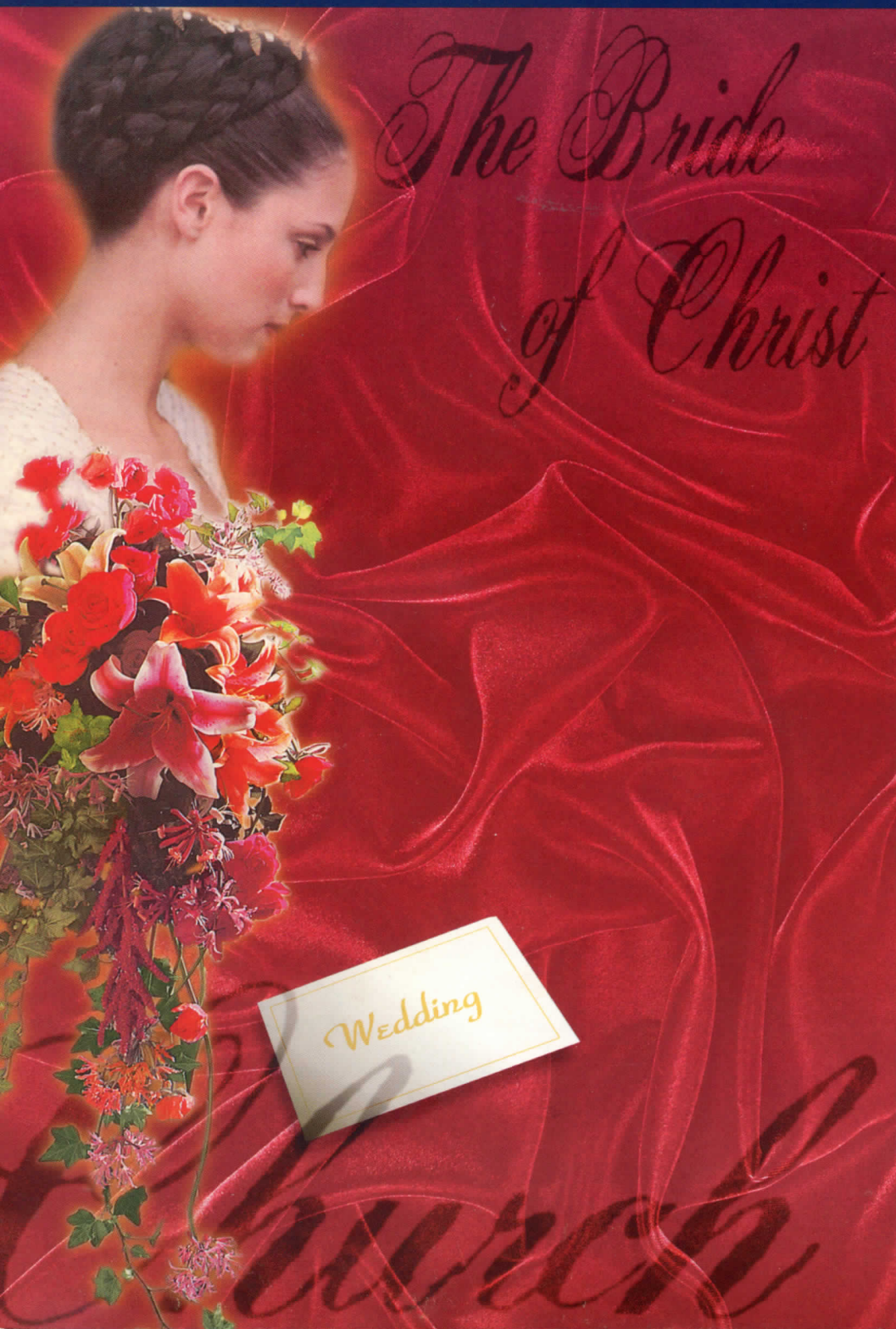
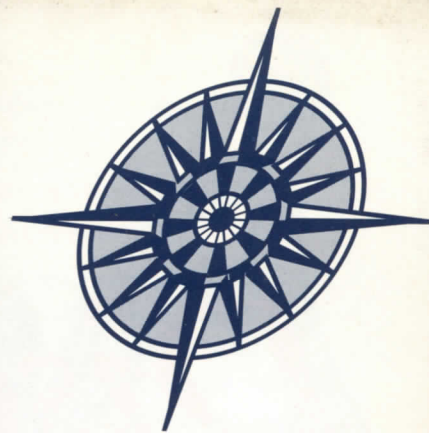


Compass

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF NON-RELIGIOUS CHRISTIANITY

£1.95

OL.2 NO.4



GERALD COATES

Future shock

JANE THORINGTON-HASSELL

Disciple or die!

TERRY VIRGO

Health hazards

DAVE TOMLINSON

Do New Churches have a future?

JULIE BROWN

A taste of fire

STUART BELL

Tired of church?

MELVYN BRAGG

Culture of despair

KEITH TONDEUR

Camelot crisis

MARCIA LORD

One body, one culture?

MARTIN SCOTT

Local church must die

JEFF LUCAS

The last word



TH



Editorial



Theme your editorial around 'do the New Churches have a future?' my editor requested.

The answer is obviously yes. But the issue is, whether they will be torch bearers or merely problem-solving fire fighters.

New Churches are 'new' not because they have no 'old' denominational tag, rather they have the new wine of the Spirit. But new wine without flexible wineskins spells trouble! (*Matthew 9:17*)

I see 1997 is going to be 'explosive' in more ways than one. I hear a succession of surprising, sometimes confusing and disorientating spiritual, relational and natural explosions.

If your church has received the new wine, are you part of a flexible wine skin? Or will 1997 be the year of a wine/wineskin explosion – and you'll lose the lot?

Pioneer Team Leader and Director of Pioneer Trust

Do the New Churches have a future? Outpourings of the Holy Spirit usually pose questions.

Ezekiel 47:6 Do you see this?

John 4:11 Where can you get this living water?

Acts 2:12 What does this mean?

I am heartened by the fact that generally in the New Churches as the Holy Spirit moves questions are being asked.

What is the nature of church?

What are cells?

Are we really relevant?

What about youth church?

When we ask questions we tend to remain teachable, dynamic, and flexible. We also find ourselves back into scripture and dependent upon one another for guidance, input and love.

It also helps the 'humility' factor and our prayer life when we admit that we don't have all the answers.

Ground Level Team Leader

PIONEER

Ground LEVEL
MINISTRY TEAM

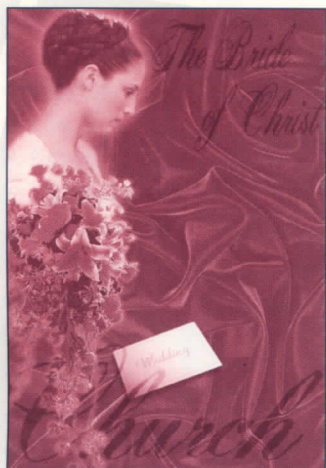
Saturday 24th - Tuesday 27th May 1997
Norfolk Showground, Norwich

Contact: The Event, PO Box 39, Sunbury on

or call: The Event hot line 01932 779772

e-mail: 'the.event@dial.pipex.com'.

£54.95 for adults, £34.95 for children, £39.95 for



DIGITAL IMAGING BY
JULIE GREGORY

PUBLISHING DETAILS:

Compass is published by Pioneer Direct Ltd on behalf of the Pioneer team and network of churches and in association with Ground Level. Pioneer and Ground Level are dedicated to promoting dynamic and effective Christianity, and are members of the Evangelical Alliance.

Editorial working group:

GERALD COATES (Chairman), PAUL DAKIN (Managing Editor), JOHN NOBLE, CLIVE PRICE (Editorial Consultant), KEITH TONDEUR (Ground Level) with LINDA HARDING, JULIE BROWN.

Design & Artwork:

POOT & VEV GRAPHICS
Tel/fax: 0181 292 5284

Printing:

TEAM SPIRIT SERVICES
PO Box 16, Romford RM5 3TN

Advertising:

ROZ NEWMAN

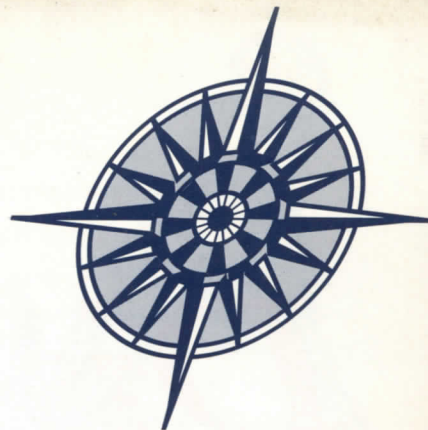
Compass is published quarterly (March, June, September, December), and is available on annual subscription. £8.00 UK, £10.00 overseas (inc. p&cp) Bulk and trade prices on request.

Compass is protected by copyright and nothing within it may be reproduced without prior permission.

All correspondence should be addressed to Compass,

Pioneer Direct Ltd, PO Box 39
Sunbury-on-Thames
Middx TW16 6PP
Tel: 01932 789681
Fax: 01932 789691
EMail: pioneer_trust@dial.pipex.com
Company No 2372826
VAT reg No 564 265 039

Contents



- 4 *Disciple or die!*
Jane Thorington-Hassell
- 7 *Boring, irrelevant and dead*
TIE Teamers survey the general public
- 8 *Future shock*
Gerald Coates
- 10 *Parachurch paradigm*
Philip Vogel
- 11 *Health hazards*
Terry Virgo
- 12 *Going underground*
Cynthia Rollanson-Williams
- 14 *Do New Churches have a future?*
Dave Tomlinson
- 15 *Letters*
- 16 *The trouble with labels*
Allison Davies
- 19 *A taste of fire*
Julie Brown
- 20 *Tired of church?*
Stuart Bell
- 22 *Culture of despair*
Elaine Storkey interviews Melvyn Bragg
- 23 *Camelot crisis*
Keith Tondeur
- 24 *One body, one culture?*
Marcia Lord
- 26 *Local church must die*
Gary Pritchard meets Martin Scott
- 27 *Poetry*
James Pavey & Gail Hutson
- 28 *Reviews*
- 31 *The last word*
Jeff Lucas

GERALD COATES

Future shock

JANE THORINGTON-HASSELL

Disciple or die!

TERRY VIRGO

Health hazards

DAVE TOMLINSON

Do New Churches have a future?

JULIE BROWN

A taste of fire

STUART BELL

Tired of church?

MELVYN BRAGG

Culture of despair

KEITH TONDEUR

Camelot crisis

MARCIA LORD

One body, one culture?

MARTIN SCOTT

Local church must die

JEFF LUCAS

The last word



Disciple or die!

It may bring back nightmares of school. But church should be a learning community – as Jane Thorington-Hassell found out

NOT MANY OF US would be pleased to go back to school. But when we become Christians, the whole process of learning to live God's way really begins. And if we're wise, we become part of a community of learners – not solitary students.

Churches need to be Christ-centred learning communities. If not, we won't fulfil our God-given task of sharing Jesus' message with others – and we won't be fulfilled in our own relationships with God and his Church.

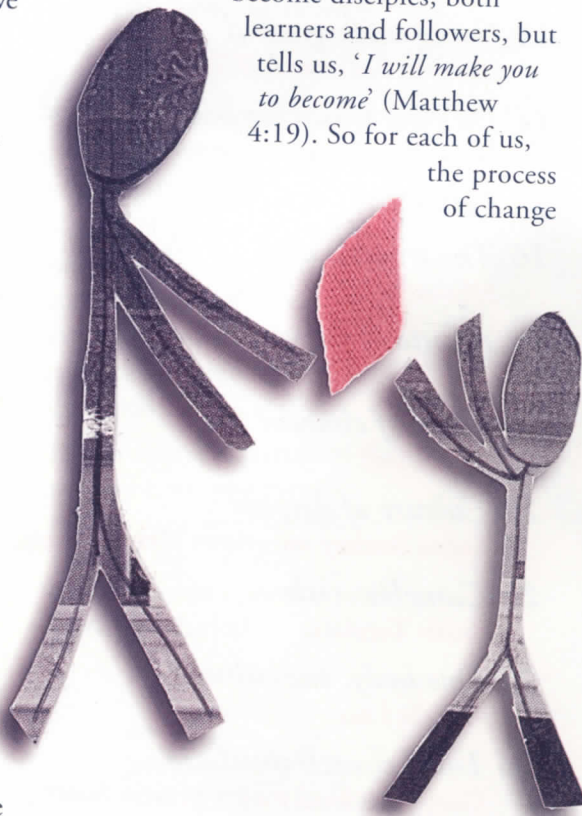
Without being a part of such a community, we're unable to make progress in the most essential of Christ's commands. That is, to show the world by our relationships of love for one another, that we are real disciples of Christ.

