

It is very easy to look out at the world around and express a cynical comment on what we see. When we do this we observe people acting only out of their own self-interest, "looking after number one", intent on seeking power in order to dominate. So much of our news is concerned with reporting incidents which reflect these attitudes in one form or another.

If we look at the life of the first Christians as shown to us in the Acts of the Apostles we see something very different. They were living in the immediate post-Resurrection era and this coloured their overall attitudes. They still observed the injustices and cruelties of the society in which they lived, but they looked to the future with hope, not despair. They believed and proclaimed that Jesus was their Lord and Saviour and that He would enter the heart of anyone who turned to Him. True, they were also expecting the end of the world any moment and so did not foresee centuries of warfare and conflict before the final Judgement was delivered. This gave a vitality and positiveness of approach which is often lacking in Christians today. So when a document like Faith in the City is produced it is recognised not so much as an opportunity to be grasped but rather a criticism of things as they are and of the people who allowed matters to come to such a pass.

In last month's Spire I referred to St. Augustine's description of Christians as "Easter People". We need to look again at what this can mean for us. It means first of all each one of us, as individuals, being consciously filled with joy at the greatness and love of God; then it means acting as if we really believe that God has forgiven us our sinfulness and accepts us *as we are* (not as we would like ourselves to be); then it means that as a body of Christian people, the Church, we can act together to take the Good News into the community and counter despair with hope, hatred with love, and wrong with right. When the world sees this it will realise that something wonderful is happening here and now in the middle of all the worldly mess. It will notice and give thanks even if it does not fully understand.

Nicholas Chubb

MISSION AUDIT

During this year and next, our Bishop plans a visitation of every parish in the Kensington Diocese, perhaps in person, or by the Area Dean or the Archdeacon. In preparation, the P.C.C. was asked to consider over coming months, a series of questions directed at the purpose, methods, and apparent effectiveness of our mission: in short, a Mission Audit.

My dictionary defines an audit thus: "a searching examination, esp. Day of Judgement". Strong stuff!

As a beginning, some two dozen of us met in the church on 8th March: a day of glorious Spring sunshine increasing at least one member's reluctance to add yet another meeting to a programme already full of conflicting demands.

But as we split into groups and considered the questions, came the reflection that if indeed our mission is in some ways misdirected and ineffective, time spent in re-examination would be well spent. The potential returns, in the shape of a loving, caring, congregational family, greatly enlarged to include all age groups, especially the teenagers and young adults now so conspicuously missing, would be abundant reward for some basic re-thinking.

The questions were searching indeed. What is the Good News? How are we to go about sharing it? No fewer than twenty questions to analyse the constitution of our parish, our resources, the way we use them, our place in, and our *influence* on, the local community. Lastly, five key questions:

1. What have we to offer?
2. What turned out to be our priorities last year?
3. What, in terms of mission, should they be in the coming year?
4. What might be stopping us?
5. In the light of the Audit, is our concept of the Good News, and the way we share it, in any way changed?

After two hours exhaustive (exhausting?) analysis, we took stock. We still have to condense and crystallise the results, and consider them, in future meetings of the P.C.C. and possibly in other groups.

Some views, possibly pointers, from our closing summing up:

1. We do offer much that is good, not least the steadfast ministry of Nicholas and the staff.
2. Our concept of the Good News, and our methods of sharing it, needed a fresh look.
3. We need to look again at Baptism and its opportunities to bring new members into our family so that they can become and remain a living part of it.
4. We are too complacent, insular, introverted. We lack faith and need to unlock our spirituality. If not, we shall become, or may already be, a parish in decline.
5. We are weak in our relationship to the younger generation, in whose eyes we seem to have little or no credibility, offering nothing on which they want to model themselves or take part in. This is a problem for the wider community also, and we need to link our efforts to theirs.

At the end, a feeling of *deja vu*, we have been here before? Maybe, but if so, it may be because we have been going round in circles, and should be seeking a new direction!

