

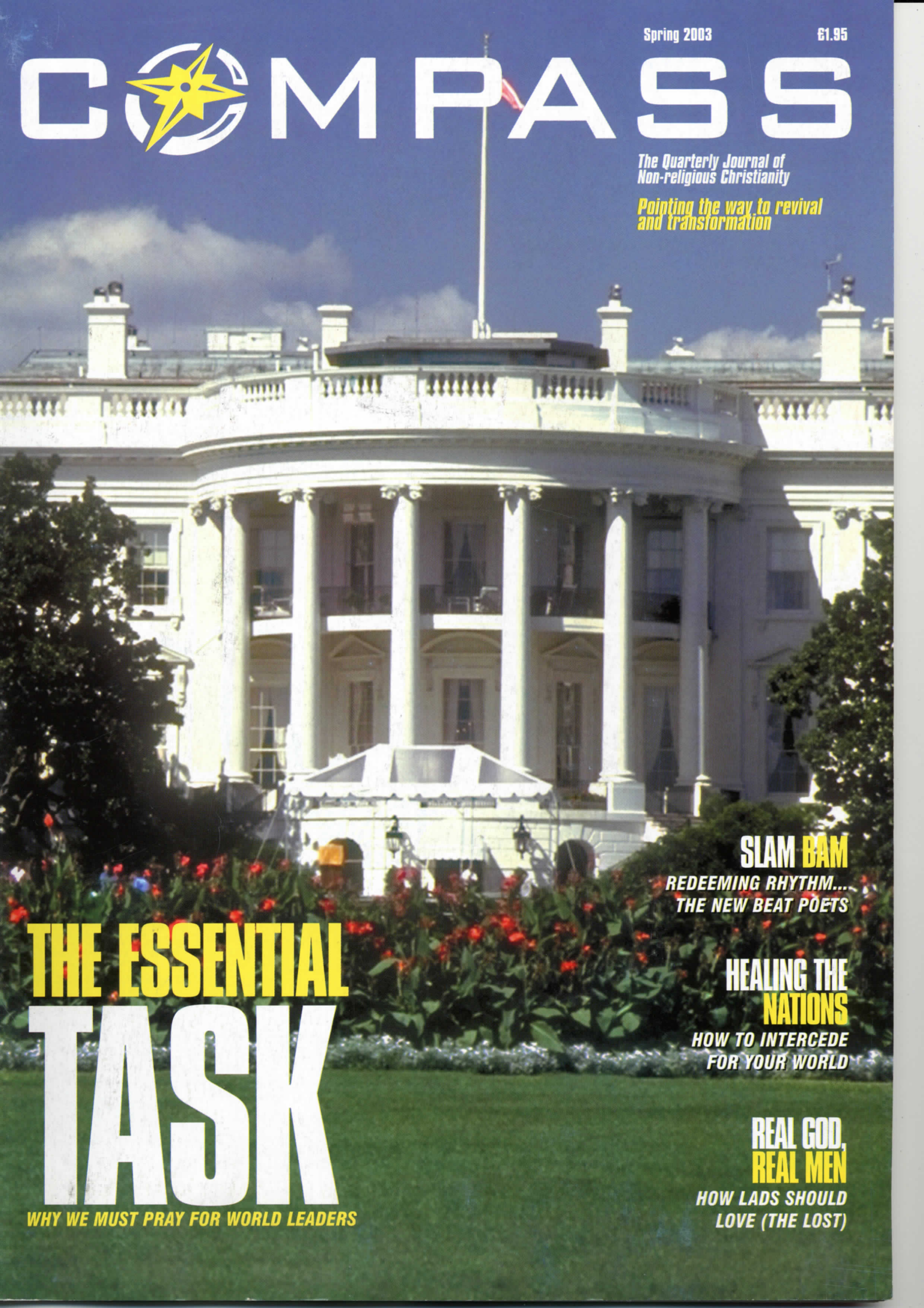
Spring 2003

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COMPASS

*The Quarterly Journal of
Non-religious Christianity*

*Pointing the way to revival
and transformation*



THE ESSENTIAL TASK

WHY WE MUST PRAY FOR WORLD LEADERS

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History shapers



We are certainly living in uncertain times. At a recent London leaders' event, Faith Forster commented with passion, 'We should be shaping history through prayer'. But perhaps we don't know what to pray.

No doubt in any congregation there are many different viewpoints. At the time of writing, many people in Britain remain unconvinced that a war on Iraq is necessary. But talk to any Iraqi immigrant or asylum seeker and almost without exception, they'll tell you that war is the only way of dealing with Saddam Hussein. But innocent people – Muslim and Christian – are likely to lose their lives in such a conflict.

On June 18th 2001, Executive Director of CARE Lyndon Bowring and I were sitting with Dr R T Kendall in his study at Westminster Chapel. He had announced his retirement and was to leave the country for America by the end of that year. He asked me if I had any insight into what was going to happen in the nation after that.

I paused and remember saying, 'It's terrible – absolutely terrible'. Then I burst into tears. He pressed me to know what I was sensing. All I had 'seen' was an outline of England, Scotland and Wales. Scotland and the North of England were lush and green, but the rest of the UK was black, as if burned – and a sense of loss hung over the landscape. The Bible makes it clear that God allows us to have such insights because he cares, and so that we may respond in repentance and prayer.

Three months later, many hundreds of people lost their lives in the World Trade Centre in New York. Our youngest son's office in the city of London was trading with the centre when the first plane crashed into the tower.

Some months after that, I was praying about the terrorist threat and sensed that Heathrow Airport would be a specific target. We were beginning to hear about Al Queda and their 'scorched earth' policy. I made contact with a senior airport official. He listened to my observations, and told me that he and his superiors were taking this very seriously. At the same time I told a group of close confidants I believed the Holy Spirit had shown me that Heathrow would be targeted. I have remained in contact with the authorities.

God's people have nearly always flourished in times of trouble. Our own Government is facing trouble on many fronts. So I am urging prayer for them and their advisors – or other forces will shape the destiny of our nation and the future of our children and their children.

But we have to come to terms with the fact that the Church is no longer centrestage, no longer enjoying powerful links and relationships. Yet there are charismatic evangelicals in politics, music, arts and media. It's generally accepted that there are nearly one-and-a-quarter million evangelicals in the country – and 60 per cent of all Christian students are charismatic evangelicals. Surely this is a time to stand together and pray.

I paused and remember saying, 'It's terrible - absolutely terrible'. Then I burst into tears

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Gerald Coates, Editor

PIONEER.

HOMEnews

Millar (HTB) – issued a joint statement about the event.

'In the face of the threat of war we strongly sense a need to call again for God's mercy,' they said. 'Our purpose is to bring together hundreds of Christians across the denominations, to humble ourselves together before God in unity and lift up the situation in the Middle East and security at home to the Prince of peace.'

'We dare to believe that, as we come together in prayer, God will graciously respond. We fervently hope that this call to prayer will resonate with many from churches throughout our capital.'

Prayer is also being encouraged to take place at other towns and cities across the UK. Those who organise any concerted prayer action in other parts of Britain are invited to let the Westminster organisers know, so that news may be shared of a growing prayer network on these issues. Please e-mail: admin@pioneer.org.uk

CAPITAL PRAYER

SEVEN prominent church leaders in London recently announced plans for a major evening of intercession for the international situation.

This prayer event – concentrating on the Middle East situation and also for the safety and salvation of the people of London – will take place on March 22nd at Westminster Chapel from 6-8.30pm. Subjects for prayer will include –

- international leaders, that war will be averted or shortened;
- for a change of heart or the removal of Saddam Hussein;



LONDON LIGHTS: Christians are being called to pray for the international situation

- and for the people most at risk.

Other considerations will be – the roots and causes of Middle East tension, relationships between Christians, Jews and Muslims; and for protection for the people of London. The evening is open to all. Praise and worship will be led by Graham Kendrick.

The seven London leaders – Lyndon Bowring (CARE), Gerald Coates (Pioneer), Colin Dye (Kensington Temple), Roger Forster (Ichthus), Lynn Green (YWAM), Greg Haslam (Westminster Chapel) and Sandy

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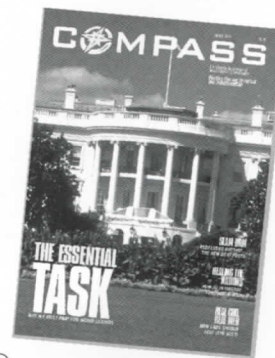
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PARISH POWER

A MAJOR initiative that the Church of England hopes will arm local parish churches with a fresh vision and enhance their future position in the heart of their communities, has just been announced.

Restoring Hope...in our church – which has the support of both the Archbishops of Canterbury and York – aims to help congregations embrace the need for change, and encourages them to look afresh at their primary calling, namely 'To love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves'.

Archbishop of York Dr David Hope described *Restoring Hope* in terms of serving the local community. 'The project is not just about restoring hope in our churches,' he said, 'but restoring hope in our communities, helping people to recognise something of the image and likeness of the eternal God in them.'

Central to *Restoring Hope* is the plan to send to every Church of England benefice across the country a free resource pack this Easter. Packs include a copy of a video presented by Tom Wright, the distinguished theologian and Canon of Westminster Abbey.

Featuring comments from senior Anglican leaders, the video addresses a range of subjects and lays out a vision for the Church in the 21st century. It gives an honest assessment of the challenges facing churches today, and issues a call to reflect prayerfully on the spiritual characteristics of the early church.

Support for this ground-breaking initiative has come from across the Anglican community, including sponsorship from a number of major Anglican mission agencies, such as Springboard, the Church Army, the Church Mission Society, the Church Pastoral Aid Society, the Mothers' Union and the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.



NORTHERN LIGHTS

A RADICAL seven-day event promises to launch 'innovative community action' in some of the most needy areas of Manchester – culminating with a massive weekend festival in Heaton Park for the whole family.

The unique celebration *Festival: Manchester* will run from Monday 25th August – Sunday 31st August. Behind the scenes are two leading outreach agencies from the UK and USA – The Message Trust and The Luis Palau Evangelistic Association.

Festival: Manchester is seeking to mobilise 10,000 young Christians from around the UK and beyond to serve in the city on social, environmental and crime-reducing projects – 'it's evangelism, but not as you know it' is the rallying call (www.festivalmanchester.com).

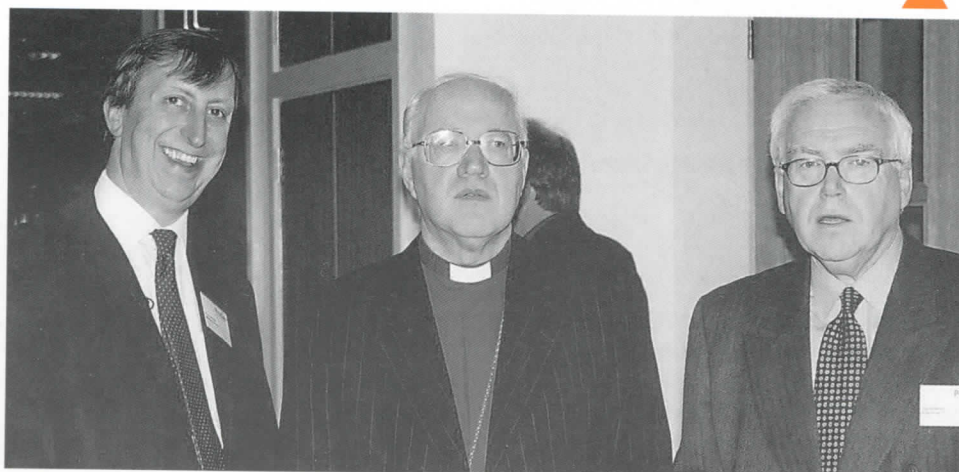
Premier Managing Director Peter Kerridge (left) and Chairman David Heron with former Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey (centre) at the recent launch of their new Westminster studios.

BROADCASTING BOOST

LONDON'S Premier Christian Radio has seen its medium wave listenership soar past the 200,000 mark for the first time.

According to figures released by monitoring service RAJAR, 218,000 people now listen to the station every week over the radio. That represents a ten per cent rise on the previous quarter – making for the highest figures ever achieved by the station.

The news comes hot on the heels of encouraging listening figures from Sky Digital, over which Premier broadcasts nationwide. The most recent report gives Premier 64,000 Sky listeners, making it the most popular Christian radio station available on the service. Sister station talkGospel.com has also grown substantially, with figures up 42 per cent to 37,000.



'SWITCHBLADE' STILL CUTTING IT

FORTY years after the story of his dramatic ministry among New York's gangs was first published, David Wilkerson's *The Cross And The Switchblade* is still touching lives.

On a recent European trip, the Teen Challenge founder met a Russian bishop who told how he became a Christian while reading the 1963 book in prison. Inmates passed around handwritten copies of the book, one page at a time.

'I'm amazed that after 40 years it would still be opening doors for evangelism,' Wilkerson said of the book, of which 32 million copies have been sold or given away.

The book is credited with having helped spark the beginning of the charismatic outpouring among Roman Catholics and mainline Protestant denominations. (**Charisma News Service**)

DELIRIOUS? KEEP THEIR PROMISE

MULTI-million selling band Delirious? were featured performers at Promise Keepers' *Passage 2002*, a youth event held recently at the 17,700-seat Arrowhead Pond arena in California, USA. Delirious? performed new music from their critically acclaimed US release, *Touch* – and were nearly mobbed in the process.



NOISY AFFAIR: Delirious? went down a storm at a Promise Keepers event

Hailed as one of the best live bands to hit America, Delirious? brought their powerful worship and energetic performance to *Passage 2002*. Hundreds rushed the stage when they launched into the title track and current US radio single. Concerned stadium security promptly escorted zealous fans back to their seats.

'Our first event with Promise Keepers got off to a lively start with lots of crowd surfing and moshing,' said Delirious? guitarist Stu G. 'Before our very eyes the venue safety people asked all the young men to sit down where they proceeded to sing their hearts out!'

In addition to the *Passage 2002* concert, Delirious? are preparing for a full tour of the US in the spring. The tour will be in support of *Touch*, which was produced by Chuck Zwicky (Semisonic, Prince).

NIGERIAN MUSLIMS IN 'CHRISTIAN CLEANSING' CLAIM

FACING prison or even death, hundreds of Christians attending a leadership conference in Nigeria in January reportedly knelt in prayer for their nation.

'The hour has come for Nigeria, Africa and the world to recognise him as their God', shouted Mosy Madugba, organiser of *Global PrayerQuake 2003* – an event that attracted more than 8,000 church leaders to an indoor sports arena at Port Harcourt.

It is claimed that in recent years, Muslims have gone on bloody rampages, killing thousands of Christians, burning churches – and even slitting the throats of children gathered for Sunday school.

'Islam is trying very hard to win our cities,' declared Steve Olumuyiwa, one of more than a dozen Nigerian evangelists who addressed the conference.

According to Lagos-based pastor Ladi Thompson, Muslims in the north 'believe they will completely Islamicise Nigeria'. Thompson's work in Nigeria is groundbreaking because there are so few Christians addressing the human rights abuses that have occurred in the north.

His Macedonian Initiative (www.macedonianinitiative.org) is rebuilding burned churches, placing orphaned Christian children in families, and aiding a group of 11 nurses from Bauchi state who were recently fired because they refused to wear Muslim clothing on the job. 'Nothing has prepared us for the challenge we face,' said Thompson. (**Charisma News Service**)

NUMBER OF US ABORTION DOCTORS DECLINES

AS AMERICA observed the 30th anniversary of the 1973 *Roe v Wade* decision that legalised abortion, a recent survey reveals the number of physicians performing abortions has dropped to its lowest level in 30 years.

According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, which tracks abortion statistics, the number of abortion providers dropped from 2,000 in 1996 to 1,819 in 2000. The number of abortions also dipped slightly – from 1.36 million to 1.31 million in the same four-year period.