Christian groups and individuals who've ceased to be learning and developing people are like stagnant ponds – unattractive, boring and basically unhealthy. Boredom need never be the complaint of the Christian because there's so much still to discover about God and

how to live for him in today's complicated world.

Being a Christian is a process – not an event

Jesus calls people to himself to become disciples, both learners and followers, but tells us, 'I will make you to become' (Matthew 4:19). So for each of us, the process of change



and growth begins and hopefully continues throughout our lives.

That's a process of personal growth – not cloning. It should be growth

towards competence and responsibility. So it's not a case of teachers simplistically telling younger Christians what to do, but equipping them with the tools they need to live as adult disciples.

That means nurturing skills of moral discernment and astute and just judgements by showing and using good practices in reading, understanding and applying the Bible in today's culture. The Bible – and particularly the New Testament – needs to be a source book for Christian living both in the workplace and community.

All too often Christians are badly thought-out and ill-informed about God and the world in which we live. However, growing Christians will be maturing in personal attitudes and behaviour as well as growing in knowledge.

Learning takes place in community – not isolation

One of the greatest difficulties encountered by lone students or distance learners is that they cannot listen to others discuss things. They cannot ask questions or work together with anyone.

It's still true that it's basically 'not good' to be on your own. Living in

today's western world is often an unhelpful endorsement of excessive individualism – and at times too great a stress is heaped on the nuclear family.

We have a responsibility to support and encourage one another to be learners. We're more valid contributors to the Church if we consider what is for the common good of church and society – and not just what suits 'me'.

One tremendous advantage inner city congregations have over their suburban brethren is their variety of people groups – of different races and cultures, the wealthy and the poor, professionals and those with a whole spectrum of backgrounds.

So in many situations we're forced into examining what it really means to be a Christian and what behaviour and practices are purely cultural. Those things would never even be considered – let

alone engaged with – if we didn't share our lives in worship and work together.

For many of us, there are all sorts of resistance to such learning. But where fear and the like exist, there's always the possibility of growth and change if people become willing to think and pray together.

Accountability to God through the Bible and fellow believers within a loving church is part of disciplined discipleship.

Training others means being teachable yourself

It's not surprising that the Bible says teachers will have to give an account to God for their practices. It's a responsible role to seek to disciple others – and especially to be allowed to seek to teach a whole church, or groups of people within it.

It's important that teachers are themselves still learners. That keeps attitudes humble, and material and ideas fresh and exciting (Matthew 13:52). We need all sorts of disciplers helping other Christians in the church to grow.

They may be youth leaders or small group leaders. And it's true to say in our Christian friendships we may be discipling one another without

even realising it, as we share our lives together.

Communicating must be relevant to today's culture

Christian teachers and trainers must keep pace with new understandings of how adults learn, and be willing to try new ways of preaching and teaching. Jesus and his disciples used many different ways of communicating the truth – not to be trendy – but to be judged as relevant.

So it's important that we're not closed communities but that we get the balance of teaching from within our communities, and that as disciples we're exposed to the ideas and emphases of Christian teachers and thinkers from other streams and traditions.

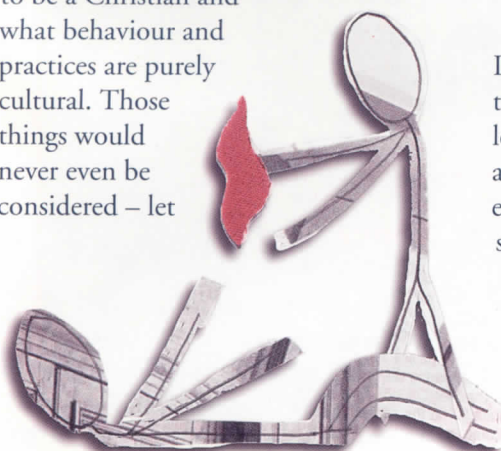
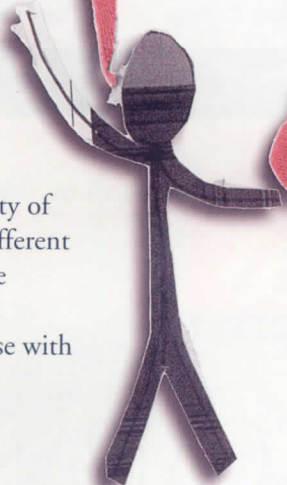
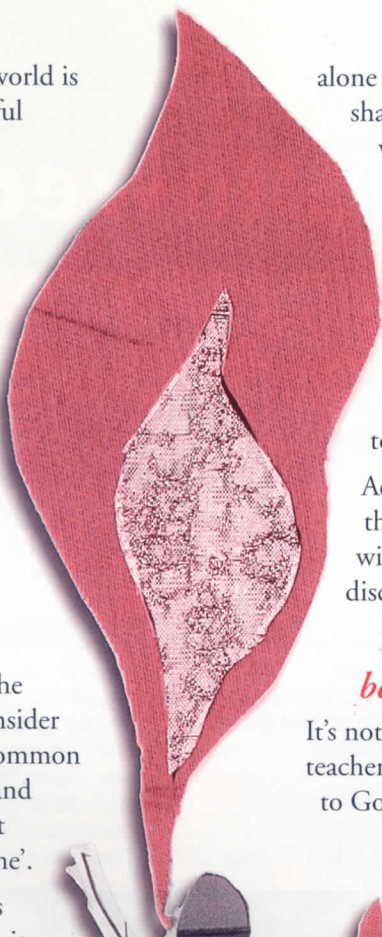
It's helpful to make full and relevant use of the full variety of teaching media. So as we share together, hopefully there'll be an increasing use of video, music and interactive learning to support, reinforce, illustrate and reveal truths that we need to explore.

It's the exposure to both word and world that makes us useful people and communities for God.

Disciples need to be prepared by the believing community to live in the world. Put simply, if we cease to be learners and learning communities, we will cease to grow. It's disciple or die!



Jane has been a Baptist pastor in East London for 11 years, and is committed to holistic urban mission and inter-church co-operation. Married to Geoff, she enjoys walking and aerobics.



Leaders.

Are you being followed?

"Learning is a lifelong pursuit from which none of us should ever graduate. Equipped to Lead is a proven resource which I heartily commend to you." Gerald Coates. (Pioneer Team Leader)



"Equipped to Lead" provides an opportunity for leaders to develop their theological understanding and sharpen their leadership skills. Equipped to Lead is an intensive one year course and specifically targeted at eldership and developing leaders. Nearly 100 hours of training are spread over 2 residential weekends and 8 Saturdays of teaching (meeting once per month). This year Equipped to Lead UK will be taking place in **three regions** - the **Northern** region, based in Doncaster, the **Wales and Western** region, based around Bristol, and the **Southern** region, based in Guildford. There are just 240 places available on a first come, first serve basis, so be sure to register quickly.

Jeff Lucas
Director, Equipped to Lead

Amongst those invited to participate:** Fran Beckett, Gerald Coates, Steve Clifford, Patrick Dixon, Pat Cooke, Stuart Lindsell, Jeff Lucas, Mike Morris, Stuart Murray, Martin Scott, Ann Clifford, Frank Green, Tony Pullin, Linda Harding, Debra Green etc
* subject to confirmation

Day sessions on The Church:

a supernatural body
a mission body
a biblical community
corporate gatherings
a discipling community
contemporary challenges
and future hopes

With subjects including

Jesus - our central theme	Church Discipline	Hermeneutics
The Kingdom	Developing a supernatural Church	Preaching
Humanity	Satan, Demons and Angels	Breaking Bread
Church Government	Mission and Culture	Theology of Worship
Leadership Lifestyle	Generation X	Integrating New Believers
Stress	Church and Society	Divorce and Remarriage
Maintaining spiritual passion	Doctrine of the Bible	Developing People
Leadership Integrity	Communication and Culture	The Future of the Church

PIONEER

National Office: Pioneer Equipped to Lead, PO Box 58, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 2UD. Tel: 01243 531898
(Mailbox 325) - Fax (01243 531959) - e mail 101620.635@compuserve.com



Compass

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF NON-RELIGIOUS CHRISTIANITY

SUBSCRIBE TO COMPASS

GET COMPASS DELIVERED DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR

Annual subscription costs £8.00

(£10.00 for international orders)

FUTURE ISSUES INCLUDE

Reaching The Lost • **Arts & Media** • **Money**

Use the subscription form enclosed in this issue of Compass
or telephone Pioneer Direct on 01932 779772

ONLY £8.00 PER YEAR

Boring!

We may see ourselves as the people of God – lively, triumphant, and excited. But how do those outside the churches see us? Are we answering questions nobody is asking? Are our 'radical' activities a turn-off to the punter in the street? If our primary concern is those outside our fellowship, how far are we succeeding?

Two TIE* Teamers left the sanctified comfort-zone of the church office to brave the opinions of the only people who really matter...

WHAT IS CHURCH?

'Place for people to worship'

'Place for religion'

'Organised environment to control people's thoughts and actions'

'Where you go for weddings/ funerals/christenings'

'The house of God'

'Place to find God and pray'

'Establishment based in Jesus Christ'

'A place that people go to praise God'

'Church is a meeting place of one to know what is Heaven and Hell'

'House of God where servants look after his planets and communicate with him' (Maaan!)

'A place where people gather in their community'

'Church is a community'

'Place where you can find God and communicate with him/her'

'It's a place of peace and tranquillity'

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CHURCH?

'It's okay'

'It is good because you can get close to God'

'Church has the image of being boring but for me I find church a place of peace where I can think and consider problems'

'Church can be interesting, services shouldn't go on for two hours if it's boring. Church should cover all different aspects – from caring for the community to a youth club'

'It is a safe place and always there when in need or worry, a place of quiet and shelter'

'A spectrum of traditions. Some older, some younger'

'Peaceful and warm'
'Holy and cold'

'Christian Church is relevant because of the moral values and beliefs'

'It should be a lot more – but fails miserably'

'People in church are hypocritical'

'It's a great place to go'

'Strongly recommend it to be in every place and every town'

'Used to go when small, but there aren't any good ones now'

'People go for absolution of sins' (Muslim)

'An important element of society'

'Very relevant and I go every Sunday'

'Not relevant'

'Crappy – I still like God but not the establishment of the Church'

'I used to think of church as a boring place where you sang hymns and listened to lectures by vicars but now I realise it is a place of activity and opportunity for the younger generation'

Research by Lola Sittabey and Diane Naylor.

The data was collected on Brentford High Road, Ealing High Road and from pupils at Chiswick High School.

*Training In Evangelism – A Pioneer course

Future

Is your church future-proof? Gerald Coates explains how we should be upgrading the hardware to meet the current – and coming – revival

TALK OF REVIVAL is in the air. Indeed, revival is here and is on its way. But are we ready? Will we survive?

Many both inside and outside the Christian community are hearing the sound of God, reaching out of the heavens and turning a page in the history of his Church.

Highs and lows will become more exaggerated. The Holy Spirit will be breaking out in the most unexpected places. Lines will be firmly drawn between charismatics and Pentecostals and non-anti-charismatics. There'll be surprising defections on all sides.

The UK phenomena

By Christmas 1996 around 250,000 had been through the evangelistic Alpha course. By the end of 2000 AD an estimated five million people will have been through Alpha in the UK. That's well over one-tenth of Britain's entire adult population.

City Gate, a Pioneer church in Southampton, has just enrolled 140 students from one school onto an Alpha course!