Jack Gostling

Christian Resources Exhibition — February 1986

The Horticultural Halls in Westminster were almost more than comfortably full of stands and people. The exhibitors came from every Christian denomination and were intent on laying before the general public the richness and variety of christian work. There were of course stands of book publishers, sellers of cassette and audio equipment and those who produced literature for missions of all kinds. Anglicans, Methodists, URC, Baptists, all invited us to find out what they did. Architects, computer experts, one or two communities (I found a German Evangelical women's community with a house in this country *most* unexpected). You would have found out how to go on pilgrimage to Walsingham or how to support poor Indians in Colombia (or was it Peru?) or how to join a group supporting the Caring Professions. Artists in stained glass and metal, candlemakers and church furnishers were represented. If these seem a jumble of ideas, well, we did have leaflets handed out by almost every stall we passed. What was impressive over all though, was the vitality of the church at large, the variety of expression and the attitude of both exhibitors and visitors. Altogether a marvellous experience of HOPE.

Nicholas Chubb

Young Families Group Pram Service – 6.3.86

It was a lovely spring morning when we broke the austerity of Lent with our Pram Service. A bunch of gaily coloured daffodils beside a beautifully eatable Simnel Cake surrounded by coffee cups and biscuits greeted us as we walked into the church. The Mothers Union in the shape of Jean Wilson and Violet Clark were there before us.

Nicholas greeted us warmly and ably set the scene for a very happy morning. Hilde Bucknell talked to us about Refreshment Sunday – now celebrated as Mothering Sunday – a time allowed by the Church to break the austerity of the lenten fast – a wayside break, halfway on the journey towards the miraculous happenings of Easter. Hilde had us look at the altar frontal so carefully and beautifully made by Margaret Lawrance: the image of the waters of life streaming from the cross – Jesus Christ – God the Father; the Holy Spirit refreshing us His children.

Both children and parents thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and we would like to thank among the others mentioned above Debbie Nunn who nobly played the piano for us.

Pam Atkinson.

Women's World Day of Prayer – 7.3.86

There was a reassurance in seeing so many people in our church whom we did not know personally, but affirming that we are all one in Christ Jesus and known to Him, if not always to each other. The same goes for those in Australia who prepared the draft of the service helping us to join with them, and countless others worldwide to "Choose Life"; not the natural physical life, but the God given Spiritual life in the Christian sense of the words.

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In the afternoon the sunshine came flooding through the windows as though blessing the efforts and dedication of all concerned. Sister Frances Dominica from St. Michael's Convent, Ham, was able to talk to us with the knowledge of many years of living and working in Australia and her short address was packed with interest in our difficult days of coming to terms with a multi-racial society. Sister explained how the immigrants to Australia had pushed their way in and become Australians and she spoke of the need to help all people when necessary that they, too, might have Life with a capital L.

I cannot finish without a word of appreciation for the Ladies Choir which led us in our singing and rendered a vigorous and musical solo. Also Olive Hayward with her vigour and enthusiasm at the organ.

A cup of tea and home made cakes and lots of chat and greetings completed an afternoon of prayerful unity.

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In the evening the theme was inspiringly brought alive for us by Shelagh Phillips who began by referring to the first reading of the service in which God promises the children of Israel to be their God. Moses reminds them that they are always in the presence of God as He goes with them all the way to the promised land.

He had loved them and been with them even in Egypt, but there they had not realised it. Shelagh called those times in our lives when we question the presence of God, our Egypt. We are enjoined to choose life and speak with God even in the difficult times in our lives, when we experience Egypt.

In the journey in 1986 what assurance have we that God is with us? St. Irenaeus wrote "the glory of God is man fully alive", and we are only alive if we choose the life which God has offered us. What is the way ahead that we are called to follow? In a meditation on the Passion of Christ a student questioned what motivated Jesus in that dreadful period, and the answer was that Jesus was in touch with His Father, and the Father reminded him "Son, I am with you all the way – to Calvary and up to the Resurrection".

We are not asked to go on that Way; but could be asked to go a way which gives a hint of Christ's experience. We can ask if God was there in Sweden, the Phillipines, Brixton, etc, or with neighbours who suffer serious illness and family upheavals. When Shelagh asked if God was with her in the Falklands she was shown the God of compassion who can comfort men in fear and the bereaved relatives, even when they question His presence in that situation.

