

The Journey

Bob Whitchurch

Salt and Light Ministries

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Foreword

“What is hidden in the roots will be revealed in the shoots.”

This has been one of the lifelong principles by which I have sought to live and build. Experience tells us that what the roots of the plant are like, and what they feed on, determines what sort of fruit grows; where the foundations of a building are shaky, time and disaster will reveal it; where the most simple flaws are not spotted, dreadful disasters can follow.

So it is with people. What we believe in our hearts will eventually determine how we live, how we build and what we end up with.

This “Roots and Shoots” series is not so much an attempt to define the distinctives of our family of churches, but rather to ensure that all our beliefs and practices are firmly rooted in the Scriptures.

Many people have asked us over the years: “Who are you and what do you believe?” While our structure may appear to be somewhat nebulous, nevertheless the understanding of our common beliefs needs to be clear and unambiguous.

We are a family of churches that believe we are to be “sons of the kingdom” sown into God’s earth. The key that transforms “the word of the kingdom” into “sons of the kingdom” is *understanding* (Matthew 13:23). In the Lord’s first parable of the kingdom (the Sower), the ‘word’ of the kingdom – the seed – when properly received and understood produces fruit. In the second parable of the kingdom (the Weeds), we discover that the fruit has become the seed, and that the seed is “the sons of the kingdom”. The word, bearing fruit, producing seed as sons of the kingdom, planted in the world! That is our prayer for this series of books.

Barney Coombs

Preface

‘What’s the point of history?’ some people often ask – sadly, even Christians! Of course, the question can sound very spiritual: ‘We aren’t interested in knowing about the past – we just want to move on with God!’ For such people, the famous quote of Henry Ford, founder of the car empire, holds true: ‘History is more or less bunk’ (quoted in *The Chicago Tribune*, 25 May, 1916).

Of course, some people love history – but still don’t learn from it. The famous British historian, A.J.P Taylor, wrote of the French Emperor Napoleon III: ‘Like most of those who study history, he learned from the mistakes of the past how to make new ones.’

In contrast to both these viewpoints, we believe it is important to know and understand our history, so that we might know where we have come from and where we are going. It is when we know our history that we know our identity. The Bible reveals God to be a God of history who wants his people to remember their history, so that they might be both encouraged and provoked by it.

Having been approached by a number of people, we felt that it might be helpful to set out the history – the journey – of our own family of churches. In doing so, we are not presenting ourselves as having the great ‘master plan’. But by God’s grace, we have learned some things over the years – and made a few mistakes too! So, we felt it might be helpful to set out the story in a booklet in our Roots and Shoots series. Many of the ‘household names’ in our family go right back to our beginnings – in fact, some facts will probably surprise you!

Whether you are new to the ‘Salt and Light’ family, or have been around for years, we believe this book will help you to know more of who we are, what we stand for, and why we stand for it, as we invite you to join us in ‘The Journey’.

Mike Beaumont, Editor

Chapter 1

Where Have We Come From?

Church movements don't just happen; they come from roots. And as a family of churches, our roots are important to us. So it's perhaps worth starting this brief history of Salt and Light Ministries by describing two of the most significant influences on our own roots and on our type of church generally: the Pentecostal movement and Charismatic renewal.

The Pentecostal Movement

In 1906, a remarkable event took place at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California, USA. A group of Christians were baptised in the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. News of this spread rapidly and soon people were coming from all over the world (rather like thousands have flocked to Toronto in our own days) to experience the power of the Spirit for themselves.

However the response to this phenomenon was mixed. While some Christians welcomed this re-emergence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the great majority of churches rejected these zealous 'Pentecostal' believers (so called after the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost; see Acts 2). As a result, in the years that followed, they set up their own denominations including the Assemblies of God, Church of God, Elim, Foursquare, Full Gospel and Apostolic Churches.

These new Pentecostal churches began to grow at a rapid rate. They soon became a missionary movement, sending men and women to Asia, Africa and Latin America. Among these early Pentecostal missionaries

was a young man called W.F.P. ('Willie') Burton. Converted at the age of 19, Willie joined a new Pentecostal assembly in Preston, Lancashire, England. In June 1914, aged 28, he went out to what was then called The Congo (now The Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire). With his colleague Jimmy Salter he worked in a completely unevangelised region there for 45 years.

When he left The Congo in 1960 there were 985 churches in the area where he had been working, and the church continued to grow. But he did not leave to retire; for the next twelve years he became a 'tramp preacher' (in his own words), travelling widely and influencing a new generation of British church leaders, including a young man named Barney Coombs, of whom we will read more in the next chapter.

Charismatic Renewal

The second major influence on our family of churches, and on many others like ours, came from the early 1960s, when God began to do something new in some European and North American churches. Up to this time 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' had largely been limited to the Pentecostal denominations. But from the 1960's people from other denominations began to have a new experience of the Spirit, accompanied by speaking in tongues and other spiritual gifts. This soon became known as the 'charismatic renewal' of the church (from the Greek word 'charisma' meaning 'gifts').

It was a key time for the Church. Many Christians were dissatisfied with their limited experience of God. A new generation was looking for radical and dynamic change in the church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to make a real difference in the world.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s new leaders in the UK encouraged this charismatic renewal. David Lillie and Arthur Wallis organised a number of conferences to encourage the ministry of the Holy Spirit and to examine the church in New Testament times. Delegates at these early conferences included people who would later become key figures, such as Jack Hardwidge, Roger Forster, Graham Perrins and Bryn Jones.

Arthur Wallis had been brought up in the 'Plymouth Brethren' and was a well-known Bible Teacher, but who became aware of the need to experience more of the power of the Holy Spirit. He had been an Army officer and had a natural authority. He was self-disciplined, prayerful, and a man of immense integrity. Above all, he had a great passion for revival. His book on revival, *'In the Day of Thy Power'*, written in 1956, was already a classic. Arthur was to become a mentor to many younger leaders.

Other significant leaders of this time included Denis Clark and Campbell McAlpine. Both Denis and Campbell travelled extensively around the UK, encouraging and teaching the baptism in the Holy Spirit. These two men organised a number of Prayer and Bible Weeks in Worthing, Sussex in the early 1960s for people with a desire to pray for the nation and to see the renewal of the church. The atmosphere of prayer, their vision for the church, and the godly example they set, became an inspiration for many who would later become leaders in the 'new churches' including Peter Lyne, Terry Virgo, Barney Coombs, and many others.

Though much of the impetus for the early charismatic movement in the UK came from Plymouth Brethren leaders who had been baptised in the Holy Spirit, things were also happening in the other denominations.

Father Dennis Bennett, an Episcopal (Anglo-Catholic) priest in Van Nuys, California, USA, announced to his startled congregation that he had been baptised in the Holy Spirit and had spoken in tongues. He wrote about this in his ground-breaking book *'Nine O'clock in the Morning'*. News of this spread rapidly to the UK and soon Michael Harper, a curate at All Souls Church, Langham Place, London, was also baptised in the Spirit. He set up The Fountain Trust in 1964 which organised conferences, published 'Renewal' magazine and produced a series of booklets that taught on baptism in the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. The Fountain Trust was particularly effective in helping many people in the traditional churches to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The publication of the book *'The Cross and the Switchblade'* in 1964 also stirred interest in this new experience of the Spirit. David Wilkerson's dramatic account of his transition from a complacent Pentecostal pastor in rural Pennsylvania to fiery preacher of the gospel to the violent street gangs of New York, made compelling reading. He put his successes down to

being filled with the Holy Spirit. The dramatic conversions of drug addicts, notably Nicky Cruz, gave hope to Christians hungry to see God's power at work. The story of what he saw God do in this needy part of New York, '*The Cross and the Switchblade*', rapidly became a best seller in British churches – even though some more conservative Christian bookshops had to sell them 'under the counter'!