Guttmacher researcher Lawrence Finer said the decline could be attributed to 'the availability of contraceptive methods' as well as pro-life activists' success blocking efforts to 'establish basic abortion services'.

Abortion rights advocates described the findings as a positive indicator that more physicians and women find abortion 'morally reprehensible'. A recent Gallup poll showed that a majority of Americans believe abortion should be legal, but on a limited basis. (**Charisma News Service**)

'GREED IS GOOD' ERA OVER

IN THE WAKE of scandals at Enron and WorldCom, a new breed of business people is emerging, claims a US magazine.

According to a forthcoming report in *New Man* magazine, recent events have spawned hundreds of seminars, books and workplace ministries – and people in business are primed to become the leading evangelists of the 21st century.

'There's a revival coming, and it's coming out of the marketplace,' said Rich Marshall, a San Jose teacher and speaker who left the pastorate to fan the flames of this budding movement. 'It's been God's plan from the beginning. But don't look for it on Sunday, coming out of the pulpit.'

Dennis Doyle, chief of The Welsh Companies, a real estate sales and management firm in Minneapolis, said more businessmen are realising that God's calling extends beyond the four walls of the church.

'There's a new paradigm,' said Doyle. 'God's calling people into the marketplace. A lot of us in business thought we had to leave our business if we want to be in ministry. But we are sure that God can use our business for ministry.'

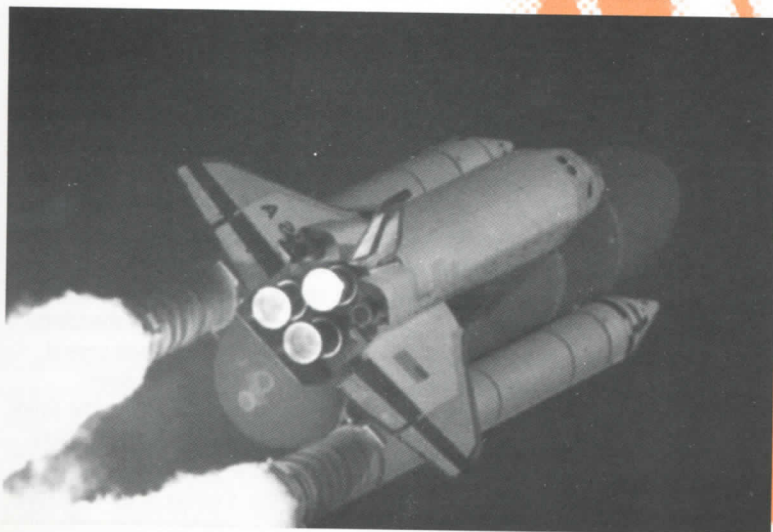
Best-selling author and speaker Zig Ziglar said businessmen who talk about their faith can help transform the marketplace: 'I regularly get letters from people who say they listened to my [testimony] tape and gave their life to Christ. It's my absolute conviction that if a Christian runs his life according to biblical principles and he's consistent, he will have great acceptance and respect among people of other faiths.'

CHURCH MOURNS LOSS OF SHUTTLE CREW MEMBERS

THOUSANDS gathered recently at a Houston-area charismatic church to honour and mourn the seven astronauts who perished with the space shuttle Columbia – including two of the congregation's own.

As part of a service titled 'Tragedy And Triumph', Clear Lake's Grace Community Church pastor Steve Riggle played portions of video interviews he conducted with shuttle commander Rick Husband and payload commander Michael Anderson several weeks ago, *The Houston Chronicle* reported.

SHUTTLE SORROW:
Churches have held
memorial events for the
Columbia crew



'If I ended up at the end of my life having been an astronaut but having sacrificed my family along the way or living my life in a way that didn't glorify God, then I would look back on it with great regret and having become an astronaut would not really have mattered all that much,' said 45-year-old Husband, who was married with two children.

'And I finally came to realise that what really meant the most to me was to try and live my life the way God wanted me to and to try and be a good husband to Evelyn and to be a good father to my children.'

More than 2,500 people – many in tears – heard Husband's words as part of three services at Grace, which were repeated at churches worldwide, the *Chronicle* reported. The first service included stirring songs from the robed choir that once claimed Husband as a member, ending with *Amazing Grace*.

Choir members remembered Husband – whose family has belonged to Grace for about eight years – as a warm and caring man with a beautiful voice. A leader of men's prayer groups, Husband sang a solo on the church's recording *Rise Up And Praise Him*, and was part of Christmas and Easter productions for years.

The congregation also heard from Anderson, also married with two children, who joined the church four years ago. 'We have had a lot of challenges,' Anderson, 43, said on the videotape. 'Rick and I both feel we were put on this mission for a reason and we have tried to meet all those challenges with prayer.'

The only black member of the Columbia crew, Anderson grew up in Spokane, Washington, where he attended Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, whose members yesterday 'celebrated their belief that he was in a place higher than space,' *The Seattle Times* reported.


'He always wanted to fly. He was born for that, trained for that, ready for that,' Morning Star pastor Freeman Simmons told the congregation, *The New York Times* reported. 'He told me: "If this thing don't come out right, don't worry about me. I'm just going on higher." He was an eagle.'

Riggle said he spent some time on the Saturday with the two astronauts' widows, Evelyn Husband and Sandy Anderson, who returned to the Houston area from Florida.

'It was amazing to see the strength of the Lord that was in their lives, the sense that though they are in sorrow and are grieving, the sense that their lives are hooked into something – that though their world is shaken to the core, their inner man is not shaken at all,' he said, *The New York Daily News* reported.

The astronauts' families are at peace, despite all the turmoil surrounding them. 'They are doing remarkably well,' Evelyn Husband told NBC's Today show, the Associated Press reported. 'We've gotten strength from each other, and it was great to see them yesterday,' she said. 'We just cried and laughed and hugged each other, and it was very helpful.' (Charisma News Service)

The essential



Scripture calls us to a solemn duty: pray for your leaders. Gerald Coates explains how we must play our part in reshaping the world

Is the Church of Jesus Christ in danger of becoming increasingly obsessed with herself? Listen to her as she prays – thanksgiving; appreciation; love; confession; apology; repentance; bless me, my family and friends and especially those in need; visit our meeting tonight; help us with our vision; and finally enable us to reach out to those around us.

And of course the Church does reach out – look at Alpha and other courses, kids' clubs, youth initiatives, community barbecues and special events. But is the gospel really at the heart of all we do, or are these initiatives and events left to the passionate, gifted few?

Perhaps one astonishing observation is what and who we do not pray for. There is probably

In the UK we have trouble on almost every front

only one main thing in the corporate mindset at present. It is Iraq and the fear of going to war, triggering terrorism on our own turf.

In the last three months I have participated in dozens of public and leadership meetings, and there has not been one single prayer for Prime Minister Tony Blair, President George W Bush, Saddam Hussein, the Muslim community or the growing Christian community in Iraq.

Well – actually there was one occurrence. Churchgoers from around the Leatherhead, Surrey area packed The Theatre (our church base) and an Anglican vicar asked for God's help in the Iraqi situation. And he did it rather well. But then Anglicans are a lot more used to praying for the Queen, Prime Minister,

doctors, nurses and the police – it has become part of their liturgy.

Interestingly, both President Bush and Prime Minister Blair (never call them Bush and Blair with the cynicism that marks most of our politics) are self-confessed Christian believers and churchgoers. Mr Blair is often seen at Westminster Cathedral in London's Victoria Street with his wife Cherie.

And if ever Christians needed to shape history, it is now. Following September 11th, the airline industry is downsizing, filing for bankruptcy, shedding thousands of jobs and several have gone out of business. Companies who service the airline industry are also being hit hard. This is the year the tourist industry is going to go the same

task

way. Who wants to fly around the world if we are at war?

In the UK we have trouble on almost every front. There is the danger and inadequacy of our public transport system, an overstretched and an overburdened NHS, confusion over what our children should be taught in school and soaring sexual diseases – particularly among the very young (we don't hear much about them because of penicillin, but there is no cure for AIDS which is why we hear about it). Then there is immigration, asylum seekers, the gun culture..!

Political leaders are continually lampooned and criticised

A politician in Westminster told me a few days ago, 'It's a crisis on every front, and nobody, absolutely nobody here knows what to do'. Well, as Christians, prayer for our leaders is a very good start. We don't have to agree with an individual's policy or their party line when we pray for political leaders.

MEDIA INTRUSION

But pray scripture tells us we must: *'The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know. Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well so we can go quietly about our business and living simply, in humble contemplation. This is the way our Saviour God wants us to live. He wants not only us but everyone saved you know, every one to get to know the truth we have learned'* (1 Timothy 2:1-4, *The Message*).

Interestingly, Paul was writing at a time when followers of Christ were often severely persecuted. To pray for Nero or the Herodian dynasty, must have been quite a challenge – especially if family or

friends had suffered under their rule.

Many Christians only seem to be interested and excited if a Bono, Cliff, Jonathan Edwards or Jack Dee declare their faith in Christ – unless they fail or fall. But political leaders are continually lampooned and criticised along with their partners and even their children.

Malcolm Muggeridge commented that because of media intrusion into every aspect of a politician's family life, sexuality and finances, hardly any good people will run for office as they will not subject their family to such exposure.

But we have many very sincere, hard-working people in Westminster and in their constituencies. Many of them are Christians – Paul Boateng, Gary Streeter, Virginia Bottomley, Alistair Birt and in the House of Lords, Caroline Cox and David Alton – to name but a few. And they deserve our prayers.

Thank God we still live in a democracy. But we also live at a time when politics is seen as dreary and politicians as dishonest or self-seeking. Getting people out to vote is becoming more difficult due to growing disinterest. If every committed Christian turned out to vote at the next General Election, their influence would be huge.

But politics is not just about war, dreadful though it is – it comes and it goes. Politics affects our local schools and communities. So we should be extending our positive Christian influence to where people are educated and work.

A new 'reformation' is needed. But it won't be along the lines of 'Give the Bible back to the people' or even 'Give ministry back to the people'. Its rallying cry will be, 'Give the people back to the community'. And that includes local and national politics. Have you ever written a letter of support for your local MP or to the Prime Minister – adding that as a Christian you praying for them?

News of a Bill being pushed through Parliament landed on some of our desks just before

Prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare

Christmas. Put simply, the law will extend racial equality issues to religious and racial equality issues. It could be law by the end of this year. Its effect will be that if you have a staff position in your Christian school, church, Christian organisation or business, you will have to, by law, give the job to the person with the highest qualifications – irrespective of their sexuality, faith or indeed lack of it.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

So pray for Steve Chalke and others of us currently engaged in talks and correspondence with the DTI. Our line has been simple: we do what we do because of who we are. And we are Christians, lovers of Christ and his teaching and he is why we do what we do. Take our source away and replace it with something else and much of what is currently being done among the poor, powerless, homeless and sick will not be done. It is called the ontological argument. Our actions are determined by our essence.

I have, on behalf of the Pioneer network of churches, ministries and training programmes – and the Round Table I am privileged to chair (of around 40 charismatic evangelical leaders) – challenged these intentions, alongside a number of denominational church leaders.

At the moment this could simply be seen as a request for prayerful self-preservation. In 20 or 30 years' time, if this law goes through, I think it will be precisely that! And I am told by a journalist that much of this material is already posted on certain websites. And if it becomes law, then these groups will target churches, and take them to court. So what is it going to be: prayer now, working hand in hand with activists or civil disobedience next year, with fines and prison?

Prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. *'Pray hard and long, pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that nobody falls behind or drops out. And don't forget to pray for me. Pray that I will know what to say and have the courage to say it at the right time...'* (Ephesians 6:18/19).



As Christians, prayer for our leaders is a very good start

● **Gerald Coates is Editor of Compass, and leader of the Pioneer network of New Churches.**

Healing t

Fear of nationalism and jingoism has turned many away from it— but praying for the nations is a gospel priority, as Charlie Cleverly explains

In recent years, we have seen a growing emphasis on the nations, with burdened hearts crying out like the psalmist: *'Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance'* (Psalm 2:8). This is perhaps because it is the time for the nations.

Philippe Joret, an apostle to France at this time, in his excellent book *Francement* applies Isaiah 62 to his own nation with typical French passion: 'For France's sake I will not keep silent and for my city's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth like the dawn, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your righteousness.'

Quoting John Knox's 'Give me Scotland or I die', Philippe goes on: 'Can we say "Give me France or I die"? That is to say, "I don't have

a reason for living that is more important to me than seeing the kingdom of God revealed over the whole of my nation."

'Like Simeon, who waited for the consolation of Israel, and who saw the salvation of the Lord, I say I want to see a powerful revival of faith in Christ and love for God fill my nation. Therefore I say, "Give me my nation or I don't have a reason to live that satisfies me".'

'I don't merely want to see these things from afar. A fire is burning in me to see my land visited by God. I long to see my country eating of the tree of life which is given for the healing of the nations.'

BUILDING JERUSALEM

I am convinced that as he grows in intimacy with God, the intercessor is likely to catch God's heart for the nations. God's purpose in creating the nations, and how we should regard them, could (and should) be the subject of a whole book. But for the purpose of understanding what will happen as we grow in intimacy with God, it is important to give a brief introduction to the subject here.

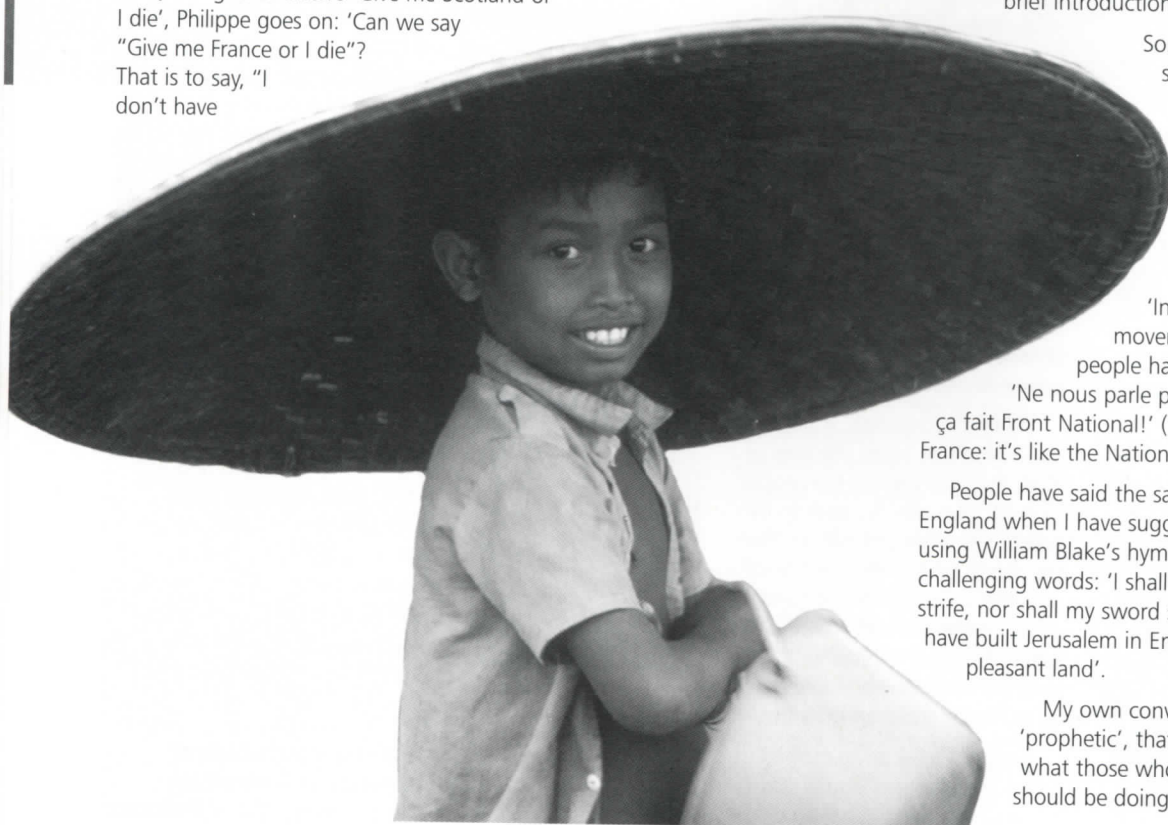
Some people react surprisingly strongly against the idea of praying for nations. This seems to be for one of two reasons. The first may be a fear of nationalism and jingoism. When involved in launching the 'Intercession France'

movement in the past few years, people have sometimes said to me:

'Ne nous parle pas de prier pour la France: ça fait Front National!' ('Don't tell us to pray for France: it's like the National Front!')

