who's preaching or what the topic or passage of Scripture is, I know there will be something relevant for my non-Christian friend.'

Let's make sure that, as churches and individual believers, we are witnesses for our wonderful Lord Jesus Christ!



A minute with... **Lex Loizides**

1. Who has shaped your life?

Terry Virgo, Don Smith and Simon Pettit have been the main leaders and friends who have directly shaped my life. George Whitefield and CH Spurgeon were absolutely massive influences for me also, along with the great Martyn Lloyd-Jones. But one of the most significant 'shapers' of my life has been my precious wife, Jo.

2. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

Crocodile at the Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town. Being unable to take a good bite out of me, I took a good bite out of him! Quite nice actually as a starter!

3. Current favourite album?

Close to the Edge by Yes (I'm revisiting some of the golden oldies)

The final **authority** of Scripture

By Arnold Bell, Sheffield, UK

A church where regular teaching and preaching of the Bible holds a primary role and where Scripture's authority is final.

2

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Why the emphasis on preaching? Is it simply a preference we happen to have, or, perish the thought, some kind of religious tradition we've inherited? And then, is it still relevant in a culture more given to visual than verbal communication? And what is preaching? Does any address in a Sunday meeting qualify? These are all very important questions.

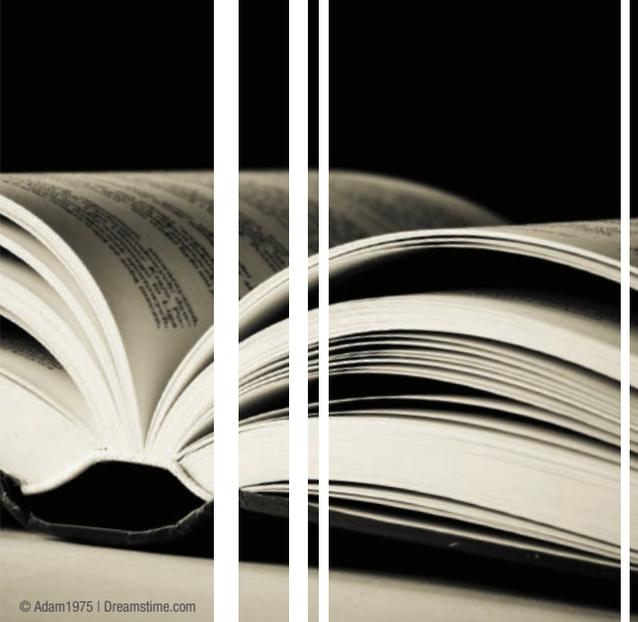
God uses words

• **To create**

The Bible opens with the account of God speaking: 'God said, "Let there be light".' He not only speaks, He achieves things through what He says: the universe came into existence in response to His declaration that it should.

• **To communicate**

The Old Testament tells of God speaking to His people through the prophets. Paul says that Israel's great privilege was that they had 'the very words of God' (Rom. 3:2). Their prosperity or decline was determined by their attitude to what they heard. >



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‘Preparing to preach involves the hard work of making sure we have correctly understood the text and that we aren’t emphasising something the first apostles didn’t emphasise’

God’s son

Nicodemus rightly identified him as a teacher who had come from God (John 3:2). Jesus is heaven communicating with earth – ‘God has spoken to us by His Son’ (Heb. 1:2). Jesus had a lot to say and he took every opportunity to say it! On one occasion he refused to be held back by people anxious to see him: ‘Let’s go somewhere else,’ he said, ‘so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come’ (Mark 1:38). On another occasion, crowds gathered and he taught them for three days with no breaks for food! (Mark 8:2).

Having taken care that his disciples should understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45), he commissioned them to go to all nations to ‘make disciples...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you’ (Matt. 28:19, 20).

Church in action

The apostles took this seriously. When threatened and told to keep quiet, they retorted, ‘We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard’ (Acts 4:20)! And the church loved it: ‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching’ (Acts 2:42).

But why?

God’s first recorded words were, ‘Let there be light!’ (Gen. 1:3). And whenever God’s word is heard it’s like light penetrating darkness. Satan is called the ‘Prince of this world’; the world languishes in his hold. And Jesus called Satan a liar; lying is his native tongue (John 8:44). This means that we are raised in a culture of falsehood, absorbing lies about God, life, ourselves, relationships etc.

When we declare God’s word, we are launching powerful, illuminating truth into the darkness that engulfs our hearers. People see what they’ve never seen before. Things change.

This is our privilege and also our passion: to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. This, of course, is why we are committed to church-planting: we want to preach to more people! Paul explained his enthusiasm to get to Rome like this: ‘I am eager to preach the gospel to you who are at Rome’ (Rom 1:15). Everywhere there are people whose lives have become entangled with harmful untruths; God’s method of releasing them is through preaching (Rom. 10:14-17).

So what is preaching?

- Not just a talk – anyone can do that, and the hearers can take it or leave it.
- Not just a Bible study or a running commentary on the text.

Beforehand

Preparing to preach involves the hard work of making sure we have correctly understood the text and that we aren’t emphasising something the first apostles didn’t emphasise.

On your feet

The preacher then has to virtually ‘multitask’: he delivers what he has carefully prepared while simultaneously heeding the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Paul puts it this way, ‘This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing truths of the Spirit in words of the Spirit’ (1 Cor. 2:13). Preaching is risky: it cannot be reproduced at will, nor can it be guaranteed. The preacher prepares thoroughly, but is then totally dependent on the Spirit to shape and apply what is actually preached. Without the activity of the Spirit, one is left with lifeless words. Those ‘lifeless words’ may be witty, fascinating or, at the other extreme, boring – but whatever they are, they won’t bring life.

Afterwards

Preaching has an outcome. What you preach, you then lead into. It may be an immediate response for salvation or healing. It may be a radical change in the style or programme of the church. God looks not just for hearers – or preachers – but for people who believe and actually do what he says.

Jesus’ story about the wise and foolish builders (Matt. 7:24-27) illustrates this. It shows two ways of hearing: both the wise man and the foolish man represent people who hear God’s word.

‘When we declare God’s word, we are launching powerful, illuminating truth into the darkness that engulfs our hearers’

What distinguishes them is the little matter of what comes next: one puts the word into practice while the other is satisfied simply to listen. A high view of preaching comes from a high view of the Bible, which in turn comes from a high view of God. We love God, fear God and belong to God.

We know that we have been raised in an environment that has predisposed us to believe falsehood; but we have been born again and as God’s dearly loved children we readily set aside our prejudices and assumptions, and receive His word gladly.

We are not simply people who love preaching – avidly taking notes on Sundays, downloading big-name messages from here and there – we are people who radically apply what we hear.

As a family of churches, we exist because we responded to what the Bible teaches about God’s desire for His church. This attitude of radical obedience and faith mustn’t be allowed to lapse. The preaching and teaching of the Bible must continue to shape and enthuse us: what kind of church, what kind of home, what kind of ambitions?

God’s Word shaped our history. It’s no exaggeration to say that our attitude to God’s Word will determine our future. ■

A minute with... **Arnold Bell**



1. Who has shaped your life?

Hearing Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones preach and sharing a room with Terry Virgo at college were both massively formative for me. And Terry seems to have survived that experience!

2. What’s the weirdest thing you’ve ever eaten?

Toadstool soup – by mistake!

3. What do you do to relax?

Oh dear! At this point all credibility is lost: I obsessively admire, read about and photograph buses.



3

A church whose people are assured of the grace of God in their lives and are clear about the full New Covenant benefits of being in Christ.

the GOSPEL of *grace*

by Simon Walker
Bristol, UK

I took my seat amongst the crowds. It was my first time at a Christian conference. I was seventeen and had been a believer for a few months. Slowly an elderly man shuffled across the platform, grasping the podium as much to steady himself as to speak from it. Foolishly I wondered what on earth he could have to say that was relevant to me.

Opening the Bible to the book of Romans he began to read, majestically declaring, ‘There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ

“The Spirit dwells in us and draws us into a new way of living”

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Jesus from the law of sin and death' (Rom. 8:1,2). I was undone. From that moment on I knew that life would never be the same again.

One of our driving values is to plant and build churches whose people are assured of the grace of God in their lives and are clear about the full New Covenant benefits of being in Christ. What is the consequence of being in Christ? How does God see me now, how have I changed?

BC DAYS

To grasp the reality of being in Christ we firstly need to delve into our own murky past and our family history in our forefather Adam. Only when we understand what life was like outside of Christ can we fully appreciate the breath-taking impact of God's grace in placing us into Christ. Writing to his friends in Ephesus Paul tells them of their former condition before they believed. It's not happy reading. They are dead in their sins (Eph. 2:1), following the value systems both of this world and the devil (Eph. 2:2). They are by very nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:3). Outside of Christ

everything about us was set against God and every aspect of God's holiness was set against us. What's more, we could do nothing about it; we were both hopeless and helpless. What a mess!

Wonderfully Paul tells us that there is an answer to this mess. It is not found in us but in God who is rich in mercy (Eph. 2:4). God's grace breaks upon our lives with salvation given to us in Christ. Jesus saves!

Mistakenly we can be satisfied with the statement 'Jesus saves' without actually fully comprehending salvation's benefits.

WHO ARE WE IN CHRIST?

First, we can see our salvation in terms of how God considers us. Our sin offends a holy God; our very nature focused His wrath upon us. But because of His love for us Jesus stepped into our shoes becoming the object of God's wrath in our place. Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane volunteers to drain the cup of suffering fully, the full measure of His Father's judgement. Our sins were placed on >

“ Victory is found in knowing the truth that our old self has died ”

Jesus; God punished them in His Son. But it doesn't stop there. God acts graciously in our souls, creating faith in Jesus within us. Therefore God declares over every believer, for all creation to hear, 'righteous'. In the moment that we believe, Jesus' very own righteousness becomes ours (2 Cor. 5:21). We are justified by faith. We now have peace with God, standing forever in grace with irrevocable rights of access into God's presence (Rom. 5:1-2).

Salvation isn't just external. Of course it's wonderful to know that our sins will never be counted against us and God declares us right with Himself. But something also needs to happen to our hard, dead, sinful hearts. And it has! We have been changed. The Bible calls this 'being born of the Spirit' (John 3:8), or 'being born again' (John 3:3), or becoming a 'new creation' – if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. 'The old has passed away; behold, the new has come' (2 Cor. 5:17).

What has gone? My old stony, wicked heart. What has come? A new heart that is soft towards God. The language is the same as the first creation. The God

who spoke light into being now releases
His living word to create again –
making new hearts fit for the
new heavens and the new

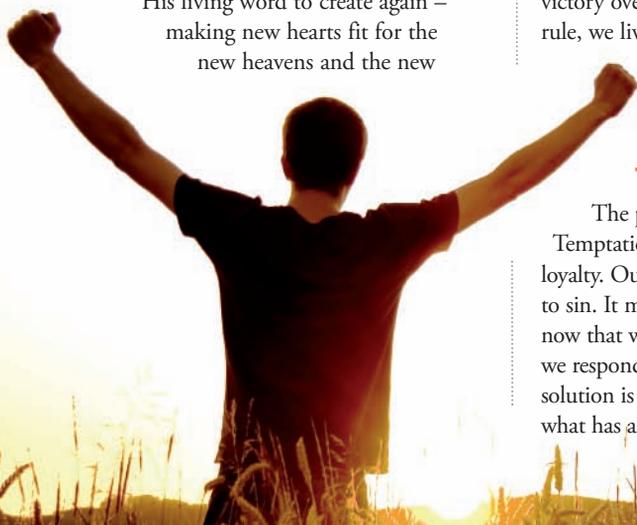
earth. Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's anticipation of a new covenant inaugurating heart-to-heart fellowship between man and God is fulfilled by Jesus (Jer. 31:33-34, Ezek. 36:26-27). The old has gone, the new has come!

AM I STILL A SINNER?

Sometimes we struggle to grasp what has happened to us. We can even get confused about who we now are as Christians; I know I'm forgiven but am I still a sinner? Am I still under the cosh of evil passions and desires that have plagued my life? The Bible is clear: 'How can we who died to sin still live in it?' (Rom. 6:2) ... our old self was crucified with Him...so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin (Rom. 6:6) ... for one who has died has been set free from sin (Rom. 6:7) ... for sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14), and ... having been set free from sin (Rom. 6:18).' Paul repeatedly declares our freedom through our own death. Our faith in Christ unites us with him in his death and resurrection. All his victorious achievements are now ours, even victory over sin. We are also now under his kingdom rule, we live in his domain. As a consequence we can say with Paul 'I have died to sin', 'sin shall not be my master' and 'I am set free from sin'.

THE BATTLEGROUND

The problem is we don't always feel free. Temptation yells loud in our ears demanding our loyalty. Our challenge is that in the past we were loyal to sin. It mastered us and we were its slaves. However now that we have been freed from its slavery how do we respond to its seemingly incessant lobbying? Our solution is not in doing as much as in appreciating what has already been done to us. Paul tells us first to



know what has happened, our old self was crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:3), second to consider ourselves dead to sin (Rom. 6:11) and third not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies (Rom. 6:12). Our mortal bodies are the battle ground. Our hearts are new and alive whilst our bodies are decaying away. The old instrument that sin used to play is where our living souls are temporarily housed. But now you can tell sin to take a running jump – no longer has it the right to play your heart's strings! The battle with temptation is not attempting to quarantine our sinfulness and then pump us with retroviral drugs to stop the pandemic spreading. Victory is found in knowing the truth that our old self has died. The disposition of your soul has been transformed. You have a new heart, you are united with Christ, you are under his reign of grace; you are born again.

Sadly sometimes believers can misunderstand Paul in Romans 7. Here Paul refers to being 'sold into bondage to sin' (v14) and concludes, 'Wretched man that I am, who will set me free from the body of this death?' (v24). Mistakenly they think this atmosphere of defeat is a snap shot of Paul's Christian life. This is far from the truth. Paul repeatedly says we are free from being under sin and without condemnation. So the debate here is nothing to do with the normal life of Christians. His discussion is more related to the inabilities of the law to transform us. Praise God that Jesus can!

EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT

There is one final outcome of our salvation that we can enjoy; life in the Spirit. God having delivered us from sin and given us new life in His Son now freely pours His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). The Spirit dwells in us and draws us into a new way of living. He cultivates His fruit within us. He empowers us to walk in the freedom that has been won for us on the cross.

New Covenant benefits are not just personal, they are corporate too. We are adopted into God's family; we have brothers and sisters. We are partners together with Christ in his mission. We are included in the beloved of God for all eternity; we are the bride of Christ. We do not merely enjoy the favour and delight of God on our own, we must share it with others – a redeemed people for God amongst the nations.

APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

How do we respond to this amazing gospel? What will we do with this freedom? Paul puts this question

in Romans 6:1, 'Shall we go on sinning that grace may increase?' The crazy thing is that we could. The gospel of grace is such that we could go back into sin with no loss of salvation. Ridiculous of course, but you are free to choose. However, with Paul could I suggest a better idea? In fact it's the only obvious thing to do; it's the logical conclusion. How do we respond to the gospel of grace, to salvation in Christ? Worship. 'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship' (Rom. 12:1). Worship!

However if such a response doesn't ring true to your soul, then you know what Jesus would say – 'You must be born again.' ■



A minute with... Simon Walker

1. Who has shaped your life?

Tony Fox (my first ever small group leader), Ian Galloway, Don Smith, Terry Virgo, David Devenish, most of all my wife Kate.

2. What do you feel most passionate about?

My wife & family and building local churches.

3. What sorts of book do you read?

Theology books that make my head ache and my heart burn.

4. What do you do to relax?

Hill walking, running, watch The West Wing, eat Curry.

baptism

into Christ & the Spirit

By Matt Partridge, Oxford, UK

The Bible's teaching on baptism is a robust, repeated presentation of what is expected of us. We are not left wondering vaguely about the place of baptism in the teaching of Jesus or the life of the believer. Jesus placed water baptism high on our agenda when he spoke this command in Matthew 28, 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...'

Jesus clearly expects his church's global mission to include this important event for every disciple, but why?