Two New Streams

It was these two new streams of the life of the Holy Spirit, Pentecostal and Charismatic, that brought new life to many individuals and groups in those days. And it is in these two streams that the roots of our family of churches are to be found.

But what of that man Barney Coombs? Let's look at Barney's story in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Barney's Story

To understand the 'family genes' of the Salt and Light family of churches, we need to look at the life of the man we see as the 'father' of that family, Barney Coombs. Barney himself says, "I am the product of my heritage" and he readily acknowledges the shaping of his life and character by his family background.

The Plymouth Brethren

Barney was raised in the Plymouth Brethren in the town of Whitstable, Kent, in the southeast of England. The Brethren are orthodox, evangelical, Bible-believing Christians. They have no paid pastors, and strongly oppose any central government of their assemblies, rejecting any notion of being a denomination. They hold a very high view of Scripture, and the Bible is central to their meetings. Every Sunday morning service focuses around the 'Breaking of Bread', and every Sunday evening the gospel is preached. For the Brethren, the church is 'the people' not 'the building', and their simple meeting places are called 'halls' not 'churches'. These halls are not regarded as 'sacred'; so on youth nights it is not unusual to find the young people playing games inside them.

Eschatology (teaching about what will happen in the future and at Christ's return) is very important to the Brethren. They love to study the prophetic Scriptures, including the book of Revelation, and have developed quite complex teachings about these events. They also focus on devotional teachings about the person of Christ, Hebrews being their favourite book

(with its emphasis on types and shadows), and Melchizedek being their favourite Bible character (the Priest-King like Christ). But ‘the kingdom of God’ was always something which was for the future, and not for now.

Growing Up

This, then, was the spiritual atmosphere of Barney’s childhood. His father, Sid, was an elder in the local Brethren assembly and a real evangelist. Barney recalls, “The front windows of our house had at least six Bible texts on display so that you could see Scripture from whatever direction you approached the place. My Dad gave out tracts every Tuesday, every Thursday, every Saturday afternoon and evening, and Sunday nights as well, if he wasn’t preaching. He preached and displayed his banner at racecourses, at town carnivals, and to workers in the Kent hop fields. He was an enthusiastic witness who was not ashamed of the gospel. To cap it all, he wore a tie that had “Jesus Saves” on it – bright red with white lettering!”

At the age of seven Barney remembers giving his life to Christ after a Sunday School lesson about heaven and hell. Referring to hell his Dad said, “I hope you don’t end up there”, and Barney asked Jesus to forgive his sins right there and then!

Sid Coombs began taking his son with him when he went out preaching on Sunday evenings. He said, “First, he got me to announce a hymn, then to do a Bible reading, then to sing a solo, and finally to lead in prayer. He was discipling me to occupy the pulpit and lead God’s people.”

The Call to Serve God

On finishing school, Barney became a cadet in the Metropolitan Police force in London. This too was part of God’s training school, with key lessons learned on discipline and dealing with people. While he was in the Metropolitan Police Barney went on holiday to Scotland and there met the woman who is now his wife, Janette. Their relationship blossomed, and they were married in September 1958.

One particular experience that marked him during this period was a visit to a Four Square Church in Leeds with his brother David.

“The place was packed; we arrived twenty minutes early and only just managed to get a seat. As soon as I walked through the door I was impacted with the heaviness of God’s presence, and I sat down and began to cry. It was wonderful and powerful and deeply moving.” This experience was repeated at Slough Gospel Tabernacle, where Billy Richards was pastor. He said, “I had been spoiled for life. Once you’ve tasted the manifest presence of God, you know what it is, and anything less than that is unsatisfying.”

In 1965 Barney was baptised in the Holy Spirit. “I’d been to a meeting where a chap from the London Healing Mission was supposed to have been speaking, but he didn’t make it because he was ill! The replacement was a woman from New Zealand, who didn’t speak terribly well, but she left some leaflets and I took them. One was by Dennis Bennett about baptism in the Holy Spirit. I knew this was for me, so I knelt down in my room and said, ‘Lord, I’m going to ask you once more for power. I’m not going to ask you again. I am believing you’re going to act’ – and the Lord met me powerfully, on my own.”

Barney recalls an occasion soon after when he was invited to speak to a Methodist women’s meeting. “Usually they’d sit there drinking tea, eating biscuits and, when you got up to speak, they’d start knitting! That week I preached the gospel with an authority and power that I had not known before. Seventeen out of forty prayed to receive Christ!” Everything had changed.

Three months later he was sitting in the kitchen late at night, having just come off duty, with a cup of coffee, a bowl of cornflakes, and the Bible. “I read Isaiah 52:11-12 which says ‘Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the Lord. But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the Lord will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.’ I knelt on the floor, because this was holy ground, and I knew I had heard God. I wasn’t expecting it – he just came right up on my blind side. I asked him to speak again (I just wanted to be absolutely sure!) and opened the Bible again at Micah 2:10, ‘Get up, go away. For this is not your resting place, because it is defiled, it is ruined beyond all remedy.’ ”

The next day Barney went to his church pastor and told him he felt God was calling him out of the Police Force and into full-time ministry in the church. Barney remembers, “He was very discouraging, explaining that these verses were for the Jews not for me. But finally he conceded that I might perhaps be able to become a pastor of a little church meeting in a Nissen hut with a tin roof. I thought this would be wonderful!”

And so to Basingstoke

While still a police officer Barney had led a youth group in Acton, West London. This group joined in a summer youth camp, run by Sid and Charlotte Cheale, near the Hampshire town of Basingstoke. This led to a relationship developing with the Baptist Church in the town and a move to a cottage in the small village of Cliddesden nearby. Barney and Janette’s initial vision was for village evangelism and the growth of small fellowships in the Hampshire villages.

After attending Capernwray Bible School in the north west of England, Barney moved back to Basingstoke and rejoined Janette. There he was asked to look after the Baptist Church until they found a pastor. But after six months of caring for the church, Barney was himself asked to become the full time pastor in October 1966.

On the morning of his ordination God gave Barney a promise that would become a life verse for him. It was from the account of Saul’s early career in 1 Samuel 10:26, which says “... and the valiant men whose hearts God had touched went with him” (NASB). This word from God, that Barney would be the leader of a team of ‘valiant men’ was to be fulfilled initially in Basingstoke, then later in the wider family of our churches.

Barney admits that initially he adopted a ‘peacemaker’ role in the church, “trying to keep everybody happy”. However, following a conference with speakers that included Arthur Wallis, Jean Darnell, Dennis Bennett, Michael Harper and David du Plessis, he soon began to give a clear lead.