People have said the same thing to me in England when I have suggested in prayer meetings using William Blake's hymn *Jerusalem*, with its challenging words: 'I shall not cease from mental strife, nor shall my sword sleep in my hand, till we have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land'.

My own conviction is that this poem is 'prophetic', that is to say it speaks of what those who follow Christ in England should be doing— building Jerusalem (in



ne nations

this context, the Church) in a land that has such potential: England!

The second reason for reticence may be because there has been relatively little published from a theological stance yet to justify the idea of praying for the destiny of nations. Prophetic voices are calling for it, and intercessors are sensing it, but the idea hasn't hit the theological colleges yet, and so the pastors aren't teaching it.

'God has a purpose for your nation— that men might, within it, seek after him'

Intercessors may catch the deep travail of the Holy Spirit when the idea is mentioned, but they can't explain it. Pastors may think it's a distraction from the main and plain task of making disciples and planting churches. But it is interesting that when Jesus gave his *'Go and make disciples'* great commission, he particularly took the trouble to mention the nations (Matthew 28:19).



Similarly, when Jesus gives his chilling image about the final judgement, he makes it clear that the judgement will be for the nations: *'But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats'* (Matthew 25:31-32).

BROODING PRESENCE

John Piper's book *Let The Nations Be Glad* (Baker Books, 1993) is subtitled *The Supremacy Of God In Missions*, and he assumes, as I had always done, that this verse is referring to individuals. But is this ►





what the text actually says?

Even though salvation is personal, might there not be in the infinite, colourful creativity of God, a purpose for each nation, a plan for each people, a call on each country? Might there not be choices that a nation can take which will generally incline the hearts of a people to see and follow Christ? And might there also be choices that can be taken which can harden the hearts of whole generations?

We first come across the term 'nation' in the Bible in Genesis 10, after the flood. We read, *'These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood'* (Genesis 10:32).

To understand the 'birth' of nations, we must understand the issue of sin. In Ezekiel 28 we see the origin of sin when Lucifer sinned by seeking to rival even God, and as a result God literally disowned him. In Genesis 4 we see sin again: for Cain, *'sin is crouching at the door'* (v 7). On that day of the first murder, Cain moved out of the presence of God.

From this passage we get an understanding of the nature of sin. It is not an act, but a nature, a brooding presence: *'Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you.'* It is a scheming, waiting, crouching being. Then Cain kills and the result is: *'Now you are under a curse.'* It is not that God has cursed him, but he is cursed.

The results of this calamity grow until in the time of Noah when the thoughts of men's hearts were *'only evil all the time'*. The catastrophic flood comes, and after the flood Noah comes out and makes a

sacrifice. Then God declares a change of approach, saying in effect, 'I am not going to do that again'.

Noah's sons are named, and from these sons God now produces nations: *'These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood'* (Genesis 10:32).

Even if for centuries this part of biblical teaching has been neglected, the Bible is clear: God is interested in nations. To Abraham he says: *'This is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations'* (Genesis 17:3-6).

After this there is a time when God deals almost exclusively with Israel. She is the apple of his eye. But not only does she represent the purposes of God on earth, we can also say that he treats her as an example of what God wants in all nations.

PROPHETIC DESTINY

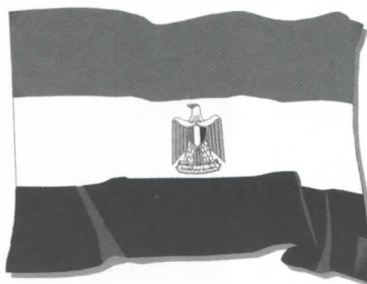
There are also glimpses or key moments when God speaks to different nations individually. We can study this in Isaiah when God gives different prophecies for different nations.

For example, read the surprising passage about the prophetic destiny of Egypt, in Isaiah 19:23: *'In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptian to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance."'*

In Joel we read the following words which some say are being fulfilled today: *'Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war!...Beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning hooks*

'We've seen a growing emphasis on the nations, with hearts crying out

into spears. Let the weakling say, "I am strong!" Come quickly, all you nations from every side and assemble there...Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side...Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!' (Joel 3:9-14).



We can think that in the past there was a time when God dealt almost exclusively with Israel. After the day of Pentecost, the non-Jewish people groups did not interest the apostles. It was as if they had to be pushed and prodded to consider them.

Then the gospel began to be poured out through Paul, of whom God said, *'This man is a chosen*

instrument of mine to carry my name before the nations' (Acts 9:15 RSV).

Years later, when Paul preaches in Athens, he seems to have a grasp of the destiny of nations: 'From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would

'God dealt with Israel as an example of how he would deal with the nations'

seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us' (Acts 17:26-27).

Paul is saying that the nations are God's workings. From Noah, God begins to determine the places and the times. So, according to the Bible, your nation is not an accident and it is not at the mercy of man. God has a purpose for your nation— that men might, within it, seek after him.

Deuteronomy says the same thing: 'When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples' (Deuteronomy 32: 8).

This fact— that the nations are the works of God— remains true, even though sometimes in the last centuries their boundaries have been fixed by men in an apparently arbitrary way.

REVIVAL PREACHERS

It may help us to understand that some conflicts may indeed result from unrighteous decisions made at the time of these boundary changes. On the other hand, in the economy of God, sometimes these changes can work together for good.

From looking at nations in general, we could go further and say that through the Old Testament God dealt with the nation of Israel as an example of how

'Prophetic voices are calling for it, and intercessors are sensing it'

he would deal with the nations. Israel is called a 'banner to the nations' (Isaiah 11:10 RSV).

Then, for 2000 years, Israel was banned from her land. Since the Second World War, Israel has been created again. Only God could have done this. The fact that Israel has become visible again as a nation may mean that God is saying: 'Now is the time for the nations'.

This seems like a new emphasis but it is not a completely new idea. In the days after the church fathers, when missionaries went to new fields, it was

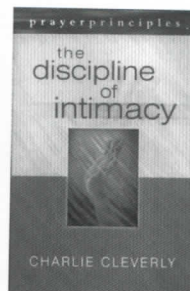
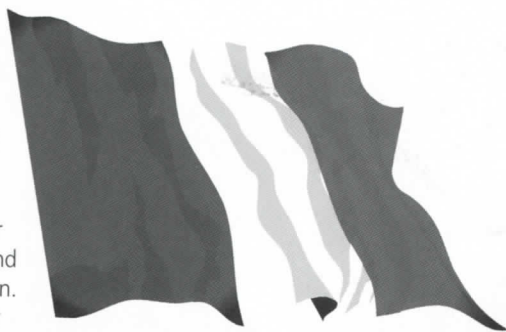
with the idea that the whole nation should come to Christ.

In times of revival, preachers have sometimes been burdened for their land in a way that has gone beyond their local area, and there have been times of great unity between churches. The destiny of nations has been affected, as happened in England in the 18th century.

However, these times have been short-lived, and it is fair to say that the revivals turned into denominations. The 18th-century revival became Methodism, at least in England; the outpouring at Azusa Street, Los Angeles, in 1905 became the Pentecostal denomination.

It is hard to imagine it any differently. But now, in our post-denominational age, in a day of great prayer outpouring, a day of hope of a great end-time harvest, this thought comes back— the idea that a whole nation can be called by God to repentance and to his original purpose.

With this comes the idea of making it part of our spiritual discipline of intimacy to pray for the nations with renewed faith and passion.



● **Charlie Cleverly was pastor of a French-speaking church in inner-city Paris for ten years, but has now returned to the UK to become Rector of St Aldate's Church, Oxford. He is married to Anita and they have four children. His article is taken, with permission, from his recent book *The Discipline Of Intimacy*, published by Kingsway.**

How to pray for nations

1 Remitting the sins of a nation and praying for forgiveness

The sins of the past can affect the present. As we draw near to God and are faced with his holiness, it is likely we will begin to confess sin – not just our own sin but the sin of our nation and the sins of our fathers. When Nehemiah heard of the broken-down state of Jerusalem, his reaction was to weep and fast and to confess the sins of his fathers as if they were his own (Nehemiah 1:6).

2 Praying for the 'redemptive purpose'

As an intercessor, praying for your nation may mean not so much praying against the things that are wrong in your nation, but praying into existence the original purpose of God for your nation. It may mean discovering the works prepared in advance for a particular nation to walk in.

3 Praying for a nation's prophetic destiny to be fulfilled

The Church is also to be a place where we discover not only the character of God for our country, but his purpose for us at each time of history. One nation that has experienced transformation through prayer is Uganda. Not so many years ago, Uganda underwent a terrible time of suffering. But Uganda has experienced for several years now a prayer revival so that many problems have been turned around.

Just Christianity

Global transformation - a dream beyond reach? Maybe. But Roger Allen shows how New Churches and relief workers have already started on the task ahead

ROGUE TRADERS: New Church campaigners at a Trade for Life rally, dressed as pirates to draw attention to trade rules that plunder the poor.



PHOTO: CHRISTIAN AID/BECKY RUST

A wind of change is blowing through our nation. More and more Christians from charismatic and Pentecostal churches are discovering that God requires us, as 'rich Christians in an age of hunger', to 'act justly' (Micah 6).

We are being challenged to learn together what it means to 'loose the chains of injustice' (Isaiah 58). We are being challenged to work in unity with Christians from other churches to seek

and in the way that we live every day. We are grappling with ideas relating to social action, international debt, fair trade and consumer power, justice in global trade and an ethical lifestyle.

A desire to 'act justly' has recently led to a growing partnership between Christians from New Churches and Christian Aid - which has been a pioneer for many years in the areas of justice and unity. Here are a few inspiring stories about this wind of change.

example, Youth With A Mission trains community-based health workers to support people living with HIV/AIDS.

'We have valued our partnership with Christian Aid,' said Lynn Green, Africa director of YWAM, 'to help bring hope to people living with HIV/AIDS in Uganda.'

Dr Patrick Dixon, founder of ACET Uganda (AIDS Care Education and Training), said, 'Churches are leading the fight against AIDS and infection rates are falling fast. Together with others, including the government, I know we can make a real difference'. The HIV/AIDS infection rate in Uganda has dropped to around eight per cent - compared with 30 per cent in 1992.

DROP THE DEBT

The Jubilee 2000 campaign, to cancel the unpayable debt of the world's poorest countries, helped 'change the landscape' in many New Churches. We have seen that the Jubilee laws about debt cancellation are biblical and show God's concern for

'We're exploring together how to take action as consumers and campaigners'

revival and transformation, not just locally, but also globally.

We are exploring together how to take action as consumers and campaigners,

SOCIAL ACTION

Christian Aid works with several New Church partners to bring transformation to communities overseas. In Uganda, for

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Psalm 121

A song of ascents.

Lift up my eyes to the hills—
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not
slumber;
he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

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UNITED FRONT: A group from a Pioneer church in Bristol joined Zambian children for a Jubilee 2000 campaign photo.



PHOTO: CHRISTIAN AID/TONY BERNDES

justice in society. We have understood that, today, this can include tackling the root causes of global poverty, such as international debt.

We have been challenged to 'speak up for those who cannot speak for

themselves' (Proverbs 31). Christian Aid has pioneered ways of doing this.

campaign showed that there is strength in unity and that, together, we can make a difference.'

More than 24 million people in 166 countries signed the Jubilee 2000 petition. Over 681,000 postcards, letters and e-mails

'We've been challenged to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves'

were sent to the UK Treasury in the last three years of the campaign. As a result, the G8 leaders promised to cancel debt worth \$100 billion, with \$54 billion agreed, and \$18 billion so far released in 25 countries.

For example, Uganda, the first country to benefit from debt cancellation, now has 4.2 million children going to primary school for the first time. There are 20,000 new classrooms and 30,000 new teachers - as well as new clinics, roads and agricultural improvements.

Christian Aid's partner, the Uganda Debt Network, helped make sure that money released reached those in most

need. These are amazing achievements, and yet the Jubilee Debt Campaign - as it is now called - reminds us that only 15 per cent of the unpayable debt has so far been cancelled and that the poor are 'still waiting for Jubilee'.

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JUSTICE IN GLOBAL TRADE

We have also discovered that the Bible has a great deal to say about the need for justice in trade and challenges us to act justly as consumers. Today, this can include buying fair trade products. These benefit people and planet, rather than harming and exploiting them.

We can help bring justice and transformation to communities through trade. As ethical consumers, we can make a difference. In the early 1990s, Christian Aid helped set up the Fairtrade Foundation. Now there are more than 100 coffee, tea, banana, cocoa, juice, sugar



PHOTO: CHRISTIAN AID/SAMANTHA NUNDEY

and honey products carrying the Fairtrade Mark in the UK, with sales growing by more than 50 per cent a year.

We are also being challenged to speak up about the unjust trading system, in which poor countries are losing \$100 billion every 50 days as a result of unjust trading rules. Debt is a big global injustice. Unjust trade is even bigger.

Christian Aid's 'Trade for Life' campaign is part of the Trade Justice Movement - a growing group of over 50 organisations - and is building on the achievements of Jubilee 2000. It campaigns peacefully to transform the trade rules to make trade work for everyone: for poor people, not against them.

In June 2002, it held the largest mass lobby of parliament ever, with about

12,000 campaigners queuing to meet 346 MPs. Unjust trade issues were debated in parliament and on the national media.

'Churches are leading the fight against AIDS and infection rates are falling fast'

So the scene is shifting. And the transformation is going much further than

So the scene is shifting. And the transformation is going much further than

the landscape outside your church window. Such actions can change the world.

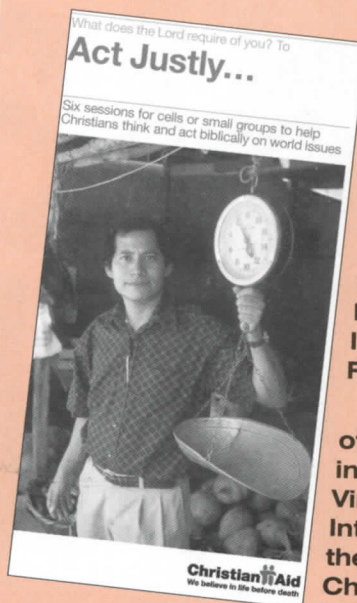
● Roger Allen is part of the wider leadership team of Bristol Christian Fellowship, where he leads a Social Justice Group. Roger is also Christian Aid's Adviser for New Churches, helping charismatic and Pentecostal believers take action concerning global injustices, such as through the Jubilee 2000 and Trade for Life campaigns.



PHOTO: CHRISTIAN AID/ROGER ALLEN

POLITICAL PLEDGES: David Rust, from a Pioneer church, joined other churches in Thornbury, South Gloucestershire, to hand in Trade for Life pledges to their local MP Steve Webb.

Resource for change



A number of New Church leaders have spoken of the need for resources to help local churches respond to issues of global injustice.