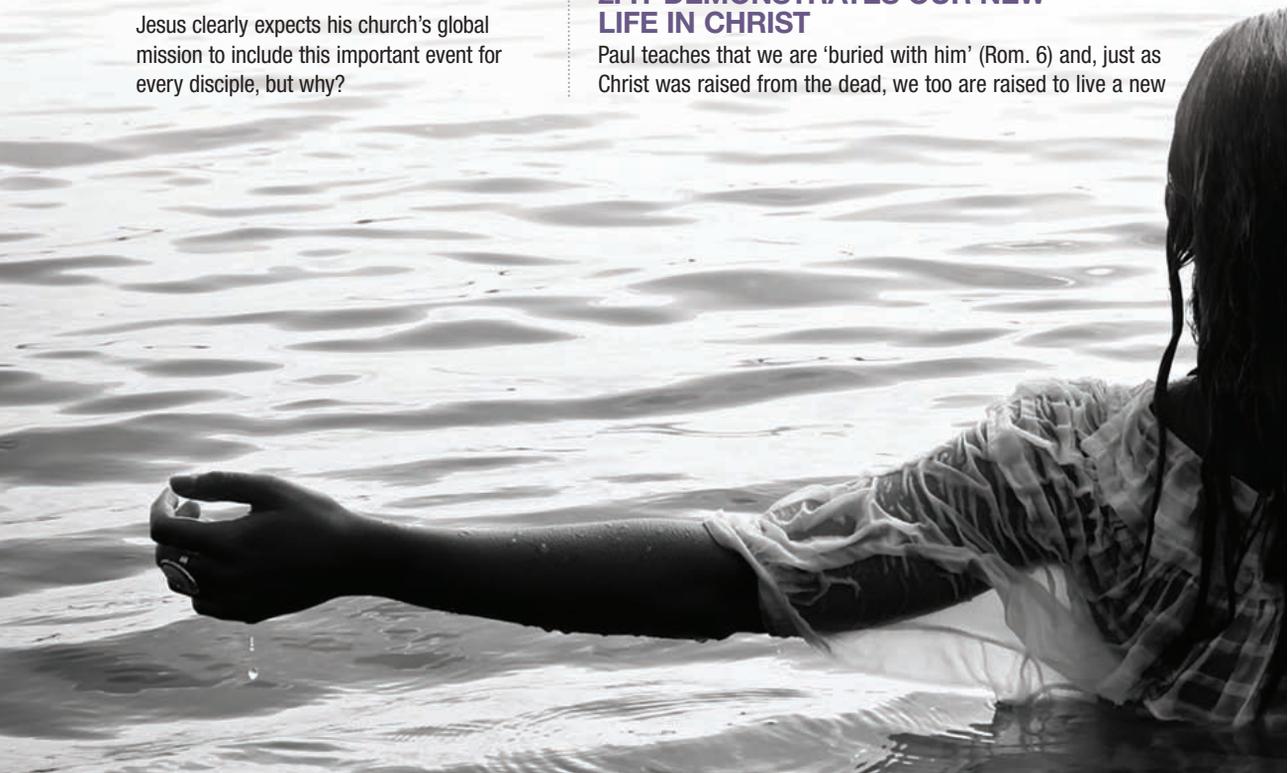
When Paul wrote Romans 6 he linked our victory over sin to our baptism 'into Christ'. Now clearly, to be saved is to know that your life is now 'hidden with Christ in God' (Col. 3:3); this is our primary baptism – into him. Water baptism is a consequential demonstration of this reality. This understanding helps us establish a Biblical framework for some of the practicalities related to baptism:

1. IT IS FOR BELIEVERS

As Peter preached his magnificent sermon, after Pentecost, he exhorted his hearers to 'repent and be baptised' (Acts 2:38). Likewise Jesus commanded, as we have already seen, that his disciples (followers and believers) should be baptised. In fact, as we look into the New Testament we see every occurrence of baptism is for a believer. Even the events recorded in Acts 16, where the jailer and his family were baptised, are clearly recorded as a result of the 'whole family' coming to 'believe in God'.

2. IT DEMONSTRATES OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Paul teaches that we are 'buried with him' (Rom. 6) and, just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too are raised to live a new



life. Baptism enacts this outstanding truth! I had the joy of baptising a Hindu convert to Christ, and as she entered the baptistry she declared that her old Hinduism would stay under the water. What a grasp of conversion and baptism!

3. IT REQUIRES LOTS OF WATER!

For baptism to represent burial accurately it really needs to be by immersion. I have always been fascinated by the Bible's accounts of baptism and have noted the details within the text. Matthew 3:16 tells us that Jesus 'went up out of the water'. Likewise, Acts 8: 38 tells us that Philip and the Ethiopian official went down into the water and back up and out again. Surely, had sprinkling been sufficient, there would have been no need to go to such lengths.

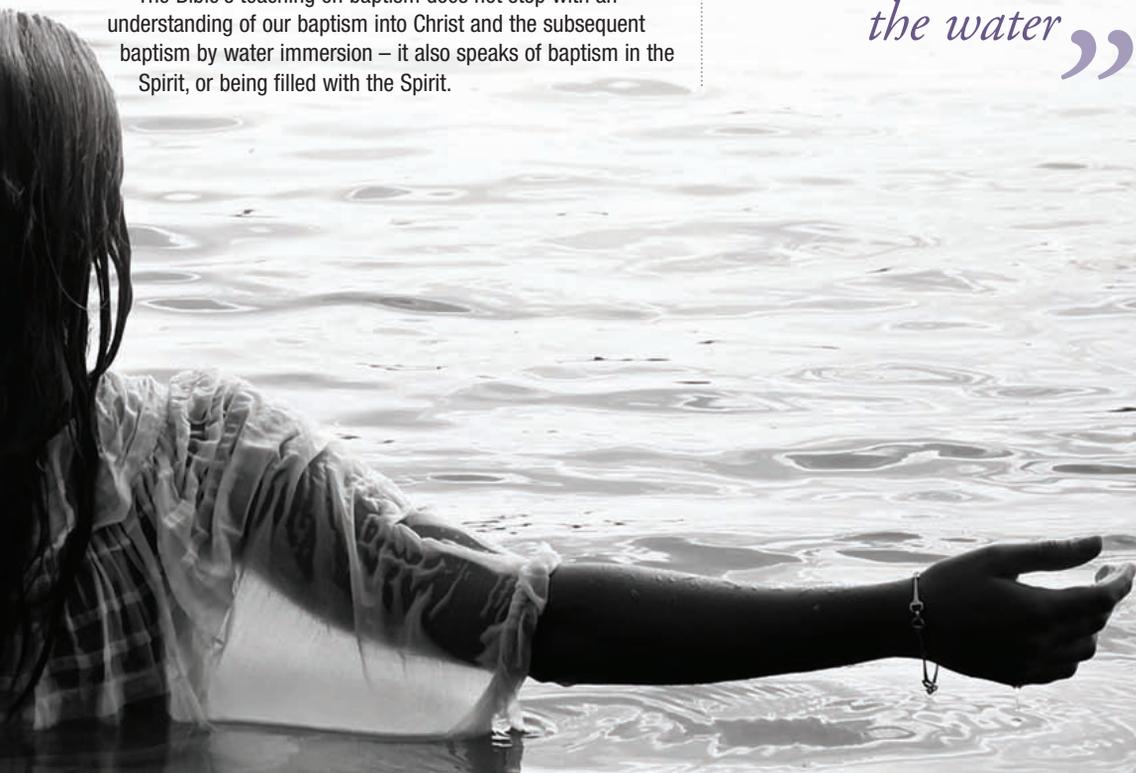
4. IT EMPHASISES OUR NEW OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST

It is amazing to consider the humility of our dear Lord Jesus, to submit himself even to baptism at the hands of John. Jesus identified himself with humanity by being baptised, but most impressively he did it to honour his Father, declaring that it was His plan that was being fulfilled through his incarnation. We know that at his baptism the Spirit came upon Jesus like a dove and the Father spoke a wonderful affirmation over him. For us too, baptism is an act of obedience. We have a new life with a new master and He has commanded that we be baptised. As we seek to honour Him through this demonstration and testimony we can be assured of His ongoing affirmation – it really will please Him.

The Bible's teaching on baptism does not stop with an understanding of our baptism into Christ and the subsequent baptism by water immersion – it also speaks of baptism in the Spirit, or being filled with the Spirit.

Now let's be clear, Romans 8:9 teaches that 'if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ'. Our salvation is only achieved by the supernatural Spirit of God, convicting and regenerating us. There is no other way to be saved. But is that it? Does our experience of the Spirit, through conversion, fully represent the expectations painted for us in the New Testament? >

“I had the joy of baptising a Hindu convert to Christ, and as she entered the baptistry she declared that her old Hinduism would stay under the water”



The Bible clearly presents a work of the Spirit at conversion but also a filling or baptising with the Spirit as a distinct event. Let's look at two examples.

1. JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES

In John 20 we read of the risen Lord Jesus breathing on his disciples and saying, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' Surely we must agree that at this point the disciples were believers. They were seeing, with their own eyes, the risen Messiah and had already seen the multiple miracles and signs. Even Thomas believed by this stage! And yet Jesus still promised them more: 'in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 1: 5). As we know, the Spirit certainly did fill them, as promised, and it transformed this fearful bunch into courageous zealots for God.

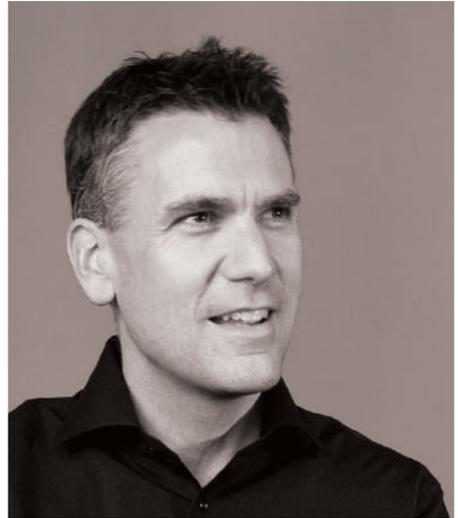
2. THE BELIEVERS IN SAMARIA

Acts 8 records for us, in some detail, the sequence of events for the fledgling church in Samaria. The apostles had heard that some there had 'accepted the word of God' and had been 'baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus' (so, clearly they were believers) yet verse 16 tells us that 'the Holy Spirit had not come upon any of them'. It is a part of authentic apostolic ministry to ensure that the fullness of the Spirit's liberty and power is enjoyed by God's people. The apostles 'placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit' (Acts 8:17).

It is this baptism of the Spirit that brings joy, courage and power to the church. We have truly received a great commission and it will be achieved as we understand the partnership we can enjoy with God through His Spirit. The post-Pentecost church was radically changed, not perfect by any means, but pulsating with power and life. We see, almost instantaneously, the recognition of authentic grace-gifted leaders, the outward thrust of mission, a defiant refusal to be shaped by the world and supernatural church communities unstoppably erupting in town after town. Something had significantly changed!

For the New Testament apostles, after Pentecost, the work of the Spirit was the central theme. Paul's initial question to the believers at Ephesus was, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' (Acts 19:2). Peter's defence when rebuked for entering a Gentile's home was this: 'As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us.' Acts 11:18 records the other apostles' response: 'they had no further objections!' The ministry, friendship and fullness of the Spirit are to be the 'normal' experience for every believer. By enjoying the baptism of the Spirit believers overcome the horror of dutiful legalism, desiring inner power for sanctification and mission but struggling to achieve it. By contrast, they can discover a fresh hunger for the things of God and display the fruits of the Spirit as an inevitable consequence.

As we consider our new life, now wonderfully found 'in Christ', let us have great commitment to the steps of water and Spirit baptism. Be hungry for them and refuse to settle for anything less. ■



A minute with... **Matt Partridge**

1. What do you do to relax?

Enjoy meals, play golf, mow the lawn, wash the car.

2. What do you feel most passionate about?

Demonstrating the Kingdom of God and building authentic local churches. Also passionate about my wife and children – constantly grateful to God for such a gift. Golf, cheese, friends, sunshine (!)

3. What do you expect to be doing in 10 years?

Going to the gym 6 times a week, reading more, being a better husband, seeing more of my friends become Christians, wondering how I now have children aged 23 and 13!

4. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

Putrefied shark meat in Iceland. Gritty, grey, salty paste..... ummm.

5 A church where God's presence is prized and where God is enthusiastically worshipped with genuine freedom for men and women to worship publicly in the Holy Spirit, to use spiritual gifts and to participate in 'body ministry'.

'Never had I imagined people who were genuinely pleased to be in church'



free to
WORSHIP

BY GUY MILLER, BOURNEMOUTH, UK

33 years ago I nervously walked into a picture-postcard parish Anglican church building at the invitation of a friend, expecting little other than familiar carols and a few outdated sayings of a carpenter from Nazareth that would nail my religious enquiry coffin firmly and finally closed. Instead I encountered the living Saviour of the world, the one who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I was blown away; I felt short of breath; there was a fire kindled that melted my hardened young heart.

Never had I imagined people who were genuinely pleased to be in church, who sang with passion and joy, and almost fell forward on their pews such was their desire to hear the sermon. That evening I encountered God in the midst of the body worshipping and hearing the Word of God, and was wonderfully saved and baptised in the Holy Spirit. In a very real sense my first church meeting set the bench mark for a life of worship in general but also in church specifically: that of a deep desire to encounter God with every member gloriously and enthusiastically alive to the moving of God's Spirit. Typical New Testament worship. >

Stale worship

Sadly much that happens in church, and even so-called charismatic worship, can be a million miles from this. As I travel around I am saddened by the all too familiar scene of believers coming late and distracted, meetings having that sense of hurry, and worship being re-heated leftovers of the songs of *Newday* and *Together On A Mission*.

Charismatic means little more than a guitar or band.

Believers gather with little or no expectation of encounter and those who participate are mainly the preacher, worship leader and (maybe) a super sparky enthusiastic prophet. Yet people leave church meetings Sunday by Sunday saying it was a good meeting when the worship was dull, not one gift was used and the sermon bored even the woodworm, causing them to abandon their 50-year ecclesiastical pews for pastures new.

The apostle Paul was clearly passionate for body ministry (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12). It is this passion and very practical teaching we must turn to, to address this most important of our values – what is it we should seek each and every time the church comes together? Let me highlight a few.

1. God's empowering presence

'Glory, transcendence, immanence' are words that trip off the tongue like theological scrabble when we talk of worship, but what do they mean? Paul says in Romans 8:15, 'By him we cry Abba, Father! The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.' At its

core is child-like intimacy, the cry and desire of our inmost soul. It is this love of God shed abroad in our hearts that captivates the soul with the wonders of the character of God.

Someone described it as 'my heart melting within me like wax before the fire with love for God my Saviour'. It is this desire to be satisfied with nothing less that must permeate our every thought as we come together, to be prepared like Jacob to wrestle with our flesh to get to that place of desiring nothing but a God encounter; 'show me your glory'. The glory of God is the opposite to the commonplace.

2. A freedom in the Holy Spirit

'It is for freedom that Christ has set us free' (Gal. 5:1). Paul was passionate that believers received the Spirit by faith (Gal. 3:2), that believers were clearly baptised in the Holy Spirit. He warns of the danger of the blessings of Christianity becoming perceived as something attained by human skill, effort or law. Charismata are 'gifts given' or 'stuff of grace', not earned or bought.

Worship can easily become man-dependent or man-centred with comments like 'we need a PA system' for a church of about fifteen people, or copycat pop star worship bands clinging to microphones and guitars with sound levels set on Mach 2, or even church administrators taking fifteen minutes to talk nicely about the house rules of church



'people leave church meetings Sunday by Sunday saying it was a good meeting when the worship was dull, not one gift was used and the sermon bored even the woodworm'

services. Aaah! All a far cry from freedom in the Spirit with an avalanche of spiritual gifts that needed teaching on how to be contained as well as ordered.

3. An eagerness of desire for spiritual gifts that build up the church (1 Cor. 14:1)

Our hunger for the gifts is born out of a genuine love for each other and every member of the body to be strengthened. Gifts are just that – gifts! They are not based on merit, neither do they confer status or platform notability. Indeed, 'if I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing'.

4. Worship that declares Jesus is Lord

No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts must include the preaching and teaching gifts. Faith comes from hearing the message, worship begins to arise when we hear the word of the Lord and respond to it. Any super spirituality that attempts to avoid or minimise the preaching of God's word can only result in producing shallow worship and hot-house Christians that wilt in the world's hot sun.

Each and every life drawn together week by week comes out of a world which puts self at the centre and all other loyalties and relationships orbit around self. When we come to the preaching in our worship we should experience the

most powerful gravitational pull in the universe that centres our lives, our hurts and pains, our happiness and hopes around the all-surpassing truth that Jesus is Lord.

We at Citygate Church, Bournemouth, are one year into our double morning meetings; hence I am aware these values have to be fought for in the pressure of time and the increasing complexities of modern life. One sure-fire test that Paul uses with spiritual gifts is that the unbelieving heart will be laid bare and new worshippers added to the worshipping community. By the grace of God I observe this frequent occurrence through the use of the Spirit's diverse gifts, including preaching. Let's raise our expectation for so much more. ■



A minute with... Guy Miller

1. Who has shaped your life?

Greg Haslam gave me a passion for reading, the church and the Holy Spirit. My father in God.

2. Currently, what is your favourite album?

Day and Age – The Killers.