In less than two years, over 2,000 prisoners have been led to Christ. One governor told the media he 'didn't know what this was, but it was

completely changing the atmosphere' in his prison. David Powe, chaplain at Lewes Prison, Sussex, has led over 800 prisoners to Christ.

Challenged by that, Surrey Metropolitan police officer Steven McNally saw 200 officers and friends gather for a 'time of refreshing'. Scores responded for prayer. Don Axel, Assistant Director of the Christian Police Association, told me, 'This has started a fire all across the south of England'.

Religion and politics

Prime Minister John Major has reacted to opposition leader Tony Blair who's made the Christian faith a major election issue. It's becoming increasingly fashionable to be a committed Christian – particularly an evangelical.

A Bible Society survey discovered that one million non-churchgoers read the Bible every day. There's a heightened

interest in Christianity in the European Royal Family – and in both the Houses of Commons and Lords.

The first black member of the House of Lords, John Taylor, is a charismatic evangelical – and currently part of a West London Pioneer church. He's keen to speak for Christ wherever he can.

After listening to a tape of a talk I gave on revival, one member of Parliament phoned me to ask, 'What can the Government do to fan the flames of revival?'

Adding a touch of humour, one church has been told it will need an 'entertainment licence' as the meetings are such fun! Surprises are becoming regular.

Icon of conservative evangelicalism Jim Packer recently endorsed a book on the 'Toronto blessing'. A supermarket manager phoned New Life Christian



shock

Fellowship, Lincoln, and asked if they'd like to print 'good news' and Bible verses on their till rolls!

Challenge for the Church

Can the shape of the Church cope with what's about to happen? What if prisoners joined your church? The erratic hours of police officers make church as we know it difficult. How do we disciple large groups of young people when they've been through Alpha or 'Just Looking' courses?

We need new wineskins for this new wine – or we shall lose both. We shall never have this opportunity again – certainly not in my lifetime. How can we create flexible wineskins to contain this heady stuff?

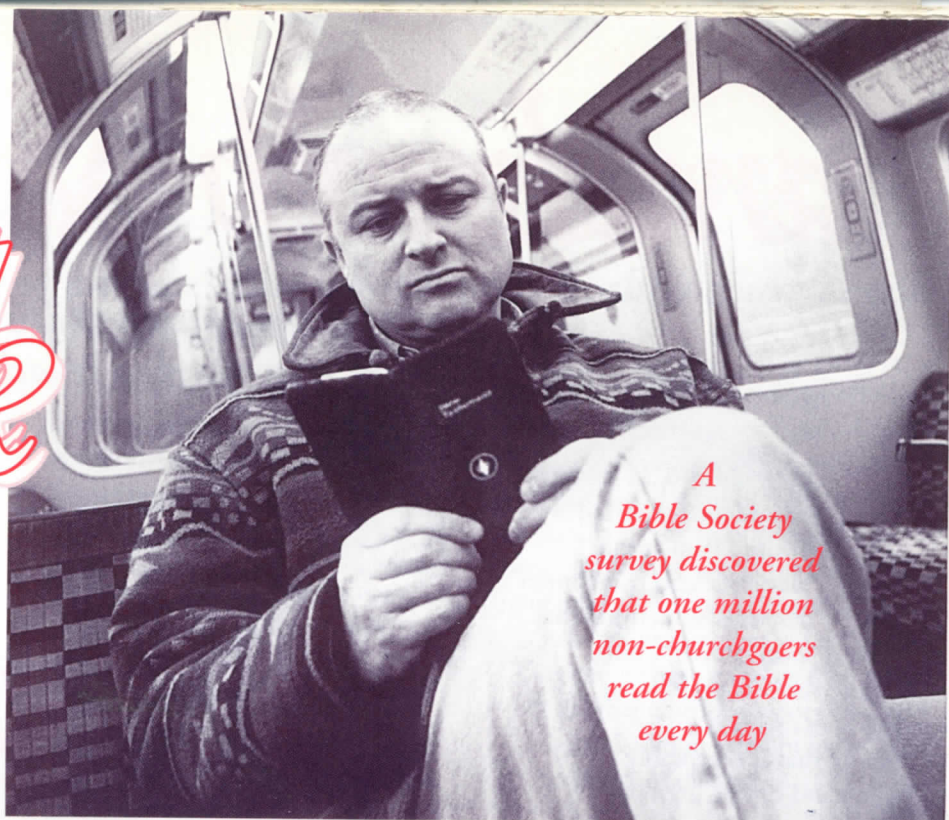
Extending access

Friendship evangelism has its limitations. Few come to Christ as a result of regular Sunday meetings.

Cell church offers us something more than a pastoral housegroup. Cells should be centres of spiritual activity – reaching out to the young, those at school, the elderly, the hungry and poor, business people, housewives, single parents and the such.

Shifting resources

Eighty-five per cent of people make a Christian commitment before age 25. Resources must be re-directed to gospel mission and the young. We shouldn't expect to reap where we haven't sown.



A Bible Society survey discovered that one million non-churchgoers read the Bible every day

PHOTO – DAVE WISKER

While pastoral and administrative skills are vital for church life, our focus must be for those who are 'the least, the last and the lost'. Evangelism mustn't be the activity of a few for a while – but the very reason for our existence.

Identifying tribes

Society is multi-cultural. There are Classic FM devotees, jazz listeners and jungle music dancers. There are groups or tribes who are prepared to drink beer in pubs with pals – while there are others who have guests at home and drink wine.

The main interest for many – especially men – is sport, while for others it's DIY or gardening. Of course, there's considerable overlap between the tribes and groups.

Core values and activities create quite separate identities. Homogeneous groups are a good starting point in making Christ attractive and intelligible to people of our kind.


Tribes must be empowered to reach people of their own kind.

We should no longer look at church in terms of who is at the main meeting or house group. Church should take on

many shapes in local schools and colleges, in old people's homes and other 'hidden people groups'.

In the words of Roger Forster, are those 'churching it' any less than those whose commitment to Christ and the gospel is shaped by traditional views of charismatic church?

In future we may not be able to judge the success of a church by how many meet on a Sunday. Instead we'll be looking at growing numbers of cells, reaching out in love, care and compassion – and touching the hurts of postmodern society.

We may only see the fruit of that as we gather in stadiums and major venues – where we can be church together. The boundaries are being removed and edges are being blurred. Be prepared for the shape of the Church to come. 

Gerald Coates is leader of the Pioneer Team and Pioneer People. He has written several books and speaks at various events and conferences. Married to Anona, he has three grown-up sons.



Parachurch paradigm

Critical of extra-church ministries?

Phil Vogel thinks we may need to re-adjust our vision

PARACHURCH ISN'T an outreach to airborne troops. 'Para' means 'alongside'. So parachurch describes something that isn't seen as local church – but something that is alongside, or extra to it. It's seen as something that is acceptably Christian and can be used by God if you are theologically gracious – or something that isn't quite legit but can at best be tolerated if you are not. Organisations like Youth With A Mission, British Youth for Christ and missionary societies fit that category.

I first came across it in the early 70s. It became a popular term among those involved in the fledgling house church movement – and especially by those who believed local church was the only true representation of God's activity on earth. But the concept has been around for much longer. The Salvation Army saw themselves as 'extra' to church – so they didn't take communion or baptise.

The same was true of the city missions who refrained from activities – including Sunday morning services – which would otherwise distinguish them as 'church'. But are we justified in labelling such as 'parachurch'? First we need to establish what church is,

before we're able to say what isn't church but is 'extra' or 'parachurch'.

Does a movement become church:

- ❖ when sacraments are administered or if it meets on a Sunday?

'How do we arrive at the view that local church is what church really is, and anything that doesn't fit becomes parachurch?'




- ❖ when there's a leadership structure?
- ❖ or perhaps it's something do with being local?

The New Testament suggests 'local' would apply to an area or city – and not as we tend to define churches today. So how do we arrive at the view that local church is what church really is, and anything that doesn't fit becomes parachurch? Basic church surely is, where two or three gather in the name of Jesus, experiencing his

presence and living for him. If that's so, then two or three Christians living in that way can be church within a parachurch organisation – or for that matter, working in Tesco's.

Some may argue that parachurches like the Salvation Army, Operation Mobilisation, YWAM, YFC and many others, haven't

contributed much to building churches. But it would take a brave person to argue they hadn't contributed a great deal to extending God's Kingdom.

Church is important. It's the bride of Christ, something he's given his life to redeem. However, Jesus spoke of church on only two occasions – the Kingdom of God on 224 times. That tells us where our focus should be. 

Philip Vogel is a member of the Pioneer Team. Formerly he was National Director of British Youth for Christ, ministry team member at Guildford's Millmead Centre, and is founder leader of Guildford Community Church. Vogel was released by his church to work both nationally and internationally. He is contributing to the Pioneer Perspectives series, and is a director of Teleios Complete Consulting.



Health hazards

We can function by focusing on side issues - but a truly healthy church exists for Jesus and nothing else, says Terry Virgo

THE LOCAL CHURCH isn't only Christ's delight. It's also his strategic base for our active, effective service.

Modern Christians have almost entirely failed to grasp this master plan in God's economy for growth and world blessing. Many have given up on the local church by remaining essentially individualistic.

Others have poured their energies into apparently more exciting Christian activities and organisations outside the local church context. But if they were to spend time assessing the lasting fruit of that choice, they might be bitterly disappointed with what they discover.

If we do not earth our vision and zeal in the local church, we will dissipate our energy and have virtually nothing to show for it. The lasting fruits of costly mass evangelism cannot be compared with the fruits of a truly healthy church that's constantly involved in evangelism based on its own community life and outgoing family atmosphere.

That, of course, begs the question: What does a really healthy church look like? What sort of community will experience the blessing of God's presence, and the love, joy, peace and growth that he supplies?

❖ It will be a church centred in heartfelt love for Christ. He will be the focus of its fellowship. Its existence will be for him and nothing less than him.

❖ Prayer, praise and worship will be at the heart of its corporate life.

❖ The teaching of his word will be fundamental because he has the words of eternal life – and we love to hear him speaking to us. We expect to experience his presence in terms that genuinely meet our need of him and his love.

Many a zealous Christian who wants to reach his generation with the gospel will turn his back on the church to join an evangelising organisation

The church where Christ's presence is never felt is not a church worth attending. We are his people, his bride. We are for him – a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. If we exist for him, anything less than gathering to meet with him is a waste of time and a total failure to understand our identity.

It's possible for a church to function without that focus, where side issues can become central. Other worthwhile activities such as youth work, the Sunday school, the choir, the music, the community atmosphere or social involvement can be the foundation on which a local church is built. In the UK it's possible for a church to exist merely because it has existed for years, and people attend with little or no motivation at all.


Against that background of frustration, many a zealous Christian who wants to reach his generation with the gospel will turn his back on the church to join an evangelising organisation. He will argue, 'Why work hard trying to evangelise my contemporaries if I know they will be turned off by my local church?'

Gradually an unwritten law becomes apparent, namely that keen Christians

will leave the church and go off to 'do something exciting for God'. Also, finance is siphoned off to promote activities which fail to honour the centrality of the local church in God's strategy. Some Christians are tempted to give only a basic minimum to their local church because they've become committed to releasing their money to other Christian work which they regard as more relevant to the advance of the gospel.

They see the local church as merely ticking over and therefore not needing much income, while important outreach organisations obviously require a lot of finance and have a certain glamour attached to them.

If those funds were channelled into local churches, we would see an end to the 'one-man ministry', with all its limitations. More church-based evangelists, pastors, teachers, apostles, prophets and their support workers could be released – as well as other specialist ministries that could find their home within the local church and draw upon the skills of its membership.

The whole atmosphere of the local church could be transformed, so that instead of just 'ticking over', it would become a vibrant,  outgoing community.

Terry Virgo is based at Church of Christ the King in Brighton. He leads the New Frontiers International team which is committed to planting and serving churches in the UK and overseas. His article is taken, with permission, from his new book 'A People Prepared', published by Kingsway at £5.99.