Barney says, “While at the conference I had a prophetic dream involving a small ‘Bambi’-like creature trapped between the teeth of a ferocious looking animal, half pit-bull terrier and half panther. The ‘Bambi’ represented new Christians. The fearful looking creature represented two

extremes in the church, extreme charismatic and extreme anti-charismatic. I was in the middle trying to keep everybody happy. The interpretation of the dream revealed that the very life was being squeezed out of the new believers and in order to rescue them I would have to contend with both extremes.” This vision imparted a new courage to Barney’s leadership.

He also learnt another lesson. “At the same conference,” remembers Barney, “Jean Darnell taught us a chorus called, ‘*Silver and gold have I none*’ which included the line ‘Walking, and leaping, and praising God’ with lots of hand-raising and actions. That same day I said to God, ‘If you will show me what to do, I will do it and leave the consequences with you.’ The Lord’s reply was ‘All right. On Sunday morning teach ‘*Silver and gold have I none*’ – with all the actions!’ While Janette was somewhat worried when I told her about this, I couldn’t wait to get back to Basingstoke for Sunday morning to try it out! As we sang the song that morning, there was a fellow in the front row with his arms crossed and teeth clenched; but a lot of people joined in with the actions. A small step for me, but I had obeyed God.”

The New Wineskin

The traditional Baptist system of church government, through deacons and by democratic vote of ‘the Church Meeting’ (its committed members) was still in place; but the church gradually introduced elders, on the model of 1 Timothy 3. Bruce Blow, still based at Basingstoke, recalls, “One of Barney’s principles was not to have a group of ‘yes men’ around him. He would lovingly rebuke us if he thought we were agreeing with his ideas just to please him! He taught us to trust our spirits and not just our minds in these areas.”

There were tensions in the church; but as Barney taught, encouraged, and led, people’s thinking began to change. “There was also a growing tide of people who loved the new wineskin. It was hard for people to argue against God’s blessing. Baptists are impressed with baptisms, and we were baptising regularly!” Eventually the new wineskin was in place, “and we democratically voted out democracy!”

Important Influences

Several people had a significant influence on Barney at this time. Arthur Wallis had an integrity, prayerfulness, and fearless honesty with the Word of God that had a profound effect on him. Arthur was willing to challenge Barney over issues in both his personal life and his ministry. Though these were often painful, Barney came to value Arthur's rebukes.

Willie Burton corrected Barney on a number of occasions during their five years of friendship. Barney recalls: "Those corrections could often be quite abrupt; but I knew he loved me, and that's what made the difference." He had many qualities that Barney admired. He used real-life stories to illustrate Biblical truth and bring his preaching alive; he had a passion to see the gospel go to the nations; he was available to God, to go anywhere and do anything for him; he was ready to hear God (always having a notebook and Bible ready in the night in case he woke up with something). Perhaps the two factors which affected Barney the most were Willie Burton's devotion to Jesus in everything, and his willingness to change, even as an old and respected Christian leader.

A further significant influence at this time was the writing of DeVern Fromke, an American author and Bible teacher. His two books '*Unto Full Stature*' and '*Ultimate Intention*' were revolutionary at the time. Fromke taught that the starting point of all theology should be God and his Fatherhood. Our goal should be a God-centred philosophy of life, in which everything is related to him. He also provided Barney with greater understanding on the important matter of spiritual fatherhood. Barney had experienced fatherhood and godly discipline from his own father, and then from men like Willie Burton and Arthur Wallis. Fromke provided a Biblical basis for this in saying, "... from Paul's prison cell flow the letters by which a spiritual father will instruct and nourish the churches. What an extension of himself – flowing on and through every century into every church, even down to this present age. This is the glory of fulfilling our high call as a spiritual father."

Fromke's teaching on the church in '*Unto Full Stature*' was drawn from Ephesians 4:11, where Paul teaches about the five-fold ministries in the church, stressing that their role is to train each individual believer, not

to do all the work themselves. He also described how finding maturity in Christ is only achieved when one is in good relationship with the whole Body of Christ. The effect of these two books, Barney says, was to “turn my idea of the church upside down.”

During this time key leaders of the growing numbers of new churches (such as Arthur Wallis, Bryn Jones, John Noble, Terry Virgo, Barney) met to discuss and combine the various Brethren influences – such as the authority of Scripture and the concept of ‘body ministry’ – with the work of the Holy Spirit, new freedom in worship, and Fromke’s teaching, to produce a new understanding of the church as the Body of Christ. They saw the task of the church was to see the kingdom of God advancing in the world. God’s kingdom on the earth was to touch every area and level of society. This was a concept that had not been considered much in the church for many decades. The writings of the theologian George Eldon Ladd played an important part in the ‘rediscovery’ of this message of the kingdom, as did later the writings of E Stanley Jones in ‘The Unshakeable Kingdom’. They also spent time working through their theology of the church and the ministries of Ephesians 4. Particular consideration was given to what an Ephesians 4 prophet would look like. Such creatures had been rarely sighted or understood in the church, and there was a deep desire for the release of effective prophetic ministry in the churches.

The Antioch Call

During this time many visiting speakers broadened the horizons of the Basingstoke Church and gave them a bigger picture of God’s work in the world. Perhaps the most significant visit was that of Peter Lyne in 1970 who preached about the church in Antioch (Acts 11-13) and who prophesied that the church at Basingstoke would be an ‘Antioch church’ – sending and receiving people from other nations. This fitted with the kind of people that God was gathering there at that time, and it has been a core value in the wider Salt and Light church family ever since.

New Arrivals

Many men and women began to join themselves to Barney in Basingstoke. Over 30 years later you will still find these people serving God in our family of churches. Tony and Doreen Gray became leaders of a flourishing youth group in the church; Bruce and Judy Blow, Roger and Mary Lloyd and David and Maureen Church all arrived on the scene, and rapid evangelistic growth took place through children's clubs and neighbourhood outreach. In 1973, under the leadership of David and Maureen, the Young People's Fellowship grew from 18 members to 100 within a year. There was an increasing recognition of the importance of small groups gathering in people's homes and this too resulted in much growth.

In 1971 Barney and Janette met Vic and Jenny Gledhill in Nepal, while on a trip round the world visiting missionaries. Jenny had been on the very first Operation Mobilisation team to India in 1962; Vic went for the first time in 1963. On his return to the UK, Barney became concerned for Vic and Jenny. He began to pray that God would bring them back to the UK for a period of time so that they could be touched by the renewal of the Holy Spirit. In 1973 their daughter Elizabeth became ill and X-rays revealed the presence of tuberculosis, and so they were advised to return to England immediately. Amazingly, on their arrival, further X-rays showed no trace of TB. But God had got Vic and Jenny where he wanted them for this season! They quickly became key members of Barney's ministry team, and Vic soon began to take teams to India and Nepal to give them exposure to Indian culture.

Other newcomers included Ron and Sue Trudinger. Ron, a former missionary and teacher among the aboriginal people in Australia, had come to the UK expecting to do research at Oxford on the history of the Moravians, but ended up in Basingstoke instead. He was a pioneer by nature, and it was quickly recognized that he was one of the 'valiant men' God was bringing to the church. Soon Ron and Sue were leading the 18-30's group in the church. Within a year 35 young people went to Israel on a ministry trip, and the following year 55 visited Kenya for six weeks of evangelistic outreach.