3. What do you feel most passionate about?

Fishing and being out on my boat with my two sons who are both better at it than I am.

4. What's your favourite quote?

'Wherever you are be all there' – Jim Elliot.



6

A church which is a loving community, meeting both publicly and from house to house, sharing and caring for each other's needs, both spiritual and material.

Loving, Meeting, Sharing & Caring **Communities**

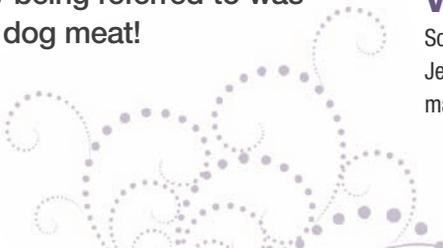
By **Indrajeet Pawar, Mumbai, India**

‘We’re very sorry, we can’t give you the local delicacy and our special meal,’ apologised the hosts of a friend in a certain part of India who was there with a mission team. There was much relief, however, when the team discovered that the delicacy being referred to was cooked dog meat!

The sharing of an innocuous meal became the testing ground of the gospel. It was first century Antioch, the social and cultural melting pot of that day. It was here that enthusiastic Christ-followers, scattered by the persecution they had faced in Jerusalem, had come. Hitherto the gospel had only advanced amongst Jews but these unnamed believers spearheaded gospel expansion into the Gentile world. Strengthened by the subsequent ministry of Barnabas and then Paul, the church in Antioch grew rapidly, affecting the city and becoming a model for years to come. As a loving community was gathered here, Jew and Gentile broke through the greatest social barrier of the first century in the koinonia (fellowship) of Jesus Christ.

What’s for dinner?

Some time later the church had the joy of welcoming one of Jesus’ closest disciples, the apostle Peter. Many a night may have been spent listening to firsthand accounts of



“We have the opportunity of reflecting the Father’s love for the Son and the Spirit’s love for them both”

astounding miracles as this ‘eyewitness of his majesty’ shared story after story from those three incredible years. The barriers remained down at meal times as well, Peter happily joining in with his Gentile brothers. However, the coming of a few hard-line brothers from Jerusalem seemed to affect him adversely. The barriers went up overnight and whilst he was ready to share the stories, he wasn’t as willing to eat with them at meal times. The gospel was facing a serious challenge in Antioch as Peter’s behaviour negatively affected others in the church, including Barnabas who began to follow his example. The gospel’s impact was being watered down as invisible walls began to go up.

Mercifully though, for the gospel and for us, the fearless apostle Paul stood up to this hypocrisy, rebuking Peter publicly for his un-gospel behaviour which was forcing the Gentiles to live like Jews and thus was undermining the very basis of justification by faith (Gal. 2:14-16). Through this Paul communicated a vital aspect of the gospel; its message of social, racial and regional integration, which he later declared to a predominantly Gentile church in these words:

‘For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he

might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility’ (Eph. 2:14-16, ESV).

This marvellous truth that Jesus has broken down every dividing wall to form a brand new community, gives rise to the gospel value that the church ‘is a loving community, meeting both publicly and from house to house, sharing and caring for each other’s needs, both spiritual and material’. Scripture would call us to embrace this gospel distinctive of one new man in Christ and build communities that are:

Loving and reflecting the essence of the first community – the Trinity. In every local church through the fabric of loving relationships we have the opportunity of reflecting the Father’s love for the Son and the Spirit’s love for them both. This is not a mushy love but, as 1 Corinthians 13 details, a robust, practical and effective one. Through our loving relationships we want to make Christ known as he said we should (see John 13:35). This takes time, understanding and much prayer but is well worth the effort.

Meeting regularly, not drawing back as the Hebrew Christians were being tempted to do (Heb. 10:25). Perhaps it was the pain of persecution or the wondering if Jesus was really the better way that caused this drawing back. Contrary to that, consider the early church in Acts 2 which met every day! They were certainly helped by the exciting days they lived in but nevertheless there was a >





devotion or, as one dictionary defines it, 'enthusiastic addiction' to meeting together in large celebrations (temple courts) and in small groups (home to home). Despite the challenges of 21st century living, church meetings are 'essential for you to grow in God, and your normal routine should include meeting in small groups as well as large gatherings' (Terry Virgo, Prayer & Fasting, May 2009). Passionate worship, the nourishment from the Scriptures, Christ-exalting prophetic words, intimate friendship – imagine being in that context at a church celebration or small group meeting – surely they'd help overcome tiredness and boost our flagging enthusiasm for Jesus and his kingdom. Therefore, let us not give up meeting together.

Sharing in practical ways. Church life is not only about spiritual stuff. It's about material stuff too. We want to share the lessons of discipleship we're learning so that we can mutually benefit. But we also want to share both from the material possessions we have, as the early church did (Acts 2:45), and from our limited resources, like the Macedonians pleaded they could (2 Cor. 8:1-4). A family recently preparing to plant a church into another country were immensely blessed when friends gave them their home to live in whilst they sorted out all the necessary details prior to moving. They'd had to sell their home in preparation for the move and were wondering how they'd manage, when these friends moved out of their comfortable home into an inconvenient place. The kingdom of God is made up of such – may we be open to the Spirit prompting us to give away what he tells us to.

Caring in useful ways, like watching the kids so that Dad & Mum can have a date night, paying bills, staying overnight in hospital with a friend who's just had an operation, cooking a special meal for that tired or struggling family in our small group, helping with the weekly shopping – the list could go on and on. The key, however, to building a caring community is to love the Lord, love his church and be sensitive to both.

In their book, *Total Church* (Crossway Books, 2008), authors Tim Chester and Steve Timmis suggest that, 'The gospel word and the gospel community are closely connected. The word creates and nourishes the community, while the community proclaims and embodies the word.'

As we love, meet, share and care may this be true of each of our local churches. ■



A minute with... **Indrajeet Pawar**

1. What do you do to relax?

Cook, read and watch old movies (whose end I know!)

2. What do you expect to be doing in 10 years?

Travelling around the 35 districts of Maharashtra (population @ 97 million and climbing!) serving existing and exploring new grace filled church plants.

3. What's your favourite quote?

'God does as He pleases and that which pleases Him is always for His glory and our good.' Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God*

“Who is going to be the primary shaper of your kids? School friends? TV? Movies? Magazines? If you don't shape them someone else will”



7 A church where Biblical family life is highly valued, where husband and wife embrace male servant leadership and joyful female submission, where godly parenting is taught and practised and where the special value of singleness and its unique opportunities are affirmed.

MARRIAGE, PARENTING & BEING SINGLE

By P-J and Ashleigh Smyth
Johannesburg, South Africa

Loving headship by the husband and joyful submission by the wife are the top two keys that the Bible gives for marriage. Take a look: ‘Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, Christ is the head of the church ... as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church ... This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church’ (Eph. 5:22-33).

Wow! Marriage stands for something huge. It models the essence of the gospel. God designed marriage as a living drama of how Christ and the church relate to each other. We have the privilege of fulfilling these roles of loving headship and joyful submission to reflect something glorious. Let's take a closer look at these roles.

P-J on Ashleigh's submission

Ashleigh expresses her submission to me through her inclination to support my leadership and initiatives within the constraints of obedience to Christ. >



Her submission is not the removal of her opinion and intelligence from our marriage, nor does it result in her playing a lesser role in our marriage.

Here is a real-time example. Last night I mishandled a situation with my eleven-year-old son, Jack. As I was busy mishandling it, Ashleigh was giving me verbal and body language indicators to help me adjust my approach. But I knew better. Twenty minutes later she returned to chat to me and, with an attitude of deference, made a compelling case for Jack's side of the argument, which resulted in me climbing down, apologising and modelling the art of apology to Jack! Do you see what had happened? Even when she disagreed with me she maintained an honouring demeanour, but her submissive bias was still potent in influencing me and shaping family life.

Ashleigh on P-J's leadership

P-J tries to lead me in a loving, serving and confident manner, like Jesus loves the church. It is not about being authoritarian, autocratic, domineering, bossy or abusive. It is simply Christ-like servant-leadership, and it is a pleasure to submit to this type of leadership (mostly!) as I know that he has my best interests at heart. But more than that, I know that my submission honours God. My biggest struggle to submit in recent years was agreeing to relocate to Johannesburg to plant our church. To be honest, I felt the beaches of Mauritius needed a church more than Jo'burg, and I was willing, definitely willing, to lay down my life to take the gospel to that tropical island. But P-J felt it was Jo'burg and so I needed to submit to his headship.

Submission is easy when you agree! We firmly believe with John Piper that 'when sin entered the world it ruined the harmony of marriage not because it brought headship and submission into existence, but because it twisted man's humble, loving headship into

hostile domination in some men and lazy indifference in others. And it twisted woman's intelligent, willing submission into manipulative obsequiousness in some women and brazen insubordination in others. Sin didn't create headship and submission; it ruined them and distorted them and made them ugly and destructive ...' Piper goes on to say that we are now involved '... not in the dismantling of the original, created order of loving headship and willing submission, but a recovery of it from the ravages of sin'.

(<http://www.cbmw.org/Resources/Sermons/Husbands-Who-Love-Like-Christ-and-the-Wives-Who-Submit-to-Them>) What a privilege!

Raising children

Please stop reading for a moment and think of one word that you would compare children to. Have you got it? I am going to go out on a limb here and guess that you didn't come up with 'arrows'. I mean, when you have to get out of bed at 2am to clean up your child's vomit, few parents instinctively say, 'Oh, you poor little arrow!' But Psalm 127 speaks of children as arrows in our hands.

First, children, like arrows, need to be carefully made. To turn a branch into an arrow requires considerable time, care and skill. Here's the question: who is going to be the primary shaper of your kids? School friends? TV? Movies? Magazines? If you don't shape them someone else will.

Second, children, like arrows, are weapons of war. God will use them as swift, penetrative, offensive weapons to advance the gospel in the lives of many in the future, and unleash great damage on the kingdom of darkness.

Third, children, like arrows, should obediently go in the direction that they are fired in. Obedience is the primary Biblical command to children (Eph. 6:1-4)

“Submission is easy when you agree!”

because it is the key to all other godly characteristics. Issues such as laziness and bad manners are actually rooted in disobedience, because if you tell your child (and train them) to be well mannered then they will be – unless they are disobedient. Here are a few ways that we are trying to raise obedient children:

1. We are confident in our God-given parental authority

God has set parents in place as the authority figures in the lives of children. Hebrews 12 speaks of how discipline is actually a privilege of being a son. Don't fear that your child will resent your discipline; on the contrary they will soon realise that it is a sign of your love for them.

2. We never count to three

The counting-to-three routine undermines your authority and places your child in the driving seat. You are training him that essentially obedience is a negotiation and he can determine the timing of his obedience. Train them to say, 'I must obey straight away.'

3. We model it ourselves to authority figures in our lives

Several times a year there is a clash between what my 'boss' is asking me to do and what my family and I would like to do. I always seize these opportunities to explain to my boys that 'I must obey my boss straight away and with a good attitude', and that although I would much rather spend Saturday morning with them, I must obey my 'boss' and rather go to that meeting.

4. We try not to exasperate our children

(Eph. 6:4). Avoid petty rules. Pick your battles.

Be merciful and compassionate. When you are in the wrong say a sincere 'sorry' to them. Also, make sure that you are giving them sufficient attention so that they are not compelled to rebel just to get some time and attention from you.

5. We use appropriate forms of punishment

We discipline mostly for three D's: Disobedience, Disrespect and Destruction (of property ... or their brother's nose). Punishment must be proportional to the offence, and also proportional to the stage of life of the child. If it is not then you will find that you >



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exasperate a growing child. Also, the mode of punishment must be what will best help the child. Different parents have more 'faith' for some forms of punishment than others, and different children respond differently to different forms of punishment. I acknowledge and respect these differences, although we have had continued success with the method of disciplining children as outlined in Proverbs (see Proverbs 13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15).

6. We are convinced that it really is worth the effort

The joy of parenting increases dramatically when you have obedient children, and most importantly, you are equipping your children with the vital life-skill of obedience, which will stand them in good stead in their obedience to God, and in life, at school and in the workplace.

“ *The beauty of local church is that marrieds and singles, children and adults can be a loving community supporting each other* ”

Being Single

The Bible affirms both marriage and singleness as 'good' (Gen. 2:18 and 1 Cor. 7:1). From Matthew 19 we learn that it is legitimate for some to remain single because they were born that way (no real inclination to marry), or have become that way, or choose singleness for the sake of the kingdom. Henry Thoreau said that 'a man who goes alone can start today. But he who travels with another must wait until the other is ready.' Thus, singleness is a state that allows opportunities for kingdom advance that marriage sometimes cannot. But singles also know tensions that marrieds may not: they can easily get over-committed, self-centred, unaccountable and lonely. The beauty of local church is that marrieds and singles, children and adults can be a loving community supporting each other, and be on mission together. Let's arise and build! ■



A minute with...
P-J Smyth

1. Who has shaped your life?

My parents. My wife. My kids. Virgo. Keller. Driscoll.

2. What do you do to relax?

Yard cricket with my three sons

3. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

A meal that Matt Hosier cooked

4. Currently, what is your favourite album?

Still The Joshua Tree. Of course.

5. What's your favourite quote?

Rocky's Trainer: And then the worst thing happened to you that could happen to any fighter. You got domesticated.

6. What do you feel most passionate about?

Local churches being all that God intends them to be.



A church led by male elders (one of whom is clearly understood to be gifted to be lead elder) who are ordained by the Holy Spirit, recognised and confirmed through apostolic ministry. These men are to be helped in fulfilling their calling through ongoing fellowship with trans-local ministries.



ELDERS: A TEAM WITH A LEADER

‘A church led by male elders (one of whom is clearly understood to be gifted to be lead elder) who are ordained by the Holy Spirit, recognised and confirmed through apostolic ministry. These men are to be helped in fulfilling their calling through ongoing fellowship with trans-local ministries.’

BY MATTHEW HOSIER, POOLE, UK

If you have been in a *Newfrontiers* church for a while, you probably take it for granted that your church is led by elders, and that these elders are men. But if you have only recently become a Christian, or come from a different church background, this might be pretty weird for you. Throw in our commitment to ‘trans-local ministry’ and you could easily end up feeling rather confused.

Contemporary western culture is democratic and gender-neutral. It tends to be suspicious of authority and not like hierarchies. As Christians eager to reach out to our culture we can feel acutely sensitive about accusations that the church is authoritarian or sexist or out of touch. These cultural sensitivities could make us shy of using language like ‘apostolic authority’ or ‘male headship’ or ‘elders’ or ‘submission’. But we must resist these pressures. In fact, I would argue that a key reason for the relative success >



Newfrontiers has seen in planting and growing churches is our commitment to teams of male elders leading churches, in submission to trans-local ministry.

LEADERSHIP IS THE THING

In every area of human activity, leadership is hugely important. Show me a good school, a good business, or a good sports team and I'll show you good leadership. Church leadership shares many similarities with leadership in other spheres but has the added responsibility of being answerable to the highest authority (Heb. 13:17), as well as the great consolation that ultimate responsibility lies not with us but with our Saviour, the chief shepherd (Rev. 7:15-17). Our understanding is that this leadership is to be exercised by teams of elders, who are submitted to apostolic authority.

WHY DO ELDERS HAVE TO BE MEN?

Sometimes those from other church traditions make sweeping statements about us like, '*Newfrontiers* doesn't allow women in leadership.' This is not true!

Women serve in many leadership positions in our churches. But what we are clear about is that only men can be elders.

EQUAL BUT DIFFERENT

From Genesis 1:27 we understand that men and women are created equal in the image of God. Neither sex has greater worth or value before God than the other. But Scripture also reveals that men and women are to have different roles as part of God's creation plan.

In this equality with difference and unity, men and women reflect God Himself. God is one, but three – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each person of the Trinity has different roles but there is no sense in which the Son is any less equal than the Father, or the Spirit less equal than the Son. In God Himself there is equality with difference and unity. We understand this to mean that in the Trinity there is genuine submission of the Son and the Spirit to the Father, as well as genuine equality.

The trouble is, no one much likes the word 'submission'! It seems to imply weakness and abuse.

Tragically, the church has often connived with the wider culture in abusing and suppressing women. We believe it is a serious sin when women are prevented from being all that they are meant to be in God, and our desire is that everyone in our churches, whether female or male, should flourish in the gifts and role God has for them.

So when the Bible talks about submission it must mean something other than weakness and abuse. It does – it is actually about strength and freedom!

The key to understanding this is that true submission is not forcefully imposed but voluntarily given. The greatest example of this kind of submission is Jesus himself who submitted both to his earthly parents and to God the Father.