Going underground

Cell church is the latest trend in the West. But in the Middle East, it's the only option. Cynthia Rollanson-Williams reports

CELL CHURCH IS 'IN'. It's a trendy talking point at Bible conventions and leaders' conferences – in the western world, that is. If you're following Jesus in a middle eastern Islamic state, cell church becomes a lifeline.

There are more challenging issues than the latest round of members' grievances over the volume of the PA. In a country whose national leaders may be opposed to the gospel, you have to face the threat of imprisonment – and even death.

In one such region – which cannot be named for security reasons –

something of great purity and power is being formed. The church has gone underground and has split into cells.

Screening disciples

There are no meetings outside cell groups, which meet once a week. Like UK churches with that structure, there's a 12-strong leadership team.

To become part of the church, each member goes through a discipleship programme. It's an effective training scheme. But it's also an excellent process of screening new people coming into the church.

Because of the country's political and religious structure, a churches

generally have government informers monitoring the situation. Up to 80% of those on discipleship courses eventually pass on into the church.

Sharing community

The church was established in 1987, with 60-70 people. They spent the first three years laying the spiritual foundations by praying and praising. Now the membership stands at 1,600 – scattered across various cities.

Every attempt is made to follow the New Testament model of church. But this group of people don't necessarily see themselves as a 'church'. They are followers of Jesus.

It's a structure based on sharing, community, prayer, fellowship and worship. There are large-scale one-off meetings for more specific purposes such as worship and intercession.

When it comes to evangelism, this church cannot be as open as we can – or should be – in the West. They cannot advertise in the local paper or put up posters in the newsagents. People are invited through their network of churches, family and friends.

There's no church building. Most meetings are held in homes, though other venues are hired for bigger meetings.

Spiritual spectrum

A classic definition of church would be – 'a house consecrated to the worship of God among Christians; the collective body of Christians; the body of clergy; ecclesiastical authority'.

But does that really tell the whole picture? There's a wide variety of churches today, and their format or structure tells a lot about them.

- Mega-church – usually taken to be where the membership is over 10,000. The church has a huge impact on a large urban area – eg the seeker-friendly style Willow Creek.
- Congregational church – where the church's activity and authority is broken down into smaller congregations who may meet up for city-wide celebration or regional events – eg Ichthus Fellowship and the classic Methodist circuit system.
- Autonomous church – the traditional FIEC congregations, Brethren assemblies, and Anglican churches like HTB, follow this line. Churches that are planted out, owe no official 'allegiance' to the parent church other than a relational one.
- Satellite church – Kensington Temple may well lead the way here, with a system of congregations that are churches in their own right, but which also come together for central meetings.
- Housegroup church – the standard evangelical/charismatic congregation that follows the model of meeting as housegroups on a regular midweek basis. But the real life and control rests in the main church structure.

The differences with this set-up to one in the UK is that British churches attract many casual visitors. But within this region, actually belonging to a church is important.

If people are invited to join the church it's because they're committed to the church ministry – they're not passive members. And in fact, those who aren't committed are asked to leave.

As a church movement, they consider themselves a mission. Due to the fact that a mission is mobile, the people are dedicated to moving on, rather than the usual static concept of church in the west.

Surrogate family

There are serious consequences for Christian converts in an Islamic country. Imprisonment, loss of job and family, closure of buildings, beatings and in some cases, death, are among the responses you'll get.

Members – particularly those who've converted from Islam to Christianity – face difficult circumstances. The

Mystery of the church

Trying to pin 'the church' down is perhaps not exactly what Jesus intended. Is it more a reflection of his Spirit – who goes wherever and however he wants – that the church should be flexible, creative and expressing itself in many forms?

Catholic theologian Richard McBrien ('Catholicism', published by Geoffrey Chapman) unpacks three biblical images which help us to understand the fuller mystery of the church:

- people of God – according to Hebrew ways of thinking, the people form a whole, a 'corporate personality';
- body of Christ – this concept underlines the church's intimate connection with Jesus Christ, and with God's call to a communal relationship;
- temple of the Holy Spirit – just as Jesus identified himself with the temple, so the body of Christ is itself the new temple, the place of God's dwelling.

church plays a huge part in their lives. In some cases, it becomes everything to them. It's their shelter and their family.

Though they are an underground church, they still manage to have an impact on the local community. They can reach a number of people through the house churches' network.

On a practical level, each house church collects a list of needy people in the local community. The church then attempts to help them in whatever way that they can. That can be financially, through gifts, or just help on a basic level. And that's done in cells.

Being in a cell within this church means you're committed totally to the people in your group. In the West, the cell group is seen as something 'added on' to the church; in the Middle East, it's a powerful base on which to build.

There's so much we in the West can learn from such a strong expression of community in this middle eastern church.

Cynthia Rollanson-Williams is a freelance writer and a member of New Life Christian Fellowship, North London.

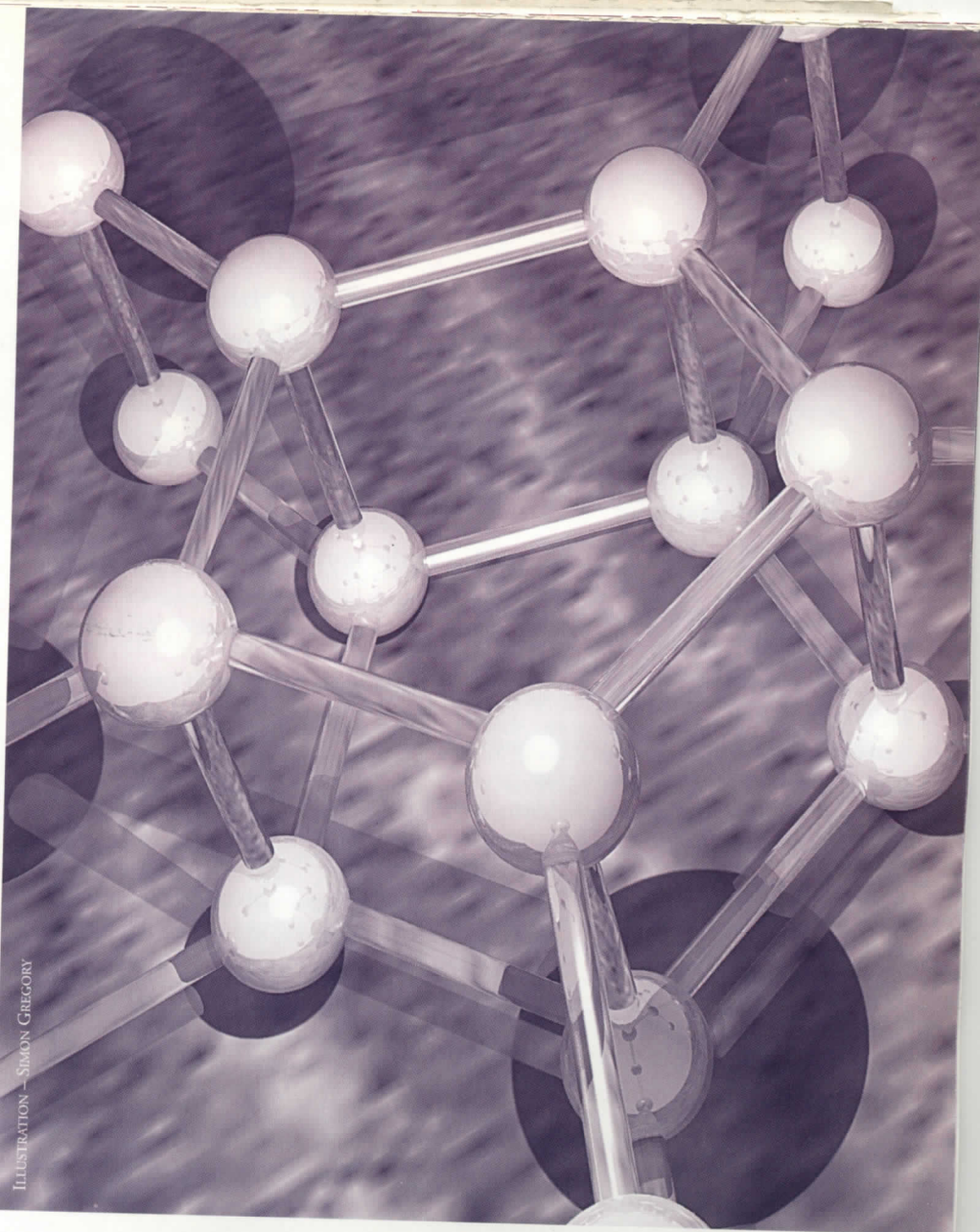


ILLUSTRATION – SIMON GREGORY

On the Spirit's wave

Birthered in expectation of a great move of God, the New Churches are a major late 20th century happening.

But Dave Tomlinson considers - do they have a future?

THE NEW CHURCHES are a remarkable phenomenon. Whether they have a future in terms of the history

books really doesn't matter.

The fact is, in less than 30 years they've become an established part of the church scenery. And they've contributed significantly to the developing ethos of British evangelicalism as we approach the third millennium.

Some may regret that. Others will applaud it. But nevertheless it is the case. And contrary to the critics who once accused them of being introspective and indifferent to mission, the New Churches are now as actively engaged in evangelism, overseas outreach, and social action as anyone else around.

To some extent, the energy and drive of the New Churches stems from a sense of being caught up in a prophetic purpose. Shortly before his death, Arthur Wallis – arguably the father of the New Churches – reflected that they were actually birthed in an expectation of some great wave of the Spirit that would exceed all that had gone before.

As one who became involved with them at an early stage, I know how rooted that expectation is in the New Church psyche. And I've done my own share of contributing to it over the years.

However, it does have a down side – especially since it's predominantly linked to a pragmatic style of leadership that tends to respond readily to whatever is felt to be the latest impulse of the Spirit.

At its best, the expectation of some great move of God just around the corner brings inspiration and urgency to the work of the New Churches. At

New Churches need, not only a sense of the prophetic, but also a sense of tradition

worst, it produces gullibility and an atmosphere that makes critical reflection on the soundness or the implications of the latest prophetic impulse very difficult.

On numerous occasions New Church people have told me of their struggle, in a climate of great enthusiasm, to be true to reservations and misgivings which they feel – whether about Kansas Prophets, Toronto Blessings, visions of revival or whatever.

New Churches do have a future. But I suspect the quality of that future depends, in part, on two factors.

It depends on balancing the exciting, charismatic, and pragmatic approach to leadership with a process of deeper critical reflection through which debate and questioning shift the focus away from platform rhetoric.


As experience shows, debate doesn't always sit comfortably with prophetic excitement. Yet they are essential partners in creating a stable and healthy future.

The quality of the future depends on the maintenance of a creative tension between, on the one hand, the sense of being prophetic people, and on the other, the sense of being people of tradition.

Unfortunately, tradition has often been confused with traditionalism – which we all rightly resist. However, at its best tradition offers, not only a stable

framework in which new movements can develop, but also the resources to fund their ongoing journey.

Some people are puzzled by the fact that I, writer of *'The Post-Evangelical'*, should have now joined the Church of England. Yet ironically, I find great scope to be radical in the Church of England – not least because of the breadth of theology and spirituality that exist in Anglican tradition, and because of the stability and rich resources that such breadth provides. New Churches need not only a sense of the prophetic, but also a sense of tradition; not only a sense of reaching towards the future, but also a sense of rootedness in the past.

I believe New Churches do have a future. But I suggest the fruitfulness of that future depends, in part, on the capacity to maintain an effective tension between prophetic vision and critical reflection and debate – and between the sense of the 'now' and the sense of being part of a living tradition. 

Dave Tomlinson leads Holy Joes, a Christian group that meets in a Clapham pub, and is a member of St Luke's, Holloway. He is author of *'The Post-Evangelical'* (Triangle).



l e t t e r s

THE TROUBLE WITH SHEEP

I'm writing in response to John Noble's article entitled 'Peace-keeping at all costs' (Vol 2 No 3). I found it very interesting and would say 'Amen' to much of what is said. I'm a little concerned with the view that 'wounding is at the heart of a true shepherd — who'll break the leg of a wayward sheep until it learns to shun danger.'

