

Spring 2002

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COMPASS



*The Quarterly Journal of
Non-religious Christianity*

**Pointing the way to revival
and transformation**

ENGAGING WITH ISLAM

**WHY CHRISTIANS AND
MUSLIMS MUST TALK**

GOD'S CLUB 18-30

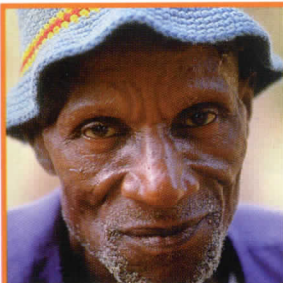
**THE SPIRIT FALLS ON A
NEW AGE GENERATION**

MISSING LINK

**TOMMY TENNEY SPEAKS
OUT ON UNITY**

THE POWER OF ONE

**GERALD COATES EXPLAINS HOW ORDINARY
PEOPLE CAN BRING RADICAL CHANGE**



*How amazing!
How easy to understand it when
it's in our own language.*

Tieta man, New Caledonia



380,000,000 people still do not have a single word of scripture in their own language.

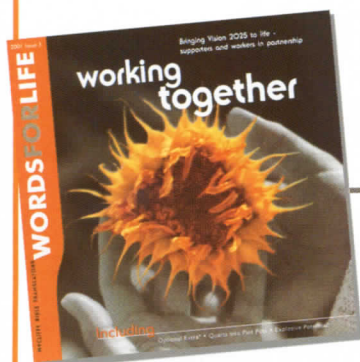
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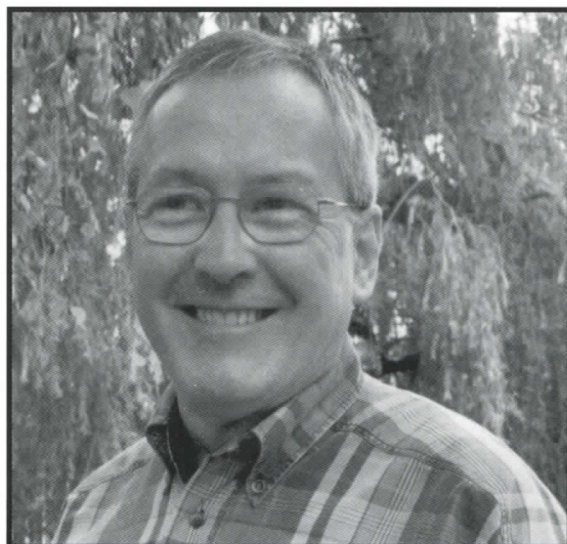
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A Shared Vision



The following vision statement was given by Tony Pullin to a network of churches that relate to him and his team, within the Pioneer network.

I heard about it, requested a copy, and was almost shocked at its contents. Why? I quite literally could have written something like this myself. But he put it far more eloquently than I could ever have done. And the fact is, he wrote it and I didn't - so here it is, as a guest editorial... (Gerald Coates, Editor)

'I have a vision of churches which are not uniform, not swallowed up, not controlled, but where each church is free...'

'I have a vision - where each church is shot through with a passion for Jesus; where a passion for the lost fills our lives and, together, we live for the gospel; praying, sacrificing, laughing and weeping together.'

'I have a vision - where each church is seamlessly a part of the community, and the only way to tell the difference is the hallmark of the life of Jesus; where the kingdom is touching every corner of society.'

'I have a vision of churches which are not uniform, not swallowed up, not controlled, but where each church is free, distinctive, honoured, creative, unique. Yet where each church is secure in relationships with equipping ministries; and accountability is releasing and enlarging and wholly a blessing. Where the only fear in relationship is the fear of the Lord, and the only coercion is the compelling love of Christ.'

'I have a vision of churches that are at the heart of unity for the gospel in their own area; some acting as catalysts, some recognising that mantle resting on others, and flowing alongside with humility and love.'

'I have a vision of our network connecting with other streams and movements of the Spirit in the Midlands; and above all, of the breath of God upon the Midlands in revival and harvest.'

Tony Pullin
Guest Columnist

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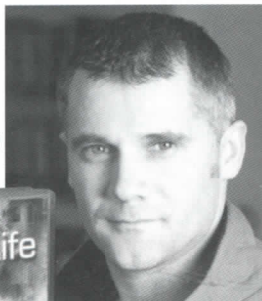
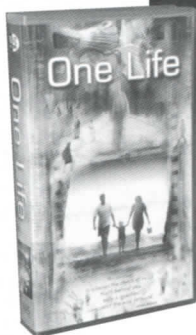
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PIONEER.

HOMEnews

GLOSSY PACK FOR OUTREACH

EVANGELIST Dennis Pethers (pictured) has launched a combined book and video outreach pack. The 16-page glossy brochure *One Life* and accompanying video - which look at such questions as 'why...where does God fit in?' - are designed for door-to-door distribution and general evangelistic work.



Dennis Pethers

'GOVERNMENT COMPLACENCY' OVER SUDAN

AS THE National Islamic Front Government of Sudan continues to bomb its citizens, President of Christian Solidarity Worldwide Baroness Cox initiated a debate calling for stronger action by the British Government.

Baroness Cox clashed with the Government in an exchange during a starred question mini-debate in the House of Lords on January 17. It is estimated that at least 80 people have been killed by Government of Sudan bombs between July and November last year.

She accused the Government of being 'unduly complacent', and challenged them to provide any evidence that their policy of what she termed 'critical dialogue with a regime which continues to slaughter its people', was working.

Government Minister Baroness Amos denied that the British Government was being complacent, and asserted that continuing and intensified dialogue was the way forward. Baroness Amos also denied that Sudan was a state sponsor of

terrorism and a supporter of the Al'Qa'ida movement.

Peers from all sides of the House rallied to Baroness Cox's support. Cross-bencher and well known Christian campaigner Lord Alton pointed out to the Government that slavery remains one of the most serious human rights abuses in Sudan.

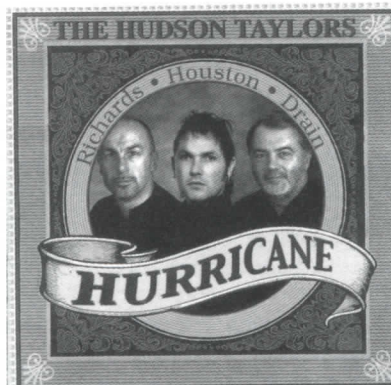
Said Baroness Cox, 'The toll of suffering in Sudan - with two million dead and five million displaced from war-related causes in recent years - exceeds that of former Yugoslavia, Somalia and the previous tragedy of Rwanda put together.

'It is imperative that the British Government and all concerned with peace and justice, respond more vigorously and with a greater sense of urgency to this unparalleled, man-made suffering and call the National Islamic Front regime to account before many more innocent people suffer and die.' (Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

WORSHIP TRIO WILL TOUR

BROUGHT together as worship leaders for a Pioneer leaders' conference, Noel Richards, Brian Houston and Wayne Drain have since recorded an album as The Hudson Taylors.

A full interview with the three singer-songwriters - who are also touring together - is to appear in the March/April edition of *Worship Together* magazine.



CAMPAIGN CALLS TO 'KEEP THE FAITH'



Faithworks activists

A NEW campaign is petitioning government to 'keep the faith' and not force churches and Christian charities to compromise their core ethos and values by dictating who they can and cannot employ.

The 'Keep The Faith Campaign' is being run in response to the Government's proposals on implementing the European Equal Treatment Directive. This outlaws discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of age, sex and religion.

The Directive also gives a clear right to Christian organisations to employ only those who share their ethos. Yet the UK Government's proposals could require every appointment of a Christian to be justified - a move which could swamp Employment Tribunals with cases and saddle Christian organisations with considerable legal costs.

Said Faithworks founder Steve Chalke (pictured above - top row, far right), 'Ending discrimination is a good thing. Christians believe all people are equal and Christian community projects serve all those in need - regardless of who those people are or what they believe in.

'However, as Christians we must not be forced to dilute our own faith. It's the engine that drives us to do the work that we do. The "Keep The Faith Campaign" urges Government to think again and allow faith-based organisations to be free to employ those who share that faith.' (Faithworks)

OASIS GOES TO WORK

OASIS is launching a new programme through which young Christians will explore the place of faith and spirituality at work while

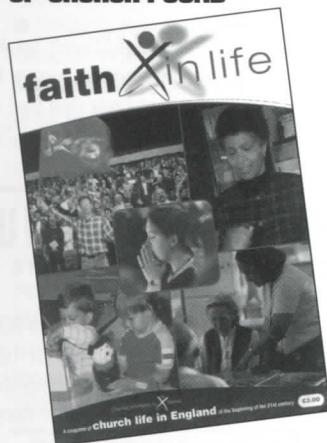
also gaining four months' valuable experience with a reputable company.

The Oasis Youth Vocation Programme begins in March 2002 and will put 18-25 year olds in four-month work placements across a wide range of vocations - equipping them to be actively involved in shaping and transforming the workplace through living and working distinctively.

Placements will comprise a variety of professions and industries - including media, law, finance and charity. Trainees will be able to learn from the experience of their mentors, discuss specific issues they see in the workplace and develop a lifestyle shaped and determined by their faith.

Said Laura Bagley of Oasis, 'Instead of "giving God a year" - as if you can keep the rest of you life for yourself - or "have a taste of Christian work" - as if working in an accountancy practice or TV production company is not Christian - the Oasis Youth Vocation Programme helps people explore the link between spirituality and the workplace' (Oasis)

SURVEY SHOWS STRENGTH OF 'CHURCH POUND'



BRITAIN'S armed forces and police officers attract much more confidence from churchgoers than politicians or the media, according to latest statistics from the *Church Life Profile*.

The survey shows 83 per cent of churchgoers have much confidence in the armed forces,

Churchgoers' confidence in institutions

	Much %	Little or %	none
Churches	87	13	
Armed forces		83	17
Police	80	20	
Health care system	68	32	
Justice system		67	33
Education system	66	34	
United Nations		55	45
Parliament	45	55	
Civil service	44	56	
Environmental movement	41	59	
Government in Westminster		37	63
Major companies	32	68	
Women's movement		26	74
Trades unions		24	76
TV	22	78	
European Union	20	80	
Political parties	16	84	
Press	8	92	

with the police enjoying 80 per cent support. At the other end of the table, 92 per cent say they have little or no confidence in the press. Television fares slightly better than the press, with 76 per cent of churchgoers saying they have little or no confidence in it.

Parliament ranks better than politicians, with 55 per cent saying they have little or no confidence in Parliament, compared with 84 per cent who say they have little or no confidence in politicians.

The European Union also comes in for a battering, with 80 per cent declaring little or no confidence. In contrast, more than half of churchgoers say they have much confidence in the United Nations.

The figures were compiled by Churches Information For Mission, a charitable body established and owned by the Christian denominations and major agencies in England. More than 100,000 churchgoers took part in the *Church Life Profile* on or around April 29th last year (2001).

An initial overview, the report introduces the concept of the 'churched pound' and argues that marketing professionals ignore churchgoers at their peril.

'Churchgoers are a secret but valuable market sector that until now has not been properly researched and effectively marketed to,' said Alison Gelder, chief executive of Churches Information For Mission.

'People talk about the "grey pound" and the "pink pound", yet neither of these sectors is as large, coherent or as potentially valuable as the one defined by the "churched pound". It is the major sector in charitable giving, a major political force, an ethically driven consumer group with financial clout and is both highly articulate and discerning.'

SINGLES MATCH

SINGLENESS has been depicted in a negative light all too often - so argues Kristin Aune in her new book *Single Women: Challenge To The Church?*.

With the population of single people in contemporary society steadily rising, 'singleness' she argues, is in urgent need of discussion and understanding by the Church. By 2010, over half of the UK population will be single. And of those attending church, single women form a quarter of the adult population - single men a tenth.

Aune examines the current gender imbalance within the Church, basing her findings around the voices of women themselves. *Single Women: Challenge To The Church?* investigates the key issues facing single women, from views on men, sex and dating to attitudes in the Church.

It considers the issues that concern single Christian women the most, and suggests ways in which the Church can respond. From the 94 women Aune interviewed, six main response categories emerged. Issues of loneliness and social need, and emotional issues associated with being single were high on most women's lists of concerns.

Yet the most commonly cited issue was the Church's attitude towards single women. Feelings of isolation, alienation and a lack of support from within the Church were acknowledged by many. (Paternoster Publishing)

'DEAD MAN' WALKS IN NIGERIA

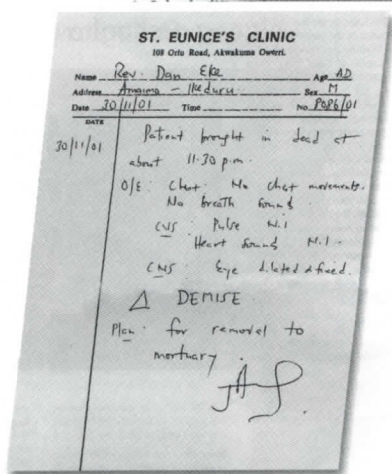
BONNKE raises man from death - that was the dramatic headline in the Nigerian newspaper *The Post Express* recently, following a remarkable happening at a church dedication ceremony led by the well known evangelist.

According to Christ For All Nations, evangelical pastor Daniel Ekechukwu suffered serious injuries in a car accident, and was later pronounced dead by two doctors. However, his wife Nneka was convinced God was going to bring him back to life.

She did not allow him to be buried, so Daniel's body was taken to a mortuary and given a chemical injection ready for embalming. The mortician was allegedly woken by the sounds of singing coming from the room - even though it contained only dead bodies. Disturbed, understandably, by this strange phenomenon, he insisted the pastor's body be removed.

Nneka had it taken to a church in Onitsha where Reinhard Bonnke was preaching. There, the corpse reportedly 'drew a breath' and eventually revived - while the evangelist preached and prayed in the main auditorium, apparently oblivious to the event.

It turned out to have been nearly two days after death had taken place, when Daniel opened his eyes and sat up. He not only rose from his coffin, but there was allegedly no sign of the injuries from his car accident. Bonnke's magazine *Telegram Revival Report* carried a photograph of Daniel proudly displaying his own death certificate.