In the New Testament we see that women were among Jesus' closest companions and highly involved in church life. However, the twelve disciples were men, and when eldership roles are described it is always in terms of men. We do not believe that this was simply a reflection of the church being born in a sexist society. Jesus and the apostles were radical in knocking down false idols in their culture, and there can be no doubt that had Jesus wanted women to be elders this would have been made clear. Women were highly involved in the early church, but they were not elders.

WHO APPOINTS AN ELDER?

We do not appoint men to eldership because they have been in the church a long time or have a degree from Bible College. Instead we examine a man's character, gifting and call, and recognise that there are four parties involved in this:

1. GOD

(see Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11)

Spiritual authority comes by God's ordaining, not man's attaining. Elders need to be appointed in response to the leading of the Holy Spirit and evidence of God's hand on the man's life.

2. APOSTLES

(see Acts 14:23)

Apostles are gifted by God as master-builders of the church and need to be involved in the process of appointing elders. The recognition of, and submission to, apostolic authority is an important aspect of being an elder.

3. OTHER ELDERS

(see 1 Tim. 4:14)

We believe in team, which means that an elder needs to be recognised and accepted by other elders.

4. THE LOCAL CHURCH

(see Acts 14:23)

While in the New Testament it was the apostles who appointed elders, it is important to note that the apostles did this for the church. Without a recognition of elders by the congregation it will not be possible for those elders to guard, guide or govern the church.

ELDERS: A TEAM, WITH A LEADER

In the New Testament, the term 'elders' is always plural. There are at least three reasons why eldership is meant to be plural:

1. SOCIAL

Relationships in a team are vitally important. Elders should be more than just work colleagues – they should be like a band of brothers who are deeply committed to one another and enjoy being together.

2. MISSIONAL

A team is joined by a shared purpose which is bigger than simply a one-man mission. The team want the team to win.

3. COMPLEMENTARY

Different elders have different gifts and no one elder has all the gifts. Working together in an eldership team allows each elder's strengths to flourish and their weaknesses to be covered by other members of the team.

Spiritual authority comes by God's ordaining, not man's attaining

Emphasising as we do the importance of having a team of elders to lead a church, some have questioned whether it is appropriate to have a 'lead elder'. However, our understanding is that every team needs a leader! The basis for this understanding is – again – the model of the Trinity. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all fully and equally God, but within this 'Team Trinity' it is the Father who takes the lead. All elders must fulfil the qualifications the Bible sets for eldership, and be able to guard, guide and govern the church, but the lead elder will have a unique contribution to make. He needs to be a man who is able to lead a team of leaders, >

‘The recognition of, and submission to, apostolic authority is an important aspect of being an elder’



ensuring that each of them is able to fulfil the call of God on their lives for the building up and blessing of the church.

The lead elder isn't more of an elder than the other elders, but the other elders gladly submit to his leadership of them and in turn enable him to fulfil God's calling.

WHAT IS THE PLACE OF TRANS-LOCAL MINISTRY?

The primary responsibility of an eldership team is the care and oversight of the local church, but we are also men with a wider vision than just our small patch. We know that Jesus has called us to global mission, and we feel a deep commitment to being part of the apostolic momentum of *Newfrontiers*.

Practically this means that elders of local churches welcome trans-local ministries into their churches and gladly submit themselves to apostolic leadership. These gifts are given to build and equip the church, and working with them we know that we are 'more together than we are apart'. ■



A minute with... **Matt Hosier**

1. What do you do to relax?

Watch the sea; play with my kids; walk the dog; swim, cycle & run; cook & eat; climb trees; enjoy God's grace in Grace

2. What's your favourite quote?

Jonah: 'I am angry enough to die.' Got to love it that that guy got into the Bible!

3. What do you feel most passionate about?

The church of Jesus Christ; my family; good food and a roaring fire

4. Currently, what is your favourite album?

Bruce Springsteen, 'Seeger Sessions'

5. What do you expect to be doing in 10 years?

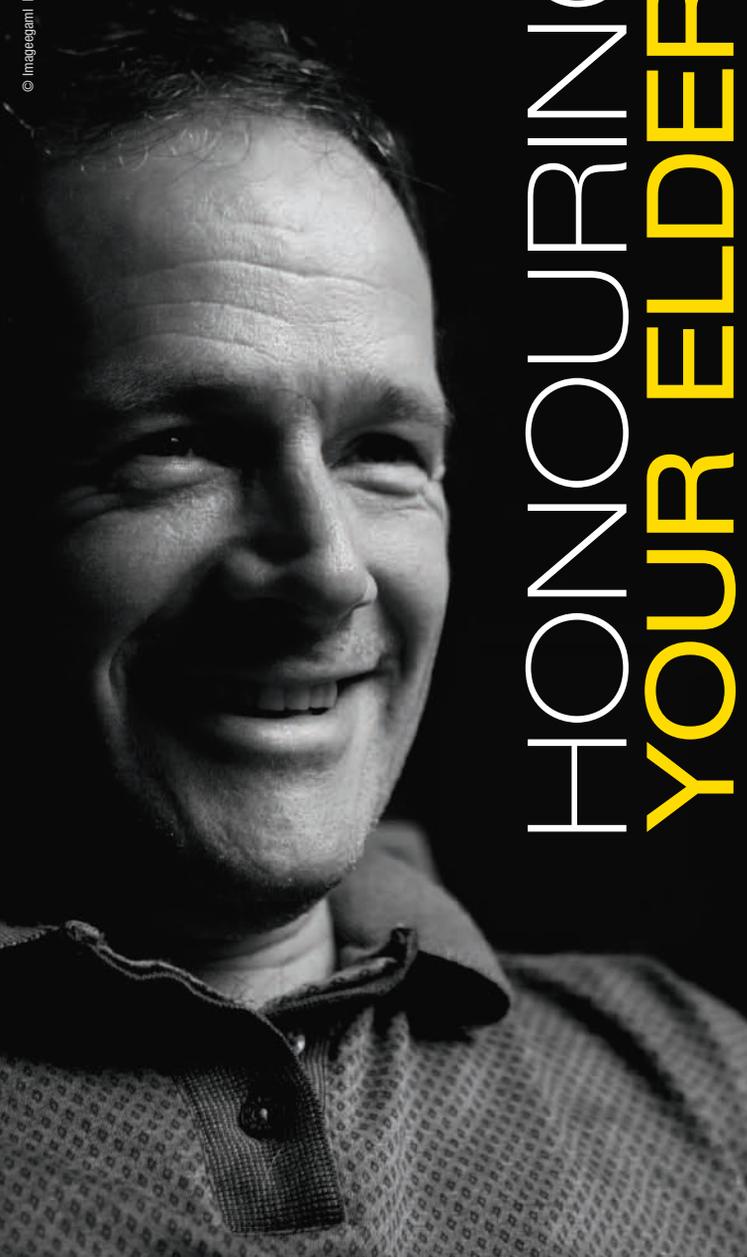
Paying for lots of weddings.

9

A church where elders are honoured as servant-leaders, caring for the flock and providing spiritual disciplines where necessary

“ CORRECT USE OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY PRODUCES AN ATMOSPHERE OF GRACE ”

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HONOURING YOUR ELDERS

JEREMY SIMPKINS MANCHESTER, UK

The woman at the well declared, ‘Sir, I can see that you are a prophet’, the rich young man perceived Jesus to be a ‘good teacher’, while the writer to the Hebrews encourages us to see him as ‘the apostle ... whom we confess’, but Jesus calls himself the ‘good shepherd’ (John 10:11).

This, of course, echoes David’s glorious description that ‘The Lord is my shepherd’ (Ps. 23:1). God had promised His people leaders with this same character: ‘I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding’ (Jer. 3:15). Peter later picks up this theme of servant leadership writing, ‘Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers, not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be, not greedy for money, but eager to serve’ (1 Pet. 5:2).

Frank Damazio says, ‘The heart of a shepherd is the closest thing to the heart of God for His church’, and it’s especially needed today where world leaders seem to lust after power and glory whilst basking in the cult of celebrity! >

'SHEPHERDS LED
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So what should spiritual shepherds be like?

Shepherds protect the flock

Paul charges the Ephesian elders to 'keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God' (Acts 20:28).

Sheep have no natural defences and so they need protection. In Biblical times shepherds watched out for dangerous predators; in the same way spiritual shepherds must be awake to those Jesus called 'wolves in sheep's clothing'. There are people who would infiltrate the flock bringing disruption and division, even seeking to devour the sheep. Spiritual shepherds are to be alert, welcoming the weak and vulnerable, actively encouraging those who are seeking God, but always willing to confront those who are threatening.

Good shepherds should always be aware of the spiritual condition of their flock and be willing to bring godly correction if necessary. This will involve loving, face-to-face exhortation based on God's Word and not on their own preferences – 'remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you' (Heb. 13:7).

Such discipline should always direct us towards Jesus as the goal of our spiritual transformation. As John Calvin said, 'If ministers wish to do any good, let them labour to form Christ and not themselves in their hearers.' The ultimate purpose of any such correction must be in line with Paul's pastoral heart wanting to 'proclaim him (Jesus) admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we might present everyone mature in Christ' (Col. 1:28).

This correct use of spiritual authority produces an atmosphere of grace – where mistakes are quickly forgiven, those who have been in difficulty are lovingly restored and everyone is growing in Christ. This produces great security in the flock, as David says, 'Your rod and your staff they comfort me' (Ps. 23:4).

Shepherds feed the flock

There are also dangerous doctrines – so one of the key responsibilities of spiritual shepherds is to keep the church founded on Biblical truth. As Paul says, 'an elder must ... hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those

who oppose it' (Titus 1:9). In these days of mass communication there are so many conflicting messages that it's easy to be led astray by an erroneous paperback, a salacious blog or an enticing television programme.

Good shepherds lead the flock 'in paths of righteousness' helping them 'to lie down in green pastures' (Ps. 23:2-3) – consistently reinforcing the foundational truths of God's Word: the centrality of Christ and our union with him in the community of the church. The immediacy of His Holy Spirit draws us to an intimate relationship with the Father then propels us out into His mission, demonstrating the kingdom of God and announcing good news to all, especially the poor, disadvantaged and marginalised. In doing so the way is being prepared for Jesus' glorious return!

Such teaching equips us to live well so that even in difficult times we can trust in the presence of our sovereign God. As David declares, 'Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me' (Ps. 23:4).

Shepherds lead the flock

Sheep have no sense of direction! Left to their own devices they can easily get lost, as illustrated by Jesus' famous parable and Isaiah's prophecy, 'We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way' (Isa. 53:6).

In Biblical times shepherds led their flock from the front with the comforting sound of their own voice, not driving them from behind with a barking dog as some modern shepherds do!

Spiritual shepherds motivate the sheep to follow their example, just as Jesus beckoned 'follow me' and Paul wrote 'imitate me'. They demonstrate a lifestyle of grace in their personal and family lives, they handle finances with integrity and the pressures of life with godly consistency – 'Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith' (Heb. 13:7).

The Bible is clear that we are called to honour our leaders. 'We ask you to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work' (1 Thess. 5:12-13). Probably the best way to honour their gifting is to follow their lead joyfully – this brings great pleasure to us and to them! 'Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden for that would be of no advantage to you' (Heb. 13:17).

Shepherds give their lives for the flock

Ultimately 'the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep' (John 10:11). I have many books on leadership; almost all speak of calling, gifting, character. Some mention team chemistry, but few concentrate on the cost! >

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Spiritual leadership is servanthood, which means we are to put other's needs before our own, no longer living for ourselves but for them. 'For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake' (2 Cor. 4:5).

This is costly in time and finances; it affects our relationships and even demands our life. This was no metaphor for Jesus; he literally laid his life down. This has not yet happened in our family of churches but as we regularly hear of our brothers and sisters around the world encountering real opposition, we must be prepared that one day it may.

Leaders never graduate from this school of serving because serving isn't some stepping stone to greatness. It is greatness itself! In this way we follow the example of Jesus – 'For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45). ■



A minute with... Jeremy Simpkins

1. Who has shaped your life?

My parents for introducing me to Jesus and to the teachings of Dr Martin Lloyd Jones. Terry Virgo for giving me a vision for Christ's glorious church!

2. What sorts of book do you read?

Crime novels by John Grisham & Lee Child. Reformed doctrine by John Piper, RC Sproul, Dr Martin Lloyd Jones.

3. What do you do to relax?

Spending time with Ann – walking, talking and drinking real ale!

4. What do you expect to be doing in 10 years?

Planting more churches in the nations and multiplying apostolic teams to serve them.

5. Currently, what is your favourite album?

"Abbey Road" by the Beatles!

10

A church freed from complacency and endeavouring to grow in gospel impact, faith, prayer, generosity, action and influence.

By Ian Ashby, Portsmouth, USA

FREED FROM COMPLACENCY

Looking back over the past few decades, we can see that much has been accomplished since we first started working together as a family of churches, and we are still increasing! Vibrant churches are growing in dozens of major cities, new churches are being started in an increasing number of nations, and the gospel is impacting thousands of lives and communities as it is proclaimed in word and deed. Some of our churches, once shunned and misunderstood by the 'mainstream' church, are now respected for their good works and positive influence. *Newfrontiers* as a movement is gaining a good reputation.

But this heady air of success can be dangerous. How easy it is for us, having gained some success and momentum, to feel we have 'arrived' and to begin to settle and become stagnant with complacency. You may have heard of the maxim: 'Success breeds complacency. Complacency breeds failure.' How often have we seen that happen to church movements in history? Movements that stopped moving and settled to become institutions.

In his introduction to these values, Terry Virgo wrote 'We have no desire to become an institution ... Our hope certainly is that *Newfrontiers* will together accomplish so much more than we already have.' If our desire is to be realised, then we must build churches that are free from complacency.

The danger of complacency

According to Webster's dictionary, to be complacent is to be self-satisfied and unconcerned. Someone who is self-satisfied is someone who has accomplished something but is now resting on their laurels, no longer concerned about the things that once led to their success. Nobody ever plans on complacency, it just sneaks up on you, and when it does it can be devastating. >

‘NEWFRONTIERS HAS BEEN SHAPED BY PROPHETIC WORDS THAT HAVE COME DURING TIMES OF CORPORATE PRAYER’

In Revelation 3 we find a local church that had become complacent. The Laodiceans thought they had everything they needed. They had stopped depending on God and had become self-satisfied, resting on their wealth and deeds. But Jesus rebuked them for being ‘lukewarm’, like the undrinkable tepid water that flowed through their city, they were fit only to be spat out. Strong words indeed!

By contrast, the churches described in the book of Acts seem anything but complacent. Right from the beginning, in Jerusalem, we see a radical church growing in gospel impact, faith, prayer, generosity, action and influence. These characteristics were then repeated as new churches were started in other regions. When Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church, he commended them with these words: ‘you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia – your faith in God has become known everywhere’ (1 Thess.1:7-8).

Keys to a radical church

How then can we, as a family of churches, avoid the pitfall of complacency and endeavour to grow in these characteristics as we move forward

in the purposes of God? Surely what we learn from the book of Acts is that prayer and the presence of the Holy Spirit are two vital keys.

In the book of Acts it seems that every new initiative or major advance of the gospel came as a result of prayer and Holy Spirit intervention and revelation. The early church devoted itself to prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:42). As they prayed they experienced the manifest presence of God as He filled them with His Holy Spirit and empowered them to preach the gospel and heal the sick (Acts 2:4ff; 4:8, 23ff); and as He spoke to them and gave dreams and visions to direct them in His mission (Acts 10:9ff; 13:1-4; 16:6-10).

To quote my friend John Lanferman, ‘Prayer was the key to the release of the Holy Spirit-empowered church to make effective the gospel of Christ.

When the Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 his presence is described as a rushing wind. Wind implies movement. So often we can use static imagery to describe the infilling of the Holy Spirit, like a glass being filled with water. A better image, however, would be the sail of a ship being filled with and driven along by the wind. That’s how it was in the early church.

As Jim Cymbala comments in his book *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, ‘Scan the book of Acts to find the apostolic liturgy. You’ll come up empty. What you will find are people moving in spontaneous obedience as they are propelled by the fresh wind of the Holy Spirit.’

Prayer power

But as Cymbala’s own story confirms, it is prayer that invites the wind. It is prayer that hoists the sail to catch the power of the wind to propel us into God’s mission. That’s the testimony of the early church. It’s the testimony of the church throughout history. Wherever we see gospel impact, exploits of faith, radical generosity, social action and pervading influence, we find God moving people to pray and the Spirit giving power and direction in response to those prayers.

We can also see it in our own history. *Newfrontiers* has been shaped by prophetic words that have come during times of corporate prayer. Some of the most significant meetings I have been in have been times of prayer with other *Newfrontiers* pastors where we were left in no doubt that God had spoken, leading us into fresh initiatives and kingdom advancement.