Living in the Shetlands where there are more sheep than people gives relevance to the biblical pictures of shepherding. Shepherds in the agricultural sense do not use leg-wounding as a means of controlling wayward sheep. Sheep who tend to wander and get into trouble are fitted with a triangular wooden collar which prevents them from escaping through gaps in fencing and damaging themselves.

The job of the shepherd is to feed and look after the flock so that each sheep can lead a healthy and productive life. The biblical Greek word 'Poimen' translated as shepherd or herdsman implies one who tends, leads, guides, cherishes, feeds and protects the flock.

Jesus is the perfect example. He is the good shepherd who would lay down his life for the sheep (John 10.11). He is the true shepherd who goes before the flock when he leads them out, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice (John 10.4). We are told that he is willing to leave the 99 for the one who has gone astray; he gathers the lambs with his arm, and gently leads those who are young (Isaiah 40.11).

A sheep with a broken leg is unlikely to be healthy and productive, nor will it trust and follow the one who is responsible for breaking its leg. Surely the use of the shepherd's crook, to encourage the sheep along and pull it out of danger, is a more appropriate image for the example of Jesus?

There are, I fear, too many pastors who feel they have leg-breaking ministries. This results in the many hurt and damaged sheep, and divided churches.

*Karen Drummond-Hunt
Lerwick, Shetland*

LOVELY JOB!

I have just read my first issue of Compass (Vol 2 No 3). I received it through my new local church, Grimsby New Life Christian Fellowship.

I want to applaud the editorial staff and contributors. After sampling many Christian magazines and publications, Compass is positively the best.

For me, Compass hits home, bang on time, about issues that need to be lived here and now until Jesus returns and restores.

*Dean Potter
Cleethorpe, Lincs.*

THE CHURCH AS A HUB

I can hardly wait for the next issue of Compass on the subject of 'Church'. This must be the question that is on all our lips as the Holy Spirit shakes what we thought was church, bringing much of it tumbling around our ears. Like many others, we at Heartlands in Stratford-upon-Avon have been seeking to create a more relevant expression of church in the heart of the community for some time.

Steve Chalke's teaching on Jesus in the marketplace at The Event Without Walls made a big impact on me. The hub of most people's lives is TV or shopping, yet the Church is often out on the periphery.

Imagine our amazement, therefore, when God answered prayer and suddenly opened a door for us when we least expected it. The availability of a prime Elizabethan site, only a stone's throw from Shakespeare's birthplace, has enabled my vision to merge kingdom business with Church to be linked with Stuart Smith's artistic talents and heart for the youth generation in creating 'Hub'. With the help of other gifted people in the church, we plan to open the shop in late February with a range of street and club clothing, ethnic jewellery, fine arts and crafts aimed at the youth market and, of course, the 2.5 million tourists God sends us each year.

We want 'Hub' to be a prophetic presence, standing clearly for kingdom principles of justice, creativity and love. For this reason, we will be stocking products from the excellent range that CRED is importing, but we are also keen to be an outlet for other appropriate Christian arts and crafts products. I would like to invite any of your readers who feel that their product might sell in our market to get in touch (see advert).

The plan is for the business to cover most of the building costs, enabling the church to use the rest of the space for administration, counselling, a dedicated prayer room and a meeting room, which in particular, will enable us to build on our contacts with the local youth and become a hub in their network. We are getting closer to the church being the body of Christ on the street!

*David Stanley
Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.*

GENERATIONAL CONFUSION

As one who is nearer the Abraham generation rather than Jacob's, I read Johnny Sertin's article (Compass Vol 2 No 3) with interest, and found myself agreeing with his thoughts.

But surely it is better if we all use the same language. How can we train to pass on the baton to our successors unless we both mean the same thing in fundamentals like left or right hand? I can imagine the chaos in the relay team!

We are told to re-define that clumsy phrase 'generational reconciliation' with no reference to the accepted meaning or

derivation of those words. Humpty Dumpty said 'When I say a word, it means whatever I want it to mean', but should an Alice in Wonderland approach really be recommended to increase understanding between the age groups?

*Tony Barker
Redhill, Surrey*

ARE YOU QUITE SERTIN?

Thanks so much for Compass and the thoughtful effort you are putting into producing a journal of non-religious Christianity.

Johnny Sertin's article entitled 'The Charismatic Movement is Over' raised some questions for me, and perhaps for others, so I thought I would ask them in your pages.

I have a high regard for Johnny and the 'cutting-edge' work he has done. I look forward to watching how God uses him in the future. But what did he mean in his article?

The title states that the charismatic movement is over. What has ended? God's work to renew churches that have gone stagnant? God's work to renew Christians who have lost their passion? Is God no longer giving the charisms?

Maybe Johnny means that churches are no longer conducting themselves in the same cultural style as they were 20 years ago. I hope they are not. Culture moves on, and the gospel, by the work of the Holy Spirit, has a wonderful way of adapting to it. So if God's renewing work and impartation of gifts of the Spirit finds a different cultural expression than 25 or 30 years ago, that's great. So it should.

Johnny also talks about handing over the baton from one generation to another. What is the baton? The anointing of God, leadership responsibilities and authority? How do the older leaders hand over their anointing, authority and responsibilities to others? When should they do it?

Biblically, it seems that the most common model is that they hand it over when they die. There is not much biblical precedent for retirement. I see older leaders in the Bible and in history encouraging, mentoring, shaping younger leaders, but I don't often see them retiring. Let the older leaders keep leading in the sphere that God gives them, be it great or small, and let the younger leaders grow into the sphere that God gives them. There is certainly need for us all in the Kingdom.

It seems to me that the Kingdom will have the most benefit when all believers keep serving God with all of their 'heart, mind, soul and strength' as long as they have breath. For older leaders part of that service is to encourage and release younger leaders, but not to turn over all responsibility and retire. Let's keep serving God together across the generations.

*C. Lynn Green
YWAM Director, Europe, Middle East & Africa*

The Editor would be pleased to receive contributions to future issues of Compass. Future themes include Reaching the Lost, Gender and Media.

Articles, poetry or illustrations should be discussed in advance. Please send a brief synopsis in the first instance.

Paul Dakin, Compass, Pioneer Direct Ltd, PO Box 39, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middx TW16 6PP

How does your church use Compass? We would be interested to hear from you

The trouble with

*Are you evangelical or charismatic? And does it really matter?
Allison Davies went looking for labels - and found a tapestry of hope instead*

WHAT SHAPE IS the Church taking, as it faces the next millennium? Are we evangelical, or charismatic – or both? Compass sought the opinions of key thinkers on this important issue.

Alan Storkey feels he needs to unpack labels. After all, he is a sociologist. That was his response. 'As I see it, the two labels differ,' said Storkey, who lectures at Oak Hill College.

'The bigger of the two is evangelical – the historical, orthodox

Christian faith, in submission to the Bible and with the understanding that people need personal salvation'.

In contrast, Orthodox theologian Andrew Walker suggested that the opposite might be true. 'Looking at the background of the charismatic movement, this goes beyond the evangelical,' he said.

'From the 60s, with the emergence of the charismatic renewal movement, we see that charismatic experience is planted in all the major denominations – including the Roman Catholic and to a lesser

extent, the Eastern Orthodox.'

Dave Tomlinson, controversial author of 'The Post-Evangelical' (Triangle), agrees with the idea that the term 'charismatic' can be applied broadly across the denominations – while pointing out that many evangelicals wouldn't choose to describe themselves in that way.

It must also be said that many charismatics would describe themselves as non-evangelical, Pioneer

People leader Martin Scott being among them. He emphasises the centrality of the Holy Spirit

to our existence as believers.

'Without the Spirit there's no valid Christian experience,' he said, 'and the experience of the Spirit is experiential. Paul's appeal to the Galatians in chapter three isn't to past belief – but to past and ongoing experience.'

It's been traditional to label non-charismatics as thinkers and charismatics as emotion-centred. Perhaps the emphasis upon experiencing the Spirit has led to that view.

But, as Alan Storkey pointed out, submission to the Spirit involves

'A kind of super-spirituality has arisen, divorced from the ordinary things of life'

DAVE TOMLINSON



Labels



ILLUSTRATION - STUART SMITH

thoughts and feelings. Many Christians would agree. God created our minds and emotions.

According to Martin Scott, the charismatic is 'far more than an experience of the Spirit – it concerns what the Spirit has called us to do... If we're the people of God's Spirit, there is the challenge of how we shape the church in the light of that'.

He is wary of the

'text for everything'

approach

adopted by

some. And while

not refuting the

authority of scripture, it may be that our experience of the Spirit goes beyond what is described in the New Testament. We're simply a continuation of the story that began there, that's being written daily.

However, a major criticism of the charismatic movement is that it's led to a 'kind of dualism between the spiritual and the natural', Dave Tomlinson believes, 'a kind of super-spirituality has arisen, divorced from the ordinary things of life'.

Alan Storkey suggested if we lose sight of God-in-the-ordinary, then we lose something important. Our faith needs to speak to ordinary people, living ordinary lives. While we may have an amazing experience of God, tomorrow the litter tray still has to be emptied.

Andrew Walker highlighted the fact that the Church has always been influenced by culture. We're living in a culture in transition, from modern to postmodern. That leads to 'anxiety and bewilderment'.

Maybe that's been a catalyst for the emergence of the post-evangelical viewpoint. Many of its adherents are no longer happy to be called evangelical – while others clearly are.

'Without the Spirit there's no valid Christian experience'

MARTIN SCOTT

Tomlinson suggests it 'is not a complete denial of the evangelical tradition, but a further step along the journey, while leaving some things behind. Many post-evangelicals are also post-charismatic, seeing the charismatic as another rigid form'.

That's due to a sense of having pigeonholed the Spirit into a particular style of worship. Yet Alan

Storkey reminds us the work of the Spirit 'in convicting the world of truth' is far greater than we're sometimes

prepared to acknowledge.

A fruit of post-modern fragmentation is the need for certainty, which may be why programmes such as Alpha are so successful. But generally, while there's a great spiritual resurgence at present, Tomlinson suggests comparatively few people are heading churchwards.

He argues that's due to stereotypical images, which the Church has done little to change. Evangelicals present a black-and-white approach to faith, which has become inadequate for many people, who'd rather explore issues for themselves. In his book, Tomlinson says the Church is guilty of presenting pre-packed solutions, rather than allowing people the liberty of thinking things through.

Martin Scott agrees. He suggests there's been a move away from the traditional evangelical standpoint by those who 'want to question, to go deeper'. So does that automatically lead to liberalism, to 'pick 'n' mix' faith?

Not necessarily, says Tomlinson. On the contrary, 'it offers the possibility of a new ecumenism, where we're free to be Christian first – with all the richness of our heritage available to us – encouraging a deeper spirituality'.

Dangerous definitions?

Evangelical

Used at the Reformation to identify Protestants, who held to the belief in justification by grace through faith, and the supreme authority of scripture. Evangelicalism now expresses itself in sub-communities - fundamentalist evangelicals; old evangelicals; new evangelicals; justice and peace evangelicals; charismatic evangelicals.

Charismatic

Designates the Christian community as guided by the Holy Spirit, as functioning according to the gifts of the Spirit... and as bonded by the love poured into the hearts of the faithful through the Spirit.

(*New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, A Richardson & J Bowden, SCM Press)

That may explain why people like Roger Ellis, leader of Revelation church, Chichester, and a 'living embodiment of solid evangelical tradition' (as Andrew Walker puts it), are reaching out to other traditions.

While labels are useful, helping us to know where we fit, Dave Tomlinson recommends living with 'constant

antagonism toward them, emphasising those which are unifiers, rather than sectarian'. Both the evangelical and charismatic are part of our heritage, helping to define our roots. But we may do well to remind ourselves we're first of all Christian.

It would be naive to suggest the Church is either charismatic or evangelical. It's clear those are just two

elements making up 'church' in the late 20th century.

Cause for excitement? Maybe. Just as there's diversity in creation, there should be richness and variety in God's Church. While we need to be true to our own traditions, we're not to be bound by them. Our God is a God of limitless possibilities, the God of the Bible, of miracles and the mundane, a God who sets his hope in ordinary men and women.