Pastor Daniel Ekechukwu shows his death certificate

MINISTERS LAUNCH 'PORN SITE'

TWO young American ministers have taken a provocative approach to combating pornography. Craig Gross and Mike Foster have launched what they bill as 'the No 1 Christian porn site' - and taken their message to the heart of the adult-

entertainment world.

The pair took a booth at the annual Adult Video News trade show in Las Vegas recently, the showcase for the multibillion-dollar porn industry that includes its own 'Oscars' for categories such as 'most outrageous sex scene'.

'If Jesus were walking the earth today, we think he'd be here too,' Gross told *The Los Angeles Times*. 'After all, [he] hung out with prostitutes and stuff.' Gross and Foster were there to talk about their new website XXXChurch.com, which aims to help people leave the porn industry and get free from internet-porn addiction. (Charisma News Service)

SECULARISM 'CREEPS'

THE HEAD of the Anglican Church in Canada has warned of the dangers of creeping secularism.

Archbishop Michael Peers said that government officials were eliminating religious references from public ceremonies for fear of offending someone, reports Ecumenical News International (ENI).

Speaking in a New Year's sermon, Peers cited the national service of mourning that followed the September 11th terrorist attacks, which avoided any religious reflection. While Canada prided itself on being multicultural, it would be a mistake to ignore the faith on which many of its cultures were based, he added. (Charisma News Service)

SERIAL KILLER'S PRISON OUTREACH

A SERIAL killer jailed for more than 400 years for crimes that shocked North-west America is now apparently a miraculously changed man who spends his time telling others from behind bars about his faith in Christ.

Sentenced in October 2000 after pleading guilty to 13 counts of first-degree murder, Robert Yates Jr meets regularly with a charismatic pastor who visits the father of five at Pierce County Correction Facility in Tacoma, Washington.

Kent Attwood, associate pastor of Church for All Nations in Tacoma, has been visiting the former killer in prison. 'What a blessing it is to hear that [he] is instrumental in others' conversions while in jail,' he said. (Charisma News Service)

JAPANESE HOMELESS OFFERED 'NEW LIFE'

THE HOMELESS are finding new life through a Pentecostal congregation in Hakata, Japan.

According to Assemblies of God News, the 90-member New Life Church ministers to about 100 homeless men and women weekly, providing them with hot meals, food and personal hygiene items.

'Economic downturns have created a much greater number of homeless in Japan over the past ten years,' said AG missionary Juan Carlos Gonzalez, who pastors the church with his wife, Colette.

He cited two other factors - proud family traditions and a religion that says misfortune is one's own fault - that cause the homeless further isolation. 'Christ is a foreign thought to the traditional Japanese. Less than one per cent of the Japanese people are believers.' (Charisma News Service)

SCHOOL PRAYERS SLAMMED

A US FEDERAL judge has ruled that a Virginia college's tradition of mealtime prayers is a 'state-sponsored religious exercise'.

Norman K Moon said the saying of grace before dinner at Virginia Military Institute (VMI) is unconstitutional, noting that 'government has become impermissibly entangled with religion', the Associated Press (AP) reported. A VMI spokeswoman said the prayers would be discontinued immediately.

But state Attorney General Jerry Kilgore plans to appeal the decision against VMI, based in Lexington, which has held the nonsectarian prayers since the 1950s.

'It's a shame today that while American soldiers are fighting for our liberty in places like Afghanistan, cadets training to be soldiers cannot pray for their safety,' Kilgore said. He added that the prayer is part of a 'militaristic ceremony' that is central to VMI's mission, making it a matter of academic freedom. (Charisma News Service)

PERSECUTION RELIEF

PERU'S President, Alejandro Toledo, met with 726 people recently who he had freed from prison. Many of those originally arrested and now freed were Christians.

Toledo apologised to all those wrongfully imprisoned and asked their forgiveness on behalf of the nation. He also set up a commission to recommend non-monetary compensation for all of them.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide worker Richard Chilvers commented on the breakthrough. 'This is a real sign of Toledo's courage in tackling the injustice of the past and evidence that the Truth Commission is doing an effective job, along with CSW's partners in Peru, the Catholic Episcopal Commission for Social Action (CEAS) and Paz y Esperanza.'

● Similarly, Pakistani Christians are celebrating after President Musharraf's Federal Cabinet voted to abolish the separate electoral system. This divisive piece of legislation was introduced in 1985 by General Zia and divided the nation along religious lines. It meant Christians could only vote for a set number of Christian candidates.

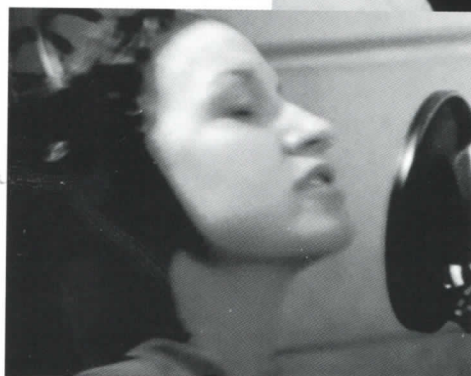
The return to the one-person one vote 'single electoral system' means that minorities will be better represented. They also hope it will mean that the blasphemy laws will have less effect, as MPs will have to represent their constituents rather than just those of the same religious beliefs. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

RECORD SALES

US CHRISTIAN music artists have successfully raised \$15,000 for the people of India, one of the world's poorest nations, through pre-sales of their new recording, *Enter The Worship Circle: Second Circle*.

The Blue Renaissance label-mates predict brisk business for the project, a

Artists taking part in the Second Circle project



follow-up to 1999's hugely successful *Enter The Worship Circle*. With 15,000 copies already pre-ordered by retailers to date, one dollar from each CD sold will go directly to Indian charities.

Kirby Trapolino, president of Grassroots Music Distribution, explained that money raised through sales is going to be providing a tremendous and

much-needed source of support.

'The average daily wage in India is only about 50 rupees, which is approximately the equivalent of one US dollar,' he said. 'For an economy where one dollar a day is a survivable income, you can imagine the impact these funds are going to have.'

The artists involved were inspired to help raise money for India because of their own close personal ties to the people and fellow musicians of that country - borne out of several visits during recent years.

Not surprisingly, the project itself abounds in the influences of India's musical culture. Songs on *Enter The Worship Circle: Second Circle* feature native Indian musicians, Indian instruments, and also recorded sounds of the market, the street, trains, and conversations experienced by group members during their stay there. (Hoganson Media Relations)

DEATH ROW FOR CHINESE BELIEVERS

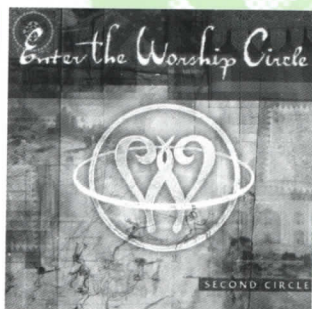
FOUNDING members of the South China Church have been sentenced to death following a secret trial.

Gong Sheng Liang, 46, and his niece Li Ying, 36, were sentenced after a secret trial held on December 18 2001 at the Jing Men Court in Hubei Province.

Gong and Ying were sentenced to death for 'using an evil cult to undermine law enforcement', according to reports from the Hong Kong-based Information Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ICHRD).

A further 15 members of the group were also sentenced, including another founding member, Ms Sun Ming Hua, who was sentenced to indefinite imprisonment.

The South China Church was founded in 1991 when Gong, who was imprisoned between 1983 and 1986, left the Born Again Movement. The church is estimated to have some 50,000 members. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide)



Open all hours

Ian Nicholson reviews the 24-7 phenomenon that is making prayer a priority again

Stories of an unprecedented prayer movement across the nation are capturing the imagination of the wider church. We asked three key participants to offer their perspectives on this exciting new trend

How do you launch a non-stop, worldwide prayer meeting? Well, in the case of 24-7 prayer, the simplest answer seems to be - by accident, with a little help from God and the internet! Pete and

Samie Greig, church leaders from Chichester, Sussex, went on a 'wild goose chase' around Europe in 1999 and visited the small German village of Herrnhutt. This was the birthplace in 1727 of what author Jim Goll has described as 'one of the



Prayer room in San Antonio, Ibiza

Just like a prayer

purest moves of God in church history'.

It was here that the Spirit fell, giving birth to a 100-year, non-stop, community-based prayer meeting among the Moravians. Under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf, this prayer meeting also led to this one community sending out 3,000 missionaries over a 200-year period.

Goll comments that many consider that virtually every missionary endeavour of the last 300 years could be traced back to the Moravians' intercession and sacrificial service.

ENORMOUS TASK

Pete returned to challenge the Warehouse congregation of Revelation Church, to a non-stop month of prayer in a dedicated room, splitting the weeks into hour-long slots. The problem was that Warehouse was 'normal' - it was bad at praying!

Its mix of teenagers and students were committed but busy, disorganised and - despite good intentions - not particularly in the 'prayer warrior' category. Kerry Strotton, one of the leaders, recalled, 'When we first started praying in this way we had little idea of what we were doing, except that God was calling us to pray in a new way.'

'Just the first 24 hours seemed an enormous task. But the momentum grew. Prayers were answered dramatically, some saw angels, non-Christians sat in wonder and it suddenly became normal and fun to pray for two hours in the middle of the night. We couldn't stop and went on for three months.'

During this first 24-7 season reports circulated on the web, *The Vision*, a prophetic mandate for a 'youth army' was penned and the stirring, corporate warcy of 'Come on!' was heard.

What has followed has been a phenomenon. The statistics and stories are remarkable. A tentative attempt to launch a one-year, non-stop prayer rota has led to multiple centres praying weekly around the world - linked by a top quality website. In two years there have now been 700+ prayer rooms in 35 nations - and www.24-7prayer.com gets as many as a million hits a month.

One youth pastor wrote, 'For years I have been trying to get my young people to pray, and last night I found eight of them on their faces at 2am weeping for their non-Christian friends. What's happening?'

In a Tennessee church a girl wrote, 'Our church has been changed forever - dozens are coming back to Jesus or being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. We are believing for an awakening that will usher

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Seed sowers

Martin Scott challenges us to influence the spheres...

I hope we are all obsessed with the possibility of the presence of the Lord invading our town, region or even nation. If it can happen in one place then it can happen in a second place. It is that concept that has kept a measure of energy in the work of *Sowing Seeds For Revival*.

There are no 'experts' who work with SSFR. But I suggest there are three key elements that probably need to be in place to spread a net over a specific geography.

KEY 1

The development of a leadership that is effective at 'pastoring the city'. If in the mid-90s the Lord was asking for his Church

boring and hard work!) as there is no substitute for this. Such things as prayer walking an entire area or leaders praying together every week is essential. Prayer also needs to be strategic so that the institutions and gates of our regions are being targeted. And, a little more controversially, it needs to be prophetic.

Not everyone needs to endorse every aspect of prayer, but we need relationships whereby we can endorse one another - and not simply the beliefs and practices of one another. In fact we can probably be more effective with people that we do not fully agree with, as the unity required goes beyond an agreement over theology and practice.

By prophetic prayer I am thinking of such things as seeking to deal with the

For it is the earth that is the Lord's - and not just the Church

back, he is now asking for his towns and cities back. For it is the earth that is the Lord's - and not just the Church.

KEY 2

The need for every sphere to be invaded by the presence of Christ as believers 'church' it at every level (and thanks to Jim Thwaites and David Oliver for this). This means spheres such as the workplace, family, marriage - all elevated to a status worth giving passionate consideration to.

I consider that on the above two points we are now being pressed to see 'church' ministry gifts reposition themselves to sit and stand alongside those in the spheres, and in the process being re-educated. If that does not happen, then it is doubtful if those within the various spheres will rise to be part of the city/regional-wide leadership.

KEY 3

The third element - and the one I have focused on for the past four years - is that of prayer. I am unashamed at continuing to stir strategic and territorial prayer. Without prayer we will not see birthed what we need to see, nor will we deal with past bondages sufficiently to see a move of God sustained.

Through prayer we can build a platform to release those who will take the Church in to every sphere of our cities (including the release of evangelists with signs and wonders) and raise an effective net over our cities to see the advance of the kingdom.

Prayer needs to be ongoing (sometimes

historic bondages, for as with an individual so with a corporate people - there are always doors that have been historically opened that now need to be shut.

How about calling for a release of such



teams that take it on themselves (in relationship to the body) to seek to deal with past issues, confront powers and pray the release of the future destiny of our geographies?

My own sense is that the Lord is asking for 'more to be done'. So this almost certainly means that we must all develop new strategies and see people released at new levels. I suggest that strategic and prophetic prayer is one area where we must see a new depth released.

● **Martin Scott is married to Sue and they have two children. He has been helping lead prayer teams (www.wild-fire.co.uk)**

Pilgrim people

Kath Fathers traces the prayer journey many of us have embarked upon

New tools for a new momentum, fresh energy for a fresh call for God's kingdom come on earth? Redemptive gifts of cities and nations; ancient anointings and redigging the wells; sin affecting the land; identificational repentance; strategic level spiritual warfare; prayer evangelism; prayer walking; 24-hour constant prayer and worship - the list could go on.

In the past ten or so years, all of these new phrases, tools, perspectives on prayer - call them what you will - have been given for

together have ever dreamed! Why did we ever package him and his ways into four spiritual laws?

The sense of journey and the value of parable speak of adventure, discovery, momentum, crossing boundaries, mixing tribes, learn-as-you-go and call for the impossible on your way. For how long have we as the Church hidden in our closets and refused to embrace the bigger picture of the message of the cross?

Heaven is waiting to be embraced and tugged down from its dwelling to change both the earth and human hearts forever! Pilgrimage is being restored to the body of

Pilgrimage is being restored to the body of Christ

the first time or restored to the Church. In the prayer movement, the 90s were a time where we exchanged the worn-out tools of decades of hard graft for new equipment effective for getting the job done. This is in no way saying that the former tools have had their day - spades are always needed for digging!

But God seems to have added others like the pneumatic drill, which is very handy for cracking through the rocky surface to uncover some long-hidden fertile ground!