Arthur Wallis once wrote, ‘A movement of God will last as long as the spirit of prayer that inspired it.’ May God

‘IT IS PRAYER THAT INVITES THE WIND. IT IS PRAYER THAT HOISTS THE SAIL TO CATCH THE POWER OF THE WIND TO PROPEL US INTO GOD’S MISSION’

continue to stir us out of complacency and inspire us to increasingly fervent prayer that brings the presence of God.

In my own church in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, USA having met for seven years in a school cafeteria, we believed God wanted to bring us into the very heart of the city to have a greater impact, but we had no venue. We asked permission to pray in the most visible and central building in the city, the historic North Church, but we were turned down. Undeterred, we began meeting to pray in the open air on top of a parking garage. Every Saturday morning, in spite of rain, snow, sleet and sub-zero temperatures, we prayed over the city and prayed for North Church. A few months later one of our members had a dream of us being granted permission to use the building, so we asked again and this time we were miraculously welcomed with open arms. We have now moved our Sunday meetings to North Church and are having an influence on the city as we preach the gospel from the very pulpit that George Whitefield once preached in.

There is still much for us to do together, so let us agree with CH Spurgeon: ‘I would that this rushing mighty wind would come upon His church with an irresistible force that should carry everything before it ... Come, Holy Spirit, come. We can do nothing without You; but if we have Your wind, we spread our sail and speed on toward glory’. ■



A minute with... Ian Ashby

1. Who has shaped your life?

Ray Lowe - he preached the gospel that saved me, he disciplined me and took a big risk in asking me to lead a church. Also CH Spurgeon who has continually inspired me to seek the Holy Spirit, and by no means least, my wife, Emma, who is a gift from God.

2. What do you feel most passionate about?

My wife, Emma and her art, my four almost grown children and my church impacting the community.

3. What’s the weirdest thing you’ve ever eaten?

Haggis in batter. Delicious, but weird to my American friends.

4. What do you do to relax?

Eat good food, drink good wine and go fishing with good friends.

BY JOHN LANFERMAN, ST LOUIS, USA

EQUIPPED FOR SERVICE IN THE CHURCH & COMMUNITY

Christianity and the church are always one generation away from extinction. Jesus' mission depended upon equipping disciples to continue what he began. Today he continues his mission through his community, the church.

The apostolic response to Jesus' mandate to go and make disciples of the nations was to multiply churches where believers were equipped to continue his mission. The result was one Jerusalem church expanding to thousands of churches encompassing the known world in a relatively short period of time.

Both then and now, leadership is crucial for this advancement of the kingdom. The importance of the local church as the primary incubator for developing spiritual leadership cannot be overstated.

Passionate followers of Jesus and leadership character are developed in a church with a sound theological worldview, and where the cause of Jesus' mission is the catalyst for forging strong relationships. If we are to fulfil the mission of kingdom expansion, restoring the church as the centre of leadership training must be a priority.

Church-based training fulfils the Biblical mandate for leaders to equip and empower their own people into a movement that impacts the world.

In order to equip and mobilise people, and develop both local and trans-local leadership, we need purposefully to create a church culture based upon this model. This happens by:

- **Creating a permission-giving culture**
- **Seeing the potential in others** in order to build into their lives and develop that potential. We note who they can become rather than who they presently are. This encourages a culture that infuses the entire church. The number one job-requirement of everyone serving in our church is to be looking for people who can potentially replace them. This contributes to an ethos of developing people and leadership.
- **Tearing down the idol of excellence.** Rick Warren states this is necessary in order to become an equipping church. An inflated value of excellence will never lead you to trust ministry to people who seem 'ordinary'. The person presently doing ministry sets the standard for ministry. This model becomes the standard; the replacement will automatically strive to emulate this.



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Local churches should be the most productive soil in which to grow leaders

• **Valuing those who empower others.** We always reproduce what we model. Therefore it is vital in a culture of people-development to value those who empower others to do things more than we prize those who do things. Equipping must be a core value and as we esteem the people who equip others, we deepen the equipping culture of the church.

The effectiveness of current church leadership should be evaluated on the principle that leadership's primary purpose is to equip God's people for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

- » Are the leaders equipping others to do ministry?
- » How many people have they empowered to do ministry?
- » Are they doing ministry through a team?
- » How successful are the people around them?

One test of how well we are doing this is to determine the number of leaders being developed from within, rather than 'outside' recruits.

The need for leaders

There is a great need for leaders! Therefore churches must prioritise leadership development. The church is the

vehicle God has chosen to raise up leaders for kingdom extension in the world. Local churches should be the most productive soil in which to grow leaders, so building churches that provide a fertile environment for leadership development is essential. As I travel the USA, it is thrilling to find former Jubilee people, as well as those who have been engaged in the training we provide, fulfilling their calling in God's kingdom throughout the nation.

Facilitating the emergence of trans-local men

During this time of transition within the *Newfrontiers* family, we are acutely aware of the need to see apostles and prophets emerge, along with trans-local teams. It is helpful to note the utter simplicity and power of Jesus' and Paul's approaches to this issue. Both invested themselves fully in the lives of a few potential leaders. They drew people to the cause and to themselves, and exposed them to the mission within the context of doing ministry. They built sound doctrine within their gathered teams and also gave opportunity to build competence. They purposely dealt with character issues, as evidenced in Paul's letters, listing the criteria for choosing leaders (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1). Jesus made godliness his focus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). Jesus always >

The local church is the centre of leadership training and ongoing mission

challenged the lack of servanthood and humility in his team (Mark 10:35-45; John 13:1-17). The process of leadership development for both the church and trans-local ministry modeled by Jesus and Paul are simple, yet powerfully effective.

- » They trained emerging leaders within the context of doing ministry.
- » They focused their team on the grand cause of kingdom extension to the world.
- » They pinpointed issues of godly character.
- » Team was the context for community, discipleship and relationship-building.
- » They made down-time a priority for reflection of ministry experience.
- » They gave extensive time for continual learning.

The development both of people serving dynamically in local churches and of trans-local leaders should follow these same principles. We train leaders in the midst of ministry as we press forward in fulfilling the great commission. We also develop leaders by valuing godly character above gifting. This occurs as we build significant friendship with each other. It is vital to allow quality time for reflection on our shared experience in the ministry. Of course, we continually want to see faithfulness and obedience, all the while developing Biblical knowledge and ministry skills.

A value that is non-negotiable for us as a movement is that the local church is the centre of leadership training and ongoing mission to the world. It is within the context of the local church, the visible expression of the body of Christ, that effective equipping takes place. For Christ's mission to flourish and his kingdom to expand over the earth, local churches, leaders and apostles must give themselves to equipping people and to leadership

development. Building a culture of leadership development must start with leaders and elders as described in Ephesians 4:11-12. As they intentionally replicate that culture throughout the entire church, a dynamic power is released for transforming cities, nations and the world. It begins with leaders cultivating the vision of the church as a leadership incubator. ■



A minute with... **John Lanferman**

1. What do you do to relax?

Spend time with my wife, Linda, the most important person God has put into my life. Love water, lakes and sea, boating, listening to Jazz and Blues. The best way I relax is to be in the whirlpool tub with Linda.

2. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

Bear, Camels tongue, hog spine soup, live gold fish

4. Currently, what is your favourite album?

Anything by Anita Krall or Stevie Ray Vaughan

5. What's your favourite quote?

When advancing, Alexander the Great's military leader came to him and asked what to do because they had marched so far they had marched off the map. Alexander the Great said, "Mediocre armies always stay within known areas, the great armies march off the map."

12

A church fully involved in our shared apostolic mission to extend the kingdom of God globally through the recovery of New Testament church life, making disciples, training leaders and planting churches by all means, including wholehearted financial commitment, welcoming trans-local ministries, regularly attending corporate gatherings, promoting our publications and communicating our news.

WHOLEHEARTEDLY OWNING OUR

MISSION

By Tim Blaber, London, UK

Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time in Antioch. The church there became a vital base for them from which they were sent to plant and strengthen many churches. What were the hallmarks of this excellent church? And to what extent should local churches today seek to model these qualities?

1. Receiving church

The church in Antioch was established following the persecution of the disciples in Jerusalem and the subsequent movement of believers into the surrounding regions. Given that this church was formed in such a way, it would have been quite understandable, especially given the absence of 21st century telecommunications and transport, for believers in Antioch to have become isolated and detached from the church in Jerusalem. >





At the very least they could have feared encouraging the spread of the persecution there. According to Luke's account in Acts 11, this couldn't be further from the truth. Despite distance and having become self-established, the Antioch church had a shared global mission and had received a wide variety of input from outside ministries, not least from Barnabas and Paul who spent a year with them teaching and laying doctrinal foundations.

It is such a joy to be able to receive gifted men sent by God to help strengthen and establish the local

used by the Lord to lead many to him, resulting in numerous baptisms. I'm so glad we're not a forlorn, isolated church!

2. Sending church

In addition to Paul and Barnabas, Agabus and other prophets spent time in Antioch, significantly prophesying to the church of a coming famine across Judea. Hearing of this crisis 'the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea' (Acts 11:28-30). This gift was

As a local church we have had the joy and heartache of sending many people to plant and lead in other church settings

church. At New Community Church we have been exceedingly blessed over the years, receiving apostolic and prophetic ministry from leaders based in other churches, some from other nations, who are eager to see us become all that we believe we are called to be as a local church. Through initiatives such as *Front Edge* we have had evangelists amongst us who have been

taken to the church in Jerusalem by Paul and Barnabas. Such was the strength of relationship that existed between these churches that they were compelled to act, sending provisions to 'the brothers', for this was a family relationship.

Famine and deprivation are tragedies not confined to the first century. In recent years, throughout Africa



Such was the strength of relationship that existed between these churches that they were compelled to act, sending provisions to 'the brothers', for this was a family relationship

these humanitarian crises have been all too common. Last year, as a family of churches we gave upwards of £500k during the crisis in Zimbabwe, an astonishing figure that had been equalled in previous years following drought in Kenya. To have the opportunity to give our money as a local church to trustworthy men, who share with us a longing to see the advance of God's kingdom across nations by feeding the poor and clothing the naked, is a humbling honour.

In addition to financial giving, the church in Antioch were also led by the Holy Spirit to send Paul and Barnabas, who had become key leaders, 'for the work to which I have called them' (Acts 13: 1-3). As hard as it must have been to part with two exceptionally gifted and loved leaders, for a church like this committed to apostolic advance there was no hesitation, and in the process they became a blessing to many. As a local church we have had the joy and heartache of sending many people to plant and lead in other church settings. It is always a bittersweet moment, for on the one hand you are seeing a dear friend move on and yet there is the hope that their leaving will result in many lives being transformed through gospel-proclamation in a new place; mission must supersede sentimentality. Had the church in Antioch buckled at this point how different might the evangelisation of Asia and Europe have been!

3. Praying church

Luke makes a point of noting that the church gathering to pray was central to sending Paul and Barnabas from Antioch. Reading on through Acts 14 we see why covering this apostolic work in prayer was so vital, for with every moment of advance and fruitfulness, persecution and opposition quickly followed.

As a church we are committed in prayer to the apostolic mission we have as a family. In recent prayer weeks we have invited leaders whom we sent out in previous years, who are now leading new churches, to be among us that we might cover their front-line work in prayer. Times like these are invaluable where faith is stirred afresh. The call of God upon us is both adventurous and dangerous, hence prayer cannot be neglected. Meeting with hundreds of other *Newfrontiers* church leaders regularly for days of prayer and fasting, for example, remains an occasion of utmost importance in ensuring that all we commit to in the UK and beyond is commissioned and covered in prayer.

4. Equipping church

Having successfully completed the work they were sent to do, Paul and Barnabas returned to the church in Antioch, bruised and tired but with a stunning story to tell. Luke paints a wonderful picture as he >



describes how they ‘gathered the church together’ and ‘reported all that God had done through them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples’ (Acts 14:27-28).

It is plain from this account that mission into new places and nations isn’t something done independently by a few, but is an enterprise owned from start to finish by the many, rooted and established in the local church. Not only does this give the Antioch church an exciting global vision, but it also provides those sent with a base to return to, where their needs can be met and where they can be served.

A few years ago, following the death of Simon Pettit who was leading a pioneering work in South Africa, we as a church sent David and Liz Holden for several six-month periods to provide support and leadership for the affected churches. What a privilege it was for us to be able to respond in such a way! Upon their return, we were so encouraged to hear that David, alongside others, had been used to identify new apostolic ministry and commission new teams to continue this work. For them, being able to return to a church that loves them and is eager to hear about all they’ve seen and done is essential, equipping them for future tasks.

When we gather in Brighton each year for the *Together On A Mission* Conference, we similarly hear reports of new breakthroughs around the world and receive ministry from those spearheading what we’re doing apostolically, all of which filters through into the local church.

The result of all this is a church that lives and breathes apostolic mission that develops and sends leaders, ultimately resulting in transformed lives and kingdom advance. This is how it worked out in Acts. Long may this continue today! ■



A minute with... **Tim Blaber**

1. Who has shaped your life?

Parents, Dave Holden, Matt Hosier, Lizzy!

2. What sorts of book do you read?

Biographies on men like Spurgeon/Whitefield/ Wesley, I enjoy the Puritan writers (in moderation!) I also enjoy reading around the Second World War.

3. Currently, what is your favourite album?

‘Young Mountain’ by This Will Destroy You (what do you mean you’ve not heard of them?!!!)

4. What’s your favourite quote?

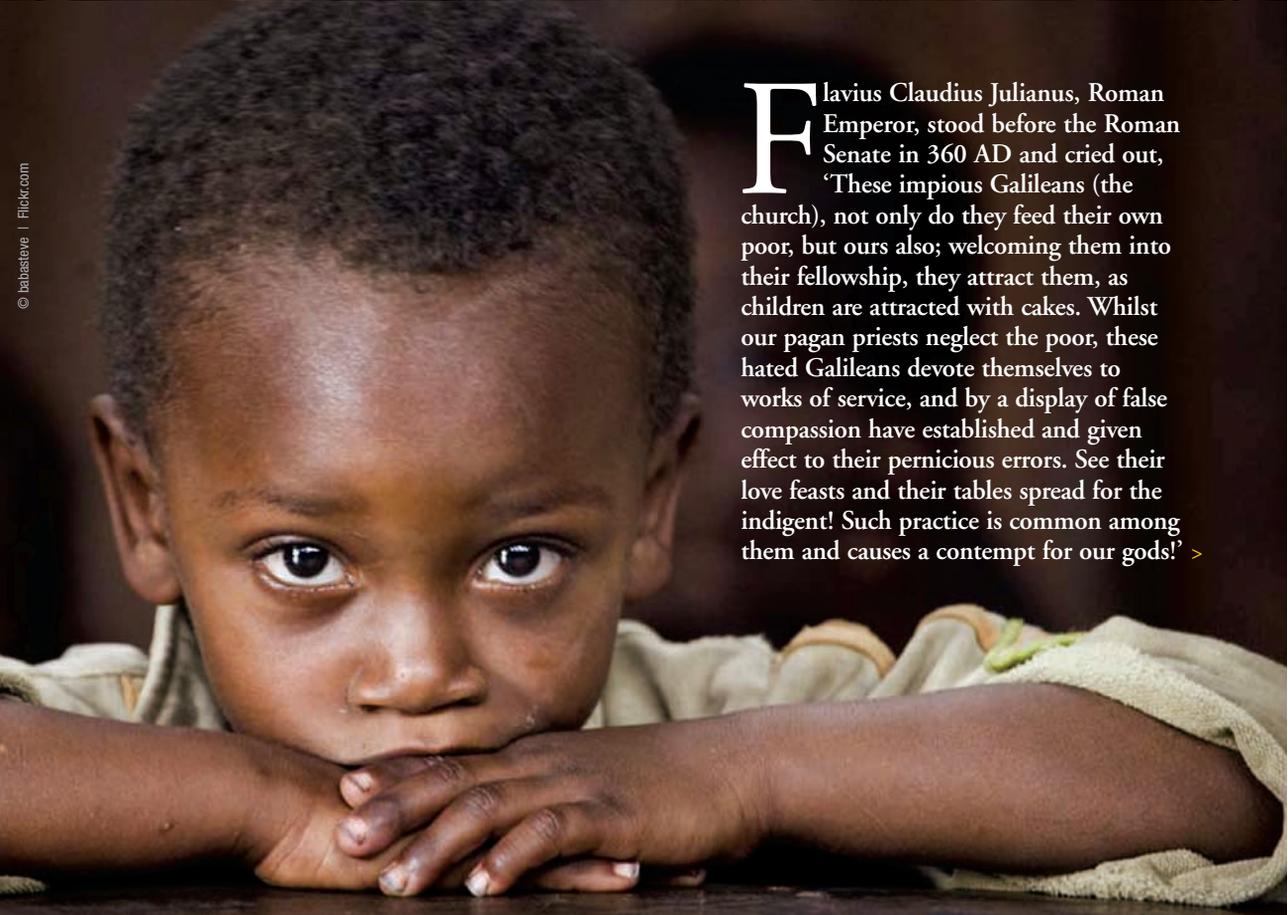
Spurgeon: “Only once we come to the end of self do we come to the beginning of Christ.”