The *Act Justly* booklet is Christian Aid's response. It is intended to help cell groups to explore such issues biblically and to take action. It uses a format familiar to cells - Introduction, Worship, Word and Our Response.

The authors come from a variety of New Church backgrounds, including Elim, Salt and Light, Vineyard, Pioneer and New Frontiers International. *Act Justly* tells some of the stories of how New Churches and Christian Aid are working together to bring transformation and unity.

Sample copies of the booklet are available free from Christian Aid on 0207 523 2225 or can be downloaded from www.fish.co.uk/actjustly

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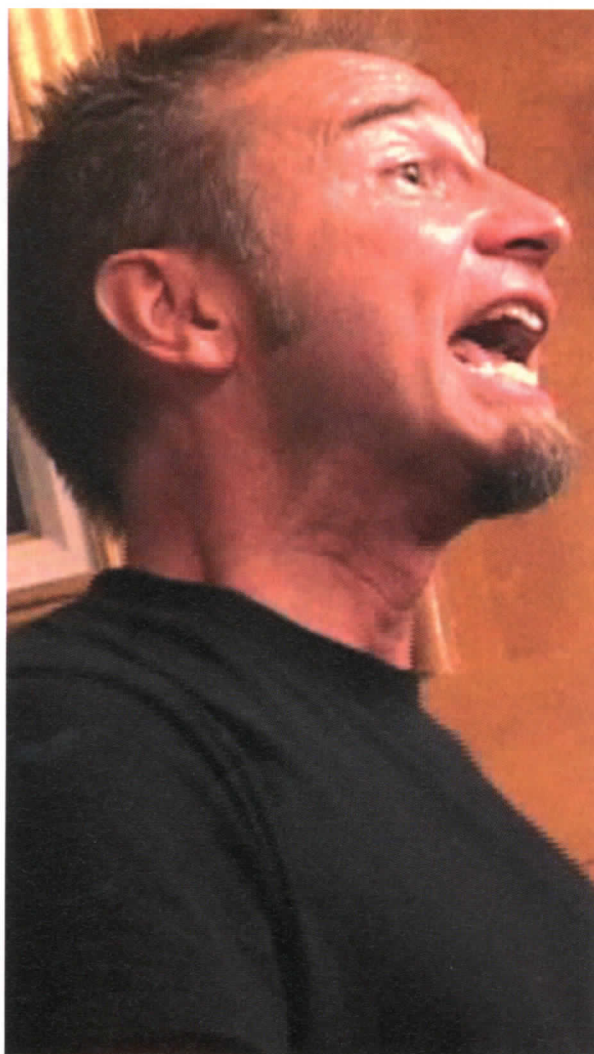
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Clayton Scott
relays his passion
for 'slam poetry'
and how it shaped
his life

Slam bam,

thank you ma'am



The late night atmosphere at Vino's Bar was electric. Of the 20 'slam poets' who'd started the competition, only five advanced to the final round. I was among them.

When I finished performing my poem, I knew the audience was enthusiastic. But I didn't expect the judges to hold up scorecards with straight tens! It was a perfect sweep and a first place win.

A young guy came up to me afterwards to say, 'Rumour has it that you're some kind of a minister. That true?' I looked at him and smiled, 'Yeah, that's right'. He then asked, 'Well, what's a guy like you doing in a place like this?' Great question.

PRAIRIE FIRE

Rewind all the way to the late 60s. The Jesus Movement in America had spread like prairie fire from California to the Midwest where I became a Christian in 1969. From 73-77 I was disciplined in the loving community of a college coffeehouse.

In the aesthetics of red shag carpet, spotlights made from

coffee cans, black light art and Larry Norman posters on the wall, I embraced two valuable principles that have stuck with me to this day.

First, from reading C S Lewis I embraced his belief that there exists no division between sacred and secular. As ambassadors of Christ and habitants of the Holy Spirit, we bring God's presence into every place we go. Second, I discovered during those bell-bottomed days that we are all called – and that everything we do is our mission.

A New Twist To Shout

what would you think
if one day
repentance wore laughter
like a light jacket
over the sleeveless t-shirt of joy
while sorrow
pulled on plaid, polyester slacks
and remorse
exchanged steel-toed work boots
for flip flops

you know what I think
I think it would be time to dance
because mercy would
be waiting on the dance floor
with grace striking up the band

FLIGHT OF THE FLAMINGO

She saw them
on one of those nature shows.
Before that only at the zoo
flocked together,
each standing on one leg.
But on the television,
Lannie watched them fly.
Gracefully, like not even trying.
Pink and coral in colour.
Flamingos, pink Flamingos.
She had never seen
anything more beautiful.

Lannie told her husband,
Raymond
that for her birthday
she wanted pink Flamingos,
the plastic kind
you can put in a garden of flow-
ers.
Her birthday came.
No pink Flamingos; no flowers.
Nothing.
Nothing.

One time she told him
she wanted to go up
in a hot air balloon
over Albuquerque at sunset.
In the cool air of autumn,

she wanted him to hold
her in his arms from behind.
It had to be from behind.
Tight. Warm. Secure.
She explained it all
in great yet simple detail.
She even used new words
she had read in a book
and had looked up their meanings.
'Quintessential moment,'
she had said,
and 'splendourous vista.'

It all rolled out
so spontaneously,
it even surprised her.
When she finished sharing,
she trembled and smiled
and pulled her t-shirt
up to soak away tears.

But Raymond,
he didn't say a word,
just looked like a blank wall.
He walked to the fridge,
opened it and stared.

So Lannie
got up in the morning
made coffee and toast

as usual.
Stood by the back window
looking to the little
garden of flowers
where she imagined
pink Flamingos.
Went to work at the factory
where they make plastic
parts for washing machines.
At night she worked
in the kitchen,
rubbed her rough hands
across her tired face.
Shuffled slowly to the bedroom
past Raymond
asleep in his chair,
the remote under his thigh.

One evening
Raymond found a note
on the kitchen table.
It read, Your supper
is in the oven.
I will be home later.
Raymond went to the fridge,
leaned against the door
with wet palms.
His eyes trailed downward
across pictures of family,
colourful magnets,

and pink reminder notes.

Just beyond sunset
Lannie lay naked
in the soft sheets
at the Flamingo Motel.
A man from the factory
slept behind her,
his body odour in the air.

A neon lit Flamingo
spread wings of light
and flew through the closed blinds
of the window,
casting pink glow upon her.
While Lannie imagined
the splendourous vista
of Albuquerque
from a hot air balloon,
a lone tear glistened and fell
quietly from her cheek.

In front of the fridge,
Raymond stared at the floor
and shifted his weight
to one leg.
He wondered
how he could explain to Lannie
that he was afraid
of heights.

It was also in the coffeehouse
(appropriately called The
Serendipity House), that I asked
important questions that helped
to shape me. One such question
was, 'Why is preaching from a
church pulpit the only means of
communicating the gospel?'

In answer to that question, my
best friend and I transferred our
theatre experience and love of
Monty Python into skit writing
and performing. In time, we'd
written a full repertoire of
material and developed an avant-

abandoned and free we were in
performance. Much of what we
did was improvisational. We
didn't give a rip about pleasing
church folk. We felt the pleasure
of God and enjoyed the simplicity
of relating truth through the tools
of comedy and drama.

Post-graduation careers ended
the comedy team. I had married
in college and began teaching
school in Oklahoma City.
Eventually, I took a church staff
position as a television producer,
and then became the youth



journaling took an interesting
turn in the form of poetry.

I had written poetry in high
school and college, but suddenly
it was like a geyser had been
tapped. Subsequently, this poetry
resurgence led to my exposure to
performance poetry and slam
poetry.

TOP TEN

Slam poetry, which started in the
mid-80s in Chicago for the
purpose of taking poetry out of
ivory-tower academia to the
common man, is simply a

**'I am still communicating truth
and reality, but now to a
different audience'**

garde, whacked-out reputation
which opened doors in schools,
corporate banquets, concerts and
arts festivals.

I'm still in awe at how

pastor at the same church.

In 1985 I accepted a senior
pastor position at a small town in
Arkansas, where I served for 18
years. Three years ago my

competition of performance poets.

The melding of writing performing poetry completely captivated me. In spring 2001 I qualified as the only male member of the four-member Arkansas slam team and competed at the National Poetry Slam in Seattle where I ranked in

'I discovered during those bell-bottomed days that we are all called'

the top ten per cent of North American slam poets.

Simultaneously with the favour and success in performance poetry, I slowly felt my heart's passion for pastoring shifting. After much prayer and heart assessment, it seemed clear that God was bringing change. Nine months ago I stepped from the pastorate into the adventure of a becoming a performance arts missionary, with a focus on performance poetry.

Some have found this transition odd – being 47, having a steady church position for 20 years, not to mention a 27-year marriage with six children to launch into the unknown. Odd? No, it's insane! For me though, the essence of my call is unchanged. I am still communicating truth and reality, but now to a different audience.

The poetry that I write doesn't

POET

**Mouthpiece of the universe, wail.
Cry, rhythmic romancer of the ages.
Breath of thunder, bellow the poem
of page, herald the poetry of stage.
The poet doesn't want to be famous,
she wants to be heard. His tongue
is the pen of the ready writer. Time
dawns the voice of the voiceless victims.
Throw the paint of language. All humanity
longs for your lament and song. Fire of bone,
proclaim the beauty and the pain in verse
and phrase. O bard, syllable slinging
passionate vagabond. O gypsy magician
of imagination. Bring the words. Bring
the poem! Come, poet, bring wonder
and magic. Come, O poet, bring us poetry!
Bring us poetry.**



necessarily carry an overt Christian message. In fact, I don't consider myself as much a Christian poet as I am a poet who is a Christian.

full of poetic writing. Think about that – God decides to give us a book that expresses his heart's intent and desire.

'Many were pierced out and tattooed and some obviously gay and lesbian...I felt like Jesus'

I write honest poetic stories or use rapid-fire humour to convey a political or sociological statement.

My poems generally are not flowery, nor do they all end with redemptive resolve. In real life, some nights fall with more questions than answers. Some experiences don't have happy endings.

CULTURAL EXPLOSION

When I first began writing honest poetry, I was misunderstood by the Christian community. I had to choose whether to take writing risks or write to please Christians.

During this struggle, I attended a Pioneer USA gathering in Dallas. In one meeting, Jeff Lucas spoke a word of prophetic exhortation over me that I was not to sanitise my poetry for the church, that the religious would be offended, but that the unchurched would be drawn by my use of painting pictures through poetry.

Why poetry, some may ask? My answer is, why not? I find it astounding that God's word is

He could have used any number of communicative mediums with which to reveal these treasures of soul. But he chose the use of written language, and often times poetry. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon – they were all written in poetic style.

What about David, the man after God's own heart? His contribution was not a manual on leadership. He gave us poetry – real life, vulnerable, not always upbeat, awe-inspiring, soul-searching poetry.

Throughout history poets were highly respected mouthpieces to reflect the heart of man. Poets were trusted commentators on humanity's political, spiritual and social condition – Shakespeare being a classic example.

Walt Whitman's famous book of poems, *Leaves Of Grass*, was touted as 'the great psalm of the Republic'. In the 50s a small band of radical and passionate wordsmiths called 'The Beats' wrote poetry that became the

catalyst for the musical and cultural explosion of the 60s. Today, we are still under the influence of this phenomenon – a movement that began by the power of poetry.

As a pastor, I fully devoted myself to encourage, exhort, and edify the Church. Without reservation or question, I still believe in and love the Church. However, God has broken my heart for an unchurched, postmodern generation that seemingly has no real interest in church.

Today, God is using me as a bridge to span to public schools, colleges, prisons, pubs, poetry slam venues or coffeehouses. Recently, I was the featured poet

WHAT THE POETS SAY

'Clayton Scott is an engaging in-your-face, slap-to-the-side-of-ya head, jolt of high-energy spoken word. He takes risks where other retreat to the safe, unprovoking stylings of garden variety poetry. His words are fast, furious, and uncompromising. Just a good time for everyone within shouting range.'

Clebo Rainey, performance poet, Dallas

'He made a lasting impression on many of the poets attending and competing in this year's slam with his excited, eclectic style, which packs dizzying imagery into every line and is delivered with the impact of a true slam veteran.'

WORDS The Arkansas Literary Society

'We didn't give a rip about pleasing church folk'

in Oklahoma City at a beautifully eclectic venue called Galileo's Bar and Grill.

The house was packed – diverse in age, race, and gender. Many were pierced out and

tattooed and some obviously gay and lesbian. I felt like Paul in Athens. I felt like Jesus, friend of sinners. I felt I was right where God wanted me to be. I felt at home.

Wherever God leads me, my approach is simple. I show up to be who I am, a poet. And I do what I do with as much excellence and passion as God has enabled me. With that attitude I have, without fail, seen the Holy Spirit do what he does – awaken and stir hearts.

Everywhere I go, I ask the Lord to show me who he may be drawing, and the way I am to love them. Inevitably, God will bring someone to me to befriend and encourage.

So, there I was at Vino's with this dude standing in front of me waiting for my answer to the question, 'What's a guy like you doing in a place like this?' I looked in his eyes and answered, 'I'm here because of my passion for poetry. Yes, I'm a man of faith, but tonight I'm a poet'. From there, a true poetic moment had begun.

● **Clayton Scott will be performing poetry at the Pioneer Leadership Conference, and some of his work is featured on these pages. He will be in the UK for three weeks after the conference and has a few dates available for booking. Contact: Dave Day at dday@btinternet.com**

TIME TRAVEL

He looked at me
and said,
I gotta find a way
to sneak outta this skin.
Yeah well, my therapist told me
that I'd been writing hot checks
on my heart for way too long.
So, we worked for three days
in wrenches and grease
putty and primer.

Wheels now spinning down pavement.
'65 Impala
taking the way
we should of gone back when.
We never dreamed to go so far
on roads we drew
like finger in the sand.
She wasn't proven,
but she took us anyway.

Didn't take enough money
just the jeans we had on
and a few t-shirts.
Slept in the seats.
Coffee in some Kansas truck stop.
Laughed about all the wasted winters
and summers that ended too soon
We drove across a desert
covered by moon-washed seas
that told us stories

that made us dumb in quiet.
For a thousand miles
the tyres moaned like sweet sorrow.
She sang that song to a Spanish melody
and danced in Salsa circles,
while the sun drank rainbows
and brushed her raven mane
with the languages of heaven.

It sounded like waterfalls
pouring out of the radio
and felt like the spring fed lake
where we piled our clothes on the shoreline
and breathed under water
the air of prayers.

As we trailed the edge of a ruby stream,
I saw a reflection of a man with hollow eyes.
So I reached out with my mind
to grasp the tail of a Colorado wind
and tied it to a hole in my sandstone heart.
The mountains never looked so afraid
as they did that night,
metallic and lonely
under the rounded clouds -
pure as river capped waves.
Driving along with Tommy Ray
in that '65 Impala.
Bound of soul like brothers,
like prophecy come true.

1000 THE PRAYERS OF A 1000 CHILDREN

Sunday 25th May 2003

Ponds Forge International Sports Centre, Sheffield

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Call for a special meeting
make the meeting holy for the Lord

**bring together
the children**

Joel 2 v 15-16



**J2 is a day for calling the children together and
taking the prayers of the children seriously.**

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stories. And there won't be any entertainers.