And what is fertile ground for other than for planting? Psalm 85:10 & 11 says, *'Loving-kindness and faithfulness have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Faithfulness springs from the earth and righteousness looks down from heaven'.*

When we're planted in faithfulness and peace, there is an irresistible draw on heaven to come and kiss that bit of territory. As we are cleaned in God's presence, we become the cleansing agents for the spheres in which we're planted - work, school, community, family, etc. Our very lives are calling for *'your kingdom come on this bit of earth, just as it is in heaven'.*

REDEMPTIVE GIFTS

So, in this first decade of the 2000's, where is God taking us next? What seems to be coming into focus is a profound awareness of the journey - definitely one of the redemptive gifts of the post-modern. Profound because it contains within it so many elements that reflect the heart of God and, in doing that, frees us from many constraints of the evangelical presentation of our Jesus.

He really is huge, massive, lavish, extravagant, and bigger than all of us put

Christ, not in order to travel to holy shrines, but to make holy each place we travel through.

We are, at last, connecting with the God who moves and breathes through every situation if we will allow him, connecting with the one who breathes into dry bones, brings them together and breathes again so they move and breathe through all of his creation (Ezekiel 37).

BIGGER PICTURE

So what is happening today? It's relational, it's a different pace in each nation, it's hearing the cry of creation and sounding that before the throne until you have some answer. It is offering your life up to God in your small corner and letting it all count for the bigger picture.

'The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ' (1 Corinthians 12:12). It's changing from 'my local church' into 'my locality' - being stretched from thinking 'my nation' into 'my continent'. The valley of dry bones for us in the UK is the whole continent of Europe!

Jesus is calling together the bones of his Church for regions, for whole nations, for nation to nation. How do we see these connected? Come on a journey!

● **Kath Fathers is co-founder of 'Cymod' - a ministry from Wales that works in reconciliation, prayer and development (e-mail info@cymod.org). She is also working in partnership to see established a relational network to facilitate 'Target Europe' within the UK and Ireland and for a number of years has represented Wales on the Strategic Prayer Network.**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

in the greatest harvest the world has ever seen'.

A church leader reported, '24-7 has been one of the most productive weeks I have ever known. People were saved, the lukewarm ignited and unity made huge steps forward. Through the prayer room a radical vision was imparted way beyond anything our puny little talks could have accomplished'.

The Bishop of Bradford found himself praying alongside a homeless guy in one of the prayer rooms. Most weeks someone somewhere gives his or her life to Jesus in one. And prayer rooms have opened in the weirdest of places - from Las Vegas to Delhi, in a brewery in Missouri, a skate park in Switzerland, a school in South Africa and a police station in Kent.

To resource this, national 24-7 bases have emerged in Australia, Sweden, Germany, Spain and Canada. In January 2002 Sweden launched its own 24-7 year of prayer. In the UK the Salvation Army has adopted 24-7 for a year of non-stop prayer.

Co-ordinator Lyndall Bywater writes that, 'It has stretched us immensely because it's going so well. We aimed at about 50 rooms and there have been 170. It has reached a wider range of groups than any other Salvation Army project, and despite the 24-7 aim to "turn the tide in youth culture" one 96-year-old salvationist described it as the 'best thing to happen to the movement for ages'.

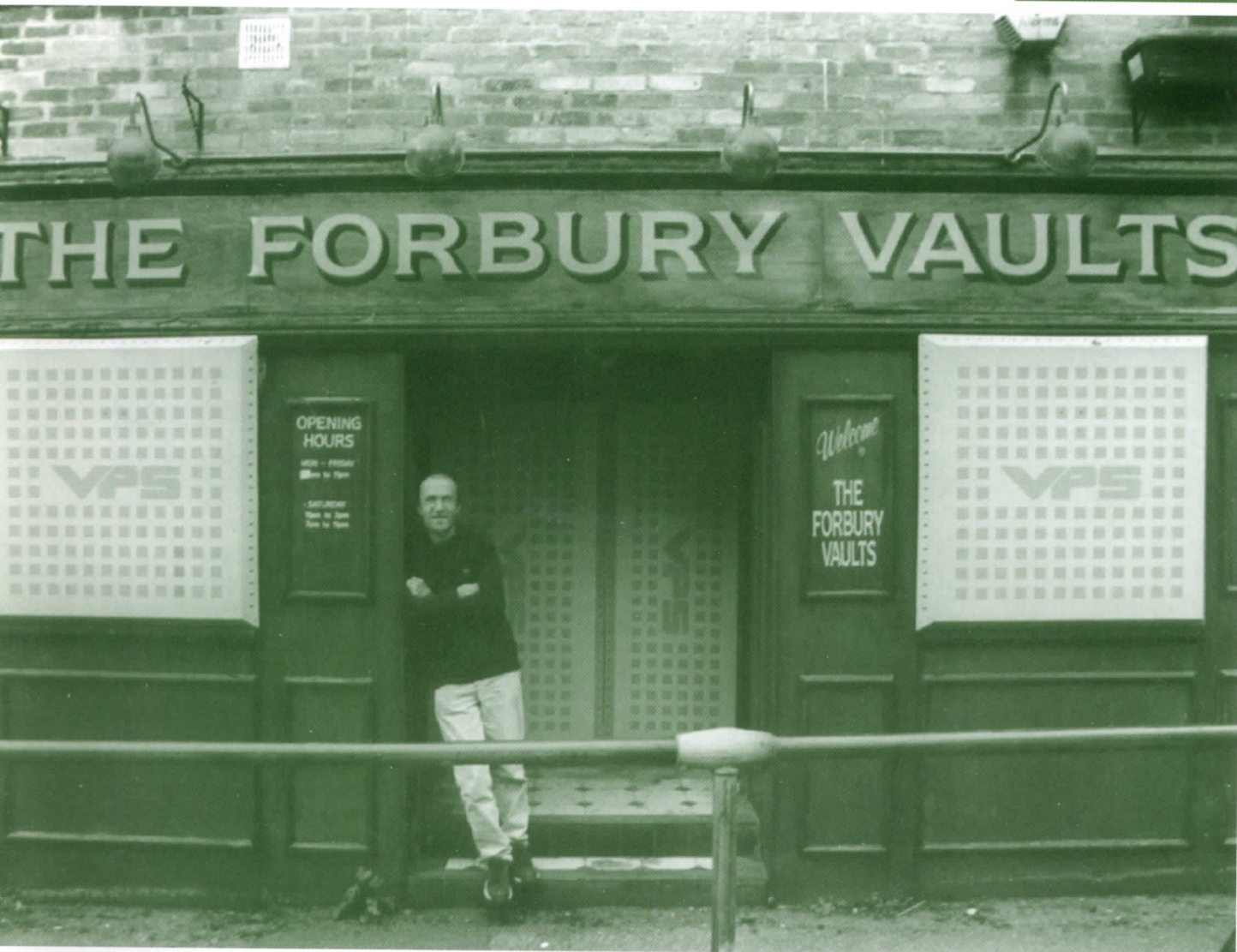
POWERFUL DIMENSION

The leaders of 24-7 believe it could be a key tool for breaking churches out of the renewal cycle into resourcing mission, evangelism and church planting. The first overseas teams in 2001 to the slums of Delhi, streets of St Petersburg and clubs of Ibiza were a pointer to the future. There were healings, people saved and the chief of police on Ibiza credited the prayers with a drop in the crime rate.

Taking prayer, love and worship out of the churches and into the streets and clubs added a powerful dimension to mission - and the sense of God's presence and anointing surprised team members.

Prayer simply has to break out. In 25 years' experience of short-term mission, these are the most exciting and effective I have been involved in. This year sees plans for ten teams with a non-stop 24-7 prayer base in Amsterdam linked to mission teams in places like Yugoslavia, Ibiza,





The boiler room, Reading, with Andy 'the abbot' Freeman

Seville and Manchester during the Commonwealth Games.

As 24-7 moves into its third year a major development will be the establishing of 24-7-365 Boiler Rooms - non-stop praying communities, with an ethos of creativity, unity and mission to the poor, in the heart of cities. The first was launched at Reading in October 2001 with a second one opening in Manchester this spring.

The Reading Boiler Room has again blown apart any preconceived ideas and expectations. The creative environment has drawn Pentecostals, Catholics, Quakers and Anglicans to pray alongside punks, Goths and business people. Others have come from all over the world just to serve and pray.

It is common to have visitors in the middle of the night looking for someone to talk to and a place to spend time with God. At a recent prayer gathering it was prophesied that God was going to divert the sewers into the churches. Mr boiler-room - Andy 'the abbot' Freeman - says that is exactly what's happening in Reading: 'Lots of mess, lots of challenges

and lots of opportunities to show God's love to people who really need him!'

So where is all this going? 24-7 describes itself as a network of like-minded people rather than an organisation and is determined to serve and partner with the body of Christ in seeing the tide turn in youth culture.

'This is something God has done and we're running like mad to keep up'

There are plans for 50 boiler rooms in the next few years, teams leading to long-term mission involvement and 24-7 offices in several Asian nations. There's also a sober appreciation that unless continuous prayer can be firmly rooted out of the church into mission, evangelism and church planting, the 24-7 wave could still simply run its course and be a passing phase.

Pete Greig states that the last few years, since that first month of prayer, have been

spent in a state of almost permanent shock. 'Very little surprises me now,' he said, 'it has been bewildering and it has been exciting. Yet it has also been a struggle and we feel incredibly weak! Whatever our plans might be, God just seems to keep blowing them apart.

'24-7 is not about a person or product - basically this is something God has done and we're running like mad to keep up. A generation has sung about being "history-makers" and hopefully 24-7 is one key to take us into that. Come on!'

● **Ian Nicholson is Teams Director of 24-7. Web: www.24-7prayer.com. E-mail: info@24-7prayer.com**

peace in the valleys

The 'dust bowl' of Ethiopia has been soaked in a deluge of reconciliation. Philip Iszatt explains how the miracle has transformed the spiritual landscape

Rugged mountains. Isolated river valleys. Tropical weather. It sounds like a series of clips from *Wish You Were Here*. This is Ethiopia - Africa's oldest independent country.

The country whose famine inspired 'Boomtown Rat' Bob Geldof to launch *Live Aid* has one of the longest histories of any state in the world. And Christianity came here as early as the fourth century.

More recently in the early 20th century, missionaries from the former Sudan Interior Mission (SIM - now stands for Serving In Mission) committed their lives to the task of evangelising Ethiopia.

From just two conversions, an indigenous national church called Kale Hewet eventually grew to 4.5 million.

BREAKDOWN

When the Italians invaded, and later during a communist revolution, the missionaries had to leave and huge spurts of growth took place. These extreme times gave Kale Hewet the natural desire to run their own affairs, but their missionary midwives loved them too much to let them go.

So began 30 years of agony, with many sad incidences that both sides deeply regret. This was relationship breakdown on a national scale - and bad enough to ruin everything.

In November 1999 I received a

call from Dr Tesfaye, the leader of Kale Hewet. He asked me to represent his church in a three-day negotiation with SIM aimed at reconciliation. In ignorance and naivety I said 'yes'.

SIM had appointed a Dr Roger Steele, Assistant Professor of English from Cornell University. We seemed pitted head to head, and when I put the phone down I

Surprise surprise, we had no idea what to do!

panicked. 'How did you get me into this, God?' I shouted.

I knew the answer as I asked the question. I am privileged to be working with the leadership of Kale Hewet over a decade, as it seeks to transform the command and control structure it inherited from the West to one that empowers all 4.5 million grassroots members. Somehow, by God's grace alone, this has led to a most wonderful relationship of two-way trust.

So Roger and I met in an Addis Ababa hotel and discovered we were brothers. Two peas from the same pod would be an understatement. We immediately liked and understood each other. Our life experiences were very similar, as was the burden on our hearts. That was the first miracle.

But, surprise surprise, we had no idea what to do! Here we were with two national leadership teams of seven people each,

dressed to the nines in their suits.

Both sides looked deeply sceptical of the other, both weary and hopeless. They had tried this several times before and it had always made matters worse.

The evangelisation of Ethiopia was at stake. But human fear and pride towered over even that. This was a showstopper - and Roger and I were supposed to solve everything. That we didn't get straight back on the plane was the second miracle.

The morning of the first day came, and we had no plan. So we let people spend the morning telling each other how wonderful they were - I call it grandstanding. It's an avoidance tactic, and you probably recognise it from your own life. It took about three hours.

Then after lunch, the Holy Spirit spoke to me. What he said was a shock, and I wrote it down rather than do it (more avoidance, I admit). But within five minutes it was happening anyway.

To Roger's and my astonishment, they all fell on the dusty floor - suits and all! They were blubbing, holding on to each other's boots, pleading in various languages for forgiveness

Their missionary midwives loved them too much to let them go

from each other. There were shouts, tears, chaos and absolute brokenness for half an hour.

I would describe it as the Holy Spirit falling on them, like a bomb. Very quickly Roger and I were on the floor as well. There

was power in the room and the floor was the only safe place to be. We didn't have to make this up. God had come.

He is the reconciler. We are nothing in comparison. It is him, him, him! That is what I feel now as I remember the event. I have seen the power of God.

RUGBY SCRUM

Recovering some dignity (actually, not much), Roger and I whispered to each other, 'What do we do now?' We felt superfluous. But after some silence, except for the whimpering from the floor, we both knew this was an opportunity of immense proportions.

This was not the time to stop and get comfortable. This was the time to take Satan by



Leaders gather for unity

the jugular.

So we proposed to the rugby scrum at our feet that we should now put on the table in absolute honesty everything that had gone wrong in the last 30 years. I

It was a fabulous, profound, deeply humbling event

expect you can imagine their bleary eyes as they stared up at us, only half understanding what we said. But of course they agreed. God was in the room.