Jeremiah had an assurance of God's presence in his life when asked to tell the king that he had angered God. Although Jeremiah could not do it in his own strength God gave him the words. Jesus summed up the position "The Father is in me and I in Him I am the way, the truth and the life", and St. Paul said "I live but not I but Christ lives in me". That is why Sheila chose life.

from contributions by Alison Thompson and Jean Western

Mothering Sunday – Children's Eucharist?

I enjoyed the Mothering Sunday service but came away feeling that it hadn't really been a family occasion – any more than normal Sundays: children were present in large numbers but not included in the worship. The church was very full and there was a lovely anticipatory feeling of celebration, yet somehow the service was not so very different from usual. Every Sunday is a true celebration, but not specifically for children. One or two of the more formal parts of the communion service were left out but nothing seemed to be added as an inspiration to the under-fifteens. It is a great pity that the traditional Mothering Sunday readings John 6, 1-14, have been dropped from the Lectionary; the reading that is now the gospel for the day is too weighty for a family service. Nevertheless surely a well-known chorus or two could have been included, or a bit of audience participation. Somehow the flowers at the end, though lovely, seemed rather an after-thought, and I wonder how many children knew what they were going up to collect?

Jane Dobson

Mothers Union

At both our meetings in February and March Nicholas was the speaker and leader, guiding our thoughts about "Ways of Keeping Lent". His main object was to get us away from thinking that Lent was a time of 'giving up' pleasures. He wanted us instead to think about doing things differently and changing our pattern of life for a while, so that, may be, we could achieve more from our

time. We all appreciated the challenge he gave us, and we trust that when Easter comes we will feel we have perhaps gained something from our efforts.

Our April meeting will take the form of the Annual **Austerity Lunch** to raise money for Christian Aid. This event has been organised in our parish for about 15 years now, ever since Mrs. Ivy Gilder first introduced us to it when she joined the M.U. here. It has usually taken place in Holy Week in line with general lent austerity. But in other places such lunches are also run at other times of the year and by other organisations to raise funds for Christian Aid. In the last few years the PCC have sometimes arranged it here, but the M.U. is very happy to carry on this worthwhile tradition. Please note the date April 9th in your diaries, and we hope to see as many members of St. James's Church as possible on that day. The lunch will be served between midday and 13.30 in Wayside; bring your friends and neighbours with you.

In the meantime the Mothers Union wish you all a joyful Eastertide.

Jean Wilson

Ascension Day – 8th May 1986

Last year we celebrated Ascension day in fine style and we aim to do the same this year. Please note the date in your diaries and we hope that all the members of Lent Groups will be able to come and join the celebration.

The Lent Groups appear to have been very well supported, it will be interesting to hear your views.

Alan Taylor

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

**ST. JAMES'S CHURCH HALL
SCHOOL ROAD**

THURSDAY 17th APRIL 1986

7.45 p.m.

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS – APPOINTMENT OF CHURCHWARDENS

PCC REPORT – ELECTION OF NEW PCC

TREASURER'S REPORT – COMMITTEE REPORTS

This is the annual occasion when members of St. James's Church and all those in the Parish have the right (and the duty) to learn about the spiritual and material well-being of our Church here in Hampton Hill. Proceedings will be as short and businesslike as possible so that all essential aspects are adequately reviewed. A lot has happened in the life of St. James's over the past year, but a lot more is to occur in the next. Come along and fire your questions: we may even have a few answers! Reports from Committees and Groups have already been widely circulated, so that people can come well prepared. More copies are available in church. *If you have received your own set, please bring it to the meeting, as only a few spare ones will be available on the night.*

“Feast of Music” – and a foretaste!

In St. Francis de Sales church on 10th May, Teddington Choral Society will be presenting works by two composers of the 19th Century Romantic School: Rossini's 'Stabat Mater' and Mendelssohn's 'Hymn of Praise'.

With soloists from the English National Opera, and an orchestra of at least 30 pieces, the concert promises a rich feast of music in contrasting styles from the opposite extremes of the Catholic and Protestant traditions. It also marks the Society's first performance under the baton of Geoffrey Bowyer, B.Mus., FRCO, ARCM, LRAM, who became its Musical Director in January.