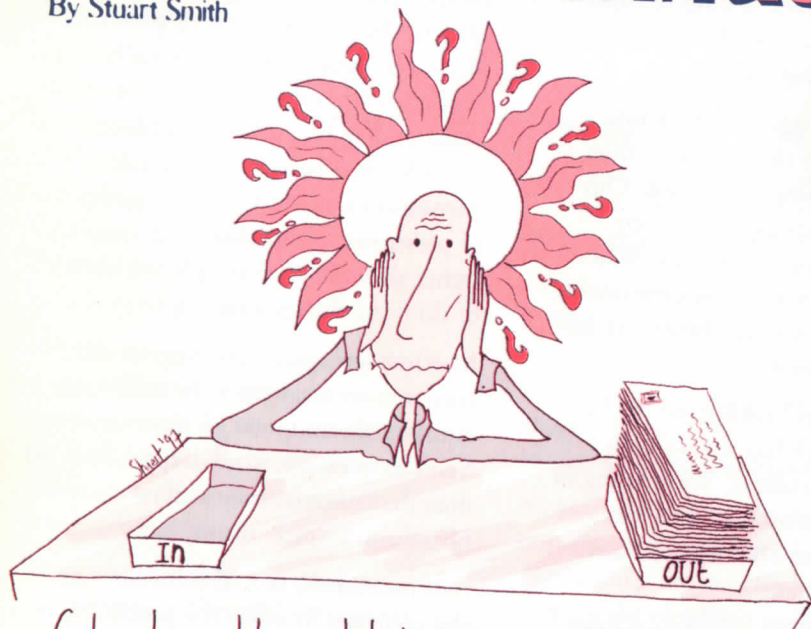


Married, Allison Davies is a member of New Life Christian Centre, Morpeth, where she serves in the worship band, and also a member of the Northumbria Community. She has degrees in Law and Nursing Science and is a part-time district nurse.



Saintly Dilemmas

By Stuart Smith



Colin desperately wanted to be 'post evangelical' ~ but was seriously beginning to doubt whether he could continue to afford the stamps.

HUB

Long-time Compass contributor Stuart Smith is looking for artists and craftspeople to contribute to the stock of a new shop he's opening in conjunction with his home church, Heartlands...

Heartlands in Stratford-Upon-Avon has taken over a prime site in the centre of town. The establishment of a retail outlet known simply as **HUB** is planned. It is hoped that **HUB** will bring the body of Christ right into the marketplace, as well as offering an expression of the creativity of the Kingdom of God. To this end we would like to invite all the artists/craftspeople out there to get in touch, if you are producing something that you consider might sell. Big Thanks!

Stuart Smith (01789 298749)

A taste of fire

*Julie Brown tasted Argentina's recipe for revival
– and found a heady brew of some familiar flavours*

SEEING the Church in revival is a moving experience.

Rather than discovering that God has ordained a 'new recipe for revival', I find the opposite.

In every church, the great, yet simple truths of scripture are proclaimed with power. It's a sound you've yearned to hear – and never want to forget.

I visited Argentina in October 1996 to attend the Harvest Evangelism International Institute – a three-day teaching conference sandwiched between seven days of 'power encounters' with revivalist churches. Following their Falklands War defeat in 1982 – which shattered the nation's pride – and President Alfonsín's 1983 announcement that the gospel may be freely preached, the evangelical churches began to experience tremendous growth.

The combination of these circumstances had ushered in God's timing for Argentina and the Christians were ready to take advantage of the situation. Fourteen years later, the presence of God is increasing, multiplying the momentum in the churches as they reach out to the lost. Churches have average memberships of around 5,000-150,000.

The people are vibrant, dynamic power stations wired up to the dynamite of the Spirit, totally outward-looking and reaping a big harvest. The people share stories of healings and miraculous answers to prayer. And, they say, the dead are raised.

Believers are equipped to engage in spiritual warfare – from age six!

Yet, in all the time I was there, that controversial term 'revival' was used only twice. Church members seem so focused on the unconverted, they're slow to congratulate themselves.

Common themes are expressed:

Evangelism – Personal and crusade evangelism is a priority. Most churches operate in cells, where each believer has a goal to multiply themselves by ten – they believe when a church isn't moved by love for the lost, it loses authority and purpose.

Praise and worship – a vital key. The Argentineans will worship for hours, unashamedly adoring God. Powerful things happen. People are healed, delivered and filled by the Spirit.


Prayer and spiritual warfare is a priority. All the believers seemed to be mature in this area, as they move in discernment and authority. The child intercessors are the most powerful prayer warriors I have ever seen.

Holy Spirit – the churches are filled with the presence of God through the Holy Spirit, made possible by their hunger for him and their adherence to their evangelistic purpose, praise and worship, study of the word and pursuit of holiness.

Discipleship – Churches focus heavily on discipleship. This teaching is conducted in the cells and also in main meetings, emphasising prayer, study of the word, purity/holiness and character issues.

Faith – there's a strong focus on faith, based on their knowledge of the character of God. They're particularly exercised in faith for miracles.

Unity – unity among the churches is crucial. Ed Silviso, President of Harvest Evangelism, has pioneered for years in this area and his strategies for 'city-taking' have been a vital key in reaching the lost.

I spent most of my time there in tears. These powerful and yet humble people believe they're commissioned to take the gospel to every person in their land – which they plan to do by year 2000. Unconcerned with theological debates, they're running with the Gospel. Their passion is inspiring and their example convincing – and the lost literally come running. 

Julie Brown is a member of Pioneer People and works at the Pioneer National Office as PA to Steve Clifford

Thy kingdom come

Church and kingdom - what's the difference? Stuart Bell gives a biblical analysis

EVER GET TIRED AND frustrated with the Church? I do! And it's then that I think about the kingdom. Don't misunderstand me. I believe in the Church – I love it!

However, though the Church is 'called out' of the world, it's in a process of change. And because the Church is people, it carries the flaws of fallen humanity.

Bible teacher John Phillips talks about two themes that have changed his life more than any others: the sermon on the mount, and the Kingdom. The following thoughts form part of an unfolding discovery.

Church is an assembly

Sometimes we interchange 'church' and 'kingdom'. But they're not the same. Imagine two concentric circles, of which the Church is the smaller and the Kingdom the larger, while Christ is the centre of both.

Church is an assembly of people who've accepted the gospel of the Kingdom:

- ❖ they are ordinary people who've been forgiven and cleansed;
- ❖ they have believed the story of God's love expressed through Jesus' death;
- ❖ they are on a process of being changed into his likeness.

The Greek word used in the New Testament is 'Ekklesia', composed of Ek meaning 'out of', and Kaleo meaning 'to call'. In Greek society that word was used for an assembly of free citizens who were called out of their homes and workplaces to consider matters of public interest.

That group not only met together – but also they had a purpose in doing so. They were responsible for declaring war and making peace. They elected and dismissed magistrates – and directed city policy.

Through God's dealing with mankind, it seems as though 'calling out' to hear from, and meet with, God, is important:

- ❖ Abraham was called out of Ur;
- ❖ Israel was called out of Egypt;
- ❖ Judah out of Babylon;
- ❖ the Church is called out 'of the world'.

So to live an isolated Christian life seems foreign to New Testament understanding of Church. All the signs point to the relation between Jesus and his people – and of a strong love between each person God has called to himself.

Paul speaks of the Church as 'the Body of Christ'. Jesus is the head. Every member – or limb – is related. Also, the Church is a building or temple which God fills, where every

person is a living stone joined together.

The Church is the Bride of Christ, emphasising the intimacy between God and his people. The Church is pictured as a family – with God our heavenly Father – and we become spiritually related with all who love Christ.

Yet the Church often seems to be composed of awkward, opinionated people, who attend many meetings and need much counselling. But God has designed that this group should be the 'spearhead for the Kingdom'.

Kingdom is a domain

The Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God is the central theme of Jesus' preaching. It's not confined within the frontiers of church. The Kingdom comes close as demons are expelled, and as Jesus performs miracles and works of power.

Two words make up the word Kingdom. The Kingdom has a King and the Kingdom has a domain. As the Incarnate Word of God steps into space and time, the rule of God begins to take effect.

The Kingdom is God's redeeming activity in Christ, in this world. Christ's Kingship is supreme over all, and Jesus is seen ruling over not only the local assembly of believers – but also angels, principalities and powers.



Ultimately, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. The Kingdom came through Jesus' ministry almost 2,000 years ago. But the Kingdom is also coming.

Every time a person is healed, a demon expelled, or an individual repents, the Kingdom comes. And the Kingdom will fully come as the visible return of Jesus heralds in a new heaven and a new earth.

The Church is called on to express that rule of Christ. It's called out for that purpose. For the Kingdom to be extended, the walls around the Church will have to be taken down. In fact, for God's rule to be expressed into the domain of his world, the Church will need to be turned 'inside out'.

Feel let down by the local church?

The next time you sit on a beach and watch the waves breaking on the sand, remind yourself of this fact: 'any wave may fail, but the tide is coming in'.



Married with two children, Stuart Bell leads New Life Christian Fellowship, Lincoln. He also heads the Ground Level network of over 40 church leaders mainly from England's east coast. Ground Level runs the Grapevine celebration which attracts 5,000 people.

ILLUSTRATION - TED ADARE

Culture of despair

Which is sick – the Church or the world? Are Christians the panacea for cultural malaise, or does the Church need to find its own remedy?

Interviewed by Elaine Storkey, Melvyn Bragg offers some perceptive observations.

In an interview at *The Nave* four years ago, you said that we seemed to be living in a culture of despair. Has it got worse or better since then?

It isn't getting any better. I think it's dreadful, especially for young people. There's an attitude that you can't do anything: things will never get better, the Government will never clear up the mess, the corruption will continue - so why worry? Look after yourself: the bad result will always come about. I think that is a culture of despair.

Is this malaise spiritual or psychological? Or is it economic?

It's fundamentally spiritual. The churches are full of people of great virtue and commitment, but as they have lost the ability to draw society together, for various reasons over the last century, that has influenced our psychology and so on.


I think that certain running repairs can be made. The Labour Party seems to be suggesting spending £1.5 billion reaching the 600,000 young people not employed. You can do that sort of thing and with a bit of luck (though one has no hope at all that things will be well administered) that will do some good.

But, fundamentally, people have to feel good about being good in order for any good to happen, and I don't think that is so at the moment.

They're probably doing ten times more than I think they're doing - and doing ten times better than I could possibly do.

It's difficult. I think they became part of institutionalised, middle-class life in this country, and that has got a bad name over the years, and with good reason. One of the reasons the churches have suffered is because they became bureaucratic and organisational - Roman rather than Celtic. Celtic Christianity on the whole says that if you pray, you pray, and if you want to be evangelistic you go and do it, and so on.

The churches are suffering from the hammering they feel they have got from science - unnecessarily, I think. They are also feeling the social hammering.

Society is moving on and church is part of the thing it wants to leave behind. 

This extract is taken with permission from Third Way, June/July 1996.

*Melvyn Bragg is well known as a writer and broadcaster. He became Director of LWT Productions in 1992. He has been editing and presenting the 19th series of ITV's *The South Bank Show*. Since 1988, Melvyn has hosted BBC Radio 4's *Start the Week*. The highly acclaimed book *Credo* is his 16th novel.*

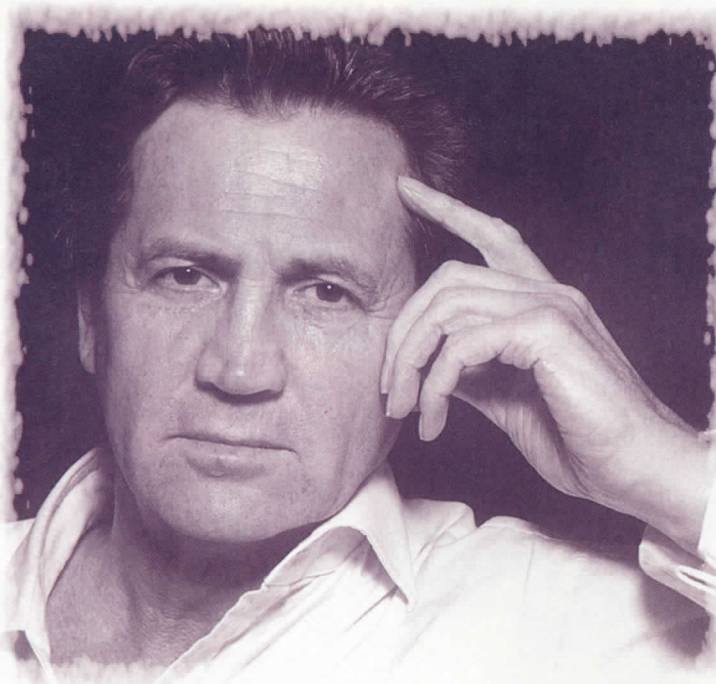


PHOTO - LWT

So it's not just a 'feelgood' factor?