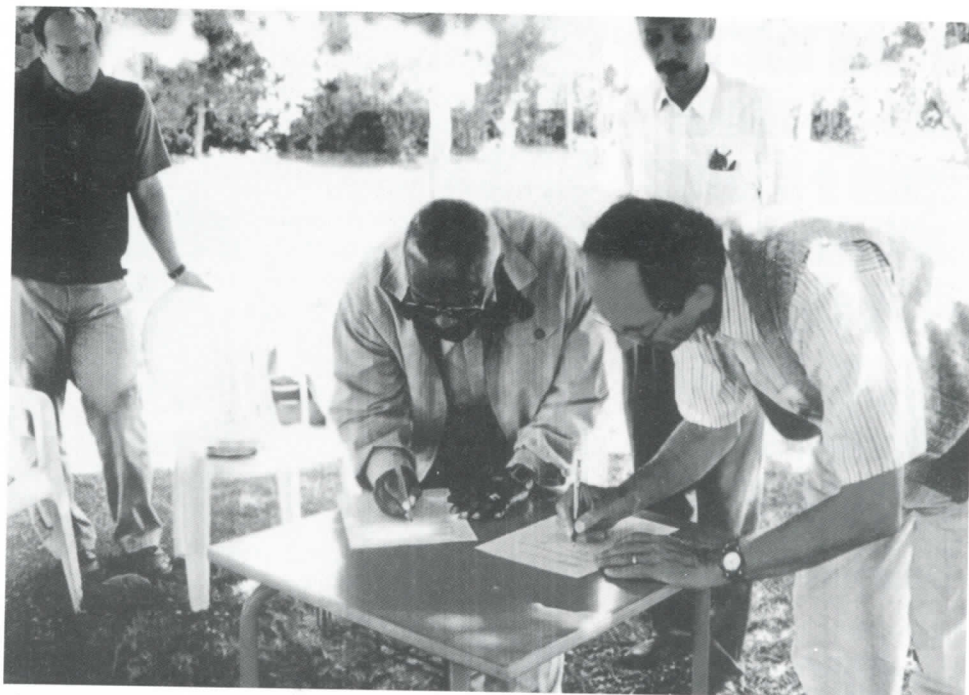
In fact we used a technique called 'pendulum negotiations' in which you give each side incentives to suggest solutions the others would want. It was a fascinating process, quite high-risk, and very much Holy Spirit-led.

Everything poured out. Several times we wondered if we'd made a mistake. But at the end of three days there was the most wonderful, thorough, and comprehensive reconciliation between the two national teams.

To seal this miracle we got them to write epistles to the church of Ethiopia, telling what

I would describe it as the Holy Spirit falling on them, like a bomb

God had done that day. Then we made a formal agreement



'Sealing the miracle' in Ethiopia

between the two parties, containing such matters as the handing over of all SIM's property in Ethiopia to Kale Hewet - that is nearly 200 Bible Schools, over 4,000 church buildings, dozens of hospitals, clinics, feeding stations and so on.

The agreement was signed under three trees whose canopies had grown together, and was marked by the first foot-washing they had ever done for each other in 100 years. It was a fabulous, profound, deeply

humbling event.

And what about us, here in Britain? Do we need the Holy Spirit to fall on us to dissolve with his tears the fear and pride that keeps



the UK church in separate boxes? How can we carry on without the same thing happening here?

● **Philip Iszatt is an organisational change consultant who has been working with the Kale Hewet Church of Ethiopia. He leads Petersfield Christian Fellowship, chairs the Pioneer change team and is pastor of Tearfund.**



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Psalm 121

A song of ascents.

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

He will not let your foot slip—
who watches over you will not
slumber;

For he who watches over Israel
neither slumber nor sleep.

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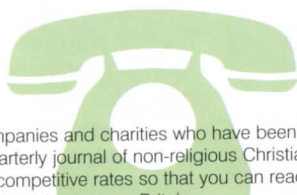
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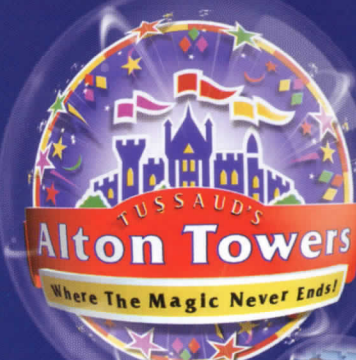
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Can you - just one person - bring about radical, effective change, in the church, workplace or another group of people? Gerald Coates reckons you can

power

There are currently a large number of ordinary, faceless people, endeavouring to live for Christ - at present in a quiet and anonymous way. Within years, months or even weeks, everything will change for them.

Why? How? Because God is doing more behind their backs than in front of their faces. In other words, God is not bound to tell us what he is up to and how he is getting us ready for our future.

Few people, even at a time of high profile, have any idea of how effective or influential they really are.

JUST ONE

It was by just one vote, that American politicians chose to adopt English, rather than German as the national language. Just imagine how different history would be, if all Americans primarily spoke German!

Just one woman, Florence Nightingale, renounced considerable wealth and position and gave herself to help the sick and dying. After years of hard work and incredible sacrifice, she eventually became the mother of modern nursing (despite some recent and unfounded bad press!).

A heavyweight boxer, who later studied law at Oxford University, became a professional astronomer. In the early 1920s Edward Powell Hubbel - at 34 years of age - proved that the universe extended beyond the Milky Way and by 1929 that it was in fact expanding.

Born in Southwark, Southeast London, in 1607, John Harvard graduated from Emmanuel College Cambridge, married a clergyman's daughter and immigrated to Charleston, Massachusetts.

He became an able preacher and by the time of his death had written 300 books. He donated those books and a princely sum of £779 to the USA's first college in 1636 - now renamed Harvard University.

And leaping from the 17th to the 21st century, a virtually unknown 22-year-old singer from London, Daniel Bedingfield, shot to number one in the pop

charts recently.

His single *Gotta Get Thru This* - with several references to God - sold 35,000 copies on the release date just before Christmas, over 100,000 in the first full week, another 100,000 in the second, maintaining his number one position in week two and dropping to number three in the week over Christmas. To everyone's astonishment he was back to number one the week after Christmas and number three after that.

He's been called the 21st century's George Michael and one *Top Of The Pops* presenter introduced him as 'not a one-hit wonder' and 'selling records by the shed full'. When Sir Cliff Richard, who has sold millions and millions of albums over six decades, heard the numbers that were selling, his simple response was, 'Let me tell you - that's a lot of singles'.

Daniel, a Christian, has prayed and worked for this opportunity. But it came sooner than he expected.

CULTURAL CAPTIVITY

As the late Malcolm Muggeridge commented, 'We live in an increasingly shallow, corrupt and trivialising culture. So we should not be surprised that godly men and women of integrity and stature are hard to come by'.

Add to that, our politically correct environment, a leaning to flat 'we are all equal' leadership models, the power of one tends to become extremely limited. Many churches - some would say even most - have the brakes of a juggernaut and the engine of a lawn mower. But that environment tends to virtually paralyse the pioneers. So he or she has to escape (or do something outside of 'church') to be and do something significant.

Unfortunately even divine providence will not insulate us from the debilitating cultural captivity that leads us down an avenue, exhausted of ideas, to strategically reach our entire community with the Gospel. Maintenance replaces mission and

A heavyweight boxer proved that the universe extended beyond the Milky Way

of



A virtually unknown 22-year-old shot to number one

community irons out our idiosyncrasies (Dear God - where are all the eccentrics?).

But there are many, living in the face of their future, whose groan goes up to God. They are blessed but unfulfilled, favoured but see themselves as ineffective, hungry for their future but rootless in the present.

Friendship is God's way to hold them in his will and to keep them on course. The trick of the enemy is to get us disillusioned, then distracted, until we are completely off course.

God is not bound to tell us what he is up to

Often, in such a situation we ask, 'Where is God in it all?' Well, for those who are hanging on, endeavouring to stay on course and living lives of continual repentance - only God is our hope. It is him we must trust, not our understanding of what is going on.

MURDER GOD

Third century theologian and apologist Origen was convinced that God was up to all sorts of things, not understood at the time. Probably drawing on Origen's views, Greg Boyd recently noted that when Jesus was on the earth, people did not know who he was and did not understand what he had come to do.

However, the Devil knew exactly who he was but could not work out what God was doing on the earth. He concluded, therefore, that God had made a mistake, for he had become like one of his creatures. Now he was killable! So the plan was hatched to murder God.

Satan touched the lives of Peter, Pilate, Herod,

the pre-Calvary crowd and others, having already entered into the heart of Judas. With the plan well underway, God was on the way to capture, torture, humiliation and death.

What the Devil had not reckoned with, was the resurrection. No-one had ever raised themselves from the dead. It was Job who first had the revelation about resurrection. It was just a glimpse. In his pain and despair, loss and bereavement he cried, 'Yet in my flesh I shall see God' (Job 19: 26). As for the Devil, this is a case of the early bird, catching what he thinks is a worm, which is in fact a stick of dynamite!

So Origen concluded, God tricked the Devil and only Jesus, it seems, is in on the plot.

And it is that one man, with one life, who lived in one place at one time, that scripture focuses on so intensely. Read the story. Be astounded by his love, in awe of his obedience and sobered by the sacrifice.

As the late Dr Lochrane prayed so memorably days before his death:

*He is the King of the Jews, that's a racial King.
He is the King of Israel, that is the national King.
He is the King of righteousness. He is the King of Ages.
He is the King of Heaven. He is the King of Glory.
He is the King of Kings and he is the Lord of Lords.
That's my King.
He is enduringly strong. He is entirely sincere.
He is eternally steadfast. He is immortally graceful.
He is imperially powerful. He is impartially merciful.
He is God's son. He is the sinner's Saviour.
He is the centrepiece of civilisation. He stands in the solitude of himself.
He is august and he is unique. He is unparalleled and unprecedented.
He is the loftiest idea in literature. He is the highest personality in philosophy.
He is the supreme problem in higher criticism. He is the fundamental doctrine of true theology.
He is the superlative of everything good that you choose to call him. He is the only one qualified to be an all-sufficient saviour.
He supplies strength for the weak.
He is available for the tempted and the tried.
He sympathises and he saves.
He strengthens and sustains. He guards and he guides.
Well, you can't get him out of your mind.
You can't get him off of your hands.
You can't outlive him, and you can't live without him.
The Pharisees could not stand him, but they found they could not stop him.
I wish I could describe him to you!*

What the Devil had not reckoned with, was the resurrection

● Gerald Coates is Editor of *Compass* and leader of the Pioneer network of churches.

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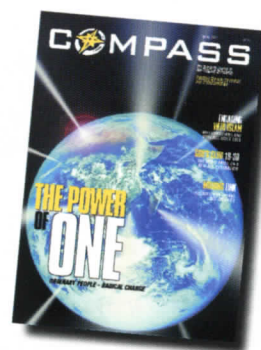
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We saw young people taking part in Alpha on the telly. Later, the papers told us an ex-Spice Girl went on a course, too. It seems to be reaching the New Age generation. Nicky Gumbel told Clive Price about the place where questions are more important than answers

God's Club 18-30

Geri Halliwell is the latest celebrity to spice up her life with Alpha, it seems. Her name hit the newspaper headlines once again when she was reportedly spotted sneaking in through a back door to attend the course at Holy Trinity Brompton.

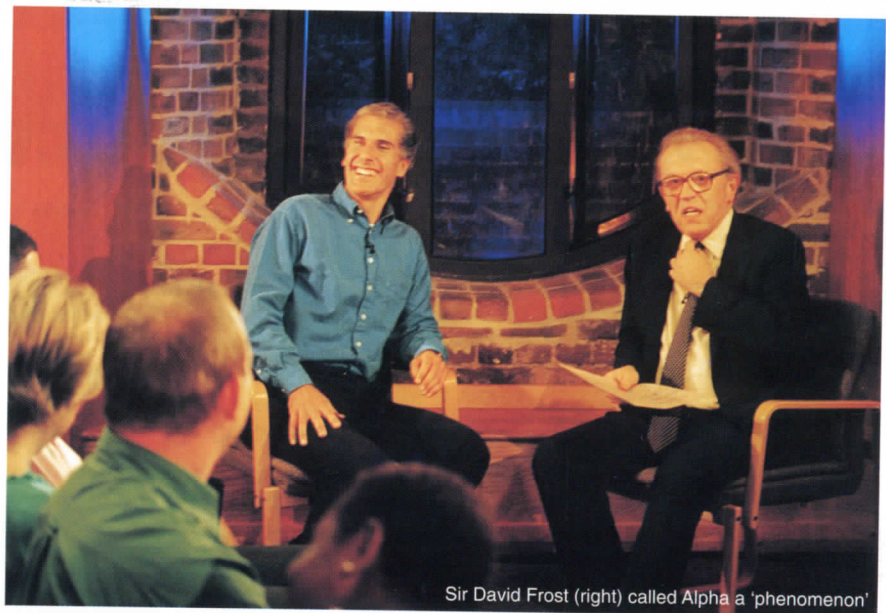
The popular singer may have produced her own yoga video. But it appears she exercises her soul to the sound of worship at the Knightsbridge home of Alpha (though HTB will never confirm or deny that a specific person is attending).

When *Mirror* reporter Clare Goldwin took a balcony seat at the 'Does God Heal Today?' session, she said Geri was sitting below her. A 'pretty brunette' shared words of knowledge, encouraging people to go forward for healing.

Men and women filed up to respond to revelations about horoscope reading, abortion, back pain, cigarette addiction and thrombosis. 'I find it all very surreal,' Goldwin later said of the experience, 'and wonder what Geri thinks about it.'

QUICK-WITTED

Well, we know what another celebrity - David Frost - thinks about it. 'Big brother meets the New Testament' is how he described ITV's ten-part series on the



Sir David Frost (right) called Alpha a 'phenomenon'

mates on a Sunday night and still get home in time to watch it on ITV.

The traditionally sharp, quick-witted and ironic Frost seemed to have warmed to Alpha, which he called 'a phenomenon - an extraordinary story'. He was reportedly 'delighted' to have been involved in the series.

And as the *Belfast Telegraph* said, 'When the heavyweight political

on pulling people into the pews with such billboards as, 'Come To Church This Sunday. And Avoid The Christmas Rush'.

Frost didn't quite follow in his father's footsteps straightaway. After studying at Cambridge he co-hosted the BBC's legendary *That Was The Week That Was*. It became the place where the F-word was said on TV.

His Alpha programme, of course, was unique in a different way. An average of a million viewers tuned in each night to watch a group of ten young people make their way through the course under the gaze of TV cameras.