For more information contact Crossbow Ministries

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FRANCOIS VAN NIEHEERH, GERALD CORTES WORSHIP: CHRIS BOWATER AND TEAM OF LOCAL
AND INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP LEADERS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS: GLORY, SYNERGY
AND SHARE CHILDREN: POWERPACK, TRAINERS, KINGDOM NETWORK AND SPARKIES

GRAPEVINE 2003
INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATION



DATE 22-26 AUGUST 2003 VENUE LINCOLNSHIRE SHOWGROUND

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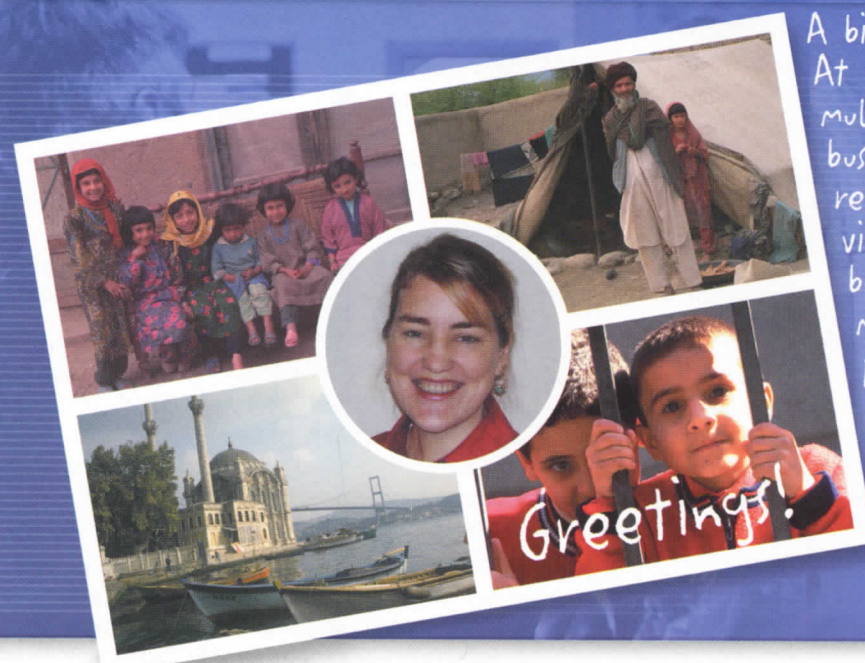
Grapevine is organised by Ground Level Supported by Plumblime Ministries and Networking Together



Operation Mobilisation, The Quinta, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 7LT

Telephone: 01691 773388 Fax: 01691 778378

Email: info@uk.om.org Website: www.uk.om.org



A big hello from Central Asia.
At the moment some of our
multinational team are very
busy ministering to Afghan
refugees. I'm continuing to
visit my friend Yulduz who
became a Christian three
months ago. Please keep
praying for more workers
and increasing language
skills for our team. Thank
you for your ongoing
support and partnership.

Katie.

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Soundbites



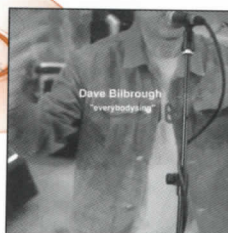
FALLING

JON BILBROUGH

A six-track CD reveals the musicality and songwriting skill of Jon Bilbrough. The opening track *Falling* is cheeky, buoyant and very chart-tastic, whereas *Fire* and *Liberation Child* propel a good rush of dynamic.

Jon has a magnetism that draws you to listen and this quality is beautifully captured on *Could It Be?* – with only acoustic guitar as the musical backdrop.

Signs of the vulnerable and sounds of the commercial merge together to make you excited about the future of Jon's music. Check out his website for details of live gigs and to buy *Falling* – www.jonbilbrough.com **SR**



EVERYBODY SING

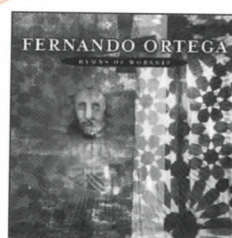
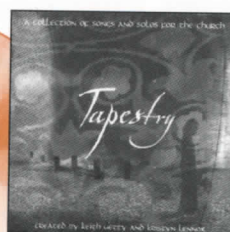
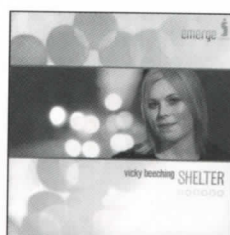
DAVE BILBROUGH (KINGSWAY MUSIC)

Dave is more than the music he creates. He carries with him a humility of character and a respect for the global adventure of sound. When he shares the stage with his wife and percussionist Pat, his musical son Jon and DJ son Dan, the strength of the family vibe models something quite unique for these times.

Dave's latest and live *Everybody Sing* was recorded at Easter People last year. It is upbeat, joyful and strong on congregational songs. The title track explodes with an encouragement to worship and from there we join with songs that celebrate Jesus, are thankful for the cross and declare commitment to the journey of faith.

The arrangements of the songs draw on many diverse world flavours – from reggae to salsa – but of particular note is Jesus Christ which is of a South African township style. There are also some intimate moments caught and the highlight of these is the love song *Cradled*.

The whole package also includes a CD Rom section featuring lyrics, pictures, tour video and interview. **SR**



SHELTER

VICKY BEECHING (SURVIVOR)

An energising start to this seven-track offering from the Emerge label of the Survivor stable, introduces Vicky to a wider audience. Already recognised as a songwriter on some of the Vineyard albums, we now get more insight into her musical and lyrical world.

With confident tunes, intelligent lyrics and a good 'live' sounding production, *Shelter* essentially contains songs of worship that range from recognising we are created to worship to admitting our complete need of God. *Search Me* cries out for the refining fire that purifies and *Precious* treasures

the moments of being near to God.

The opening *Yesterday, Today, Forever* bursts onto the scene but is not really a true indicator of *Shelter's* pace. From the third tune onwards, we are treated to a more gentle and laidback vibe closing with cello and guitar as Vicky sings of 'the loving arms' holding her. **SR**

TAPESTRY

KEITH GETTY & KRISTYN LENNOX (KINGSWAY MUSIC)

The phrase on the cover describes this CD as 'a collection of songs and solos for the church' – an excellent summation that highlights an aspect we don't often think about.

Does every song of worship brought into a church setting have to be one that the whole congregation sings? Sometimes we need a song to be sung 'over' us – we need to hear it rather than speak it.

I Am Still Willing is sung from God's perspective, and *First Love* is a challenge to us not to forget what a remarkable thing it is to find a 'love big enough to carry you'. *No Height No Depth* and *Your Song To Me* highlight God qualities that we need reminding of – but from a more person-to-person aspect rather than corporately sung.

There are also some great congregational songs including *Every Breath*, *You Have Chosen Us* and *Solid Ground* – full of true words and singable melodies. Kristyn Lennox and Keith Getty make for a great songwriting team, and as the title *Tapestry* suggests these are beautifully woven words and melodies. **CO**

HYMNS OF WORSHIP

FERNANDO ORTEGA (WORD/WARNER BROS)

He's like a Latin American Paul Simon – with his gentle delivery, personal lyrics and memorable tunes. Label under 'enduring artist'.

Fernando Ortega has written some of his own excellent material. But on this latest offering he also presents some classic songs of the Church – like *Be Thou My Vision* and *All Creatures Of Our God And King* – all in his distinctive style.

Luxurious arrangements on violin, cello and piano combine with Fernando's sensitive vocal delivery to provide a strong call to worship that transcends the contemporary/traditional demarcation lines and brings Celtic, folk and ballad influences into one beautiful blend.

Every discerning listener should have at least one Ortega album in their collection. **CP**

● Music reviewers:
Carolyn Oates,
Clive Price and
Sue Rinaldi

Is it really possible - in this new age of mass strikes? Rodney Green unpacks the gospel imperative for harmony in the workplace

Paul lived in a society where slavery was commonplace. His instructions to the Church about work reflect that. Nevertheless, we cannot dismiss his teaching as relevant only to slaves and their masters, with nothing to say to workers in the 21st century.

In fact, I would argue that it imposes upon us even higher standards. If Paul expected even Christian slaves to be conscientious in their work, how much more conscientious should Christian employees be as free workers in much less arduous contexts.

And if Christian masters were required to be scrupulous in their treatment of their slaves, all the more should Christian employers adopt high standards of behaviour towards their staff.

Sooner or later, in any organisation, you will encounter truculence, confrontation, the pursuit of profit and power, lack of concern, divisiveness and injustice. Despite such provocations, it is contingent upon a Christian to seek to build harmony between employer and employee.

THE CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEE

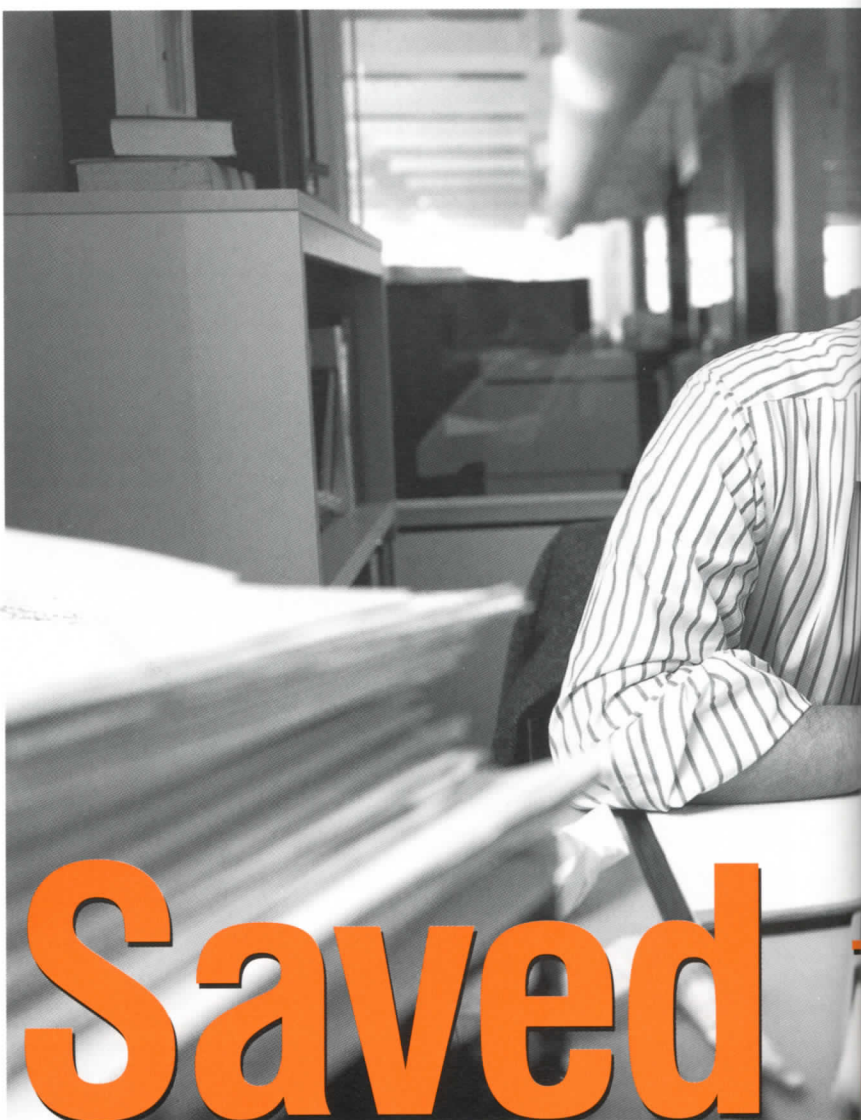
Four qualities emerge from Paul's words in Ephesians and Colossians, which should be innate to every Christian employee - one's approach to work, attitude to work, loyalty to Christ and to employer, and expectation that he or she will reap what they have sown in relation to their work (Galatians 6:7).

Approach

I once worked with a wonderful colleague who relished his supporting role. He gratuitously gave credit to his boss for his own achievements. He never chafed when instructions had to be reversed at the last minute. He was forceful in debate, but entirely relaxed when decisions went against him, and could always see merit in them.

Among his own subordinates he was always positive about his boss and, when the latter left, organised a huge farewell party. His submission was strong, freely given and productive.

A co-operative spirit is at the opposite end of belligerence, manipulation, contempt and disloyalty - it stands out against the negativity, complaining and grumbling that taints many workplaces.



'Rebellion has often been dressed up as desire for justice'

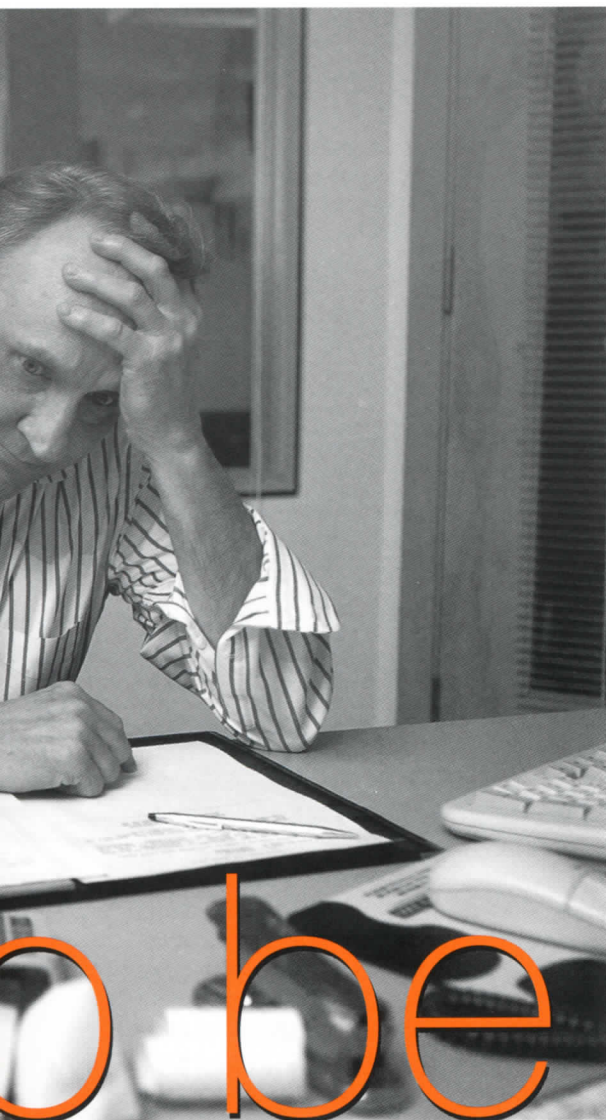
We should not confuse this attitude with mindless subservience. A co-operative spirit is rooted in a conscious acknowledgement of God's hand behind the office of responsibility: David recognised Saul's status as both his king and *'the Lord's anointed'* (1 Samuel 24:5,6), despite Saul's many faults and his unjust behaviour towards David himself.

The Creator is committed to securing order, which, from time to time, is achieved by maintaining an undesirable status quo. It is certainly right that the occupant of high office should act with integrity, but even a vain and foolish boss is owed the duty of co-operation in the wider interests of order and stability in the community.

Rebellion has often been dressed up as desire for justice. For the Christian, strike action against your employer - except in extreme circumstances as the lesser of two evils - will always raise fundamental questions that cannot easily be answered if respect for the office of manager is to be maintained. After all, these words of scripture were first addressed to slaves.

Loyalty

A Christian's first loyalty is to Christ, and, from Paul's point of view, all Christian employees are actually employed by the Lord. It would not be too far-fetched to talk of all Christian workers as employees of Christ.



'A co-operative spirit is at the opposite end of belligerence'

break the law or put their lives at risk. However, even at these times of bewilderment, a Christian's obedience and loyalty remain key, and cannot be glibly side-stepped.

Attitude

I remember an occasion when members of a group of senior colleagues were asked to donate an hour of their time to support a staffing gap that had arisen in another team. The proposal was greeted with hoots of good-natured derision.

However, after a little banter, it became clear that no one was prepared to volunteer. Then one person did. No one followed suit. It was left that other 'volunteers' would be sought after the meeting.

When the rota was published later, several people noticed that each gap had been filled by a Christian. Coincidence? Perhaps. But it illustrates an attitude of wholeheartedness in the face of unappealing chores, of not holding back, of giving when no one else will.