The feelgood factor means an extra few quid in your pocket, which is very nice indeed but it's not what I'm talking about.

What should the churches be doing?

I don't know. I feel completely unqualified to talk about that. I am not a regular churchgoer, so why should I tell the churches what to do?

Building Jerusalem on Camelot

KEITH TONDEUR

SINCE LOTTERY FEVER first hit Britain just over two years ago, the Church has generally tried to take the moral ground to say they're opposed to it.

And there are a number of good reasons for that reaction.

There is a belief that the lottery will lead to gambling addiction. There are certainly indications that a small, but significant, number of people are affected in that way. There was also the fear that people who were struggling financially would spend more on the lottery because they saw it as the only way out of their problems. Again, experience shows that is true - with the poorest members of our society spending more in percentage terms than any other sector.

Given that few of those people will actually win, it means their situation is steadily getting worse. The lottery also encourages discontentment with our present situation, as we're encouraged to believe we'd be happier if we possessed more.

Given that most of us in Britain are rich in worldwide terms - and that the Bible encourages us to store up treasures in heaven - it's evident that Christians should have plenty to say against the lottery.




ILLUSTRATION - IAN ROBSON

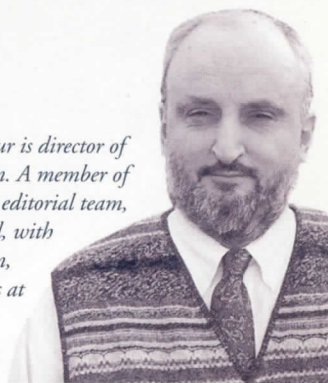
Unfortunately, their case has been weakened by churches applying to the Lotteries Board for funding. Many non-Christians regard the Church's position as hypocritical. We say we oppose it, but then apply for funding.

There's an argument that says money is neutral - or even that it can be 'sanctified' and thus turned from evil to good. Whereas I'd agree with that to an extent, I believe it's still different to actually apply to a funding source which we know is doing harm to some of the most vulnerable citizens. Jesus calls us to be different:

- ❖ to be in the world but not of it;
- ❖ to be a light shining on a hill;
- ❖ to show there's a different and a better way of living.

He also tells us we have to make a choice. We cannot serve both God and money (Matthew 6.24). I believe that when churches apply for lottery funding, they compromise their very purpose - and at the same time damage the Church's legitimate argument about the lottery being properly considered. 

Keith Tondeur is director of Credit Action. A member of the Compass editorial team, he is married, with three children, and worships at New Life Christian Fellowship.



One body, one cu

British churches are increasingly multi-racial. But multi-cultural?

Marcia Lord issues a challenge

LIKE IT OR NOT, black churches abound in Britain. When my sisters and I were small – and even today – we could pinpoint those among the Afro-Caribbean community who were on their way to church.

The men were smart in suit and tie, with polished shoes. The women had their different hats, pleated skirts and smart jackets. The children were miniatures of their parents. With Bibles tucked under their arms, they'd walk with a spring in their steps towards church.

The life of our churches is skin deep

Many of those churches grew out of necessity. When my mother's generation came to England to accept the invitation to make better lives for themselves, they were ill-prepared for the reality – a nation of people uncomfortable with dark skins and consumed with the hatred that ignorance breeds.

That generation of immigrants turned towards the Church, knowing that God was a loving God and acceptance would be found in his house.

My mother tells me of a time when she entered the Sunday service at the local Anglican church. The minister asked her to leave because her presence was upsetting the congregation.

We need to smash the lies of the enemy – and give our black communities the same hope of salvation as any other

ture?

The strong, unspoken message was: 'you can drive our buses and clean our homes but whatever you do, don't bow the knee before the Almighty in the same church as me'. And so we have a form of Christian apartheid.

A different form of worship may be found in your local CE church on a Sunday afternoon. In a hall, at the back or maybe above the main church, a black congregation is rejoicing in the presence of God.

The praise that echoes from those halls couldn't be rivalled. Remember when we updated our services and tossed out the tambourines? Well, they never went out of vogue in the Pentecostal church.

Remember how proud we were to move away from the piano and acoustic guitar into a full five to 25-piece band? Well, the black churches have been there, done that – and pioneered the record label. Yet who will stand and counteract the lie that the God of the Christians is a white man's God?

Tragically, many people edit history and theology to suit their own prejudices. Was it not the church that sanctioned the Ku Klux Klan? And who upheld apartheid in South Africa?

It was the Christian church that turned my family away. Even today, our so-called 'multi-cultural' churches are,

in reality, monocultural. The worship is soft rock and pop, with the occasional bass line thrown in (hooray – we have diluted reggae in the church!).

The silence of our churches is deafening

Our progressive churches – who've so readily cultivated people of other ethnicities and pressed and shaped them until they fit into the 'correct' mould – are proud to claim that more than one shade of skintone attends their church. We may not ask them to leave. But we certainly don't allow them to be 'themselves'.

What's the difference?

A church that's *mono-cultural* is not necessarily *mono-racial*. The prefix *mono* means single, alone. Therefore when a church is defined as *mono-cultural* it means that a single culture is represented despite the fact that it is *multi-racial*.

We all know that a white person may belong to many different cultures while belonging to the one race (this is also true for any other racial group). The *mono-culture* is not necessarily the dominant racial culture but the prevalent one.

PHOTO – JULIE GREGORY

What of the black church? Is its function dead? What are her attractions, that black people continue to shun the 'white' churches? Do young Afro-Caribbeans really need a separate place to worship from the people they've grown with?

Where are the heroes – those who will lead us into the new millennium proclaiming Jesus as Lord? We need prophetic people who will take up the following challenges:

- ❖ to take the power and inspiration of the black preacher onto the streets;
- ❖ to bring the wisdom of God into the black communities;


- ❖ to be a force to be reckoned with;
- ❖ to stand against all forms of injustice and to wield the double-edged sword.

All of that needs to be done in conjunction with the 'white' churches. We need to be learning from one another – not rejecting one another's cultures and customs. With black leaders increasingly taking a stand for their communities, the black church needs to make her stand, too.

The mission field is clear. Whole communities are in need of a relevant gospel that doesn't water down the truth and isn't afraid to stand in the face of racism and discrimination.

Now is not the time for silence. Now is the time to put those issues on to our agendas. We need to smash the lies of the enemy – and give our black communities the same hope of salvation as any other.

When the truth of Jesus is abroad, then the false gods that prove so attractive will lose their appeal. And when our churches lose their monocultural safety,

then they'll be filled with the sound of multicultural praise. 'For God so loved the world...' – not just our small corner. 

A regular contributor on cultural issues, Marcia Lord works for the Christian Business Alliance in north London. She is a member of Unity Church, Wood Green, and is married with two children.



PHOTO – JULIE GREGORY

Local church must die

Gary Pritchard meets Martin Scott

HERE'S A MAN WHO won't duck difficult issues. 'I genuinely feel it's time for the "local" church to die,' he says – to the stunned silence of anyone listening.

Martin Scott's audience begins to absorb the passion and logic of his argument as he unpacks that startling statement. 'We always seem to have to qualify the term church with an adjective,' he continued, 'like local or youth. The fact is, it's either church or it's not!'

Scott's call for a debate on the definition of church, stretches back to what he feels is a misuse of the label 'charismatic' for many historic and so-called new churches. He argues that what is often touted as charismatic, is simply good old-fashioned Protestantism.

'We have much to be grateful for from the Protestant tradition,' he added, 'such as justification by faith and so on. But many churches have adopted a less than radical – even legalistic – model, to what is meant to be a dynamic Holy Spirit movement.'

Scott set out some of the criteria:

Protestant model

– will always elevate the person with the theological understanding as leader; maturity comes as a result of more understanding and thus greater belief;



PHOTO – NEV CORBIN

Charismatic model

– elevates people who may have little theological understanding, but are being anointed by God; maturity is being conformed to the image of Christ in the context of community.

Warming to his theme, Scott continued, 'It's clear that while we are grateful to God for our past, the "local" church model is failing to reach large chunks of the community.'

He then called for a radical review of how we structure church, suggesting a greater emphasis on diverse and flexible wineskins. 'It's more a question of asking what is the Holy Spirit saying for a specific situation,' he added, 'rather than asking where does all this fit in doctrinally.'

His argument draws light to the debate surrounding postmodernism, and how to reach a fragmented society comprised of hundreds of 'tribes' and sub-cultures. Scott calls for more 'eccentric' churches anointed in a particular way for a particular task.

'Jesus told his disciples to go out and eat what was set before them,' he concluded, 'but we seem to expect people to come and eat at our often exclusive tables.'

Food for thought indeed.



Gary Pritchard is a freelance journalist and leads a church in Newport, South Wales.



A

is for authoRity, desired And despised, a catalyst
for succeSS, a CaVern of Lies

U

U is for UniOn, an accountable mesS. oR
safety in numbers, a drag on progreSS

T

T is f0r teAm, to extRactor to take,
an option of love or a smilIng FAKE #

H

H is for halls, those stages oF poWer where
platforms create an ivory Tower

O

O is for orDinary, the people below, facilitating leaDers
or a serving Show

R

is for Rwa rd, aspired to and taken, gathEr th3m together
until we are sh a k e n

I

I is for Integrity te PRIZE so often lost,
so long held tight, so swiftly tossed

T

T is for tiEs that bind up our freedom
constrained and hurt until we leave them

Y

y is For yŌu thats
where the buck stoPs
take responsibility
untie the KNotS

James Pavey ©1994

Walls of
Rejection built
on Foundations of Hurt
cemented by Wrong Choices
can encouragingly be Dismantled
as they were built a Brick at a time to
Enable us to Rebuild a Prison into a Temple

Gail Hutson



r e v i

MUSIC - COMPILED BY SUE RINALDI

Taste and see!

So often we are content to live on such a narrow diet! In a world full of variety and creativity we easily become comfortable with the familiar. However, all around us there are cries for 'new food' to be added to the menu - where innovation and originality are essential ingredients. The following releases are examples of this 'musical food'... so go on, taste and see!

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

YFC

(YFC PO Box 5254 Halesowen W.Midlands B63 3DG)

As part of the jubilee celebrations of Youth for Christ in Britain, this album was released featuring songs and singers linked with the organisation.

The overall musical style and inlay cover is aimed directly at the young end of the market - particularly those who enjoy the 'chilled-out' dance vibe rather than the jungle zone.

On a superficial listening level, it appears creative and innovative but if you dig deeper the production is thin and many of the programming sounds lack authenticity. Five different singers are featured - but Doug Walker stands out as having the most 'ear-friendly' voice.

A good attempt however at moving the musical boundaries of worship.

♦ ♦ ♦

ELEMENTS

Maggi Dawn

(Zoo Audio - distributed by Kingsway Music)

Maggi has been a writer of songs for many years but her new release 'Elements' is more than just a collection of songs. Her inlay notes are excellent and allow us access into the mind of this woman of substance. A contemporary thinker - Maggi is searching beyond religious jargon to explore 'a bigger, more liberating God' and her lyrics particularly reflect her desire for gender-free images of God.

Each track begins spaciouly - sometimes featuring didgeridoo, bells, nature sounds, washy guitar - and with one or two exceptions leads us into atmospheric, slow-paced ambience. 'Psalm 131' has a lovely lilting melody and 'Wash Me Clean' has high memorability factor. The musical ideas are refreshing, although you may question whether this songwriter is always the best singer of her songs.