Further Input

In 1971 Ivan Baker visited Basingstoke. He was an English-Argentinian who was involved in the initial revival in Argentina in the 1960s. He taught extensively on the subject of discipleship, and here was another key to future growth. For the work of the kingdom to expand, men and women needed to be personally discipled in the ways of the Lord. Training the next generation soon came to be a priority.

During this time Barney listened to tapes by an American Bible teacher called Bob Mumford. Bob's teaching on the Holy Spirit, on the nature of rebellion, and on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was formative for Barney, who began to teach what he was hearing and understanding.

Consistent teaching of God's Word was of crucial importance. Bruce Blow recalls, "It was not just one-off teaching. It had to be taught and taught until the saints had grasped the revelation for themselves. Barney's teaching would often be backed up by others like Tony Gray and Ron Trudinger."

In 1975 Barney invited Bryn Jones and Arthur Wallis to have an overall look at the structure of the church in Basingstoke (now 'Basingstoke Community Church'). One of their recommendations was to relieve Barney of administration, and Bruce Blow took on this role. Barney was beginning to travel around the UK and overseas. He made a number of visits in the early 1970s to Czechoslovakia where Christians were being persecuted.

A Growing Role

Basingstoke Community Church became known as a pioneering church in the charismatic renewal, and Barney's reputation was growing. The Christian musical 'Come Together' in 1974 gave Barney a more public profile. The musical brought together Christians from many different churches in an atmosphere of worship and ministry. "It broke the ice right across the board, with people from all sorts of churches taking part in it. There was an anointing on it, with power all over the place." The musical expressed a genuine concern for the unity of God's people and, over the next few years, celebrations called 'All Saints Nights' drew Christians together in united worship.

Something was starting to happen!

Chapter 3

A Growing Family

By the mid 1970s a group of leaders and ministries in the south of England were beginning to be linked together under Barney's leadership, and a larger 'family' was starting to develop across the nation.

A Market Town in Oxfordshire

In 1974 Barney received a request, via Vic Gledhill, from Dave and Chris Richards and Geoff and Mary Norridge who were at that time leading a young people's group at the local Methodist Church in the market town of Witney. Many of the young people (including a young man called Mark Mumford) had been baptised in the Holy Spirit and had started to meet in Geoff and Mary's home. The issues of water baptism and baptism in the Holy Spirit had inevitably led to some difficulties with the church; so, they asked, could Barney come and give them some help?

Praise and worship was a major emphasis of this growing group, as was deliverance. There was a developing sense of sharing their lives together. They often visited a church in South Chard in Somerset, led by 'Uncle' Sid Purse, Harry Greenwood and Ian Andrews, which was an inspiration for them in the freedom of praise and the presence of God, and in healing and deliverance. Geoff and Mary were baptised in water at Chard, with some significant prophecies given about what God wanted to do.

Merryfield House

The Norridges and the Richards felt God calling them to live together ‘in community’. So they sold their own homes and bought a large house in Witney called ‘Merryfield House’ in 1973, along with two single ladies in the church. This became the base for the new fellowship when it became clear that they could not remain Methodists and hold to their new-found conviction about believers’ baptism and so had to separate from the Methodist Church in 1974. With the baptism in the Holy Spirit had come a fresh awareness of the truth of the Word of God, and in particular about baptism in water. As Dave and Chris, then others, requested water baptism, they were baptised in the pool at Merryfield House.

There was a sense of real excitement in the church, aware that they were moving into uncharted territory, with no models to follow. The meetings were exciting. Mark Mumford recalls, “It was not unusual for a chorus to last thirty minutes. Bearing in mind that a chorus usually had only four lines to it in those days, that was quite some time!” Their radical commitment to community and discipleship produced a great sense of destiny and expectation. Careers and hobbies were put aside in order to be more focused on following Jesus. Other key members of the group at this period included Bryn and Dorothy Franklin.

Barney asked whether the group would be willing to receive pastoral oversight from Vic Gledhill and teaching input from Tony Gray, which the group was very happy to do, and a strong relationship was forged in the years that followed.

It was at this time that Dave Richards wrote the song, ‘For I’m building a people of power’. It was an immediate success in Britain and around the world. Geoff Norridge remembers it being written when about seventeen people were at Merryfield for a midweek meeting. Geoff had a picture of a bicycle, with the power being transmitted from the pedals to the rear wheel by means of the chain, which was made up of links joined together for a common purpose. Geoff remembers, “In the midst of the meeting, Dave just disappeared off upstairs and we could hear him trying to knock out the song on his guitar. Eventually he came down with the full product.”

In 1976 Dave and Geoff left their teaching posts to be paid by the growing church. Vic Gledhill gave the main oversight to the church during this period, though the Witney church also received ministry from a wide variety of sources including Sid Purse and Ian Andrews from Chard, Keri Jones, George Tarleton, Goos Vedder, and Peter Hill, who had been the inspiration for the 'Festival of Light', an outstanding, landmark Christian 'demonstration' in Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park, London, in 1971.

The Family Starts to Expand

New churches were planted across the County from the Witney base. In 1980 Geoff and Mary Norridge moved to Kidlington, just to the north of Oxford to work with an already-existing group. The group was re-established, and it would eventually become the nucleus of the Oxford Community Church that was planted some years later. Links grew with small groups in Cirencester and Eastwood, near Nottingham. The sense of call to Eastwood grew strongly, and in March 1980 Dave and Chris Richards, with Mark and Nesta Mumford, moved there to help the church develop. John and Val Micklefield, who had been in Eastwood, moved down to Witney. Subsequently a small group developed in Derby that eventually became a congregation. In 1987 the church centralised in Derby, with Mark and Nesta moving there and leading the new 'East Midlands Christian Fellowship'.

John Wastie led the church in Witney for a short period, until Steve Thomas took over in the autumn of 1981, following some years of close collaboration between the Merryfield group and this young pastor of Cote Baptist Church in the Oxfordshire countryside just a few miles from Witney.

Growth across Oxfordshire

Steve Thomas had been brought up in a Baptist Church in Liverpool, in the north-west of England. He had studied Classics at Wadham College, Oxford, between 1968 and 1972, and then Theology at Regent's Park College, Oxford, where he trained for the Baptist ministry for the next two years. While at Regent's Park, he had been Student Pastor at Cote Baptist

Church, some fifteen miles to the west of Oxford. On completion of his studies, he was invited to become the permanent pastor of the church.

In 1977 Steve was baptised in the Holy Spirit after a lot of reading, studying of the Bible and, he says, “provocation by charismatics” that he knew. But most of all it was the result of “the people in the church in Cote who were praying for me!” The transition of Cote from a traditional Baptist Church to a charismatic church was not without its difficulties. The local press wrote very negatively about all the strange new things that were happening, and Steve and the church had to weather much criticism.

Later that year he met the Merryfield group, and a friendship began to grow. At Easter 1978 the Cote Church and Merryfield Fellowship held a joint conference, with Vic Gledhill as main speaker. Steve was attracted by what he saw at Merryfield – “even if singing a chorus twenty times over was a bit excessive!” He loved the depth of their faith and friendships – real and not religious. He appreciated the pastoral wisdom in Barney, life in the Holy Spirit, freedom in worship and praise, and an understanding of the kingdom of God. In 1981 Steve was asked to take the leadership at Witney, which he did, while still maintaining oversight of Cote.