Working wholeheartedly means standing out against making the minimum contribution, clock-watching, rigidly working to rule, and giving the impression of being overworked and underpaid.

Expectation

On one occasion I knew of a senior manager who

slaves

carrying out his business plan.

Work, therefore, is not a subsistence 'tentmaking' activity that Christians must undertake in order to finance their 'real work' in the Church - neither is it a regrettable necessity or self-centred indulgence.

The sacred/secular divide has been broken down. We are 'slaves of Christ', doing the will of God and 'working for the Lord' (Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 3:23) and as such we should approach our work with energy, striving for excellence out of loyalty to him.

Loyalty to the Lord may translate naturally into loyalty to the organisation, which is a company's richest asset, but its roots go much deeper. Such loyalty rests on the determination to build a firm foundation of integrity at the heart of an organisation and thereby to secure its long-term interests. Thus a company can be rescued from the temptation to put short-term expediency ahead of long-term credibility, and be reminded of its *raison d'être*.

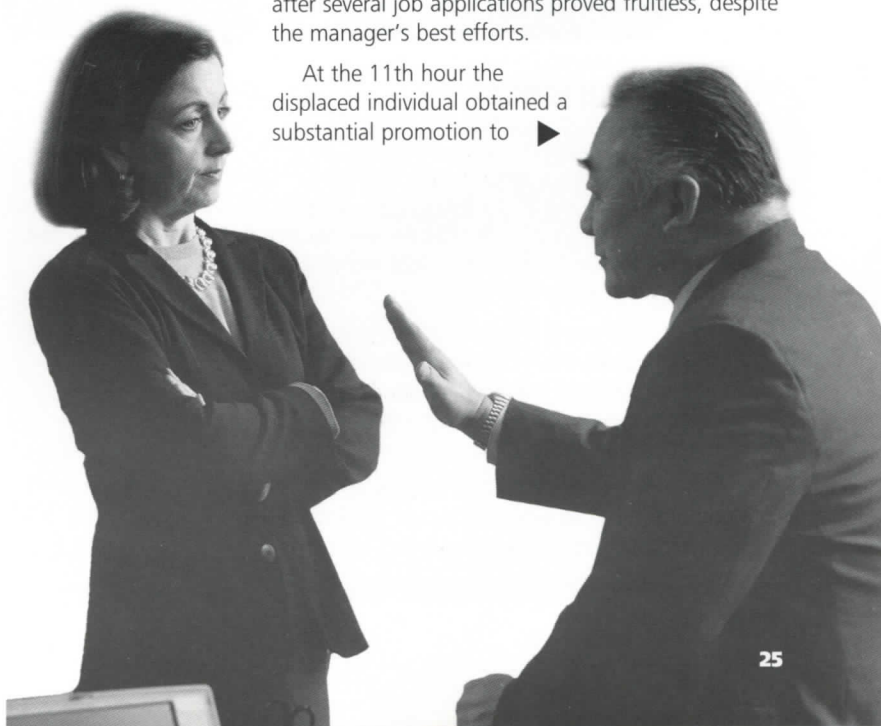
Of course, Christians will face dilemmas when the spirit of co-operation clashes with their loyalty to Christ. It would be improper to obey an employer who demands conformity to a policy that is illegal, or the disposal of evidence that would otherwise bring justice to a situation.

No employer has the right to ask his staff to lie,

was outraged when a highly competent junior colleague was unjustly ousted in an internal restructuring.

Things went from bad to worse for the hapless individual, who was treated as an outcast - deliberately by his foes, and awkwardly by others who intended no harm but had lost their confidence with all the upheaval. Redundancy seemed inevitable after several job applications proved fruitless, despite the manager's best efforts.

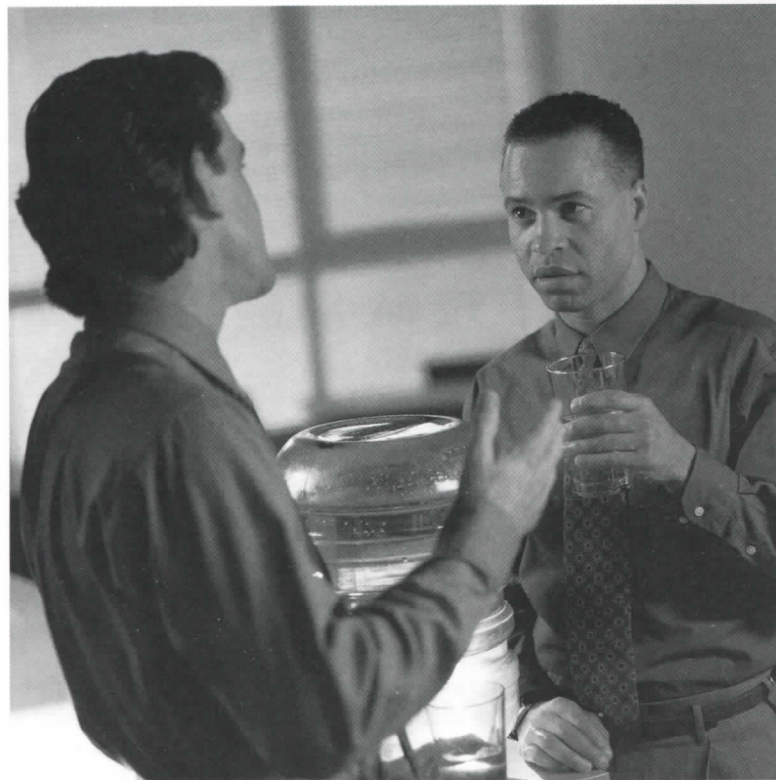
At the 11th hour the displaced individual obtained a substantial promotion to ►



another organisation. When the manager was informed, he was heard walking through the corridors shouting, 'Justice! Justice at last!', to the consternation of all around. The aggrieved colleague had been rewarded in line with his manager's proper expectations - even if that reward came from out of the blue!

Nevertheless, when an employee's rightful expectation of reward is denied, he or she should still persevere, trusting in the knowledge that God sees everything. God is the champion of what is right. He will distribute punishment and reward in his good time, either in this life or the next.

If 90,000 hours of our life is taken up at work, that we are subjected to injustice for such a high proportion of that time is a matter he takes very seriously. God has no favourites (Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25). The Christian at work can look beyond the marketplace to him and be confident that, in the end, justice will prevail. All our actions at work must be based on this assurance.



THE CHRISTIAN EMPLOYER

The two qualities to emerge from Paul's teaching, which can be applied to Christian employers, are a sense of obligation towards employees and an awareness that authority is a privilege given by God that should be used wisely.

Obligation

The balance of power is heavily weighted in favour of employers - especially if they also own the means of production. So they have a very clear obligation to use that power to provide what is 'right and fair' (Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 4:1).

Leadership is as much about the moral as the practical. The Christian employer should be as much 'one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled,

upright, holy and disciplined' as a church elder (Titus 1:8). There is no room for one standard for religious leaders but another for business leaders.

Management can portray almost any action as necessary to remain competitive. Often the information needed to judge whether a particular course of action is justified or merely rationalised is not available to most of the staff in a company.

'Work is not "tentmaking" to finance our "real work" in the Church'

Large pay rises for the top managers - is this genuinely needed to recruit and retain high quality staff in the face of comparable packages on offer from market competitors, or just so much self-indulgence? Redundancies - are they the proper consequence of real investments in productivity, or the simplest way of paying for perks?

The employer holds immense influence over who can or cannot be promoted in an organisation. He or she should constantly be aware that God gives authority for the interests of all - not just the few at the top.

Employees naturally expect support, reward, training and development opportunities, encouragement and praise where this is due. It is also incumbent upon an employer to ensure that grievance and disciplinary procedures are fair and consistent, to ensure that all colleagues are pulling their weight and that the organisation's reputation is protected.

Every organisation has its share of vested interests, special pleadings and factions with axes to grind. Everyone will see circumstances from their own perspective. A true leader must be prepared to do right even if this puts a lot of people's noses out of joint.

The employer is obliged, both legally and morally, to extend this kind of support to all staff, without favouritism or discrimination. This implies more than instituting a grand policy statement on Equal Opportunities.

Favouritism is a form of discrimination that can arise from the subtlest of foundations. It cannot be right for someone's work prospects or conditions to be diminished merely because they belong to some minority group.

After all, each of us belongs to some kind of minority or other. Failure to treat all individuals fairly on the basis of their potential is neither fair nor right, and it is the employer's job to combat it.

Privilege

I was once at a meeting in which a director arrived late. When he'd gained his bearings, he asked indirectly whether anyone at his level from other departments was expected. When told 'No', he stormed out, muttering.

To him, seniority was everything. His high-handed behaviour left us with the strong impression that we should all be more careful of his dignity in the future if we wanted to avoid trouble. Fear can be very effective

'There is no room for one standard for religious leaders but another for business leaders'



in galvanising action in the short term, but it is a fast route to contempt and bitterness in the long run.

Employers can also intimidate by exhibiting impatience, rudely interrupting and dismissing the ideas and suggestions of others. They may seek to ease the burden of having to listen, consult and generate support for policies and plans by a variety of petty tyrannies which slap down differences of opinion and frustrate partnership - sidelining a junior colleague, omitting to pass on information, obtaining alternative advice covertly, sitting in uninvited at staff meetings.

A popular technique is to create a culture of blame. First, make every effort to ensure that no blame attaches to yourself. Then insist that it was someone else who gave the bad advice. Finally, when everything goes pear-shaped, stir up a witch-hunt (for the benefit of more senior managers), loudly proclaiming that something must be done about those intolerable staff in the Section X, who can never be relied upon to do anything right, even though you have given them very clear instructions.

This type of manager is only interested in what he can get out of a job for his own advantage. By losing the respect of his staff in this way, his only recourse is to use intimidation.

In my experience, an effective way to spread blame is to twist the idea of accountability so that someone is held accountable whenever there is a bad result - real or imagined. Nothing is left to chance.

Everything is deemed to be due to deliberate acts or omissions, and everyone knows a scapegoat will be found. This is a bully's charter dressed up to look like performance management.

If you have encountered one or two 'experts' in this style of management, and have been on the

'Large pay rises for the top managers - is this genuinely needed?'



receiving end of their abusive behaviour, remember that God laughs at such tyrants. He promises that, in the end, they will be put to shame and disgraced, their power will vanish and they will be nothing at all (Isaiah 41:11-13).

Good employers will take great care to avoid using their position of privilege to intimidate. Jesus ridiculed the rulers of his day for lording it over their subjects (Matthew 20:25-28): *'whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,'* he said. The leader's real objective should be to serve.

I'll finish with the old joke about the man lost in an air balloon. Bringing it down to 20 feet or so above a field, he asked a man on the ground if he knew where he was.

'In an air balloon 20 feet up,' he replied.

'You must be an engineer,' the balloonist shouted.

'How did you know that?'

'You have just given some accurate information that is completely useless to me.'

'You must be a manager,' said the engineer.

'How did you know that?' rejoined the balloonist.

'Because first of all you're high up. Secondly, you're completely lost and don't know where you're going. And thirdly, now it's all my fault!'

Pursuing harmony at work is a demanding challenge when so many other agendas seem to take precedence. To achieve harmony will test even the strongest believer. Small wonder, then, that we are expected - in whatever we do, even in the mundane - to work at it with all our heart as working for the Lord.

● **Rodney Green is Chief Executive of Leicester City Council. Married to Helen, and with two sons, his interests include - theatre, travel, music, walking and supporting Leicester Tigers. His article is taken, with permission, from his new book 90,000 Hours: Managing The World Of Work, published by Scripture Union (www.scriptureunion.org.uk).**

WORK: WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

'Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart...And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favouritism with him.'

(Ephesians 6:5-9)

'Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.'

(Colossians 3:22-4:1)

Campus coalition

Much has been written about the student mission field in our nation. Many sense a call from God to his people to focus at this time on seeing a spiritual harvest within our universities.

So many good things have come out of our universities in the past – movements and key leaders who have shaped both the Church at large and the spiritual landscape of our nation. Different Christian organisations like UCCF, Navigators and Agape have been involved in evangelism among students over a long period of time.

Around five years ago Fusion entered the fray with a vision to slot alongside the other ministries and see every student reached with the good news of Jesus and to see many find faith in Christ, finding a vocational calling to serve him with their whole being.

PASSIONATE DIALOGUE

Fusion has grown dramatically. But it's true to say that we have felt dwarfed by the task. Something truly unprecedented is needed if we are to make a difference – and for this to happen we were going to need more people in the mix.

Enter the 'Round Table', which Gerald Coates hosts at Waverley Abbey House, attended by leaders from right across the denominational spectrum. I arrived late to find these key leaders engaged in a passionate

Agencies with a concern for students and young people are joining forces in a bid to reap a spiritual harvest in our universities. Roger Ellis reports

dialogue about the needs of students and immediately sensed that something special was happening. God was also leading others to the same conclusions!

At the end of that session I sat with Sandy Millar and Nicky Gumbel from Holy Trinity Brompton/Alpha. Alpha works with all the major denominations and organisations throughout the country that it can. We began to dream as to how we could work even more closely together to see students reached and discipled. Something exciting was happening.

In the days that followed there were various meetings where we discussed how we could work together for students. Very quickly, Soul Survivor joined the mix – with Spring Harvest offering support, too.

The result of this has been a real sense that we are becoming a coalition together. This partnership is made up of different organisations and ministries, each with a unique contribution and key focus. We are

people who share the same vision and values and are therefore able to work closely together.

ACCELERATED GROWTH

We have begun the journey. We will work together serving Alpha in their Student Leadership conference next September. We will all work together running the student stream at Soul Survivor next summer. We will also partner together with Spring Harvest running the Student Evolution week, which in 2004 will become much bigger.

Student Alpha will be a tool, which we will all focus on developing everywhere we

Something truly unprecedented is needed if we are to make a difference

can among students. Fusion cells will become the framework we will all use to connect with churches of all denominations, providing a 'week in week out' means of reaching students together.

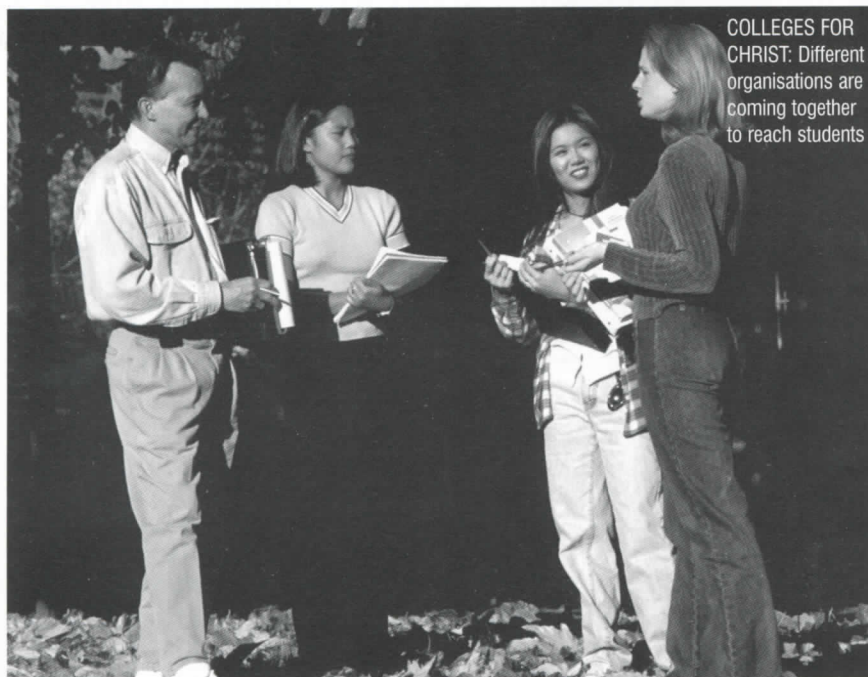
Soul Survivor is and will become a key gathering in the summer for youth, which includes many students. Spring Harvest is a key gathering for the whole Church at Easter time.