Closely followed by Job:
“My breath is offensive to my wife” Job 19:17 (long before the days of Tic-Tacs!!)

Local Church:

God's vehicle for empowering the poor

BY STEVE OLIVER DUBAI, UAE



Flavius Claudius Julianus, Roman Emperor, stood before the Roman Senate in 360 AD and cried out, 'These impious Galileans (the church), not only do they feed their own poor, but ours also; welcoming them into their fellowship, they attract them, as children are attracted with cakes. Whilst our pagan priests neglect the poor, these hated Galileans devote themselves to works of service, and by a display of false compassion have established and given effect to their pernicious errors. See their love feasts and their tables spread for the indigent! Such practice is common among them and causes a contempt for our gods!' >

What impact the local church was having that it caused the governing authorities such as Flavius Claudius and his fellow rulers were being greatly embarrassed by their lack of action with regard to caring for their poor. Not only did the church care for the poor in their own ranks, but history reveals that they even took care of the injured Roman soldiers when they returned from military campaigns.

Such were the values and foundations laid by the apostles, that the early church saw the care for the poor as central to their mission of revealing Christ and reaching the nations.

With our growing understanding of apostolic ministry within *Newfrontiers*, we have come to hold the value that we need to be churches that serve and empower the poor within our own ranks and beyond!

GROWING UNDERSTANDING

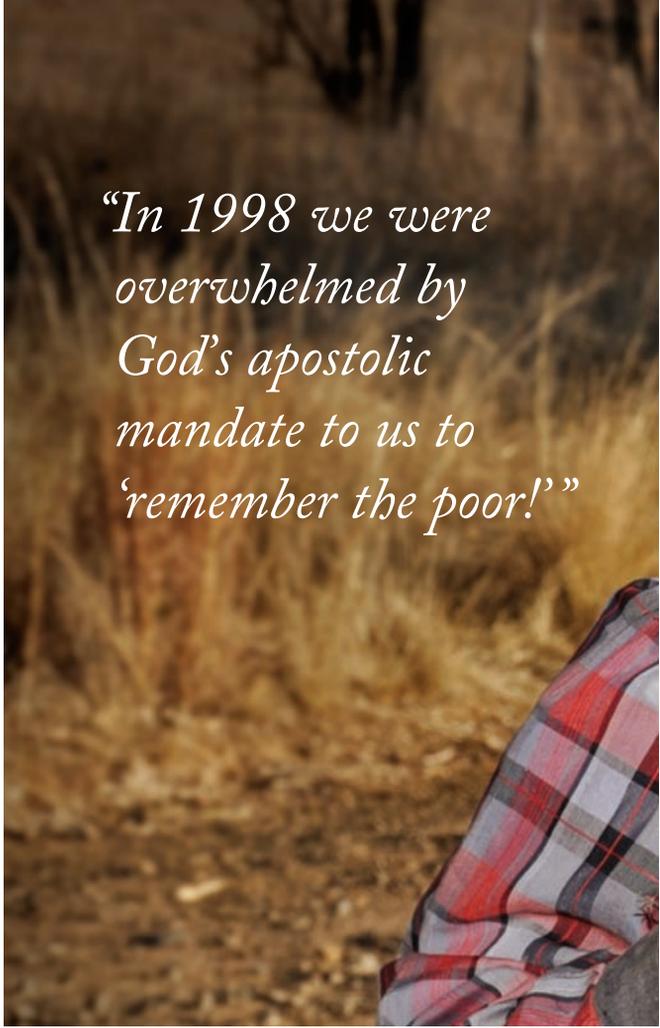
Over the past decade, God has been most gracious in revealing His compassion for the poor in so many tangible ways. First, in 1998 we were overwhelmed by God's apostolic mandate to us to 'remember the poor!' This immediately released a caring heart among us and we have made great strides in serving the poor across the world, just as was done by the early church.

Furthermore, God has also revealed to us that He has not only called us to serve the poor, but He has also given us a mandate to empower and embrace them, so that they can join us on world mission! He is looking for their full inclusion and participation.

AN EXPRESSION OF GOD'S HEART

Caring for and empowering the poor is not just a good idea, but an expression of God's heart. We know from Scripture that God has no favourites but loves all men equally, whether rich or poor. However, there are countless references in the Bible to His heart for the poor. Let me explain further.

I have three sons, Cameron, Richard and Adam. They are fantastic young men whom I love equally with all my heart. They are very different from one another and obviously I do not favour one more than the other. However, in the event of one of them facing illness or



*“In 1998 we were
overwhelmed by
God’s apostolic
mandate to us to
‘remember the poor!’”*

trouble, my attention is on that son in his situation more than it would be on the other two. I love them all equally but I focus on the son facing difficulties.

So it is with God. His special attention is given to those who, as the Psalmist wrote, 'are on the ash heap'. God gives special attention to the poor in their need.

GOD'S EMPOWERING PRESENCE

So what can we, the church, learn from the way God responds to those who are 'on the ash heap of life'? I have found Psalm 113 most helpful when answering this question.

First we read that God 'stoops down to look' (v6), which infers that He is not aloof, distant or uncaring but very mindful of the plight of the poor. But He does not stop there! We read on and see that 'He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap.' Such compassion mixed with action!

Now consider the outcome of God's intervention: 'He seats them with princes!' By reaching out to those in need, God's aim is to lift them out of poverty, and give them a place of equal position and acceptance in His kingdom. From a place of desperation, the poor find themselves fully included in God's purpose for the nations – what a joy! God's intervention



is a complete work of restoration and inclusion. No wonder Flavius Claudius was so annoyed by the actions of the early church who seemed to have fully understood and embraced God's care for the poor in such a tangible way – tables were laid, great was the provision, welcoming hearts reached out, and the poor were fully embraced.

NO PLACE FOR NEGLECT!

Many and varied are the demands on the modern church leader. Our desire to see strong and healthy churches planted across the globe doesn't leave a great deal of free time for the average leader. But in light of the ongoing challenges vying for our attention, we are never given license to neglect the poor! It is said that 70% of the world's unreached people are in this category.

I find it sobering to read about the rich man in the parable of Lazarus in Luke 16. At the end of his life, we find him being held accountable for neglecting Lazarus who lay

suffering outside his gate. Lazarus was not in his employ nor even on his property, but God expected the rich man to show compassion and to act upon it.

Even if we find ourselves in churches that minister mainly among the more affluent in our society, it does not take a great deal of investigation to find those suffering 'outside our gate'. What a joy it has been to see churches within our movement respond so willingly to dire situations in nations like Zimbabwe, Kenya and Haiti. My prayer is that we will never find ourselves in situations of neglect or grow tired of doing good. >

*'From a place of desperation,
the poor find themselves
fully included in God's
purpose for the nations'*

'We unlocked some of the principles of serving and empowering the poor, which we still use today'

EMPOWERING THE POOR

One evening in 1997, I faced a real dilemma. The following day I was meeting with a group of leaders to find a solution for how we were going to take care of the many widows and children suffering in our church community. The situation seemed so much bigger and more complex than I felt we could manage. However, I made a discovery that changed my thinking! I discovered 1 Timothy 5. This passage of Scripture is a letter from a wise apostle to his young apostolic delegate instructing him how to care for the widows and orphans in the Ephesian church community – it was like discovering a large gold deposit!

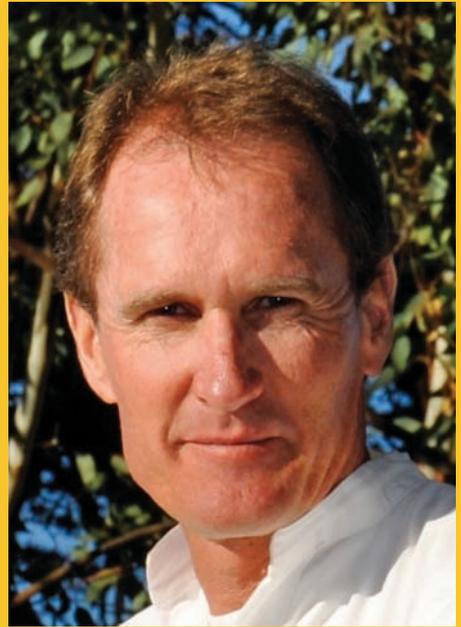
Inspired by the Spirit, we unlocked some of the principles of serving and empowering the poor, which we still use today. Paul is so detailed and helpful in the way he instructs his young counterpart. Here are some of the principles we discovered:

- There has to be an identifiable need
- The widow's family are firstly responsible, before the church
- Those in need have to be practising good spiritual disciplines
- They have to be living a life pleasing to God
- They must be fully participating in the local church
- They should not be idle and given to gossip

Armed with the principles found in this passage, we began in Clarens what has become one of the most effective works among the poor, stretching across education, skills empowerment, care of vulnerable children, care for the elderly, advocacy, care for HIV/AIDS sufferers and job creation. Such has been the impact of this local church in Clarens that the region surrounding the town, which includes an area of five towns, took the name of the church in 2004 - Dihlabeng.

REMEMBER THE POOR!

I think it is fitting to quote our dear friend and fellow leader, the late Simon Pettit, who first brought this mandate to our attention. He said, 'Jesus came to preach good news to the poor. As he looked out on the crowd, he had compassion on each one of them. Therefore, we must start with individuals and not be overwhelmed by the scale of the need. In Matthew 25, Jesus indicates that, "whatever you did for one of the least, you did for me". We need to follow the example and teaching of Jesus and "remember the poor".' ■



A minute with... Steve Oliver

1. Who has shaped your life?

I am grateful to so many: My wife Heather, Jeff & Viv Kidwell, Ray Lowe, Simon Pettit, Dave Devenish, Dave Holden, Terry Virgo – and a special friend, Gary Welsh.

2. What sorts of book do you read?

Biographies – great men of faith – Smith Wigglesworth!

3. What do you do to relax?

Play golf – what else!

4. What do you expect to be doing in 10 years?

Watching many 'sons' plant NT churches and cheering them on every step of the way!

5. Currently, what is your favourite album?

Spyro Gyra – Incognito ...jazz!

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A church which wholeheartedly embraces the New Testament teaching of the one new man, demonstrating love and respect between the races, cultures and sexes.



One new man

By John Kpikpi

City of God Church

Accra, Ghana

In his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul declares some amazing things about the church: God loves the church, has brought the church from death to life, has raised the church up with His glorious Son Jesus Christ and seated the church with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

‘The church was not simply a union or club made up of Jews and Gentiles who were willing to ‘bury the hatchet’, it was a new creation!’

It gets even better. The church is God’s handiwork and there’s a hint here (Eph. 2:10; 2 Cor. 5:17) of her being a totally new creation of God. In encountering the church, therefore, we are coming into contact with a most unusual company of people on earth.

Although each of these truths would have been breathtaking for Paul’s first century readers, nothing could have prepared them for the next thing he reveals about the church – that it is composed of people drawn from two sides of one of the greatest divides in all history, Jews and Gentiles!

Paul does not gloss over how these two peoples regarded each other: he describes a barrier between them, a dividing wall of hostility (Eph. 2:14). There were deep-seated prejudices on both sides. They hated each other, calling each other by derogatory names (Eph. 2:11). Their beliefs about each other ‘allowed’ them to treat each other as being less than human and to unleash weapons of war on each other with devastating results.

But Paul had seen a vision of a new, very different reality in which a new relationship was formed between these two warring factions through the gospel. He announced a ‘peace pact’ which had taken shape not through the efforts of diplomats working at the United Nations or shuttling between the

capitals of the Middle East and Washington, but by the blood of Christ shed on the cross (Eph. 2:13-16).

A new creation

According to Paul, God has only one Son, Jesus Christ, in whom He has given us His one gospel, the gospel of grace. This gospel was first preached to the Jews and through it they were brought into God’s Son, Jesus Christ. When this same gospel was then preached to the Gentiles, those who believed found themselves ‘in the same person, Jesus Christ ... in this one body’ (Eph. 2:16a). Did the fighting continue? No, the former enemies were reconciled through the cross. In fact God, according to Paul, had carried the matter well beyond our present understanding of reconciliation to something even closer – they were now one body, one new man in Christ! (Eph. 2:15) The church was not simply a union or club made up of Jews and Gentiles who were willing to ‘bury the hatchet’, it was a new creation!

Paul argues that the original and separate identities of these two people groups had been abrogated by Christ’s death and resurrection. A demolition work had been carried out which had cancelled their former identities. The reconstruction work that followed had resulted in a single common identity –



in Christ!

In Paul's own words

'You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:26-29).

This work of Christ put paid to all the enmity between these two peoples who had hated each other so vehemently and for so long. Thus, beginning with the Prince of Peace and his new people, the church, we see God's peace for the whole world being ushered in.

Friendship not enmity

Paul's vision of the church is perfectly aligned with the message of the Messianic hope for world peace sounded by prophets through the ages. In Isaiah 2:1-4, we read that the establishing of God's true church in the last days will include the ingathering of many peoples with the potential for major breakthroughs for disarmament and hence world peace (also Mic. 4:2-4). Later, in graphic detail, Isaiah describes the holy mountain of the Lord where those who formerly would have been arch enemies, fighting and killing each

other on sight, are now friends, eating together, playing together and even lying down together (Isa. 11:1-10). The bitterness and hostility has been taken away. Enemies have become friends.

This is in tune with the revelation shown to the apostle John:

'After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands' (Rev. 7:9).

So now you can see that in a town where there were both Jews and Gentiles it would be wrong to have one church for the Jews and another for the Gentiles. That would be showcasing two 'gospels' and two 'Sons of God'. It would be the very antithesis of what God wants to demonstrate through His church. But many of us may never meet a Jew or live close to one. So what has this teaching got to do with us?

Peace for the world

I believe that the bad relationship which existed between the Jews and Gentiles before Christ came is no different in nature from all the very bad relationships that exist today between the races, tribes, cultures and sexes. No matter which part of the world we

live in, we have all witnessed the barriers, dividing walls and hostilities between different people groups who happen to be living close to each other. We can cite the example of blacks and whites in South Africa, the USA and the UK. In India we have the divisions within the caste system. We know of the hostility between Indians and Pakistanis. Then we have the tribes in Africa – for example, the Yorubas and Igboys in Nigeria or the Gikuyus (Kikuyus) and Luos in Kenya or the Ewes and Ashantis in Ghana. Sometimes the enmity and dividing walls are between the sexes.

In each of these contexts, however, God's gospel, which had the power to save and recreate the Jews and Gentiles, has the same power to save and recreate all these warring factions so that together they can form one body – the body of Christ.

If we capture Paul's vision of a glorious church then, hard on the heels of preaching the gospel to our own people group, we will start preaching the same gospel to the people groups whom we have always disliked or hated, those for whom we have some derogatory names or with whom we have even fought wars. As we preach the same gospel to our 'enemies' we will discover that God will incorporate them into the same body that we are part of. Our former enmity will be >



deleted by the cross of Christ. He will make us one with them. Our local churches will become prophetic microcosms, the first signs of world peace!

the differences between males and females were not designed for war but for love and complementing each other. As the Son of God continues to redeem men and women of every tribe, tongue and race from the power of sin we will discover increasingly that our differences, which hitherto fueled separation, hatred and war, shall become tools that we will use to complement and serve one another in love in the new nation God is building. Then one day we will join the multitudes that the apostle John saw in glory:

‘... a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb ...’ (Rev. 7:9a).

For now, let us accept one another just as Christ accepted us in order to bring praise to God (Rom. 15:7). ■



The blessings of diversity

If we are eager to conform to the apostolic revelation of Ephesians 3:4-6 we cannot submit to the formation of separate churches for different races or tribal groups living within the same town or city. To do so is to present two different gospels and two different Sons of God; but he is one and the gospel is only one.

So diversity need no longer mean hatred and war. In fact God, the only wise God, has built diversity into the very fabric of His creation – as a study of the plant and animal kingdoms quickly reveals – and we human beings are no exception. However, although we come in different shapes, colours and sizes, all human races, tribes and people groups were created in the image of God and therefore all have equal value to God. None of us was created in the image of baboons (Gen. 1:27).

Significantly, there is diversity in the Godhead. But it does not exist so that its members might shoot at one another but rather that they might love and complement one another, and advance God’s work. In the same way,

‘Although we come in different shapes, colours and sizes, all human races, tribes and people groups were created in the image of God’



A minute with... John Kpikpi

1. Who has shaped your life?

God, and among men, Terry Virgo.

2. What do you feel most passionate about?

Christ Jesus & his church.