Church planting

These were days of growth and expansion, with an increasing sense of call to the city of Oxford and the county of Oxfordshire. Steve and the team recognised the need to have a base in Oxford itself, as a key strategic centre, and to be in the business of church planting. So new groups were planted in Wantage and Chipping Norton in 1981, largely because of the increasing number of people who lived in those towns who wanted to be part of the new churches. Churches in Abingdon and Bicester followed some years later. But it was not all success! A group planted in Carterton (home to a major RAF base) simply did not work out and was closed a few years later, with some painful lessons learned.

A group led by Steve and Geoff Norridge moved into the city of Oxford in 1985, with a clear prophetic call, part of which was to ‘infect’ students of Oxford University with a passion for the kingdom of God that would never leave them. Since then Oxford Community Church has had a major impact on many students from many different nations. Three years

later Bryn Franklin passed on the leadership of Witney to become part of the team at Oxford, a move that proved to be highly significant for the development of Bryn's prophetic gifting. Under Steve's leadership, Oxfordshire Community Churches continued to develop and grow, and was both evangelistic locally and active internationally.

Further afield

News of what was happening in these churches spread, and in the following years other groups began to ask for Steve's help. Some, such as Frank and Sylvia Payne in nearby Henley and Mike and Liz Beaumont in Sale, Manchester, came as a result of Baptist connections; others, such as Rick and Liz Thomas who led a congregation in Worcester, came through apparently more 'random' encounters. Over the following years, the family continued to grow, and there are now more than 70 churches relating together across the UK.

Chapter 4

North America and New Zealand

In the early 1970s Barney was a worship leader at the Capel Bible Week, the first of many such Bible Weeks to follow. This public platform gave him the opportunity to get to know, and travel with, many of the leaders of the other rapidly-growing networks of new churches.

The Basingstoke church was also growing quickly all through this period. Many were being converted through the house groups; others joined who were attracted by the life, vitality, worship and sense of vision that the church experienced. So it was a considerable surprise to many people when, in 1976, Barney announced that he and Janette felt called to leave the UK and move to Vancouver, Canada.

Vancouver

Over the years, Barney had got to know Bob Birch the pastor of St. Margaret's Church in Vancouver, a church which had been hugely effective among the hippies during the years of the 'Jesus Revolution' in North America in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Barney joined them and eventually became senior leader. But a very difficult period followed. Many of the existing leaders and members were not happy with the changeover, and resisted what Barney was doing. He ruefully admits, "365 people left the church in two years!" Reflecting on those painful days, Barney believes his mistake was to have gone to the church as a "rich man". Proverbs 18:23 speaks of how "A poor man uses entreaties, but the rich man answers roughly" (NKJV). Through this experience Barney learned some tough

lessons on servanthood and humility. This period of his life was to produce material for a message he would often preach in later years called, “Ten things I will never do again”.

Discipleship and Controversy

During his first year in Vancouver, Barney met Bob Mumford for the first time. Through him, Barney met the other four ‘Fort Lauderdale’ teachers – Derek Prince, Don Basham, Charles Simpson and Ern Baxter. These men’s ministries, linked together in ‘Christian Growth Ministries’, had been a powerful stimulus to charismatic renewal and restoration in North America. In 1977 CGM and others convened a national charismatic conference in Kansas City which gathered 50,000 people for a time of celebration and teaching. Their magazine, ‘New Wine’, was read eagerly around the world, and they taught strongly on the themes of covenant and discipleship in particular.

These leaders were troubled by the weaknesses they saw in the North American church. They saw an independence of spirit, an emphasis on ministry rather than relationship, a casual attitude to authority, and a lack of real accountability. The result of this was an undisciplined, divided, and ineffective church. In redressing the balance, they placed a heavy emphasis on the authority of God, and on his delegated authority in the church. Christians were strongly urged to “obey those over you in the Lord”. The authority of elders was stressed, as was the submission of the people to spiritual authority. Similarly in the area of discipleship – where there was a serious lack of training for young men and women in the ways of God – great authority was given to the disciplers. Of course much of this was extremely positive, and these emphases underlined for Barney his fundamental conviction that the Body of Christ is relational.

But some church leaders, particularly in the United States, took these teachings too far. Discipleship became authoritarian in nature. Soon stories began to emerge of authority being misused and of serious abuses of trust. One of the causes of these problems was that many teachers selected the Scriptures that supported their particular views rather than teach from the

whole Bible and let this shape their message. Soon the whole theology and practice of discipleship became out of balance.

Barney admits, “We were infected by that”, and feels that churches in the our family during that period went too far in certain areas of teaching and application. Some elements of honour, servanthood and pastoral authority were overstressed. However, Barney believes that, “we largely escaped the worst repercussions” over discipleship. The controversy over ‘heavy shepherding’ in the United States was a bitter one, dividing churches, and causing much damage in the Christian community. One sad result of this controversy was that the ‘Fort Lauderdale teachers’ eventually went their separate ways in ministry.

However this time in North America allowed Barney to meet other Christian leaders. He met Dennis Peacocke in 1978 and developed a strong friendship with the radical and fiery pioneer. Dennis’ passion for the kingdom and his risk-taking, buccaneering prophetic style, were to have considerable effect on the churches in North America and Britain.

Growing Relationships in Canada

Duane Harder had been working for the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists in Canada since 1963, and first met Barney in 1976. Another friendship grew, and Duane and Marva asked Barney to give oversight to them and their ministry based in Castlegar. Duane identifies in Barney “the simplicity of his desire for the centrality of Christ” as the single most impacting factor in his life.

After university in Edmonton, Ron MacLean returned to Vancouver. By the spring of 1976 he had concluded that his deep desire to be discipled would not be fulfilled there and conceived a plan to go as a missionary to South America. Ron recalls, “Enter Barney Coombs, Spring 1976. ‘My plan’ was about to go up in smoke. I was the master of ceremonies at an outdoor wedding when God spoke to Barney and said, ‘There is one of the men I am joining you to.’ A period of discipling by Barney included some time working for the church in Vancouver, in a variety of lowly positions!”

In 1976 a request for help came to Bob Birch from a sadly battered, divided and defeated group in Winnipeg called the Mount Zion fellowship.

After the church prayed and fasted, they felt the Holy Spirit direct that Barney should be invited to go and assess the situation. Over the next few years Barney sent Duane Harder to Winnipeg every two weeks to minister to the church and to bring healing and restoration. Then in 1979 Ron and Sue Trudinger came from Basingstoke and for the next ten months set the church on a new course. Barney eventually asked Ron MacLean to go to Winnipeg to be the pastor of Mount Zion. “After four months of agonizing indecision, God called me very clearly and all my unbelief and fear was blown away.” So in September 1979 Ron moved to Winnipeg, having become engaged to Mary that same week. He lived with the Trudingers for three months – “a wild and wonderful time – their house never had less than 8 to 10 people living in it the whole time I was there,” says Ron. The church was growing, Ron and Mary were married, the Trudingers left, and ‘Gateway’ came into being.