These are early days. Yet already there are early signs of accelerated growth. This has been the best first term we have experienced so far within Fusion.

Pray for us as we all connect together. It will take time to see this coalition take shape.

Many more ways of co-operating together will surely emerge. However, the possibility of making a sizeable impact for Christ within our universities seems more attainable!

● **Roger Ellis is a popular speaker and author who has fathered a number of initiatives over the years from his home base at Revelation Church, Chichester.**



COLLEGES FOR CHRIST: Different organisations are coming together to reach students

The world's definition of manhood has been found lacking. Baz Gascoyne calls for 'new men' who are focused on the fire of God for their generation - and who, with tears, will bring the gospel to their hurting communities

real God, real men

My gran was brought up with ten other brothers and sisters in quite a religious family. When she discovered I'd become a Christian, she said the following to me in quite a stern tone: 'That Christianity might be okay for you but don't try to get me into it. I want nothing to do with it, so don't bother talking to me about it.'

I found out some time later that she'd been put off Christianity by her parents who made the children read the Bible every Sunday afternoon. I think one of her brothers didn't help the cause either.

PAINFUL DEATH

I loved my gran and I'd been given another chance to pray for her salvation, but also talk to her personally about Jesus. All the years I lived with my gran and granddad I knew that I had taken them for granted and sometimes abused the love they showed me.

My granddad had died in the

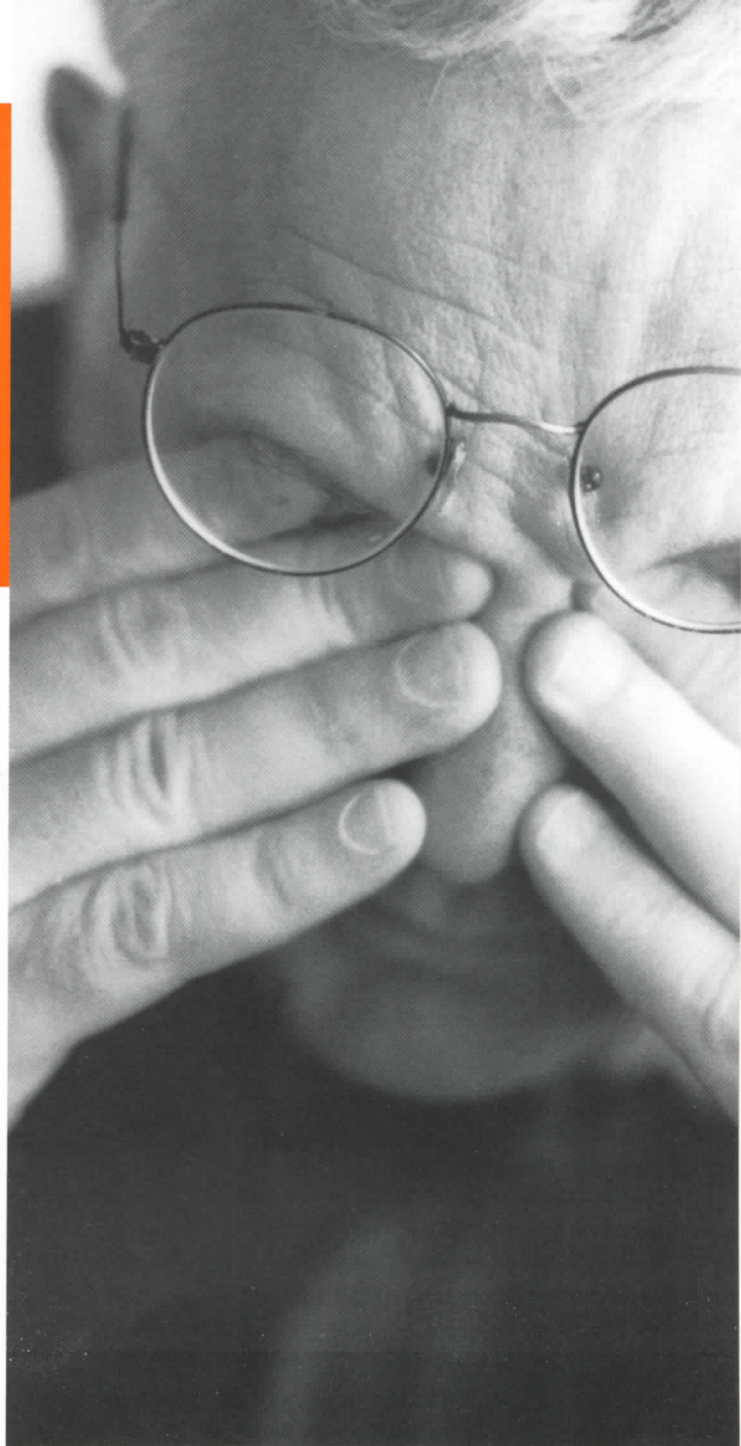
1970s. He had a painful death due to cancer. I remember standing outside his bedroom door one night, listening to him crying out to God, 'Please take me as I cannot bear the pain any more.'

When you love someone you want the best for them. If they're not Christians, you are desperate for them to discover God's love. If you don't, I would suggest you don't love them enough.

In John chapter 11 we see what real love is. Jesus has heard his close friend Lazarus has died and is quite calm about the whole situation. Eventually he is moved by the weeping of Mary and the Jews over Lazarus' death.

In verse 33 we read: '*When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.*' In verse 35 we read the shortest verse in the Bible: *Jesus wept*'.

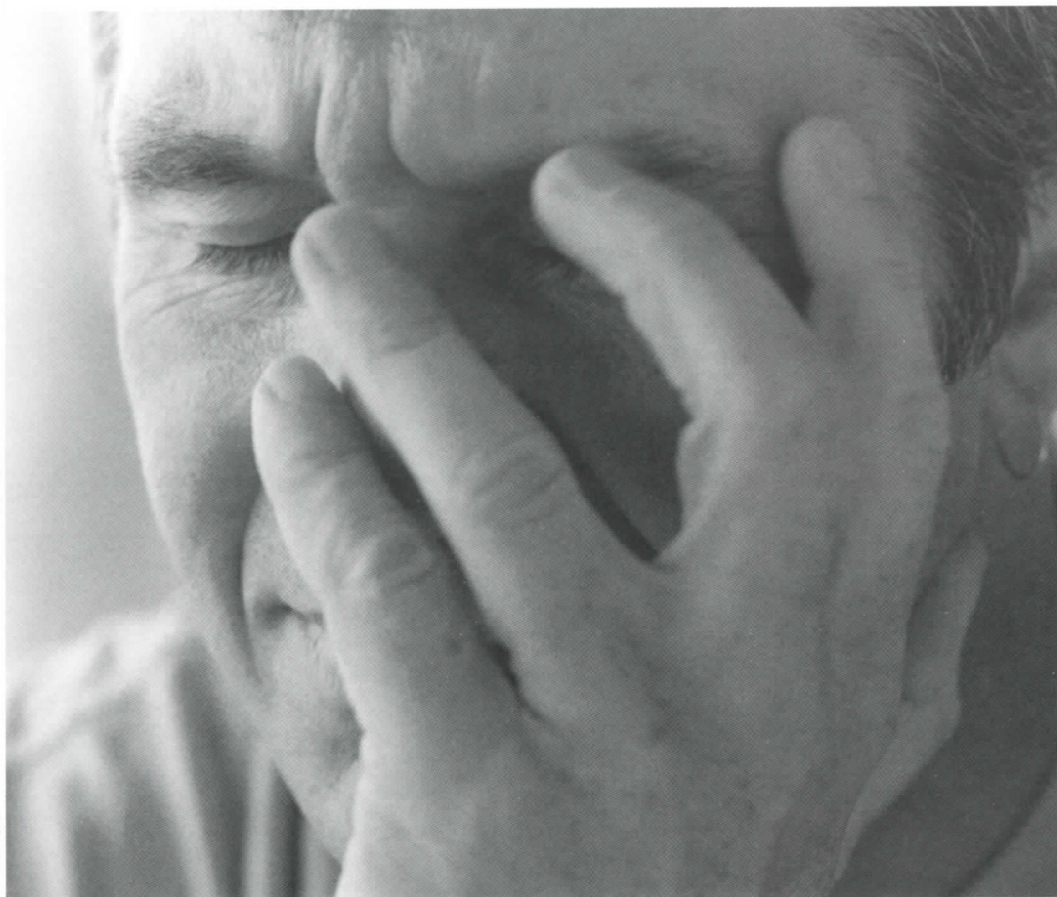
Why did he weep? Because he had compassion for the people



and he loved Lazarus. That doesn't mean a few tears down the face and quickly wipe them away before anyone sees you showing some emotion! But he wept, probably making a scene but not bothered what people thought as he was deeply moved by what was going on.

If this kind of compassion was to engulf each Christian man – young and old – in this country we would soon have a revival of people coming to know Christ. Until we are willing to let God break our hearts with his love and compassion for the people of this nation and others, we'll never reach out to people to share the good news of Jesus.

'Have we given up sharing our faith because we've lost confidence in the gospel?'



The other day I was shocked as I read about a young boy being murdered and torched to death, and also of an elderly man who lived locally being beaten to death. What shocked me was how unmoved by these stories I was. I just pushed it aside with some thought of how society is getting worse.

GOD'S HEARTBEAT

It's so easy to get consumed with our everyday commitment that we lose the rhythm of God's

confidence in the gospel, the good news of Jesus? Or is it simply because our hearts have become hard to the hurting, needy people in our society and world?

I was encouraged some years ago to pray the following prayer: 'God, will you give me the heart of Jesus, so I will feel as he feels for people? Will you give me the eyes of Jesus, so I will see as he does for people? Will you give me the mind of Jesus, so that I will think as he does about people?

'Hospitals are not my favourite places – I've been known to faint at just the smell'

heartbeat for our neighbours, school, college, university friends, work colleagues, family, friends and the different people we see or come across daily.

Why is this? Is it because we've lost the first love of God in our own lives? Is it because we're no longer concerned about people dying without knowing God personally for themselves? Have we given up sharing our faith because we have lost

Will you give me the mouth of Jesus, so I will speak as he does to people? Will you give me the ears of Jesus, so I will listen as he does to people?'

When I have said this prayer sincerely, I have been amazed at the outcome. At times my heart has become heavy with pain as I listen to or talk with people about what is going on in their lives.

I have started to see people in

a different light – not through my own eyes of judgement but through eyes that really feel love and acceptance towards them. I want to reach out and be there for them in whatever way God sees fit.

Living this way is exciting and rewarding – letting God get hold of you and take you on the great rollercoaster journey of fun, laughter and tears which we call life, rubbing shoulders with those he has put in your path to make a difference in their lives and even introduce them to this living God.

It's far better than allowing your heart to get hard and cold, becoming one of those people who just used to get excited about sharing their faith.

SAUSAGE STEW

One day I received a phone call from my mother:

'Barrie, it's your mother. Your gran is in hospital – she's not very well.'

'What's wrong with her, Mam?'

'She's in a coma.'

'Are you sure?'

'Yes, I saw her today. She's in ward B4. Bye.'

I phoned the hospital to see if I could arrange a time with them to see my gran outside visiting time. The reason for this was to avoid bumping into my father. He was my biological father – and that was it. He'd lived in another country most of my life, and hated the sight of me – especially since I'd become a Christian, probably because of some of the things he was involved with.

The hospital agreed to allow me some time in the evening after visiting hours to see my gran. I got the tram up to Darlington and went to see my mother and brother in the daytime.

In the evening I walked to the hospital, feeling very apprehensive about what I was going to see. My mother had prewarned me that my gran had lost a lot of weight and was now blind.

Hospitals are not my favourite places. I've been known to faint at just the smell when I walk through the main doors! When I

worked for a Methodist church in Northern Ireland I had to do hospital visits, and numerous times came out ready to puke or faint.

I managed to pull myself together and get to the ward. The nurse informed me that Gran was asleep and I had 15 minutes. I approached the bed cautiously and fearfully. There she was asleep, like a skeleton, so helpless and lifeless.

This was not the lady who'd worked so hard running her own bakery shop, or the lady who used to make the most fantastic sausage stew or Christmas cake. The lady who had such a distinguished laugh was not laughing any more.

My gran was an amazing woman with whom I lived for many years during my childhood

and later teens. I sat quietly looking at her frail body, thinking what a wonderful woman she was, when all of a sudden she woke.

'Gran, How are you?'

'You bloody idiot, she's dying,' I thought. Then she called out, 'Who's that?'

'It's Barrie,' I replied.

What she said next still brings a smile to my face.

'Nick?'

'No, Barrie.'

'Joe?'

'No, Barrie.'

'Buck?'

'No, Barrie.'

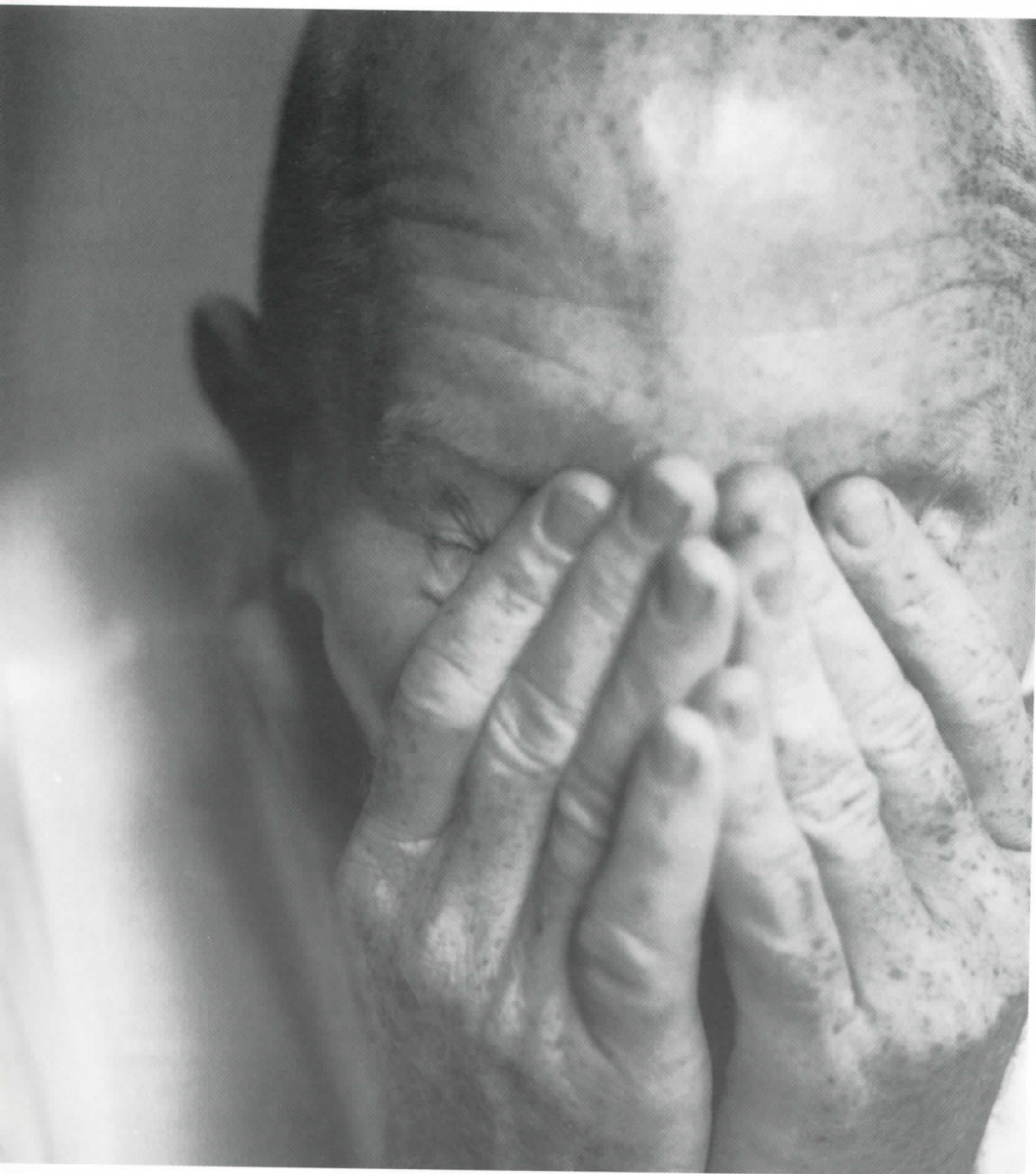
'John?'