JOURNEY TO FAITH

Their overall reaction at the end was, 'We've all changed'. Some became committed Christians. Some said they had started a 'journey' to faith. Others had simply changed some of their attitudes towards life.

Alpha leader Nicky Gumbel admitted to

'Big brother meets the New Testament'

Alpha course. Sir David was the presenter of last year's ground-breaking documentary.

Yes, Alpha made it to the small screen. Actually, it was already on countless TV sets via the course videos. But this time you could go out for a drink with your

commentator Sir David Frost - the son of a Methodist minister - accepts an invitation to present a new ten-part series on Christianity, it is time to sit up and take notice'.

Sir David's father was Rev Wilfred Paradine Frost. His son remembers him as an evangelistic clergyman who was keen



Compass that initially his team had hesitations about the idea of the series because of the privacy of all the guests. 'Also I didn't know how it would work on television,' he added. So they said 'no' to ITV.

When the company returned with their programme idea six months later, the national Alpha initiatives had begun. It struck Gobel that they couldn't really say 'no' a second time.

'Here was an opportunity for people to hear more about Alpha,' he explained, 'and therefore it would help the churches that were running it to be able to attract more people. So we agreed to do it.'

While filming, it didn't really occur to Gobel how many could be watching the programme. So he was surprised at the impact it had, as people found it easier to invite friends to courses around the country. It produced 'nothing but good'.

Gobel himself had one person in his group who was there purely as a result of seeing it on television. And the general awareness of Alpha went up by 45 per

cent - so more than seven million people knew what the course was.

The last night was Gobel's personal highlight of the series. Viewers were able to hear what had happened in each person's life. 'None of them had been unaffected by the course,' he said. 'To me that was extraordinary.'

He thought the participants were 'surprisingly open'. Only one of them decided to move to another group to avoid the cameras - and she re-appeared in the final interviews with David Frost.

QUICK FIX

There were some objections to the lateness of the

scheduling and some lengthy gaps between programmes. 'There was always going to be a two-week gap after the first two programmes,' Gobel pointed out.

But as a result of September 11th, there was then a further six-week gap that made it more difficult for continuity. 'It was hard for people to follow it, but I think the amazing thing was that it was out there.'

Alpha is a rolling programme of initiatives, courses and conferences at HTB and at centres around the world. Gobel admits it's not a 'quick-fix solution' to church growth - though churches across the globe are growing because of it.

Reporters pointed out as much at the time of the TV series. 'When our

An average of a million viewers tuned in each night

churches are losing worshippers,' said *The Times*, 'Alpha is packing them in the aisles.' And the *Sunday Telegraph* said, 'churches...are now filling up again.'

One of the key findings is that attendance at HTB's Alpha courses is peaking dramatically among the 18-35 age group. 'This is the most significant thing that's happening,' said Gobel.



September 11th caused a gap in the Alpha TV series. Alpha's US offices were near Ground Zero - and their team were evacuated when the planes struck.





'This is the group that many churches are finding it hard to attract in the UK and generally round the world. This didn't happen the first time we ran Alpha. What happens is the first time you run Alpha, you get whatever your church is.

'But the more you run it and the more you begin to break into this group, then they will bring their friends. Some of these friends are from outside the church and they are spiritually hungry - many have no church background at all.

'And they want to know the answers.'

Gumbel feels that the statistics show that these people like Alpha. 'If this lot didn't like Alpha, they wouldn't come. These are people who are outside of the church. What it shows is that Alpha appeals to this age group.'

'None of them had been unaffected by the course'

PICK AND MIX

Perhaps the presence of people like Geri Halliwell - 20somethings marked by their 'pick and mix' approach to spirituality - confirms Gumbel's observation. Indeed, he is reported to have told the *Daily Mail* almost that.

'Most of the people who come to Alpha are aged 18 to 35 - a whole New

Age generation who've missed out on God - and for them it seems to be the weekend away that does it.'

'It's not about winning the argument'

He was referring, of course, to the so-called 'Holy Spirit Weekend' - where attendees are warned that people experience God in different ways. 'I think the experience of God is key for this generation,' Gumbel told us.

'Unless you give people a real opportunity to have a real experience of God through Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, I don't think it is going to have the same impact,' he said of the course.

Another key to unlocking the church doors for this generation seems to be the style of leadership on Alpha. That came across on the TV series, where leader Paul Cowley was seen to be encouraging questions - rather than answering them.

'We've been saying for years that the leaders shouldn't give a talk - simply ask questions,' said Gumbel. One person

complained that Cowley had been asked a specific question about the cross, yet didn't give the stock evangelical response.

'He was very disappointed with Paul who had this wonderful opportunity on national television to answer this question and fluffed it. But he hadn't fluffed it. He'd exercised great restraint, and said, "what do other people think?"'

The questions are more important than the answers on Alpha courses. The idea seems to be to create a safe place where seekers can genuinely do their seeking.

'It's not about winning the argument in the small groups,' said Gumbel. 'If people have felt that they've had a good time, then they'll come back next week. And those questions funnily enough have gone by next week.

'They may tell you at the end that they didn't get a satisfactory answer to a specific question, but they probably won't raise it again. They seem to have taken on board what was said. They won't admit they're satisfied, but it's all going in.'

Alpha is good for churches if it allows them to hear people's questions about God and faith. 'It makes us ask the question, "are we the sort of church that people want to join?"' said Gumbel, 'because you have to hang on to them.'

● **Clive Price is Consultant Editor of Compass.**

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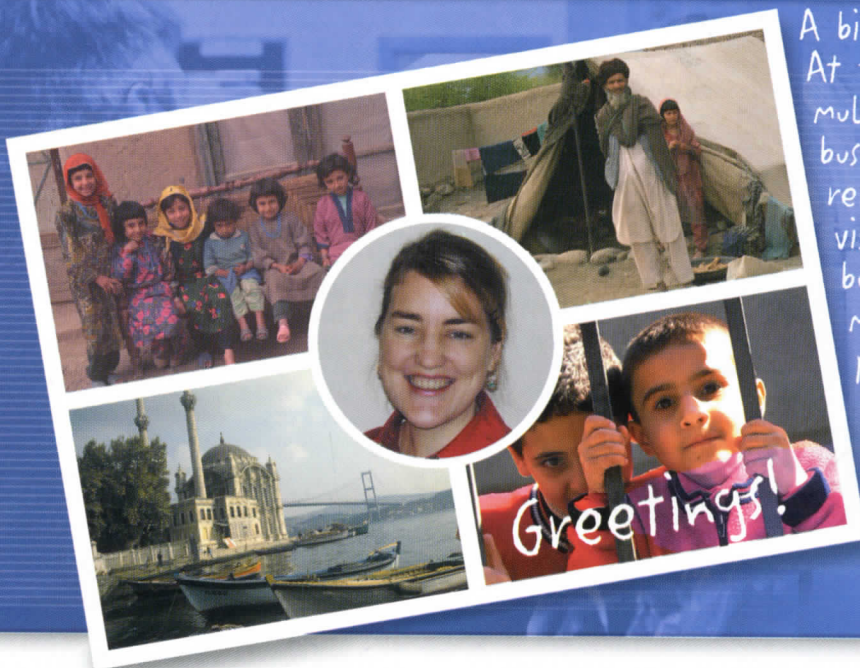
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A big hello from Central Asia. At the moment some of our multinational team are very busy ministering to Afghan refugees. I'm continuing to visit my friend Yulduz who became a Christian three months ago. Please keep praying for more workers and increasing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

Katie.

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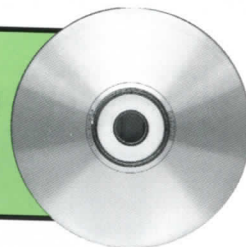


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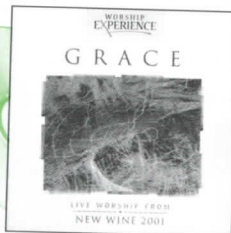
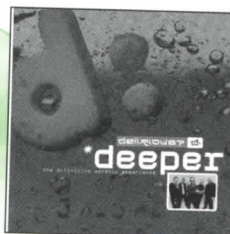
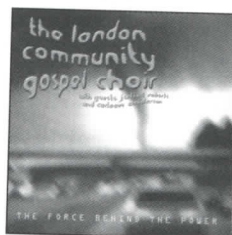
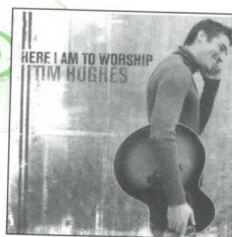
HOLD ME IN

GODFREY BIRTILL WITH THE CELEBRATION CHOIR
(WHITEFIELD MUSIC)

Godfrey continues his adventures in live recordings with a collection of reflective and upbeat praise songs recorded at Eastland AOG at Tulsa, Oklahoma, featuring the Celebration Choir.

The title track is a gentle picture of the safety we find in the arms of God and *Beautiful River* tells of God's cleansing power like the force and majesty of pure water. There are also songs of celebration, such as *Bless The Lord* and *Closer Jesus* which sing of how to 'live the rhythm of the Lord'.

The presence of the Celebration Choir adds a big sound to this album and their collective voices create a gospel vibe (www.godfreyb.com). **SR & CO**



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

resource their congregations, this album is a feast. **SR**

HERE I AM TO WORSHIP

TIM HUGHES (SURVIVOR)

Tim Hughes is currently one of the most prolific songwriters from the Soul Survivor network and is writing songs that are fast becoming standards for many churches, conferences and songbooks.

Former Sonicflood members Dwayne Larring and Jason Halbert have produced an album that charts a definite course for a songwriter who exposes a sensitive heart, a good head for melody and lyrics that are very cross-centric.

Here I Am To Worship is perhaps the best known alongside *May The Words Of My Mouth*, *Redeemer* and *My Jesus, My Lifeline*. The newer songs that stand out are *Maker Of All Things* and *If There's One Thing*. **SR**

CAN YOU HEAR US?

DAVID CROWDER BAND (SIXSTEPRECORDS)

They went down a storm at last year's *Worship Together* conference in Southport, with their dynamic mix of guitar-driven sound, violin and multimedia images.

The David Crowder Band are an honest, hard-working college band from Texas who are linked into 'Passion' - an American youth movement similar in style and ethos to Britain's Soul Survivor.

Sound-wise you can make comparisons with Dave Matthews. Crowder uses his own material and plunders the treasure chest of ages past for the odd classic hymn such as *All Creatures Of Our God And King*. He and his mates also do a great version of Sinead O'Connor's haunting *Thank You For Hearing Me*. **CP**

DEEPER

DELIRIOUS (FURIOUS)

They had to do it sooner or later. Littlehampton's Fab Five have issued a special 'coming of age' worship compilation that offers two CDs full of massive favourites - some remixed, some redone - along with a brand new bonus song, too (*Not Forgotten*).

Those who have the *Cutting Edge* CDs may think they have most of the 25 tracks already, but *Deeper* also includes songs from later albums *King Of Fools* and *Mezzamorphosis*.

All in all, a decent compilation that hasn't offered the fans just a bunch of tracks cobbled together - but a few remixes and a couple of surprises as part of the package. It shows the pathway of success for this trend-setting band as they continue to hit the rock nerve and press the praise buttons. **CP**

THE FORCE BEHIND THE POWER

LONDON COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHOIR (KINGSWAY)

The UK's top gospel choir are regularly seen and heard in many places. From appearing on TV programmes such as *Top Of The Pops* to backing mainstream artists including Sting and Sir Elton John, LCGC have continually made their musical mark for around 18 years.

The Force is their eighth album and the first new recording for two years. Regular vocalists Rev Basil Meade and Michelle John-Douglas are joined by well-known singers Carleen Anderson and Juliet Roberts.

The result is a collection of R&B gospel tunes ranging from the funky *Never Alone* and *I've Found The Answer* to the more lamenting *Tell Me What's Going On* and *Where Could I Go?*. **SR**

GRACE - LIVE WORSHIP FROM NEW WINE 2001

VARIOUS ARTISTS (KINGSWAY)

Fifteen thousand worshippers gathered at the Royal Bath & West Showground during the summer of 2001 - and this album reflects the songs and the sounds from that event.

There are many live recordings released from worship events around the world, but this one stands out from the crowd for a variety of reasons. First, the quality of the music production enables those not at the event to enjoy the experience - that can't be said of all live recordings because for some you definitely need to have 'been there' to enjoy the finished product.

Second, the songs are consistently good. The featured worship leaders, Gareth Robinson, Neil Bennetts and Tim Hughes, lead through many of their own self-penned tunes and for those looking for songs to



missing link

Few have seen the spiritual breakthroughs they dream about in their communities. Why? Tommy Tenney believes we've left one vital ingredient out of the revival mix

God wants to send real revival. More than just a banner stretched across the front lawn of a church and more than a few conversions, he wants to send the kind of revival that finds entire cities falling under a canopy of his glory.

So why do we often approach the level of revival we dream about - but never quite get there? It is as if we are missing one ingredient. I've come to the conclusion that the missing ingredient is true unity. It is God's catalyst for revival.

When a recipe is created, there is often a single catalytic ingredient. A catalyst is something

The missing ingredient is true unity - God's catalyst for revival

that triggers or initiates significant change when it comes into contact with other things. If that particular catalytic ingredient is missing from the recipe, the whole cake collapses.

BAKING CAKES

I remember that when my sister was first learning to cook, she failed to understand the difference between baking soda and baking powder.

For the uninitiated, it is more than mere semantics. It is the difference between a cake rising as it should, filling the house with its flavourful aroma as it bakes - or one that smells good, but doesn't look or taste as it should. One ingredient can make the difference between success and failure, between victory and defeat.

The cars we drive these days have a special pollution-control device called a 'catalytic converter'. This device contains a single 'catalytic' ingredient - in most converters it is platinum.

When toxic gases cross this grid of platinum in the converter, they change into something that is non-toxic. That single ingredient is the catalyst required for the process to work.

The original 'recipe' in Acts 2 says they were in '*one accord in one place*'. Then the 'suddenly' of God came. Fire filled the house. It says, '*they were all filled*'. This is in fulfillment of the promise in Acts 1:8 (NKJV) - '*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*'.