Ron’s ministry was shaped under Barney’s spiritual fatherhood, his values and principles for life and ministry. “The first was that the Body of Christ is a relational family. Barney would often say to me, ‘Ron, it’s God who has joined us together for his purpose’. The second was the centrality and supremacy of Christ. He always encouraged us into the sovereignty of God, and constantly pushed us into Christ. The third was a total commitment to the kingdom of God. Barney not only modelled zeal and abandonment to the cause of Christ but also encouraged the same from those in leadership. Fourth, his encouragement: he has a unique way of lifting your hope and strengthening your faith.”

In 1980 Peter Wyns met both Barney and Dave Richards, who were speaking at a conference in Peterborough, Canada. Peter was leading a young church in Niagara Falls. “We were a small, independent church at the time, full of faith and vitality. We needed a father figure and some older brothers to walk with, and we found that in Barney and his team. They brought a greater measure of government and a security that comes from true accountability. We were attracted to Barney because of his maturity, his pastoral gifting and his emphasis on the relational nature of the church. He was very approachable and very wise.” As the relationship developed Peter’s conclusion was that “We found a larger family that we fit into very naturally”.

The church in Vancouver, after the immediate period of upheaval following Barney's arrival, slowly began to settle and to find its new identity. The church was renamed 'West Coast Christian Fellowship' in 1984. There were increasing calls on Barney's time, both in North America and the UK, and his pastoral wisdom was much in demand from a growing number of churches. It was time to pass on the leadership of West Coast, and he invited Vic Gledhill, who had already moved from Basingstoke to be part of the leadership team, to now lead the church. This gave Barney more time to travel, and he found that his "band of valiant men" continued to expand.

The USA

Art Good met Duane Harder for the first time at a Mennonite Renewal Conference in Alberta 1987, where they were the two main speakers. Art was pastor of a Mennonite church in English Lake, Indiana. The church had grown rapidly from 30 to more than 300 after the Holy Spirit moved powerfully in 1973, and began to plant out new congregations. By the late 1980s there were a growing number of 'relational joinings' as well, and an extended family of churches came into being under Art's leadership.

Art asked Duane to come to speak and became aware of Barney and the values he espoused. Art says, "The thing that drew me towards and into the Salt and Light family was the definition Duane's visit brought to what I was carrying within me intuitively – the 'family genes'. I discovered that what was represented by Barney and Salt and Light had been resident within me, and I felt I belonged with this family". The majority of congregations in Art's family had Mennonite origins, but have now lost their Mennonite makeup and identification with the Mennonite denomination.

In March 1995, Barney was speaking at a conference led by Dennis Peacocke where he met and had breakfast with John Isaacs, a pastor from San Jose, California. They knew of each other through their involvement with Bob Mumford, but had only seen each other at a distance. Their hearts were immediately joined together. Within a year John asked Barney to be his pastor. Since then the church has received Barney apostolically, and

John's ministry and influence throughout the 'Bay Area' has grown significantly. John is the chairman of 'Pray the Bay', a prayer movement that draws together several hundred pastors. In July 2001 Ed Silvoso, a well-known, dynamic preacher and author of outstanding influence in the body of Christ, and his wife Ruth, both of whom were longstanding friends of John and his wife Leighton, joined the South Bay Covenant Church. Already, their presence has been a fantastic blessing, both locally and to the wider Salt and Light family.

New Zealand

In 1977 Barney was speaking with Peter Lyne at a pastors' conference in Waikanae, New Zealand. He was struck by the sense of God's call on the life of a young man there called Fraser Hardy. Fraser was accompanying his father, Bill Hardy, a missionary pioneer. Fraser remembers that "Barney invited me out of the blue – we had never met prior to this – to come to Canada, which I did. Within a month I was with him there, and then in the UK for nearly five months. Astonishingly, two weeks before this I had seen a map of North America and felt God tell me that I would be spending time there as part of his call and training in my life, as I had chosen not to go to Bible school."

The church in Palmerston North that Fraser leads has grown significantly over the years, and he is a respected figure nationally in the New Zealand churches. Barney has made annual visits, with different teams, which Fraser says "has helped the team through many difficult situations." On a personal level, the relationship has trained Fraser in his growing translocal ministry. "I now help to care for an emerging network of churches in New Zealand and Malaysia. These include several multicultural churches, Generation X churches, and family based groups. Three groups have come as a result of planting, while the others have linked to us over time."

Chapter 5

A Growing International Family

Following Barney's departure to Canada in 1976, the Basingstoke Church was led by Vic Gledhill for a time, and then by Bruce Blow. In 1981 Barney and the Basingstoke elders believed it was time for a fresh direction, and so invited Dave Richards to come and work with the team, leaving the leadership of the church in Eastwood to Mark and Nesta Mumford. At first Dave's task was to work on strategic issues with the church, but in May 1983 he took on full pastoral responsibility as well. Dave led the church until 1996, when he was released to give himself full time to his growing apostolic and itinerant role, including being part of the planning and speaking team at 'Spring Harvest', perhaps the most significant interdenominational gathering in Britain. By that time, the Basingstoke Church had grown considerably, based on a pattern of house groups and local congregations, each actively involved in their own local communities, with a monthly Celebration when all the congregations would come together to receive vision and prophetic direction.

Uganda

A choir's provocation

In 1983 Barney met Ray Barnett from 'Ambassadors of Aid'. Ray had been stirred by the desperate plight of orphans in Uganda following the brutal regime of Idi Amin and the Civil War. Ray trained some of these orphans into a vibrant choir which went on tour in North America and the

UK to publicise their desperate situation and to raise resources from the West.

‘The African Children’s Choir’ concert at West Coast Fellowship deeply moved the church in general and Barney in particular. He sensed that God wanted him to go to Uganda as soon as possible, and within a few months he found himself in Kampala, the capital, accompanied by Ngwiza Mnkandla from Zimbabwe, at a teaching conference for 150 pastors. All of them had friends and family who had been murdered under the Amin regime and had suffered persecution themselves. Here was a church that had come through the fire. They were hungry for God’s word, and Barney taught on the kingdom of God and the ‘family genes’ – the basic principles of our own church life.

Joinings of the Lord

Many of the pastors who attended the conference were leaders of ‘The Deliverance Church’ of Uganda. Men like Titus Oundo, Dan Naaya, Ben Oluka, Laban Jjumba and others, responded warmly to Barney and his ministry. Their team leader, Nicholas Wafula, was studying in Nairobi, Kenya, at the time, but Barney was able to visit him on his way back to the UK. Nicholas reminded Barney that, having heard a teaching cassette tape from Basingstoke many years before, he had written to him to say that they were like sister churches. There was a further connection too. Gordon and Mary Silk from Basingstoke had worked in Uganda since 1953. While Gordon was lecturing at a teachers’ training college, he struck up a firm friendship with Nicholas, then a trainee teacher. The Silks had left Uganda in 1973 during Amin’s regime, but they had kept contact with Nicholas and his wife-to-be, Betty. This meeting between Nicholas and Barney was one of those ‘joinings of the Lord’ and their friendship quickly grew. The result was to be a joining of the two spiritual families.

Nicholas has continued to grow in stature and influence in the nation of Uganda. When the Millennium Celebrations were held, attended by the President himself, it was Nicholas who was invited to chair them. And it was to Nicholas that the President’s wife turned to head up ‘Operation Joseph’, a nationwide food-producing project. Clearly God has been opening up opportunities to him!