'No, Barrie.'

OPEN WIDE

This went on for some time as she went through the list of her brothers, sons, grandchildren and finally got to me. I asked her if she'd had many visitors. She informed me that she hadn't, while constantly calling me by other people's names (no doubt the names of the many people who had visited her!). What I was

'I could hear the faintest of breathing. I held her hand and prayed for her'



to hear next caused me to ask my gran to repeat what she had just said.

'I have had this man at the end of my bed who just kept saying to me, "Sarah, come to me I love you." He stands there with his arms open wide smiling at me urging me to come with him. Do you know who he could be?'

By then I was crying uncontrollably.

'It's Jesus, Gran.'

'What does he want with me?' she replied.

'He wants you to be with him.'

I went on to explain the gospel to my gran and told her how she could have assurance of eternal life before she died. She said she was going to pray and ask God to forgive her and ask Christ into her life. Immediately after that she stopped talking. Initially I thought she'd died, so I leant over and listened. I could hear the faintest of breathing. I held her hand and prayed for her and then leant over and kissed her goodbye. I knew I would not see her again this side of eternity.

I left the hospital very emotional but grateful to God for that last time with my gran and for what he had done in her life

while she had been in hospital. God had heard my prayers for my gran, asking specifically to have an opportunity to share with her about Jesus, and he had come through big time!

I ran and danced around the hospital car park, thanking God and shouting at Satan – telling him he'd lost another battle to the Outrageous Grace of God. Tears streamed down my face as I experienced a combination of joy and sadness, knowing my gran was about to begin a brand new life with Jesus at the end of her own.

At her funeral I listened to the local vicar as he informed the mourners of the change in this lady's life in the last three weeks. As I smiled within, he commented on my gran's desire to pray, have the Bible read to her and take communion with him. I knew one day I would see Sarah McIntyre again, as this was just the beginning of her life at the grand age of 89.

EMOTIONALLY HONEST

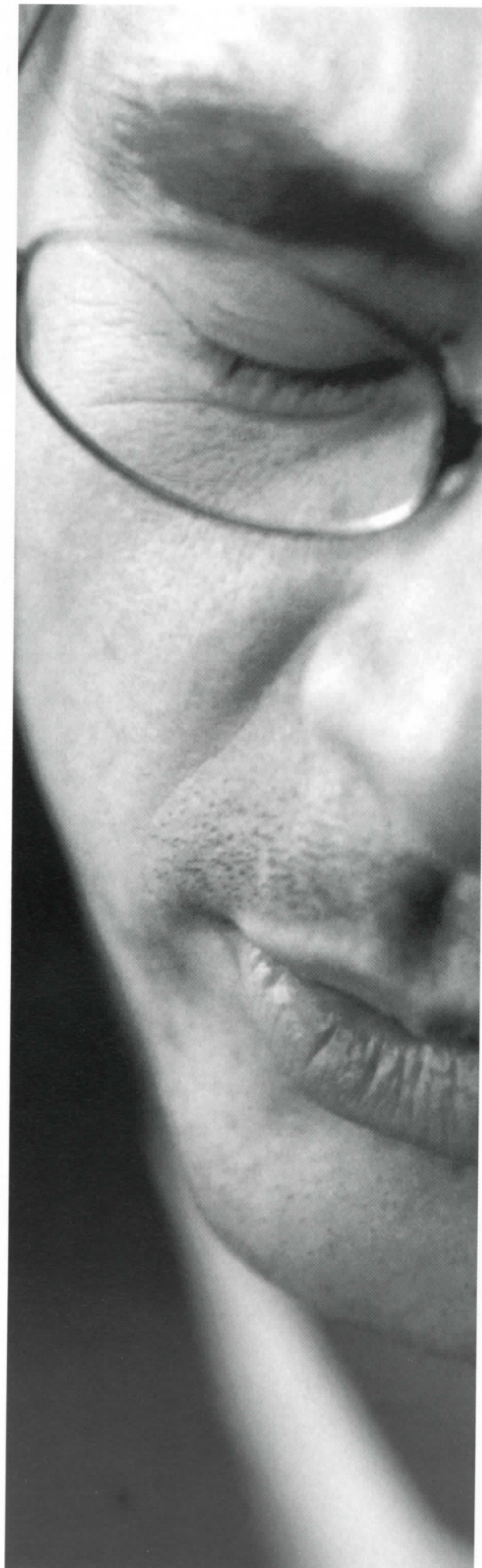
During my visits to different churches to speak, or participate in youth weekends, I come across many people who struggle with sharing their faith. The main struggle is with guilt – guilt of

'It's about time we men became real men, unafraid of emotions and prepared to carry godly burdens'

not doing it or failing at it.

I believe this is often due to the way people are being disciplined about evangelism. If we could get over to people that God wants to use us in sharing our faith in a natural and relevant way (where we remain emotionally honest), we would see a dramatic shift in the way people behave when opportunities come their way.

One of the biggest obstacles for men in sharing their faith today, I believe, is all to do with identity. A visiting speaker (Ray Booth) who was doing a three-week series on the Fatherhood of God, said in one of our meetings:



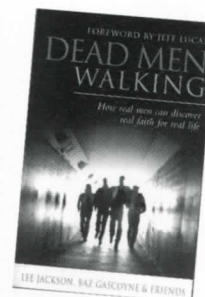
'If you grasp your true identity in God, that you are a Prince, a Son of God, this will affect every other area of your life'.

He went on to say: 'As you allow your relationship with your heavenly Father to improve, your worship, prayer, Bible reading, witness, work and family life will all improve.'

We need to understand that if we can experience this in our hearts, it will transform our endeavours. As Christian men today we need to have our hearts broken by the Holy Spirit so we will weep like Jesus did. Why? Because we will then see people and treat them as God wants us to. No longer will we be immune to the horrendous things we witness on the news or read in the papers, but we'll actually be provoked to do something!

Such an experience might mean we'll cry as never before or hurt with a pain in our hearts as never before. Good! It's about time we men became real men, unafraid of emotions and prepared to carry godly burdens rather than our worldly ones.

This is how God feels daily for his people, his world. Isn't it about time we had more of this within the Church, but more importantly outside it where it really counts? How's your heart today?



● **Baz Gascoyne is married to Linda, and they live and work in Sheffield. Six years ago they planted a church in their local community. It started in their front room with a dozen people, but for the last four years has been meeting in a community centre. His article is taken, with permission, from the book Dead Men Walking, which Baz co-wrote with Lee Jackson and others, published by Kingsway.**

Gary Pritchard reviews
Eminem's *8 Mile*
movie debut, and
looks for clues in
seeking how the rap
star has managed to
hook a loyal following

Once God had threatened to use an Old Testament animal to voice his perspectives, the job of prophet was dealt an uncertain future. John the Baptist and company didn't help matters either, with their cryptic mumblings and exotic lifestyles.

Cut to present-day, and the label 'prophet' continues to elude clear definition or even an agreed identity. In-house promotion from cell facilitator to fully paid-up prophet is rare even among insular denominational hierarchies.

Such confusion at the heart of the Church, is mirrored at a wider cultural level with even more bizarre consequences. From David Ike to Kurt Cobain, the 'prophet-of-a-generation' tag gets bestowed by commentators on anyone able to articulate more than a few syllables.

TRAILER TRASH

For those however, who've long held the view that God uses a wide-ranging span of creation to communicate his good ideas, the question is not so much who's talking the talk, as who's walking the walk? So Bono cuts world debt, Geldof feeds the world, Mandela restores our belief in humanity and Michael Jackson...er...hangs his baby out of a window.

Which brings us to Eminem. His movie *8 Mile* is the cinematic vehicle that's been designed to transform the white rapper's image – previously better known for his controversial views on homosexuals, bad language and multi-million dollar record sales.

The film has been labeled semi-autobiographical in that it tracks parallels between the formative years of Marshall Mathers (Eminem's real name) and that of *8 Mile*'s key character, Jimmy 'Rabbit' Smith Jr.

Rabbit struggles to 'keep it real' as a white trailer-trash steelworker with an absent father, amoral mom and a gift for freestyle rap. Eminem makes a reasonable fist of his first proper acting role, but it's how the film has transformed his real life image that is most remarkable. He has morphed from the gay-baiting, 'bitch'-hating, public pop-devil number one in the US, to prophetic mouthpiece of the broken-home, depoliticised, three-minute generation of white America.

The film sees Rabbit reduce a homophobic work colleague to jelly with his blazing verbal rescue of a gay co-worker, and his new found family credentials are paraded in soft-focus sensitivity in his relationship with his on-screen younger sister.

But it is only when Eminem is allowed to step out



Rapture

from the constraints of the Rocky-meets-West Side Story storyline, that we catch a glimpse of how he has managed to seduce half of America and the UK. The film builds towards a rap-battle crescendo, where he manages to not only crush his ghetto-champion opponent, but also win over the cynical mostly black garage club crowd in the process. It's the ultimate suburban boy fantasy – a crowd of cool black people cheering on the white underdog.

MUSICAL OBLIVION

Eminem puts in a spine-tingling performance while transforming the crowd-taunting chants of 'Elvis' and 'Choker' to cheers of respect and acceptance – in the one scene where he is truly set free to be himself.

The Elvis insults are well aimed – the king of Rock 'n' Roll himself never quite managed to shake off accusations of 'white man steals black man's songs' to find fame. Eminem has cleverly pre-empted such claims, displaying his confessional credentials by rapping, 'I am the worst thing since Elvis Presley, to do black music so selfishly and use it to get myself wealthy'.

And that surely is the rub. Eminem has been plucked from musical oblivion to being tagged 'the voice for a generation', by fans who feel he articulates their own pain and sense of isolation. And by shamelessly parading his 'white boy loves black culture' honesty, he has managed to avoid many of the race-hate accusations that cross-music genre icons normally find themselves tagged with.

Prophet in the wilderness, or profiting from his wiliness – who knows? But try telling his teenage fans that his words are only words, and you are likely to encounter an expletive-laden response that forms the language of the devoted disciples of the poet from Detroit.

● Gary Pritchard is Editorial Manager of *Compass* and a Senior Lecturer with the University of Wales, Newport.



'He has morphed from pop-devil to prophetic mouthpiece of white America'





Buckets of glory

Jeff Lucas marvels at the last brave days of Tyler

T Tyler was 16 when he died. He had lived in the valley of the shadow of death since he was eight years old. The battle began when, at the tender age of four, he developed neurofibromatosis – a disease that turns the body into a harrowingly efficient production line for tumours.

He would endure 12 major surgeries, and in the end the doctors stopped counting tumours, and counted days left instead. They knew that it would not be long.

One of the toughest denials for the tactile Tyler was the fact that his family couldn't hug him anymore, a refusal born of kindness, not coldness – because to embrace him would have sent his nerves into searing agony. And he would watch longingly as dad wrestled with his brothers and sisters – that rough and tumble playfulness way out of bounds for his fragile frame.

As his sight became dim however, his humour stayed razor sharp. One night, as he sat with his family in the kitchen, all faces stained with tears, he announced that the 'sobfest', as he dubbed it, should come to an end. 'How about we all suck it in and go to bed?' he suggested.

Sherri wanted to explain to her son that there was a bright future, out of this world, ahead. She compiled a book about his life, calling it 'buckets of glory'. The rationale was simple; she figured that her boy had been drenched with hundreds of buckets of suffering and pain. The maths are simple – there would be hundreds and hundreds of glory buckets waiting for her Tyler.

There was one other hope that Tyler had cherished. He had liked a girl in his church for a very long time. Erica is blond and beautiful, with a warm, winning smile and a tender heart for God. In America, the football season begins with a so-called 'homecoming' party. Tyler asked Erica if she would do him the courtesy of accompanying him to this very special event. Somehow, the news of the

proposed date got around the town; two limousine companies called to offer the finest transport available, free of charge. A local florist provided the most beautiful bouquet to crown the evening. A jeweler gave an earring and necklace set for Tyler to present to his date – and three restaurants called to offer free dinner. But the big question remained: would Erica say 'yes' to the date?

Tyler returned home from the hospital, to discover that his front garden had been totally transformed. Erica's family had pitched in to create a garden wide carnival of colour. Bright balloons bounced in the breeze. Bunting garlanded the hedges. But

were given to Tyler as he ended his life here. He had been completely deaf for five months, but, towards the end, he was able to hear the faintest whisper, the quiet reassurances of Mum and Dad as they prepared him for the great journey.

And then, the night before he went, he reported hearing a voice, calling his name: a summons from above to the party? As his family, including siblings Jeremy, Charlie, Katie and Colby gathered together, six of them to whisper their farewells. And as he flew away, they said that the sense of peace in the room was thick, tangible.

Something tells me that, when he skipped up the pathway to be with Jesus,

His parents sensed that they were about to witness what they saw as a real privilege – the entrance of their son into heaven.

what demanded Tyler's attention, as he stared, speechless, at the garden, was the dozens of fluorescent posters that had been placed everywhere. Many of them carried just one word, bold and arresting.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Tyler, resplendent in his rented tuxedo and top hat, and the lovely Erica were transported to the party like royalty. He danced with her by flipping the joystick of his electric wheelchair backwards and forwards. It was a wonderful evening, when for just once, life said a big yes.

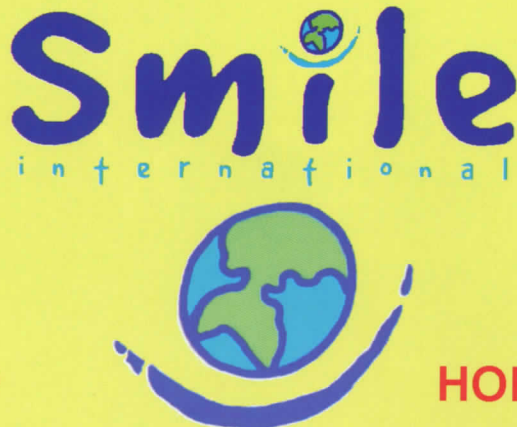
And now, as you read this, Tyler is gone, his battle with the tumour machine that has been his body finally over. His parents sensed that they were about to witness what they saw as a real privilege – the entrance of their son into heaven. Gifts

the clumsy wheelchair an unnecessary accessory now, that the Lord himself wasn't the first sight he saw. Call me sentimental if you like. But, knowing Jesus, I reckon that Tyler had a special 'homecoming' party in heaven. A few billion bright buckets, brimming over with glory. And perhaps, to welcome him, there was a rash of a million bright posters on display, each one with just one word scrawled upon it. Yes.

Tyler is home.

● **Jeff Lucas is a popular speaker and author and will be part of the programme at the Pioneer leaders conference. His article is adapted from an excerpt from *Lucas On Life 2*, due to be published by Authentic Media in March 2003**

BULGARIA
ALBANIA
GAMBIA
MACEDONIA
MONTENEGRO



KOSOVA
BELGIUM
ZAMBIA
ZIMBABWE
HONG KONG/CHINA

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