The Greek word in Acts 1:8 that we translate as 'power' is *dunamis* - a derivative is our modern English word

'dynamite'. The dynamite of God came when the unity of believers was present.

It is very difficult for us to pray for power and receive it if we don't have the basket to hold it. Unity is the basket. The size of our basket will determine the volume of visitation.

Five hundred heard Jesus' historic instructions to go and 'tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high'. But when the power came, there were only 120 present. What happened to the 380?

going to leave had left and unity was achieved by the sheer attrition of those whose purposes were not as in tune and in step with God.

Throughout the book of Acts, we see a Church that was virtually unstoppable as long as it was in unity. As soon as division set in, however, the Church's impact on society weakened. There is only one place in the scriptures that a blessing is commanded. Psalm 133 (NKJV) reads:

*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!*

mass evangelism is roughly equivalent to having babies on the pavement. There is no one to care for these babes in Christ. I'm not sure God can truly bless such 'crusades'.

God is not pleased with the loss of spiritual babies. These new believers may experience legitimate contact with God, and pray genuine prayers seeking his Lordship. However, if there is no basket to contain and nurture them, they will die.

If we really want to see God move upon this generation with the kind of magnitude we have

One ingredient can make the difference between success and failure

I wouldn't want to have been one of those who left the upper room the day before Pentecost. Can you imagine how they must have felt the rest of their lives? I am sure some of them joined in later, but they weren't there the day it happened. It would be like a father missing the birth of his child.

Could it be that God was waiting until some left before he could come? There is such a thing as a ministry of subtraction. I have often wondered if by the time the number got to 120, all who were

*It is like the precious oil upon the head,
Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron,
Running down on the edge of his garments.*

*It is like the dew of Hermon,
Descending upon the mountains of Zion;
For there the Lord commanded the blessing -
Life forevermore.*

If you want to put yourself in a position where legions of angels stand ready to bless what you are trying to do, then get in step with the unity of God.

We often have the mistaken concept that unity is the result of revival. I propose that unity is the cause of revival. When we pursue unity, we create the framework necessary for God to send revival.

I am concerned when many crusades have thousands of conversions, but the 'new converts' never enter a church again. That wouldn't happen if there was true unity in the Body of Christ.

This kind of unanchored

dreamed about, then we must do what it takes to create a 'container' in which God can place his precious harvest.

MAKING BASKETS

What God wants to do is weave us together to create a basket able to carry the volume and weight of true revival. If he cannot weave us in and out among each other - because we rub each other up the wrong way - then what is he left to do?

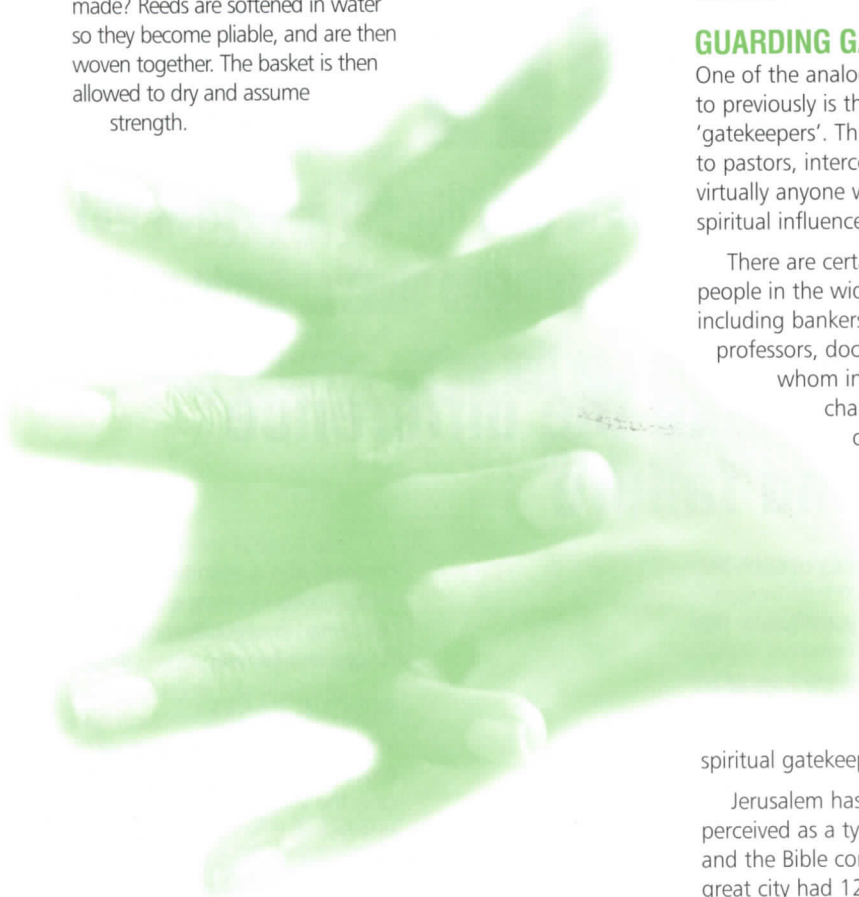
I am convinced that sometimes it's necessary for God to 'knock the rough edges' off us. He's more interested in the development of our character than in the expansion of our comfort zone.

Do you know how God does that? He'll place you in the 'sack of covenant relationship' along with all of your rough edges. Then he will place me in the sack, too - complete with my own set of rough edges.

He may add from one to several thousand more individual believers before he finally closes up the sack and begins to shake us up and down and all around. He'll continue to shake the Church until our jostling against one another has removed all of the rough

edges. We'll emerge from God's 'shake and bake' sessions either cracked and bitter or polished and better!

Do you know how baskets are made? Reeds are softened in water so they become pliable, and are then woven together. The basket is then allowed to dry and assume strength.



God wants to soak us in the water of his Word and the oil of his Spirit until we become flexible enough for him to weave us together, and become a safe carrier of revival (notice that the carrier of revival is 'we', not 'me').

Picture Moses floating on the Nile. A deliverer was born, but

How long has the Lord's prayer for unity gone unanswered?

would he float long enough to 'set his people free'? Only if there is a woven basket to protect him.

How many deliverers were born - and lost - over the last 2,000 years because there were no woven baskets of unity to carry them safely to their destiny? How many men like Moses and women like Mary or Deborah perished before their time with their gifts and calling untapped for lack of protective baskets?

We must never refuse to bend to the Master's desire that we join with others. He wants us to be woven together into a basket trustworthy enough to save a deliverer.

GUARDING GATES

One of the analogies I've referred to previously is that of the 'gatekeepers'. This term can refer to pastors, intercessors, teachers - virtually anyone who exercises spiritual influence.

There are certain influential people in the wider world - including bankers, lawyers, professors, doctors - through whom influence is channeled into and out of a city. This universal pattern tells us that if we want to affect the spiritual atmosphere of our cities, then there must be spiritual gatekeepers.

Jerusalem has always been perceived as a type of the Church, and the Bible confirms that. This great city had 12 gates, each with a name. Which gate is yours? Have you taken your place? Where are the gatekeepers who will stand in the gates of the city in unity?

What good does it do if you guard your gate, but I don't guard mine? The city is still vulnerable because of a lack of unity. If you lock your gate but I refuse to lock

They valued individual agendas over God's agenda. Once the Church was restored, then the city could begin to be restored.

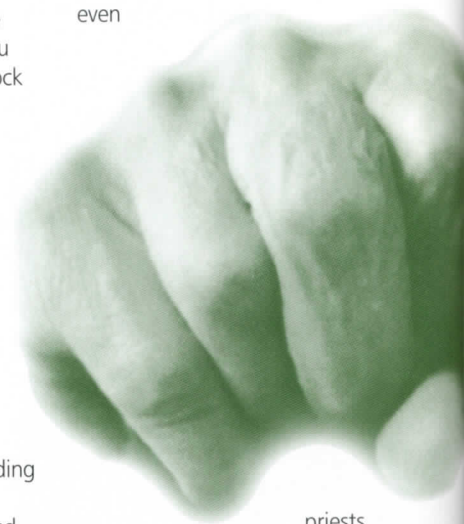
That's what I'm pursuing today. We've seen what happens when God visits the Church. But the members of my generation have never seen what happens when God visits a city. Before the glory of God can flow into the streets of our cities, it must first flow in the aisles of our churches.

There's something within me that cries out, 'Preach to us, Ezra! Tell us how we are to build the Church!' I can also hear another message coming. God wants to send the kind of revival that Duncan Campbell witnessed in the Hebrides outbreak.

He said, 'Of the hundreds who found Jesus Christ during this time, fully 75 per cent were saved before they came (to the church building)'. That kind of supernatural soul conversion can only happen where there is an incredible amount of unity. It only happens when the entire Church is crying out for revival. When the gatekeepers stand in the gates, a city begins to be rebuilt!

The book of Nehemiah contains wonderful allegorical comparisons in which the prophet calls out the different names of the 12 gates of Jerusalem and then calls out the people who are to begin rebuilding them.

Perfumers built gates, goldsmiths built gates - even



priests built gates.

Everybody took the gates nearest to them, gates that had been burned, that had ruined reputations. The Church also

stands with a tarnished reputation, but the gates can be rebuilt. It's time to restore the integrity of Jerusalem (the Church) again.

The final passages of this account in Nehemiah 13 relate

the potential to redeem a wrong choice! This has all the appearance of a true outworking of Romans 8:28 - God made something good come out of a bad situation.

Sodom and Gomorrah were bad cities, the original twisted

There is such a thing as a ministry of subtraction

that it was time to restore everything to its proper place, and then the prophet Nehemiah closed the gates. The Bible says that some of the merchants who wanted to desecrate the Sabbath by selling their goods on that holy day lodged just outside the gates two or three times until a spirit of spiritual violence came over Nehemiah. He told them if they did it again, he would use force against them. It then says, 'From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath'.

The enemy has enjoyed free passage in and out of our cities, in and out of our lives and in and out of our churches because somebody wasn't guarding their gate. Either I wasn't guarding my gate or you weren't guarding yours, because the enemy always seems to be able to sneak in through some back door.

It's time to close the back door of the Church. It's time to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other gatekeepers throughout the city and create the container for God's glory.

The scriptures say that Lot sat in the gates of Sodom and Gomorrah. It's as if God gave him

sisters. Lot shouldn't have been there in the first place. But perhaps God said, 'Maybe a good man can affect a bad city' and raised Lot's position in the city until he 'sat in the gate'.

In Lot's day, that was the equivalent of being a modern-day judge. The gatekeepers controlled all of the entrances and exits of the city. Everything came in and went out through the city gates. So to sit in the gate was a position of influence. More than that, he judged matters and determined whether righteousness and unrighteousness would prevail. You are an influencer if you are a gatekeeper.

Lot should have opened the gates of the city to things that were good and righteous, while trying to close the city's gates to things that were unrighteous. It is obvious he recognised righteousness - after all, he opened his home to the angelic visitors despite the risk. But what about the question, how often did he close the city to the things of unrighteousness?

The truth is that Lot eventually lost his family because he wouldn't take a stand. If a city is to stand and its walls be unbroken walls of integrity, then the gatekeepers must work together to jointly guard the city.

Satan would love for the gatekeepers of the Church - pastors and people of spiritual

influence, intercessors, etc - to be in such disunity that gates are left unguarded, so evil can come and go at will. Satan's hopes are dashed when the gatekeepers take their positions faithfully with a clear vision and goal of redeeming the city. This gatekeeping mentality will create a network strong enough to hold the harvest.

So far, we've only talked about the recipe and ventured into the dreamscape of commanded blessing. Can you imagine angels ever ready in eternity with buckets of blessing and the standing command to pour them out - but only in the container of unity?

How long have they stood on the balcony of heaven with full buckets ready but nowhere to pour them?

It is time, my friend. It is time.

How long has the Lord's prayer for unity gone unanswered? How long will he continue to wait upon the weak hand of flesh to say yes to his ways? Only you and I can answer that. The only unanswered prayer of Jesus is also the only prayer the Church can answer.

An old teacher once taught me, 'If it is to be...it is up to me'. Jesus is waiting patiently and longingly to see his prayer for unity in the Church come to pass.

If it is to be...it is up to you and me. Let us choose unity. It's time to link arms and hearts in one accord. The season for prayer and supplication for unity is upon us. The time for talk is over - now is the time to act. It is time for the Lord's prayer to be answered.

It's time to close the back door of the Church



● **Tommy Tenney is a well-known revivalist who received international attention when his book *The God Chasers* came out in 1999. Founder of the *God Chasers Network*, he has spent ten years leading churches and 17 years in full-time travelling ministry. His article is taken from his book *God's Dream Team*, copyright 1999, published by Regal Books, Ventura, CA 93003, USA and used here by permission (www.gospellight.com).**

The workplace isn't usually seen as important as an overseas mission field, or evangelising an unreached people group. Yet it's where most of us live out most of our lives every day. So how do we become effective 'ambassadors' there? Mark Greene explains why who you are has just as much impact as what you do

Forgotten Kingdom

Our lives are under constant scrutiny at work. We spend more time there than anywhere else. We spend more time with co-workers than anyone else. They see when we succeed, when we fail, when we remain joyful in tough circumstances, when we cancel social engagements, when we are asked to work on Sundays, when we are promoted, when we are tired and hungry.

Our lives preach all the week.

The world we live in puts an emphasis on techniques rather than on character. On results, on instant gratification, on tangible manifestations of success, on methods to achieve that success, on 'how to'. How to be happy. How to bring up children. How to have a happy wife. How to have a happy husband.

Technique is important, but not nearly as important as holy character. And holiness is not primarily an ethereal, otherworldly quality of misty peacefulness and beatific grins. Rather, it is the obedience that springs from love of God and love of one's neighbour.

Several times in Leviticus 18-20, God says, 'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy', then goes on to give a string of commandments that relate to idolatry, the occult, telling the truth, justice, business practice, feeding the poor, protecting resident foreigners, and so on.

What we want people to see is the light - not what we are doing

LITTLE THINGS

Holiness works itself out in obedience to God across the whole range of human behaviour. Character works itself out in action. Both who we are and what we do are vital components of witnessing.