The birth of a hospital

Dr Ian Clarke, from Bangor in Northern Ireland, accompanied Barney on a trip to Uganda in 1986. Ian visited a number of locations, made contacts in the Ugandan medical world, and returned with his family shortly afterwards. He set up a clinic at Kiwoko, in the devastated war-torn Luwero triangle. His first dispensary was a roofless, windowless Church of Uganda building; but with extraordinary faith, commitment and energy, he set about developing medical facilities in this needy area of central Uganda.

Soon after the clinic was established, Ian and his wife Roberta were visited by their pastor, Dr John Kelly and his wife Barbara. While studying at Queen's University, Belfast, Barbara had organised an early morning prayer meeting that had focussed on the nation of Uganda, so she had a long-standing interest in that nation. On the evening of 2nd July, just days after returning to Northern Ireland, John and Barbara were showing a film of their trip to their daughter Sarah and to Barbara's parents, Alex and Pat Bell. Suddenly, Barbara experienced a massive haemorrhage from an artery in her abdomen. Within a very short time she had passed into the presence of the Lord.

Barney was in the middle of a church camp meeting when he was informed of Barbara's death. During that night Barney sensed the Lord speaking to him saying that all the churches related to his leadership should be invited to take up an offering to be used for the building of a hospital dedicated to the memory of Barbara Kelly. The offering came to over thirty thousand UK pounds. Some months later Ian, John and Barney stood in a small open space surrounded by elephant grass and jungle and dedicated several acres of land for the new hospital.

Over the years Ian and Roberta have received great support from their home church in Bangor as well as from many other Christians throughout the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Other medical staff joined them, including Karen Morgan from West Coast Christian Fellowship, Vancouver, and Gudrun Trautmann, a nurse from Agapé Fellowship in Munich, a church that relates to John Kelly. The present modern Kiwoko Hospital, which has had a huge and beneficial impact on the whole region, is a testimony to Ian Clarke's passion and perseverance and also to the

faithful prayers of a young university student. The Clarke's story is well told in Ian's book "*The man with the key has gone*".

John and Barney had already begun to develop a close relationship, but when Barbara died, their relationship was deepened to a whole new level. John later married Jenny, a widow with a daughter Wendy Ann, and they have two more children, Patrick and Ruth. John's commitment and passion for the expositional preaching of the Scriptures has proved to be a great blessing amongst our family of churches. Also in recent years John has developed and pioneered 'The Pastoral Training Course', which has provided much needed help to those who carry pastoral leadership in our churches.

More medical input

More medical input was found in Dr. Jan White, a General Practitioner from Witney in Oxfordshire, and a member of Oxfordshire Community Churches. Jan paid an exploratory visit to Uganda in 1986, which led to a sabbatical the following year and the establishment of J.O.Y. ('Jesus – Others – Yourself') Medical Centre in Ndeeba, Kampala. Fourteen years later, under the leadership of Dr. Stephen Watiti, the Centre is about to expand to be able to take inpatients.

During her sabbatical year, Jan felt God calling her to work abroad long term and, with the backing of her local church, resigned from her GP partnership in order to work with the Deliverance Church Medical Programme in Uganda, where she remained until 1992. Over that time, a second smaller clinic was started in Apach, and plans were drawn up for another clinic in Mbale, which was later opened by Dr. Simon and Sian Gray from Milton Keynes.

After a year at King's Bible College, Jan went to work with Deliverance Church in Nakuru, Kenya, from 1994-98, helping to start a clinic in Nakuru and a smaller clinic in Masai Mara. By the end of 1998 she was back in Uganda, where she took on responsibility for the medical work in Mbale, in eastern Uganda, and where she started a village clinic in Buwasuguyi in 1999 and a hospice for terminally ill cancer and AIDS patients in Mbale in 2001.

Compassion for orphans

Jay and Vicki Dangers had also been working in Uganda, with a particular concern for the many thousands of children orphaned under the rule of Amin. They had begun an orphanage in Kasaana, and came to value the input and friendship from Barney and others on their regular visits. This ‘New Hope Children’s Centre’ is just a short distance from the Kiwoko Hospital, and a natural friendship exists between the two establishments, though they are run and financed quite separately.

Strengthened relationships

The growing medical ministry and the orphanage work has become a place of service for many people from the UK and North American churches during the years that followed. This served to strengthen the ties of relationship between the Deliverance Churches in Uganda and those elsewhere in the Salt and Light family. Natural partnerships developed between churches, such as the links between Exeter and Mbale, and Sale and Mbarara. These kind of relationships were hugely beneficial in both directions.

Zimbabwe

Ngwiza and Maureen Mnkandla had seen tremendous growth in ‘Faith Ministries’ in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s, with lots of conversions and new churches planted. The church had been established by foreign missionaries, many of whom left the newly-independent Zimbabwe. ‘Faith Ministries’ was undergoing a radical transition: from white to black, from old to young, and from traditional to modern. Ngwiza says, “We needed new wineskins; and the Salt and Light family offered just that.”

They first met Dave and Chris Richards in 1984, when the Richards family made a visit to Harare to see Mike and Cherith André. The Andrés had spent several months in Basingstoke and now worked with Ngwiza in ‘Faith Ministries’. Ngwiza recalls that, “As we began chatting about the things of the kingdom, I realized that Dave was articulating things that I believed but did not have words for. It became evident to me that he had travelled the road that I was travelling and was several years ahead. From

that initial encounter there was an immediate bonding of our spirits and I knew that this was the beginning of a long journey. Before he left, I invited him to pastor me, since nobody in Zimbabwe was willing to do so and nobody understood what it meant to pastor someone outside your own organisation.”

In 1985 Dave visited the church with Barney to confirm whether God was behind Ngwiza’s invitation. Ngwiza comments, “It was love at first sight with Barney! The big teddy bear was irresistible! His fatherly approach, the depth of his understanding in kingdom issues, and his vision, won our hearts.” Ngwiza also appreciated the focus on discipleship, relationships and the kingdom of God. “They demonstrated respect for us as equal partners and co-workers, as opposed to the paternalistic missionary approach which we were used to. They were inclusive.” Subsequently ‘Faith Ministries’ developed the mission statement of “Discipleship through Relationships”.

Kenya

Alan Vincent’s meeting of Mark Kariuki in Nakuru led to seven Kenyan Deliverance Church pastors coming to a Salt and Light leadership conference. Out of this Dave Richards came to meet JB and Persiah Masinde. JB led the fast-growing ‘Deliverance Church, Umoja’ close to Nairobi Airport. He and Dave soon developed a strong friendship. Another link was forged, and JB’s considerable preaching gift was soon to be in demand in the UK, both at our own family events, and on the platform at ‘Spring Harvest’. Over the years, the work in Kenya has continued to grow and develop significantly under JB’s fatherhood.

India

Vic and Jenny Gledhill had kept their relationships in India through frequent visits. They had known Alan and Eileen Vincent, who had been used by God in a movement of outreach and renewal with Roman Catholics in Bombay, and had kept a good friendship with Charlie Lazaro, pastor of Bombay Baptist Church in the 1970s. The church in Bombay had known

powerful movements of the Holy Spirit in healing and evangelism over a number of years, particularly through Alan Vincent's ministry there.