The 'Hymn of Praise' is one of Mendelssohn's later works, in which the influence of Beethoven's 'Choral' Symphony and its great 'Ode to Joy' is strongly evident. By way of a 'trailer', a choir from the Society will perform choruses from the 'Hymn of Praise', with piano and organ accompaniment, in our church at 6.30 pm on Sunday 27th April in place of Evensong. As the name implies, this is essentially a musical expression of worship, in which we hope many will come and join.

Appreciation of the performance may be expressed by contributing to a collection for the Teddington Memorial Hospital.

Jack Gostling

Liturgical Dancing

After our winter break when the cold prevents rehearsals, the Liturgical Dance Group is beginning weekly again on Wednesday 9th April at 8 pm in church. Initially we will be working on a contribution to the Ascension Day celebrations, which will tie in with the Lent Course question: What on Earth is the Church for? New members to our group are always welcome.

Stewardship – New Members Meeting

From time to time the Stewardship Committee arranges an evening for discussion and information about what it means to be a member of the Stewardship Scheme. In many ways Stewardship has been a key factor in the life of our church and it is essential that everyone who comes to worship at our church is given the opportunity of considering the merits of joining. The next such evening will be on May 15th at Wayside, (7.45 for 8.00 pm). Hopefully if you are not a member of the scheme you will receive an invitation, but if you do not and would like to come and hear about Stewardship, do let us know, you will be most welcome. It may be that you are a regular worshipper at St. James's and have declined previous invitations to join. Should you feel that you wish to reconsider the situation, do let us know so that the details can be sent to you.

Alan Taylor

Drama in Church

We have seen liturgical dancing, music in various forms, dramatic readings in church in the not too distant past. In the near future we plan to bring some drama. On 18th May (Pentecost or Whitsunday) the Covenant Players will be bringing a small group of people to act for us at the evening service at 18.30. The Covenant Players started in the early 1960's with a vision by Charles M. Tanner of a travelling ministry in drama. His friends smiled. 500,000 presentations later the group is still active throughout the world. There is a base in London for England, but the group, having started in America, has spread throughout Europe. Locally the group performed last year at Bishop Perrin School and was very well received. Further details of what is in store for us will be published in the May magazine. In the meantime book the date and the time, 18th May at 18.30 pm and ensure your friends come too. It will be something special for all of us. Don't miss it.

Modern Music Service

Later this year we will be launching a regular service at 8.00 pm on Sunday evenings using modern music. It will be a service of Praise and Worship using music in the Rock/Gospel style. More details and the starting date will be published shortly.

We would be pleased to hear from any local musicians who would like to be involved in this project. Our particular need is for a bass guitarist, but we wish to form a large group of musicians to allow cover for sickness, holidays, etc. Incidentally within this style of music it is possible to incorporate every instrument imaginable so if you are interested, please contact me at Church or by phone. (979 4858).

Paul Revis

Meditation — Psalm 22

From 'My God why hast thou forsaken me' to the great promise 'Let your heart live for ever. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord.... All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him even he that cannot keep his soul alive. A seed shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord unto the next generation. They shall come and declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done it'.

Was it the remembrance of these familiar words that brought our Lord to the grateful 'It is finished'. 'Into thy hands I commit my Spirit'?

Oh you of little faith. If my son remembered this psalm upon the cross, and remembering took comfort and committed his spirit into the hands of God, how much more should you remember in those days when you feel that the Lord has forsaken you that His promise is true and endures for ever; that He is with you, abides with you and works in you in His time and in His way.

You are in a dark road, there is no light anywhere to be seen, perhaps your misdeeds press on you, your sickness cripples you, your grief numbs you, but you too remember your God in the time of your trouble, you cry out 'Lord, I *do* believe, pardon my unbelief. I know that you have not really forsaken me. I know that you are a loving father, I know that your son and His Holy Spirit are my deliverance' and lo, sometimes immediately, sometimes a little delayed, the promise and the hope bring peace and deliverance from fear and unwholesomeness.