And don't believe that it is not having an impact.

Lewis Trippett was a lawyer working for a telephone company. One day a woman came in from the accounts department. He had never seen her before. She asked him if he was Lewis Trippett. With some trepidation, he replied, 'Yes, I am.'

She said, 'You're the only one in this department with any integrity. Don't change. Everyone else abuses their expenses.'

Then she left as abruptly as she had come. Little things make a difference.

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus says: 'In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven'. Now, it does not say: 'Let your good deeds so shine before men that they may see your light and give glory to your Father in heaven'.

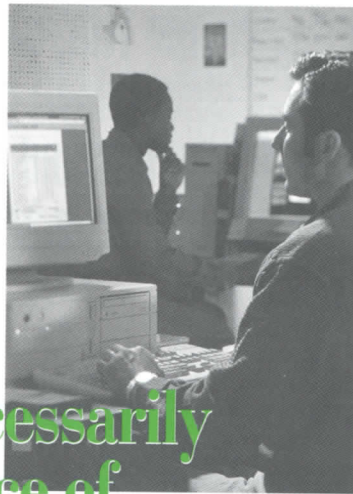
The emphasis is not on the deeds but on the light. This is a vital distinction. What we want people to see is

the light and the true God behind it - not what we are doing. Similarly, John in his Gospel talks about Jesus' miracles as signs, pointers to his identity. The miraculous deeds point to the light.

Both Cain and Abel bring sacrifices to God. One brings sheep and one brings groceries. One is pleasing to God and one isn't. This has nothing to do with the produce but rather with the character of the man. It isn't just what we do but how we do it that determines the extent to which it brings glory to God.

Excellence is not necessarily the exclusive province of God's children

om



Excellence does not in itself do that. Excellence is not necessarily the exclusive province of God's children - nor is good character, nor is honesty. Somehow, by grace, by the power of the Spirit to transform us, to work in us, there must be something about our light that points to God.

Joseph is a good example. His discernment so shone before Pharaoh that Pharaoh gave him the name 'Zaphenath-Paneah', which means 'God is living'. Indeed, it is precisely because Pharaoh recognised God's revelation in Joseph's wisdom that he put Joseph in charge of Egypt:

'...Pharaoh asked [his officials], "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?" Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders".' (Genesis 41:38-40)

God's revelation of the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams was a one-off supernatural event. But it was followed by a lifetime of faithfulness and wisdom. Certainly God does intervene in supernatural ways as he did in Joseph's life, and we may or may not give him the glory.

However, he also has the opportunity to reveal himself through our character, through our response to everyday events. Our lights can shine, our testimony to the power of the gospel can be powerful, without the direct verbal communication of the Good News.

The world we live in puts an emphasis on techniques rather than on character

BEING FRANK

In the building where I used to work there was a lift operator called Frank. He stood at the bank of lifts in the main entrance and ensured there was an even balance of lifts going up and lifts coming down.

For many people this might be a menial, repetitive task with little opportunity to shine. But day in, day out, Frank would have a smile for everyone as they came in to work. Frank would greet us by name. He seemed to know all our names. And he would tell us to have love in our hearts.

Frank was a lift operator but people didn't see menial drudgery in his job. They saw in it an opportunity to transmit love and joy, to make people look forward to their day and help them overcome the frustrations of their journey into work. One person even walked round the block to come in at Frank's entrance so she could start her day with a warm welcome from Frank.

I don't know whether Frank was a Christian, but people saw his job in the light of his cheerful, giving spirit. When he retired, my company gave him a significant chunk of our shares. And he didn't even work for us - he worked for the owner of our office building. He made a difference.

So it is with our work. In what light do we want it to be seen?

Ideally, we want people to see in our work the light Jesus has brought into our lives. What we do and the way we relate to people should point others to God.



One person hoes, one person sows, one person waters

HEAVENLY IMPACT

How God is going to use you in the process of bringing those around you to himself is up to him and you. In one case you may do something that may not truly register for another decade; in another you may lead someone to the Lord. In another you may encounter some hostility.

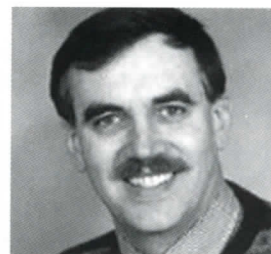
One person hoes, one person sows, one person waters. But he will use you, whether or not you are always aware of it.

Think for a moment of the way God brought you to himself. Certainly there may be one or two people who were particularly significant. And there may be people you have completely forgotten, who taught you something important. But maybe in heaven you will know the impact they had.

Equally, there are probably people who did things that struck you or people who said something that made a big impact on you. They will never know, at least not till heaven, the difference they made.

● **Mark Greene spent ten years working in advertising in London and New York, then studied at London Bible College. He ended up lecturing and then serving as Vice Principal. He is now Director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity. His article is taken, with permission, from his book Thank God It's Monday, published by Scripture Union (phone: Scripture Union Mail Order 01908 856006. Online: www.scriptureunion.org.uk. Locally: Christian Retailer)**

Amid the fall-out of September 11th, Christians and Muslims need to talk. Peter Riddell examines the varying reactions to the global crisis and points a way forward for meaningful dialogue



Engaging with *Islam*

After the shock of September 11th, the world awaited the fall-out. Allied forces engaged in air strikes over Afghanistan, and ground troops followed. The world held its breath.

Politicians pleaded for tolerance. Racists targeted mosques and radicals torched churches.(1) The public was in fear of fundamentalists.

But one thing is clear - military action is not the only way ahead. Another kind of engagement is needed, too - an intellectual and spiritual engagement with Islam.

We must avoid stereotyping Muslims. The diversity that characterises the worldwide Islamic community has been reflected in the different ways Muslims have responded to the events of September 11th.

Radical voices were raised loudly in the days following the attacks. But moderate Muslims were also quick to speak out, denouncing the actions.

HOLY WAR

The question many people are asking involves the sacred texts of the Muslim world, and in particular the Qur'an. Does the Qur'an really incite the kind of violence that rocked the world in September? Or is this a fallacy, the product of a paranoid and Islamophobic West?

Radical groups draw on the Islamic scriptures to justify their policies. The Supporters of Shariah website quotes the sacred Hadith (the traditional sayings of the prophet Muhammad) in praising death in jihad, promising that it will lead to great rewards - including the forgiveness of sins and guaranteed salvation on the day of resurrection and entry to Paradise.(2)

The militant group Al-Muhajiroun, which has branches in Britain, Lebanon, Pakistan and the United States, organised

a gathering on September 15th in Birmingham, entitled 'USA, the Enemy of Islam'.

They issued a statement the following day saying, 'Muslims, stand together and unite our Ummah [community] to fight against the enemies of Allah...and his Messenger Muhammad in this time of need. The Book of Allah calls you, the Ummah, cries for your help and Paradise awaits you'.(3) Once again, the theme of Paradise was prominent in the rhetoric of Muslim radicals.

However, mainstream Muslim leaders issued strong statements against the attacks. Dr Zaki Badawi, Director of the Muslim College (London) and chairman of the Imams and Mosques Council, said on BBC Radio: 'Those who plan and carry out

Mosques throughout Britain also observed the Europe-wide three-minute silence in memory of the victims of the attacks.

In a remarkable article in the *Sunday Observer*, the Muslim academic Ziauddin Sardar called for the Islamic community to recognise that Muslims are in the best position to take the lead in the common cause against terrorism: 'The terrorists are among us, the Muslim communities of the world'.

This theme was picked up by the leading British Muslim periodical *Q News*, which stated that, 'terrorism has no place in the vocabulary of Islamic law. The Muslim world now needs to become more stern with extremists'.(6)

Sardar sought to invoke Islamic Law

Moderate Muslims were quick to speak out, denouncing the actions

such acts are condemned by Islam, and the massacre of thousands, whoever perpetrated it, is a crime against God as well as against humanity'.(4)

He quoted Islamic sacred scripture to emphasise that Islam does not sanction the taking of life. This recourse to the text was also made by Islamic representative bodies. The Muslim Council of Britain declared that the Holy Qur'an equates the murder of one innocent person with the murder of the whole of humanity.(5)

himself in condemning the terrorists, declaring: 'To Muslims everywhere I issue this fatwa: any Muslim involved in the planning, financing, training, recruiting, support or harbouring of those who commit acts of indiscriminate violence against persons or the apparatus or infrastructure of states is guilty of terror and no part of the Ummah.

'It is the duty of every Muslim to spare no effort in hunting down, apprehending and bringing such criminals to justice'.(7)

Q News declared the terrorists beyond the pale: 'We need to tell the world that Islam is guiltless, and that terrorism is carried out by members of an aberrant cult, called Kharijism, which borrows some Islamic forms but is in fact a separate religion'. (8)

So, the divergent views among Muslims were based on differing perspectives on the sacred texts. In effect, the radicals and the moderates were singing different tunes from exactly the same score. Each accused the other of distorting the true message.

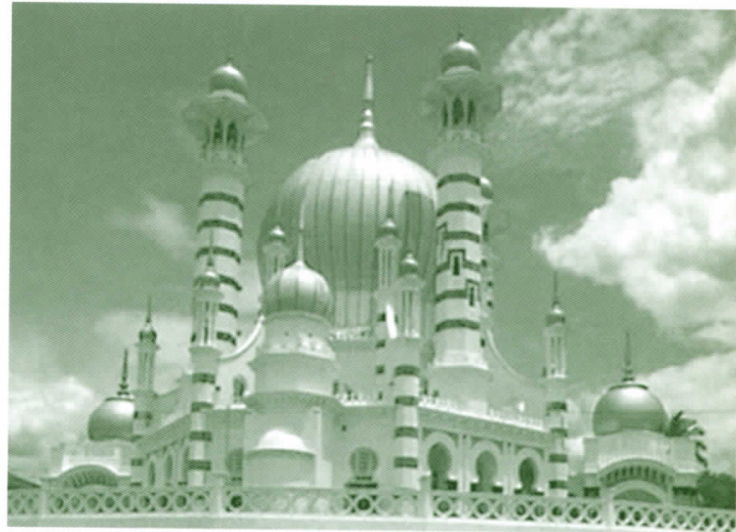
The problem is that each interpretation is 'valid', given the contents of the sacred texts themselves. When you put the Qur'an and Hadith together, you can, in effect, make them say whatever you want. (In this respect, the Old Testament is little different.)

Those who interpret the texts as justifying terrorist attacks can find clear Qur'anic support. So can those who condemn them. Islam, according to its texts, is not 'either/or', it is 'both/and'. It

purpose of killing as many as possible? There's no doubt that they, too, were driven by scriptural motivations. A document left by one of the hijackers is replete with references to the Qur'an, the prophet Muhammad and the early history of Islam.

These references underpinned the actions of the hijackers. The writer urged his colleagues to consider Muhammad as their model: 'Remember the battle of the prophet...against the infidels, as he went on building the Islamic state'.

He exhorted them to keep God uppermost in their minds as they carry out their task, and to refer to scripture: 'You should pray, you should fast. You should ask God for guidance, you should ask God



the verses, that you would wish for death before you meet it if you only know what the reward after death will be. You will be entering paradise. You will be entering the happiest life, everlasting life. We are of God, and to God we return'. (9)

And what of the world's most wanted man, Osama Bin Laden? What are his religious motivations? When allied airstrikes on Afghanistan commenced, he issued a statement expressing overtly his support for the terrorist attacks.

Above all, he emphasised the supposed divine sanction for the action, stating: 'There is America, hit by God in one of its softest spots. Its greatest buildings were destroyed, thank God for that. When God blessed one of the groups of Islam, vanguards of Islam, they destroyed America. I pray to God to elevate their status and bless them'. (10)

RADICAL NETWORK

Of greatest importance to the Muslim community and, indeed, to broader

society, is the relative influence that the different Muslim voices bring to bear on the

Mainstream Muslim leaders issued strong statements against the attacks

has the potential to be both a religion of peace and of violence.

So issues of interpretation become key: do the interpreters wish to recreate a golden age from the past by following the texts in a literalist way, focusing on the verses which exhort military jihad, or are they prepared to adapt the writing to modern realities, focusing on those verses which stress that jihad is a metaphor for the internal struggle to be more devout?