3. What do you expect to be doing in 10 years?

Serving at least 200 churches and communicating God’s truth to multitudes using print, multimedia and any other modern technology that has been invented by then.

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A church which is proving to be both salt and light in its location, impacting the culture of the community.

One summer evening, as I walked home, looking forward to spending supper time with the family, the idyllic scene played out in my mind. We would sit outside in the back yard, enjoying a dinner of roasted chicken with garlic, lemon and herbs. Perhaps some new potatoes, a green salad, a glass of wine ...

SALT & LIGHT

BY DAVE STROUD, LONDON, UK



As I opened the fridge, my daydream was shattered by the putrid stench of rotten meat. I unwrapped the chicken and the smell immediately made me retch. I ran for the bin, appalled at the foul aroma, and sadly resigned to the prospect of a disappointed family and a meat-free salad! This trivial example reminded me of a simple, but important principle. Without proper preservation meat will quickly rot and decay. Society, of course, is no different.

The United Kingdom has the highest level of drug addiction in Europe. The number of couples getting married has reached its lowest point since 1862. Schools send home 2,200 children

“It has always been important to us to build excellent churches but our influence should go far beyond our buildings and our meetings, and have a tangible effect on the society around us”

a day for disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Violent crime by women has reached an all-time high, with an average of 250 women being arrested each day. 58% of 14-17-year-olds have viewed pornography, and 40% are sexually active. Over 41,000 women under eighteen fall pregnant each year, and 49% of them have abortions. Since abortion was legalised in the UK just over 40 years ago, seven million children have been aborted. Everywhere you look, there are signs of decay.

This epidemic is not isolated to my own country. Many similar statistics are echoed in other nations. As a result, we have to ask why the church is not making more of a difference.

Jesus told us to be salt and to be light. These are evocative pictures of how the church is to be in society. Salt preserves; it

holds off decay. If the church were being as salty as it should, we ought not to see such levels of corruption in society. Light penetrates darkness; it brings revelation and helps people to see the truth. The church should be a beacon of hope, showing up sin for what it is and bringing revelation through the preaching of the gospel. It has always been important to us to build excellent churches but our influence should go far beyond our buildings and our meetings, and have a tangible effect on the society around us.

This means that as individuals we need to take responsibility for the environments in which God has placed us; our workplaces, our university campuses, our streets and our schools. We need to be a positive influence through our actions and our proclamation of the gospel. As local churches we need to impact whole communities, through social action projects and care for the poor, providing for the needs of society and being a positive presence in their midst. One of the benefits of working together across nations is that we can also look to make a difference at a broader national and international level as God leads us.

This is not a new innovation, but a core component of what we were made to do in Genesis 1. On the sixth day, God created man and instructed him to ‘fill the earth and subdue it’ (Gen. 1:28).

Fill the earth

Clearly this was a command for Adam and Eve to have children. From the beginning it was God’s intention that the whole earth be filled with people who bear His image and represent His handiwork.

Today there are over seven billion people on the planet, so you could be forgiven for thinking we’d filled it enough! But many of those living on the earth today do not know their Creator and God’s image in them has been marred by sin. Jesus has come to restore the image of God in man, so in addition to giving birth to physical children and raising them in a godly manner, we are called to give birth to ‘spiritual children’ through evangelism, conforming people to the likeness of Christ through the gospel.

Subdue the earth

The term 'subdue' is a rich and multilayered word which speaks of cultivating, protecting, taking responsibility and bringing order. Adam was placed in a garden and told to cultivate it.

Today our call remains the same. We are to cultivate the environment around us for the glory of God. Even the most beautiful garden, if left untended, will soon become overrun with weeds. God's creation mandate is this; you are to be gardeners! Pull up the weeds, tend the plants, draw out the beauty of creation. Be salt. Be light. The implications of this are vast. We have a God-given responsibility that goes beyond simply building churches and winning the lost. We are called to shape the whole of creation. This will require all of us to play a part, using our different backgrounds, talents and passions to bring order to this world.

John Cadbury understood this principle. In the 1820s, alcoholism was rife in England. Water was so polluted that people drank gin in large quantities, and society was plagued by drunkenness, which led to poverty and crime. Cadbury took it upon himself to find a solution, and so established a business, providing cocoa and chocolate as alternatives to alcohol.

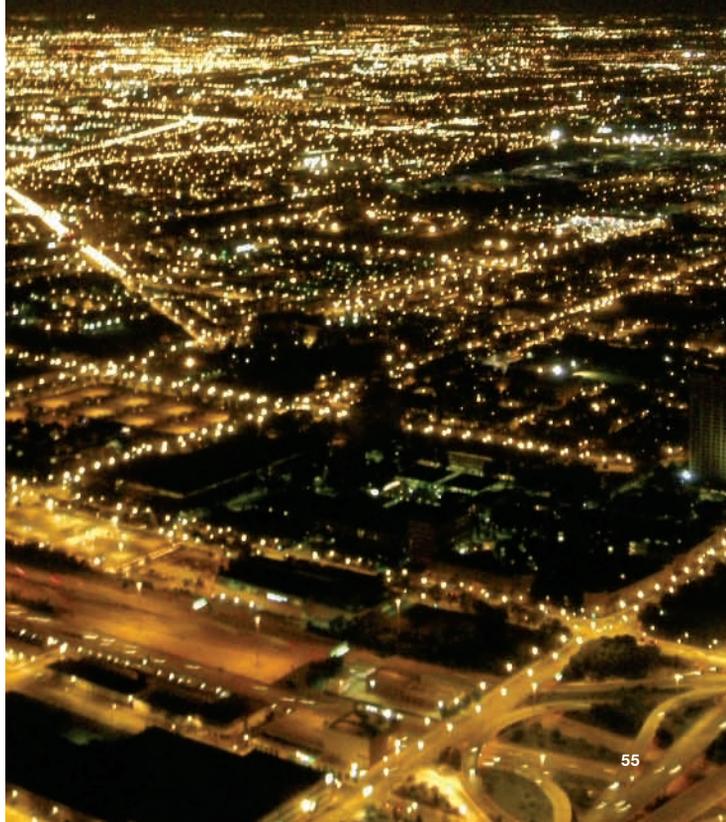
For many years the Cadbury family was actively involved in social reform, campaigning against the use of children to clean chimneys and fighting for the rights of the underprivileged. They set high standards for the care of their workers, paying generous salaries, and providing education, healthcare and pension schemes. For half a century they even ran Bible readings and morning prayers.

In the late 1890s John Cadbury's sons purchased a large plot of land and built affordable housing with space for gardens and trees, for employees and non-employees alike. By taking responsibility and striving to be salt and light, the Cadbury family had a remarkable and lasting impact upon their society.

We need to live with the same kind of vision. Fill the earth and subdue it. Be salt and light. We dare not focus on one to the exclusion of the other. Instead we must evangelise and transform culture.

We must preach the gospel and care for the poor. >

“ *The breadth of the commission to be salt and light is immense. It is all-encompassing, and it requires us all to play our part. The gospel needs to work its way into all areas of society* ”



Being salt and light

As individuals we need to be salt and light in our localities. We need to ask ourselves the question 'how can I cultivate the area of the world in which God has placed me?' For some it may be by becoming an outstanding worker for your employer or be as simple as refusing to gossip in the office. For others it may mean visiting an elderly neighbour or being a positive influence amongst other parents and teachers at the local school.

Once I started a neighbourhood watch scheme that made the area feel secure and broke down the barriers between the different ethnic communities that lived on the street.

As local churches we need to impact our communities in practical ways so that our neighbourhoods are better places in which to live. The streets should be safer, neighbours more trusting, children able to play safely in public spaces. Unbelievers should miss your church deeply if it were, for any reason, to close!

We will also need real wisdom to know how to use our resources at a broader regional or national level. We must remember that there are times when the local church should be supporting those championing change rather than leading the way itself. This is not because we have suddenly lost faith in the church. Rather, local church elders may find themselves lacking the complex skill set necessary to campaign for some sorts of structural reform. Reform may require making an allegiance with a particular political party in a way that is inappropriate for a local church. It may cost more than a church can successfully raise and manage. On these occasions we should not be afraid to release the next generation of reformers into their calling, supporting them with prayer and encouragement, as they become the Wilberforces or Shaftsburys of our generation.

The breadth of the commission to be salt and light is immense. It is all-encompassing, and it requires us all to play our part. The gospel needs to work its way into all areas of society. Salt gets deep down into the cracks, and light can penetrate even the smallest and darkest of places. No part of this world should be beyond the reach of God's rule. No millimetre of creation should escape His redeeming touch.

The potential is enormous. I am genuinely excited about all that God will achieve through us as we commit ourselves to being salt and light in the world. It is my hope and dream that, as we strive to bring God's rule to bear on all of His creation, our name as a movement will be deemed worthy to be listed alongside the nation-changers of ages past. ■



A minute with... Dave Stroud

1. Who has shaped your life?

A whole range of people, including David Devenish, Terry Virgo, John Wimber, Roger Forster, Jackie Pullinger and Steve Nicholson (who oversees church planting in the USA for the Vineyard network).

2. What do you do to relax?

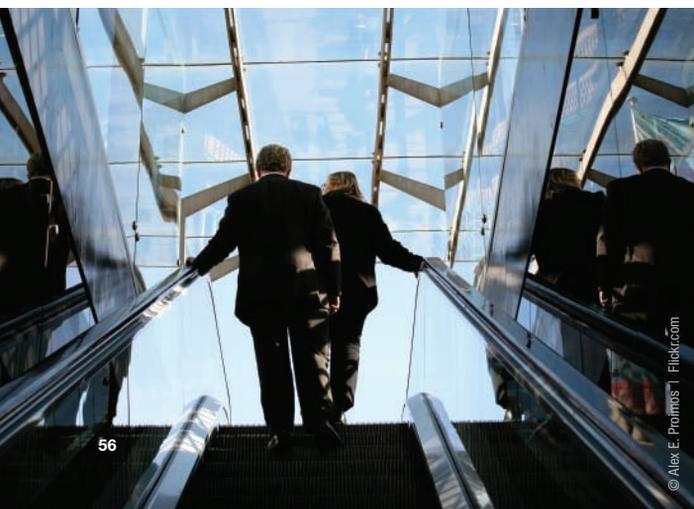
I enjoy eating and relaxing with family and friends, reading, classical and modern art and watching any sport, particularly cricket.

4. Who's your favourite Bible character?

I am constantly inspired by the apostle Paul because of his remarkable ability to keep going with such grace despite extraordinary difficulties. He seems to be forever filled with joy and overflowing with God's love.

5. What's your favourite quote?

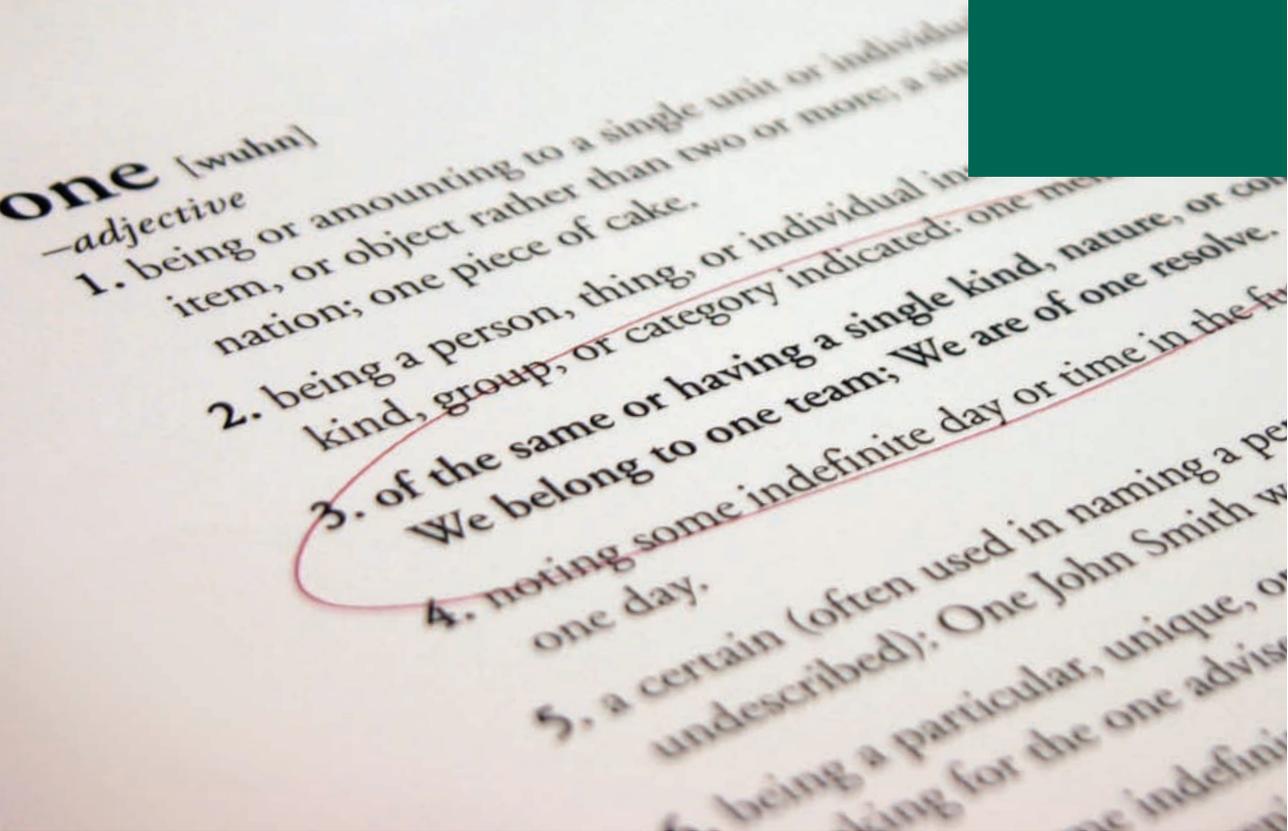
'The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man' (George Bernard Shaw).



Perfectly

MANY EXTRAORDINARY WORDS CAME FROM THE LIPS OF JESUS BUT TO ME SOME OF THE MOST REMARKABLE ARE RECORDED IN JOHN 17:23. JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL THOSE THAT WOULD BECOME HIS FOLLOWERS 'THAT THEY MAY BECOME PERFECTLY ONE'.

BY STEVE WALFORD, BRIGHTON, UK



“WE ARE GENUINELY FOR EACH OTHER AND UNITED IN OUR DESIRE TO SEE THE GOSPEL POWERFULLY IMPACT OUR CITY”

Not just one but perfectly one! We have our work cut out trying to live this out in just one local church. However, if we have any expectation that this prayer will be answered, then surely we need to take responsibility for being the answer not only in our own church but amongst other churches in our community.

Far from making us insular, Jesus makes it clear that to reflect his heart of love to all our brothers and sisters in Christ has staggering repercussions amongst the unchurched. ‘By this all people will know that you are my disciples’ (John 13:35).

For fifteen years I have been on a journey with other church leaders in Brighton, UK who share the conviction that a greater sense of oneness is worth pursuing because it’s what Jesus died for. We formed the *Brighton Evangelical Alliance* (BEA) which now consists of 25 churches and six Christian organisations. It is quite likely that other groups of churches have moved further and faster than us: we have inevitably experienced frustrations, setbacks and disappointments. Nevertheless we are now largely free from the pain, suspicion and independence of earlier years. We are genuinely for each other and united in our desire to see the gospel powerfully impact our city. The challenge

remains largely the same in knowing how to further relationships whilst remaining true to our vision and values as a local church and a movement.

Here are some of the key learning points for me as I have represented our eldership team in this sphere. I think my fellow leaders in the *BEA* would agree with most of them!

OUR STARTING POINT - WE ARE ALREADY ONE

Rather than trying to present a united front we are to maintain the unity Jesus has already won for us (Eph. 4:3). It pays to remember often Jesus’ very practical wisdom that ‘the one who is not against us is for us’ (Mark 9:40).

DEVELOP FRIENDSHIP

It’s hard to fall out with those with whom you play squash, share Jacuzzis, sit round bonfires, eat breakfast and drink wine! Many leaders and their wives can feel lonely and appreciate genuine fellowship. As well as the personal networking that takes place we invite everyone to two social events a year. This is vital to providing an organic rather than an institutional foundation to anything we do together.

PRAY TOGETHER

We have a weekly prayer meeting for

leaders where we pray for our city, our churches and each other. More than in any other context it is here that our successes or setbacks are owned together. We have definitely grown in our openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit together. Twice a year we arrange ‘away days’ in the countryside for worship, teaching, prayer and fellowship. We gather about 40 for these very fruitful occasions.