Blessed are they that, through grace, can grasp that Almighty God, in accepting the entirely pure offering of His own son, needs no other sacrifice from us but a contrite, penitent heart, and eyes of understanding and belief, following Jesus through life, partaking of His agony and death to be with Him in the dust and be raised up to a new life, free of the tyranny of unforgiven sin, knowing oneself loved as one is, sinful, penitent, wishing to serve, seeking strength from God. An image is only an image until life is imparted to it. An image made in the likeness of God is only worthy of the likeness if the Spirit of God gives it Life. Rise up from sleep, oh people of God, clothed in new robes, washed clean through the blood of the sinless lamb and in the midst of the darkness around be lit from within by an exceeding great light for nothing can separate you from the love of the Father *who sends His heaven to enfold you* and who brings you at last, triumphant, through the gate of death into the heaven which is eternal.

M.O. written 8.4.77

Sunday Trading

The meeting on 1st March at Teddington Baptist Church was attended by about 140 people – all the chairs were taken – on a bitterly cold evening. By definition those who managed to get to the meeting, or thought it worthwhile, were of one mind against deregulation. The upshot was that Mr. Jessel declared himself against deregulation and was one of a group of M.P.s who are trying to persuade the Government to allow a free vote, that is to allow each one to vote according to conscience and not necessarily along official party lines. He is also pressing for an Early Day motion. As yet no form of words have been suggested for the motion in the House of Commons upon which members will be asked to vote.

Nicholas Chubb

St. Mary's Hospital, Hampton

The DHSS has sent two almost identical letters to me in answer to my letter to Mr. Barney Hayhoe expressing the PCC's dismay at the possible closure of St. Mary's. One of the differences between the two letters is that the writer of one said he had sent a copy of my letter to "the Health Authority". Small differences apart, the message is that all efforts are currently being made to find a home for the Hospital within the overall care of one of the three Health Authorities responsible for our area, Kingston, Hounslow and Spelthorne and Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton. If all else fails then the land will be sold and the "revenue raised to open a Community Clinic which would supplement their geriatric health care provision".

Administratively it is all a mess and there is no solution which will be completely acceptable to all the parties concerned. What we must all press for is the best possible solution to a problem that will not go away.

Nicholas Chubb

Magazine Appeal

The Editorial Board would like to thank once again all those who have now responded. At the time of going to press the amount received is well over £400. We hope to publish the final amount in the May issue of the Spire.

From the Registers

Baptisms

March	16	Edward Neal Quigley	1 Albert Road
		Oliver Adam Bartholomew Bournsell	30 Windmill Road

Funerals

January	20	Winifred Kate Joslin	Laurel Dene	aged 88
	21	Lilian Mary Honey	School Road Ave.	aged 91
	21	Leslie George Kent	formerly of Windmill Road	aged 64
	24	Hilda Rose Haydon	Laurel Dene	aged 85
	28	Cyril Frederick Glassup	93 Pigeon Lane	aged 70
February	5	Reginald Thomas Lewis	41 Dean Road	aged 84
	18	Sydney Amos Foster	Laurel Dene	aged 94
	19	Evelyn Maude Girling	formerly of Laurel Dene	aged 94
	20	Margaret Ethel Monk	23 Hartland Road	aged 75
	21	John Deacon	236 Hanworth Road	aged 76
	27	Florence Ellen Brewster	29 Cranmer Road	aged 71
March	14	Thomas Edward Newman	172 Uxbridge Road	aged 76

Dates to Note

April	5	10.00	Churchyard Working Party
	8	10.30	Magazine Committee
	9	12.00	Austerity Lunch
	17	19.45	Annual Parochial Church Meeting
	27	18.30	Teddington Choral Society sing Mendelssohn's Hymn of Praise
	28	20.00	Hampton Council of Churches (St. Theodore's)
May	3	10.00	Churchyard Working Party
	5		Parish Ramble
	7	14.30	M.U. Janet Robinson on the Quakers
	8	20.00	Parish Communion for Ascension Day
	11	16.30	United Service at All Saints Hampton for Christian Aid Week
	15	20.00	New Members' Party
	18	18.30	Covenant Players – Drama for Pentecost
June	4	14.30	M.U. visit to St. Michael's Convent, Ham
	7	10.00	Churchyard Working Party
	16	20.00	Hampton Council of Churches, Percy Road Methodist Church
	28		Parish Outing