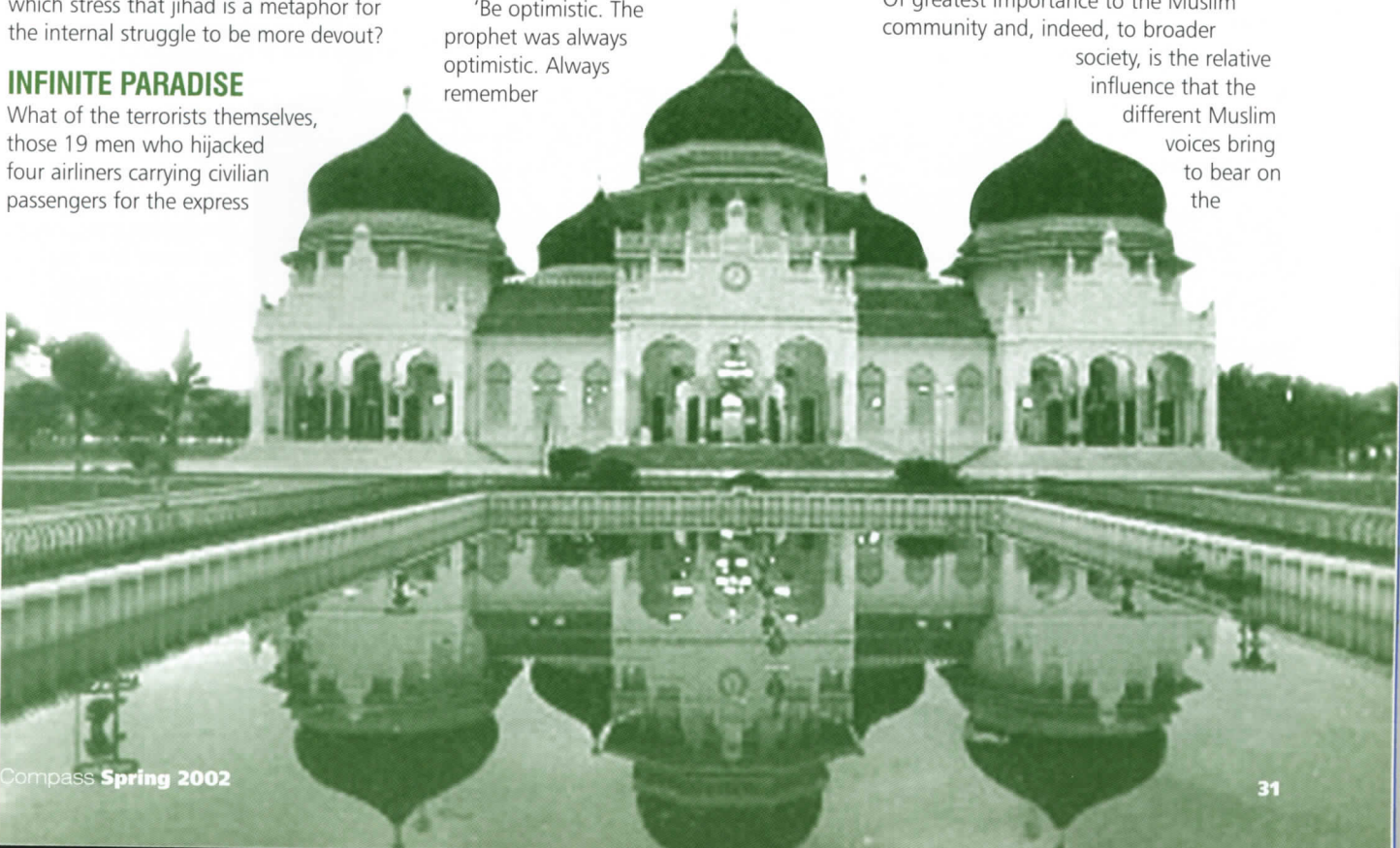
INFINITE PARADISE

What of the terrorists themselves, those 19 men who hijacked four airliners carrying civilian passengers for the express

for help. Continue to recite the Koran'.

He urged his fellow hijackers to overcome their natural human fear by remembering that Paradise awaits them: 'You have to be convinced that those few hours that are left you in your life are very few. From there you will begin to live the happy life, the infinite paradise.

'Be optimistic. The prophet was always optimistic. Always remember



Muslim masses. Many factors suggest that the moderate view carries the day with the majority of Muslims in western countries such as Britain. However, the policies of the radicals have a strong appeal in certain quarters - especially the young.

It is clearly wrong to hold all Muslims responsible. Christians should condemn the indiscriminate attacks on Muslims and Islamic property in Britain and elsewhere. It is to the credit of western political leaders that they have so forcefully denounced the stereotyping of all Muslims.

Issues such as the diversity of Muslim opinion and the need to condemn anti-Muslim public reaction are important and require a response. However they are, in a key sense, secondary to the central issue, from which our attention must not be deflected.

The fact is that there is an international network of radical Muslims committed to terrorism that must be stopped. This network, built loosely around the Al-Qa'ida group led by Bin Laden, has come into

Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and an abortive attempt to bomb Los Angeles airport in 2000 all carried the imprint of the Al-Qa'ida radical network.

A US government report released the day before the terrorist attacks suggested that the radical Al-Qa'ida network run by Osama Bin Laden could call upon thousands of Islamic militants in dozens of countries around the world.

In Afghanistan alone, according to a Russian government report to the United Nations, Bin Laden's group had at least 55 bases in early 2001 with over 13,000 men under arms, including Arabs, Pakistanis, Chechens, Filipinos, and other nationalities.(11)

BIBLICAL STANDARDS

It is crucial to enlist the aid of moderate Muslim governments in the ongoing response to the radicals. The rapid cutting of political links with the former Taliban government of Afghanistan by the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia was an important early step.

Furthermore, US efforts to draw together

partnerships and engaging in dialogue at community level, as well as offering hospitality to Muslim neighbours or colleagues.

Christians should continue to urge their governments to stress that most Muslims do not bear responsibility for the terrorist attacks. If the Muslim majority is brought within the circle of friendship, then the radicals will be cut off from the base of support they wish for.

Western governments, in conjunction with allied states, will need to take appropriate action against the radical Islamic groups through a strengthening of anti-terrorist legislation, arrest and detention, and limited military action.

Such measures received the sanction of the United Nations Security Council on September 28th when it adopted a wide-ranging, comprehensive resolution with steps and strategies to combat international terrorism.(12)

Christians can back their governments in this, and statements of support for focused military action during the Afghanistan conflict were issued from most denominations. At the same time, it is our Christian duty to ask searching questions of governments - to ensure that the action taken is proportionate and effective.

Such an approach seems to conform to biblical standards. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus told his disciples to turn the other cheek when struck, but later in the same book he also overturned forcefully the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple.

In other words, we need to select our response wisely, according to the circumstances. Sometimes dialogue and humility will be the best course. But on other occasions a more forceful response (when the former does not bring about a godly environment) will be required.

Some Christians are concerned that the West too rapidly

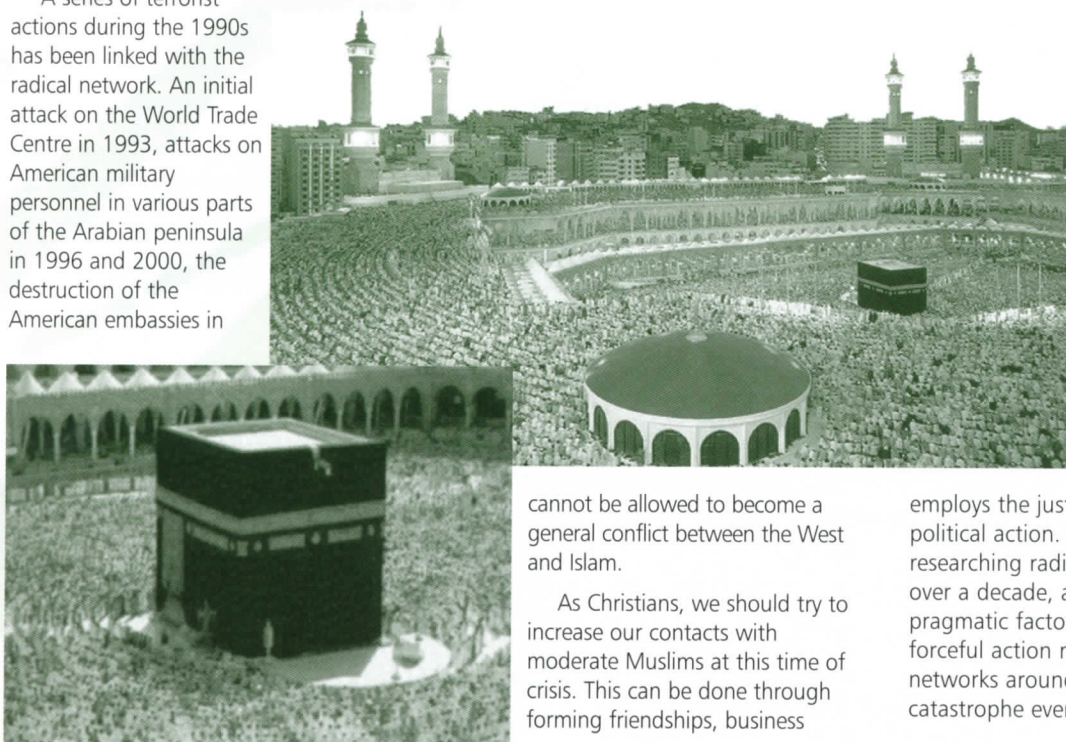
employs the just-war theory to sanction political action. But I have been researching radical Islamic thinking for over a decade, and am driven by pragmatic factors. If we do not take forceful action now against radical networks around the world, a catastrophe even worse than September

Most Muslims do not bear responsibility for the terrorist attacks

public view since September 11th, but they have been far from dormant prior to that date.

A series of terrorist actions during the 1990s has been linked with the radical network. An initial attack on the World Trade Centre in 1993, attacks on American military personnel in various parts of the Arabian peninsula in 1996 and 2000, the destruction of the American embassies in

and maintain a broad coalition - including Muslim nations - provides hope for a resolution to the present world crisis. This



cannot be allowed to become a general conflict between the West and Islam.

As Christians, we should try to increase our contacts with moderate Muslims at this time of crisis. This can be done through forming friendships, business

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11th awaits us.

We must not negotiate with the Bin Ladens of this world. The view of some commentators, that the radical threat will be solved by isolating Israel, dropping sanctions against Iraq and withdrawing US troops from Saudi Arabia misses the point.

If those three steps were taken, Muslim radicals would find



difficulty, is to return to the text.

The reason, perhaps, that Christian fundamentalism poses less of a threat to the world is that the bloodier Old Testament narratives have been superseded by the teachings of the New.

A Christian, however extreme,

likely to persuade anyone to kill. That is not to negate the historical association between Christianity and bloody military action - but it is to acknowledge that the New Testament provides less fertile grounds for misappropriation by terrorists.

September 11th has stimulated many more Christians to want to know more about Islam, and that can only help interfaith understanding. Sadly, so far it is largely uni-directional, and we must hope for a corresponding desire among Muslims to learn more about Christianity.

The West remains fearful of Islam, and vice versa. We must find ways of working with, and not against, each other. For the sake of us all.

We should try to increase our contacts with moderate Muslims

other causes for complaint because in essence (and this is key), their literalist reading of Islamic scripture leads them to conclude that non-believers (that is, non-Muslims) are 'infidels' and should be fought.

'Fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every strategem,' says the Qur'an (Surah 9, verse 5). The issues of Israel, Iraq and US military bases are merely manifestations of the radicals' conflict with the West - rather than its causes. (13)

People in the West are increasingly scared of fundamentalism. Yet why does it seem as though Islamic radicals are more dangerous than Christian fundamentalists? The reaction of any religious fundamentalist, in a time of crisis or

is likely to base their views upon the teachings of Jesus - which in turn are less

● **Dr Peter Riddell is Director of the Centre for Islamic Studies at London Bible College.**

RIGHT TO REPLY

What do you think? Do you agree with Peter Riddell's analysis, or do you have another story to tell? We'd like to know. And in the next issue, we'll carry further views on Christian-Muslim dialogue from Dr Chawkat Moucarry, a Syrian-born Christian who grew up in a Muslim culture and who now lectures in Islamic Studies. It's all part of the Compass ethos - to help each one of us find a way through these tough issues.

Over the

Edge

Black ice. Sheer drop. Near disaster. Death-defying rescue. But should we share it? Jeff Lucas treads carefully in a world of pain

It was a beautiful autumnal day. Bright sunshine disguised the reality of black ice, lurking stealth-like on the road surface.

We were driving up a mountain pass in Oregon, a million Christmas trees creating a lush, green carpet below us. I noticed there was a sheer drop of hundreds of feet. The philosophy was simple. Drive carefully. Or die.

A friend was at the wheel. I was in the back, wrestling with our young children who wanted an 'are we nearly there yet' update every 30 seconds. Suddenly we hit a patch of frozen ice (note for physics graduates: most ice is frozen).

The car went into a spin, and I casually observed we were moving across the road towards the gaping snow-white jaws of oblivion. This was not good, could not be God's will for us, and even if it was part of the plan, I didn't like it. I decided to express my protest in no uncertain terms.

HORNED FIGURE

The Bible says we should put serious effort into everything we do: 'whatever things you do, do them with all your might'. I gulped in a great lungful of air and proceeded to obey by screaming blue murder at the top of my voice.

I think God must have heard me - certainly passing aliens picnicking on other planets probably did. Now, in the slo-mo that apparently precedes death, we continued our helpless spin towards the precipice. Oh dear.



'Instead of a "Bruce Willis - Intercessor" voice, mine sounded like Minnie Mouse with her tail caught in a lift door'

My friend, the driver, was not screaming. He was praying. He seemed to think some dark skullduggery was afoot, because I heard him inform Satan to 'get off of the car'. I peered through the swirling windscreen, but there was no horned figure with pitchfork and red tights perched on the bonnet.

Still, praying seemed a good idea, so I joined in. But instead of a 'Bruce Willis - Intercessor' voice, mine sounded like Minnie Mouse with her tail caught in a lift door. The crevasse loomed, so I dropped the prayer ministry and got back to screaming.

The car tipped suddenly as we went over the side. What happened next defies logical explanation unless one concedes there is a God who's interested in us. In a split second, the car was lifted up and shoved back onto the road. A passing lady driver stopped her car, so astonished was she at the sight.

In a breathless roadside conversation with her later, she told us that three of our four wheels had gone over the edge, and then the car was lifted up. Also a Christian, she was in no doubt as to the identity of our rescuer.

LOVE AFFAIR

To write this presents me with a quandary. Christians - better Christians than I - die in car accidents. Just recently, a young man with whom I have shared ministry fell asleep at the wheel, and died instantly as he ploughed into a tree. He'd made sacrificial choices to follow Jesus, and had a

bright, promising future ahead of him. But he wasn't spared.

I'm tempted to never speak of the cliffside rescue again. But then I'd deny something God did. Perhaps I have to tiptoe into the fog of mystery. The fact is, I don't have a clue why I was spared when other more faithful friends of Jesus will die today in accidents around the world. But my half-knowledge mustn't prevent me from affirming that it did happen. God sometimes heals, and no disease is stronger than his muscle, but many are not healed.

I'm horrified by the kind of Christianity that promises people results - health, healing, prosperity - as long as they follow a set of pre-packaged faith principles. Not only is God reduced to the status of a hapless vending machine, but also sincere people are hoodwinked. Faith is a love affair, and sometimes an exasperating and confusing romance at that, rather than an easy climb up 20 solid stairs to success.

Did God bless you today? Good. Share it. But tread gently among those living under a brass heaven, who still limp forward, painfully yet faithfully, waiting for God. To affirm the power of a supernatural God in a world of pain is like balancing precariously on a tightrope. It takes grace.

● **Jeff Lucas is a speaker and Bible teacher with an international ministry and serves churches both here and in the States. He is also Vice President of the Evangelical Alliance.**

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