LOOK FOR THOSE WITH A STRONG SENSE OF YOUR COMMUNITY

There can be a great loss of momentum when an influential leader suddenly moves on. Wherever possible it therefore helps to build most strongly with those who are in for the long haul and, ideally, who look to bring through leaders from within their own ranks.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Because of the desire for gospel breakthrough there are often new local or national projects springing up which we can feel obliged to get involved in. However, there are relatively few initiatives that inspire faith in every church. What has worked well for us is when two, three or more churches partner together for specific purpose. Usually one church or leader takes the main lead and others can choose to opt in if they want to. This has worked for worship and youth events, open air evangelism, outreach to housing estates and social action projects. Other outworkings of partnership have included lending of premises for a season and good communication about people changing churches.

PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS

Due to the fruitfulness that has come to us as a local church from single-mindedly making Sundays our main event, we now tend to be less event or project orientated. This can make us appear a little aloof and can be frustrating for other churches. It is therefore helpful to explore other ways

to serve our brothers and sisters. *Worship School* and the *Leadership Training* programme have been great opportunities to equip local as well as *Newfrontiers* churches. Our Sunday evening meetings bring great refreshment most weeks to small church groups and leaders looking in. There is probably much more scope for us, whatever our church size, to utilise our resources creatively for the benefit of others without losing our focus on what God has called us to do.

WELCOME NEW CHURCH PLANTS

As a group of local churches we have worked hard at being very welcoming to new church plants rather than feeling threatened or in competition with them. We endeavour to meet with their leaders, pray for them and encourage them when they hit sticky patches.

LOOKING FOR MORE

It is not unusual to hear statements along the line that we must get more united so that revival can come. Although God loves to bless unity, it seems to me that there is little Biblical or historical evidence for this expectation. If we attain such a level of unity then I think we will probably already be enjoying revival!

Nevertheless, Ephesians 4 indicates that God gives us key ministries 'until

we all attain to the unity of the faith'. Who knows how God will move in the future to bring churches closer together? There may well be some surprises ahead. When our local city council had an issue with us and we got some flak in the press, local evangelical churches were quick to come to our defence. It meant a huge amount to us and probably did as much for church unity in the city as many other initiatives. But surely attaining unity must include closer doctrinal agreement. In the past we have had forums where we discussed some theological issues such as the nature of the church and water baptism. They were great contexts for graciously hearing and understanding each other better but there were probably no significant outcomes. However, I hope the day soon comes when God draws us closer together in this way also.

In conclusion, I am not aware of a single significant move of God that has been rooted exclusively in one church. The bottom line is we need each other. As part of the amazing body of Christ we need to reflect God's intention that 'that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another' (1 Cor. 12:25). It's not a quick or easy journey but it is one that is well worth making. ■



A minute with... Steve Walford

1. Who has shaped your life?

My parent's example, Terry Virgo's passion for prayer and my wife's honesty!

2. What do you feel most passionate about?

Seeing a massive city-changing church established in Brighton & Hove.

3. Currently, what is your favourite album?

Hillsong – Tear down the walls

4. What do you do to relax?

Play squash or walk in The South Downs

5. Who is your favourite Bible character?

Jonathan's armour bearer because of his willingness to go into battle without a sword.

6. What's your favourite quote?

Steve Farrar's personal mission statement in 'Finishing Strong' - 'Don't screw up'

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A church desiring and welcoming encouragement and correction from trans-local ministries in the fulfilment of these objectives.

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By Steve Petch, Chichester, UK

RECEIVING ENCOURAGEMENT & CORRECTION FROM TRANSLOCAL MINISTRIES

AS WE LOOK AT THE DIFFERENT VALUES THAT MAKE UP THIS SERIES IT QUICKLY BECOMES CLEAR THAT CHURCH LEADERSHIP IS A CHALLENGING TASK AND NOT FOR THE FAINTHEARTED!

“EFFECTIVE TRANSLOCAL MINISTRIES DON’T JUST ‘DO THE JOB’ THEMSELVES, THEY BRING A NEW EMPHASIS INTO THE CHURCH SO THAT WE ALL MOVE FORWARD AND BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE”

This is especially true if you are the leader of a church plant, and remains true if you are among an established eldership team with a multiplicity of men and gifts. The spiritual landscape is littered with churches and elders that have failed to go the distance, and none of us can afford to become complacent thinking ‘it couldn’t happen here’. How do we ensure that we hold firmly to Biblical values and fulfil the call of God on our churches? Thankfully God has not left us to do it on our own.

TRANSLOCAL MINISTRIES – A GIFT FOR EVERY LOCAL CHURCH

Obviously we rely on the Bible, which is full of wisdom and direction for churches. We also have the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit, at work in both the leadership and the wider congregation, to guide us through wisdom, prophecy and discernment. But the Word and the Spirit are not all we have. Ephesians 4:7-16 teaches us that the ascended Jesus also gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers as gifts to his church too. These gifted people are given by Jesus to help equip the church for ministry, and also to bring us to maturity and unity.

It might be nice to think that we could have each of these ‘five-fold’ gifts represented within every local congregation, but the nature of these gifts is that they are translocal, so it falls to local church eldership to create a culture where these ministries are welcomed to bring encouragement and correction, both to the eldership and to the wider church. This requires humility and a submissive heart on the part of the eldership,

especially where the church appears to be moving forward well. Even in a large, fast-growing church, where perhaps one or more of these gifted people is resident, the church will still benefit from others coming in who move in these gifts in different ways, with different personalities and experiences. It’s not just new or smaller churches who need translocal ministry; we all need to be caught up with an apostolic adventure!

MAINTAINING BALANCE AND GAINING MOMENTUM

Churches can falter in many ways, and one of the most common is for something to get ‘out of balance’ and for the church to veer to one unhelpful ‘extreme’ or another. Eldership faces the constant challenge of helping the church to maintain a healthy balance and at the same time to keep a forward momentum. It’s easy to avoid extremes if we put the brakes on everything but then the church will fail to thrive, or perhaps even die. How do we manage this difficult process of maintaining balance whilst gaining momentum? This is where input from gifted translocal ministries, not imposed upon us but working in relationship with us, can make an enormous difference. Here are just some of the ways they can help:

Seeing with fresh eyes

When we’ve been in a church for a while we can cease to see the obvious. Eventually we can become complacent about issues that need resolving, or fail to play to our strengths. Gifted input from a fresh pair of eyes can both bring encouragement to what is good and also lovingly point out where some attention is needed. If a local church should drift into a culture of legalistic practice, or the development of internal cliques, a discerning prophet or apostle would tend to identify the problem, as Paul did with the Galatians.

When we receive outside ministry on a Sunday I will always try to ask how the speaker assessed specific areas such as the welcome, the worship and the overall feel of the church. Gifted translocal ministries often have a God-given ability to spot problems that local leadership is blind to. >

A wider perspective

It's very easy to become focussed on our own area of ministry and forget that we are part of something larger, both in terms of *Newfrontiers* and the kingdom of God. Someone working translocally is able to lift our eyes to see what is going on more widely, and also to help us connect to churches and situations beyond our own local congregation. It was exactly this sort of input that enabled my wife Jo and me to see that it was time for us to move on from our first church plant to plant again.

Support for the elders, especially the lead elder

Ongoing relationship with gifted translocal ministry, especially apostolic ministry built over years, can help us to fight any sense of isolation. We're not on our own; someone else is standing with us and praying for us.

This support creates accountability and encouragement for the eldership, accompanied by correction when necessary: serious pastoral issues can be talked through; advice can be given on major decisions; an external perspective can be brought to help resolve difficulties in the team or the church; issues of theology can be checked; changes to the eldership can be talked through, and potential new eldership appointments can be identified and discussed.

An emphasis on releasing the church into new areas of ministry

Effective translocal ministry not only comes with a different gifting, but also with an ability to release that gifting in other people. For example, evangelists provoke the church to reach out with the gospel, prophets inspire us to pursue new heights in prophetic ministry, and teachers birth in us a new desire to understand the depths of God's Word. Effective translocal ministries don't just 'do the job' themselves, they bring a new emphasis into the church so that we all move forward and become more effective.

It was the input of a translocal evangelist that inspired the first church plant I led to

take the step out of a home and into a public setting with the gospel; as a result we grew and never looked back. It was apostolic ministry that released many in that church into the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and prophecy, as new gifts were imparted through the laying on of hands.

Fresh momentum

Apostolic ministry is especially important because, in addition to the impartation of spiritual gifts, it works to draw churches into increasingly dynamic mission and greater faith, believing God for more. The fruit that is imparted during the visit of one of these gifted ministries can bring a fresh momentum and impetus to the whole church. It's not just for the eldership, but impartation that the whole church needs to receive. Jesus gave these translocal ministry gifts to the church for our good so let's not hold back in isolation but rather push through to see our people equipped for service and built up towards greater maturity and unity. Together let's build healthy churches that will go the distance. ■

A minute with... Steve Petch



1. Who is your favourite Bible character?

I'm not sure I can pick just one character, but my favourite book of the Bible would be Ruth. I found that the story repeatedly reduced me to tears when I was preparing a series on this book to preach at Grace Church; the love and grace of God just blew me away.

2. Currently, what is your favourite album?

I have two: I love the 'Redeemer' album that was recorded at Grace Church by Survivor records; it has some awesome new worship tracks on it. I also love 'Kingdom Of Comfort' by *Delirious?*. The lyrics have a great message about the need for us to care for the poor.

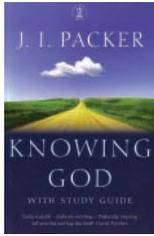
3. What do you feel most passionate about?

My wife and children are definitely first. I'm also passionate about seeing great churches built that will preach the gospel, transform communities and remember the poor. I also feel a new and growing passion in the whole area of special needs and how we bring hope to the many people in our communities whose lives are affected by issues such as autism, learning difficulties, physical difficulties and so on.

Recommended Resources

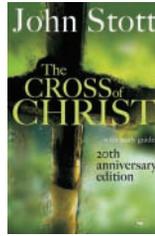
Knowing God

J.I. Packer



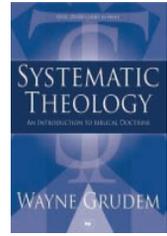
The Cross of Christ

John Stott



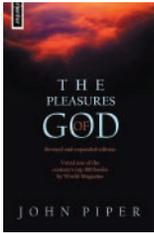
Systematic Theology

Wayne Grudem



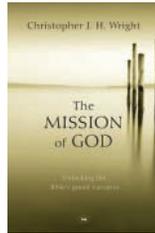
The Pleasures of God

John Piper



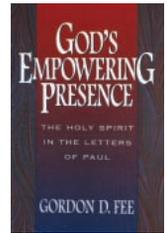
The Mission of God

Christopher J.H. Wright



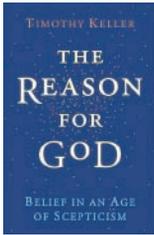
God's Empowering Presence

Gordon D. Fee



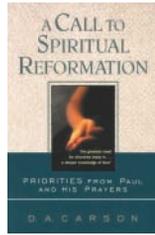
The Reason for God

Timothy Keller



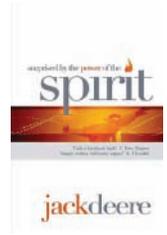
A Call to Spiritual Reformation

D.A. Carson



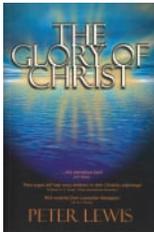
Surprised by the Power of the Spirit

Jack Deere



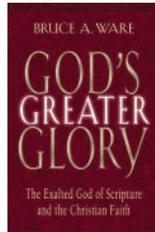
The Glory of Christ

Peter Lewis



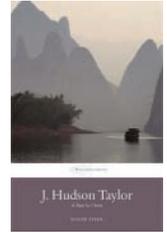
God's Greater Glory

Bruce A. Ware



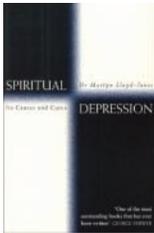
J. Hudson Taylor

Roger Steer



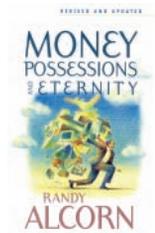
Spiritual Depression: Its Causes & Its Cure

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones



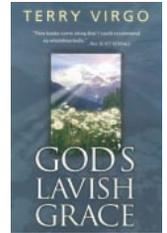
Money, Possessions and Eternity

Randy Alcorn



God's Lavish Grace

Terry Virgo



This is a compilation of *Newfrontiers* Vision and Values which were first published in *Newfrontiers* Magazine October 2009 – July 2010.

Because of the very busy schedules of the contributors to this booklet, it is not possible to enter into correspondence related to the themes covered.

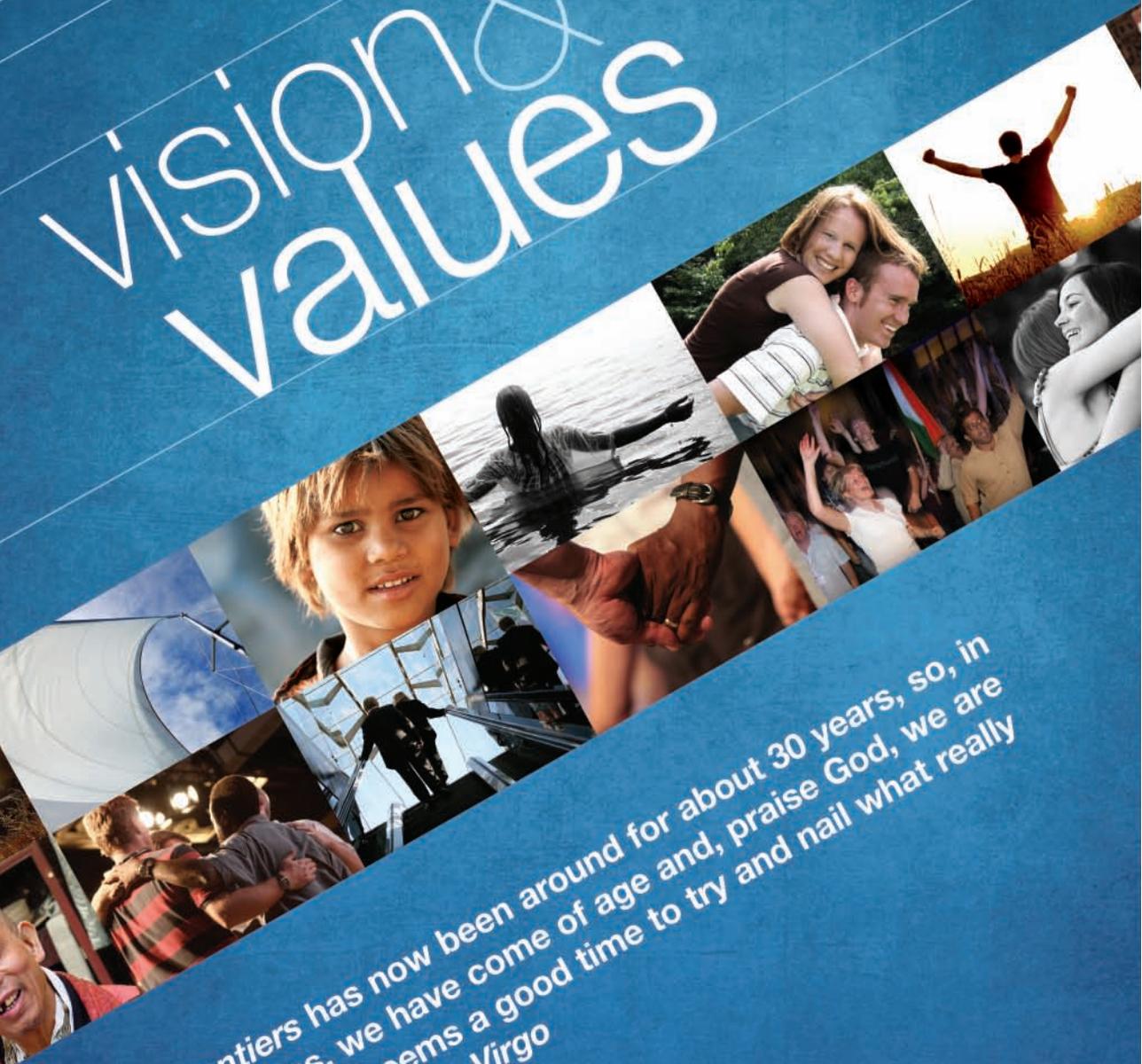
Newfrontiers 17 Clarendon Villas, Hove,
East Sussex, BN3 3RE, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1273 234555 Fax: +44 (0)1273 234556

Website: www.newfrontierstogether.org

Email: office@newfrontierstogether.org

vision & values



'Newfrontiers has now been around for about 30 years, so, in Biblical terms, we have come of age and, praise God, we are still growing! It seems a good time to try and nail what really makes us tick.' Terry Virgo