'Elements' begins well and ends well but may lose a few listeners somewhere in the middle.

♦ ♦ ♦

Sweet Rain

Worship Together Live vol 2

(Kingsway Music)

It has been a long held opinion of mine that nothing expresses the awe and majesty of God better than the best of our old hymns and that nothing ushers in the Holy Spirit like a few powerchords and a touch of feedback!

'Be Thou My Vision' utilises this mix of ancient and modern and is representative of the stylistic pot-pourri of instruments (gutsy bottleneck guitar, fiddles, mandolins, accordions and dex), songs and artists featured on this album.

Tracks range from Noel Richards' tender 'Hold Me Closer To You' to Ishmael's foot-stomping 'Hebrews 13.8', from Sue Rinaldi's dance-flavoured 'Change This World' to Wayne Drain's 'Dancing With The Father' - a slice of good time rock 'n' roll. Some conventions are challenged, why have a guitar solo when you've got a DJ?

The (by and large) imaginative arrangements and the (mainly) strong songs, combine with effective changes of pace, dynamic and mood, to draw the listener in and make for a successful showcase of new material. A good deal of joy, excitement and emotion of live worship is captured.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Martin Lore

KAFKA

Nigel Kennedy

(EMI Records)

Nigel Kennedy trained at the Yehudi Menuhin School and quickly rose to become one of Britain's best known prodigiously talented violinists in the classical field. In his own words 'after interpreting the music of deceased geniuses, writing one's own music is a natural progression'... hence Kafka. An album of surprisingly original pieces, mostly instrumental but with an occasional foray into songs sometimes mixing contemporary vocals with a contrasting classical male contralto.

NK is known for 'kicking against the establishment' and

abandoning convention and his compositions certainly reflect this. Ranging from 'Jimi Hendrix' style electric violin solos in 'I Believe In God' to the beautiful and poignant 'Melody In The Wind' featuring Stephane Grappelli, 'Kafka' is unashamedly eclectic and raw.

NK is a master of melody and the musicianship is outstanding. However be prepared - Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons' this most definitely is not!

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
Caroline Bonnett

RETURN TO RITUAL

Synergy

(dbass records distributed by Nelson Word)

The phrase 'Industrial-techno,dance-funk' best describes this imaginative album. Speaking the language of today, it merges a kaleidoscope of sounds with processed spoken samples to brilliant effect. Followers of 'Future Sound Of London' (FSOL) or the like would appreciate the sub-bass and the great sense of musical perspective that Synergy have. Production is high quality and 'would hold the floor' at any club venue. Experimental use of Matthew Fox samples may worry sections of the Christian community - but delivers depth as we hear 'The young are violent, the adults are bewildered'. This album does not attempt to be mainstream Christian music and so scores points for originality and up-to-date culture relevance.

Synergy appear to be on their way to becoming leading exponents of industrial dance music - can't wait to hear their next release!

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

COMPASS RATINGS

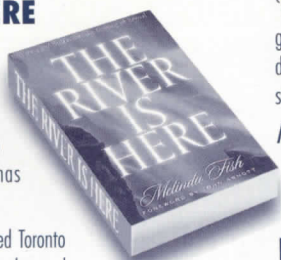
♦	disappointing
♦♦	average
♦♦♦	good
♦♦♦♦	delivers
♦♦♦♦♦	distinction

BOOKS AND RESOURCES

THE RIVER IS HERE

Melinda Fish

The most astonishing thing about this rather attractive book has nothing whatever to do with anything that Melinda Fish has written.



It is true that — since the so-called Toronto Blessing — the entire spiritual landscape has changed in the western world as well as Asia. But you don't realise how much it has changed until you turn to the back cover. There is, as you would expect, a warm commendation from John Amott — who leads the team at Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship. There is another, not dissimilar to John Amott's, from myself.

You may feel that this will give a clue to the book's content. And it certainly does. But what you are totally unprepared for is the third commendation. Guess who said this?

'Melinda Fish's gentle book explores the Toronto type blessing from the inside. Seeing it as God's therapy for the drooping and discouraged, rather than as his fireworks display for sensation seekers, she offers the best apologia yet for an international phenomenon that is now too big to ignore. If revival is your concern, this is a book to brood on.'

Well — it's J.I. Packer. Jim Packer to some. His classic 'Knowing God' sits on tens of thousands of bookshelves. Along with John Stott, Packer is an icon of conservative (some would say anti-charismatic) evangelical Christianity.

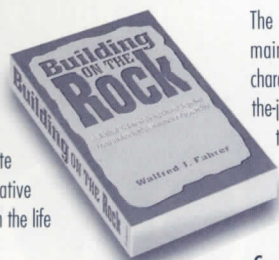
So what is Packer doing commending this book? He's acknowledging that after three years of the 'Toronto Blessing' much of the fruit is clearly the work of the Spirit. It is even more amazing when you consider that, to my mind, the book is light on scripture (though Mrs Fish may feel this is being covered elsewhere). However, the stories speak for themselves and, as we reflect what we focus on, this book will cheer your heart.

Gerald Coates

BUILDING ON THE ROCK

by Walfred Fahrner

The author, an Anabaptist Mennonite pastor, defines church as an alternative faith community modelled primarily on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.



Church issues are challenged: is Sunday morning's event church; is its programme important; is individual victorious Christianity a myth; are experience and doctrine priorities; what about the pastor's salary; how much authority has he; should church members counsel him; is my money mine; is church just a museum to the memory of Jesus?

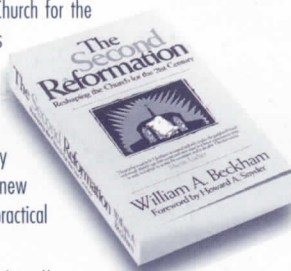
'Church' says Wally, 'is not only about getting to heaven but about getting heaven to earth'. A thought-provoking book, good for discussion groups and leadership teams. Simply surprising yet surprisingly simple.

Muriel Shelbourne

THE SECOND REFORMATION

William A Beckham

Subtitled 'Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century', Beckham's book sets out clearly what he feels is wrong with the present condition of the Church. He goes on to lay biblical foundations for a new shape before outlining a practical design for the future.



The impact of this book will vary depending on the reader's understanding of Church and experience of cells. The heart of Beckham's message is the call for the Christian life to be expressed in community through small groups. He asserts that it's only in this context that qualitative and quantitative growth can be sustained.

I happen to agree with him, and would recommend this book as a helpful contribution to the cell church debate.

Sue Scott

LEADERSHIP TRAINING MANUAL

'What is Church?' — As our structures and practices are re-evaluated in the light of this question, we can be confident that making disciples will remain central in the life of a growing church.

Pioneer's Leadership Training Manual is not just another knowledge-based leadership course. The well-presented ring bound manual has a fresh, down-to-earth feel and its 260 photocopyable pages make Jesus-style discipleship central.

The course is built around 17 training sessions which cover the main Biblical principles of leadership with a strong focus on character issues. The role of a personal tutor and the gaining of on-the-job experience is seen as vital in the process of shaping the trainee leader.

The need to disciple new leaders has never been more pressing and I will find this manual a very useful tool for that purpose!

Sue Holzer

Most of the items reviewed in Compass are available from Pioneer Direct on: 01932 789681

PIONEER Direct

*As some to church repair.
Not for the doctrine, but the
music there.*

ALEXANDER POPE

*As for the British churchman,
he goes to church as he goes to
the bathroom, with the
minimum of fuss and with no
explanation if he can help it.*

RONALD BLYTHE

*He was of the faith chiefly in
the sense that the church he
currently did not attend was
Catholic.*

SIR KINGSLEY AMIS

*There is a species of person
called a 'Modern Churchman'
who draws the full salary of a
beneficed clergyman and need
not commit himself to any
religious belief.*

EVELYN WAUGH

*The Church of Jesus Christ is
the supernatural fellowship
and union of all God's people
called for the glory of God,
under the headship of Christ,
to the worldwide work of
making, mobilising and
maturing disciples.*

COLIN DYE

GRAPEVINE



FRIDAY 22 - TUESDAY 26 AUGUST 1997

LINCOLNSHIRE SHOWGROUND

11AM AND 7.00PM EACH DAY

speakers

Stuart Bell
Bob Mumford
Barney Coombs
Dave Cave
Dave Kitchen

worship

Chris Bowater
Johnny Markin
Trish Morgan

Synergy

Andy Harrington & Team
Delirious? (saturday only)

children

Ishmael and Wally

*Brochure and further
details from:*
Grapevine 97

257 Freeman Street

Grimsby

DN32 9DW

Tel: 01472 240071

Fax: 01472 346186

1997

The last word

MY HEART WAS BEATING wildly against my chest as I entered the crude, tin roofed building. I stepped suddenly into a strange, alien world. A song leader with wild, windmill arms wrestled with a smile that threatened to possess his whole face. The congregation's eyes were moist, and some of them had their arms raised up in the air.

Hands up?

Who were they waving at? Were they asking permission to slip out to the toilet – one hand if you need to go a little, two hands if you need to go, right now? Eyes shut tight now, some murmured quiet amens, others appeared to know how to speak Russian...or was it German...what was that? By now I was succumbing to confusion, but it was to get worse. Abruptly the song ended, everyone sat down, and it was then that I saw it. Who in their right mind would build a miniature swimming pool in their church building?

The minister appeared, resplendent in a long black gown with fishing waders up to his thighs, an aquatic Dracula. Now another man joined him in the water. Suddenly, the Reverend Dracula grabbed the hapless guy and pushed him under the water. He had been baptised, and I had had enough. I fidgeted though the sermon, made a mental note of how many people were desperate for the loo during the final song, and made a run for it. Sitting outside in my car, I decided. Christians were crazy. I would have nothing to do with them, ever again. Then I realised I had left my coat in the church building.

I crept back inside, and was immediately assaulted by the youth leader. I had never seen so many teeth in a human head in my whole life. He invited me to 'afterglow'. Now what? Did this crowd end their day by setting fire to old ladies? I walked in and joined the afterglowers. Dracula's victim approached me. Still wet, he shook my hand and got straight to the point.

'Hello. Are you a Christian?'

I mumbled something pathetic – and suddenly realised that I didn't know God – and that I really wanted to. These people had confused me, irritated me, but I had to know the reason beyond their smiles. I told my still dripping friend that I wanted to take the big step. His words chilled me.

'You have to go to the little room at the back.'

Horrors. Dracula would be there, in a room filled with stainless steel cabinets and glinting surgical knives. But in that 'little room' my damp friend explained the gospel without the aid of syringes or rubber gloves. Now it was 10pm, and I was a Christian. I stepped out into what I thought would be an empty church building. And then I saw them and heard the cheer. Every single member of that little congregation had waited to welcome me. With undisguised delight they formed a long queue to the back of the building, and I slowly went down that line of love, hugged, and affirmed. I had found the church. They were a million miles from my culture, in just about everything they said and did.

But they loved God, they loved one another, and they loved me.

I was home.



**'Hello.
Are you a
christian?'**

Jeff heads up Equipped To Lead and Context, Pioneer's training programmes. He is part of the oversight team at Revelation Church and has a broad teaching and preaching ministry nationally and overseas. He is also Vice President of the Evangelical Alliance.





THE EVENT FOR REVIVAL



Join with thousands from across the UK and around the world to get prepared for revival through four days of dynamic teaching, worship and prayer.

Speakers and musicians include:

Gerald Coates

Peter Lyne

Noel Richards and band

Delirious?

The Worldwide Message Tribe

Sue Rinaldi

Dennis Balcombe

Joseph Garlington

Simon Matthews

Dave Day

Ishmael

John & Christine Noble

Jeff Lucas



Saturday 24th - Tuesday 27th May 1997 (Spring Bank Holiday Weekend)
Norfolk Showground, Norwich

Contact: The Event, PO Box 39, Sunbury on Thames, Middx, TW16 6PP for literature and booking forms

or call: The Event hot line 01932 779772

e-mail: 'the.event@dial.pipex.com'.

£54.95 for adults, £34.95 for children, £39.95 for students.



PIONEER