In 1981 Stanley Mehta became pastor of Bombay Baptist Church. Stanley says, "Vic pushed me to grow up into my potential, and spurred me on to take responsibility." For some years Stanley had a vision of what a New Testament Church could be, but "Vic showed us that the kingdom of God was bigger." For Stanley, discipleship and servanthood were key values, and he welcomed being part of a bigger family. Over the following years, Vic took many teams to India, some to teach and encourage, others on evangelistic 'exposure' trips.

The church has pushed way beyond the southern tip of Bombay, where the original Baptist Church is located, and now ministers right across this strategic city. It ministers to six different language groups (English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, and Gujerati) and has developed training colleges in English, Hindi, and Tamil for its future leadership. It has developed many new outreach and social programmes based on Vic's teaching that "People are important". Stanley and his wife Esme have grown in their own ministry and are now looked to by many across the nation as a spiritual mother and father.

Chapter 6

Expressing the Vision

Structure of Support

A growing work demanded a growing and flexible structure to serve and release it. And so ‘Salt and Light Ministries’ was set up in Canada and the UK to assist Barney with his increasing responsibilities. The name was one that Barney felt God gave to him as a summary of all that we were to be about. ‘Salt and Light Ministries’ provided a legal and financial base for Barney’s travelling ministry and provided a place of oversight and accountability for him. Trustees were appointed in each nation in 1982 (Arnold Bennett, Bob Swindoll, John Chamberlain and Roland Lewis in Canada; and, initially, Dave Richards, Steve Thomas and Vic Gledhill in the UK.)

The Trust was set up, “to promote the advancement of the Christian religion and the advancement of education and the relief of poverty”. The approach was always to relieve Barney of as many administrative burdens as possible, but to avoid a centralised bureaucratic structure. At first Bruce Blow worked as Barney’s administrator in Canada, then Peter Hill when Barney moved to Witney, UK, in 1985. Barbara Gyde and Adrienne Blakey were to continue this administrative support later.

A Team for Europe

To complement this legal and administrative structure Barney called together informal groups of leaders. In the UK in the late 1970s and early

1980s there was a 'UK and Northern Ireland Council' which included Dave Richards, Vic Gledhill, Steve Thomas, and John Kelly. This group became known as 'The Senior Council', with some changes of personnel. By the mid-1990s there was a deliberate change of style and philosophy to make this 'Council' into a 'Team'. The Team met three times a year in different locations, giving them the opportunity to minister in local churches, meet their members and stay in their homes (always a great place for learning what things are *really* like!).

Barney increasingly delegated the chairmanship of these meetings to Steve Thomas. A clear transition was taking place, culminating at the 1998 'Days of Destiny' conference in Harrogate, where Barney removed his 'mantle' (a waterproof jacket!) and put it around Steve's shoulders. From then on, Steve became the leader of what was now The European Apostolic Team. That same year the Team became more European in reality when Bob and Muriel Whitchurch moved from Exeter to France.

A Team for North America

In North America Barney called together a Council that has been under the chairmanship of Ron MacLean since 1996. The huge distances between the churches meant that the team could not work as closely as those in the UK and Europe, but the group has an annual leaders' conference. Recently there have been some very positive youth conferences, and young people from the different churches have travelled together on mission. The North American Council is aiming to work together more effectively to help equip the saints. Barney remains the key to the coherence of the developing team.

Across the Nations

In Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe the leaders meet in each nation, as it has proved too complex and expensive to arrange an international African forum. In India the churches have had regular leaders' conferences and many church family camps.

More Steps Forward

By the early 1990s it became evident that a new approach was required in the expanding family. The number of churches was growing and there was a need for improved communication. So in September 1992 Gina Charsley was appointed as the full-time administrator for Salt and Light Ministries. She was a graduate of King's Bible College, and had been very involved in the Basingstoke church. She quickly made a vast difference to administration and communication. First at Whitcheater House in Scotland (the home of King's Bible College), and then in Oxford from 1996, Gina's skills brought a huge improvement to the level of communication both nationally and internationally. A further step forward was taken in 2001 when Andy O'Connell, who had already shown his considerable administrative and strategic skills among the Oxfordshire churches, became Administrator to the European Apostolic Team.

In recent years Barney has also established an International Apostolic and Prophetic Council, which meets each year in a different nation across the world. This team spends time in fellowship, prayer and seeking God, and considers Biblical and theological issues and how they impact our churches. In 2000 they met in Bombay, India, and had some animated discussions on topics as varied as the place of Israel in the purposes of God and the nature of spiritual warfare. In 2001 they met in Calgary, Canada, where they discussed papers on Discipleship, Church Planting, Postmodernism, Hermeneutics, and Trends in Youth Work – a distinctly varied diet! On this occasion, most of the Council members were accompanied by young leaders, and the discussions were, in the words of Steve Thomas, “both stimulating and challenging!” In 2002 the Council met in Uganda and focused on Covenant Theology, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the current worrying trend towards the trivialisation of God.

There is a growing sense of relationship and friendship in this international grouping and it brings strength to all that we seek to do together across the nations.

Publications

In 1996 Salt and Light Ministries went into the world of publishing. Its first book, ‘Appointment in Buenos Aires’, recounted the life-changing experiences of a team that went to visit Claudio Friedzon’s church in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to see the work that the Holy Spirit had been doing, not only in the church, but also in the notorious top-security Olmos Prison. In the same year, the first of our ‘Roots and Shoots’ series came to light, a series designed to deal with a range of theological and practical issues. Since that time, some twenty-one titles have been produced. While they are all written in a simple, readable form to ensure that they are within the reach of all our people, they seek to be thoroughly Biblical and theologically accurate, and many a writer has had our editor, Mike Beaumont’s, red pen scrawled across their text before it saw the light of day!

Barney has also written a number of books over the years including, ‘A Guide to Practical Pastoring’, ‘Apostles Today’, and ‘Snakes and Ladders’ (on handling life’s setbacks). Each aims to deal with issues that are of current importance and contain the principles by which Barney has sought to build. His latest book, ‘God’s Plan for Himself’, is Barney’s life message and looks in detail at God’s original plan and man’s destiny.

King’s Bible College

One of Barney’s major concerns has always been the need for training in the churches. With the general drift away from the faith, many new Christians, especially young people, have no Biblical knowledge or background. The time when a certain amount of Biblical understanding from school or Sunday school could be expected was long gone. Many people in the churches had experienced the power of the Holy Spirit, but had little framework of the word of God into which to fit their experiences. Others were rejecting the place of Bible colleges altogether, as they were seen to represent the old religious order.

But Barney became more and more convinced that unless urgent action was taken to provide positive training, with good theological content, the churches would lose their anchor in the word of God. So, the vision for King’s Bible College began to grow in him – though initially he had a hard

battle to convince other key leaders in North America and the UK to support him! 'KBC' was eventually launched in 1983.

The West Coast church had a residential retreat at Springcrest, just outside Vancouver, which they made available as a home for the new College. About thirty students signed up for the first year. Under the direction of David Denninger, a thoroughly Bible-based course was set up. David did some of the teaching, but the majority of it was given by visiting lecturers from across the family of churches around the world, each coming for a week or two to teach on their particular speciality. The College soon established itself. Most students have come from the UK or North America, but a number of Africans, Indians, and other Europeans have taken the course.

After four years in Vancouver, KBC moved its home to the UK to encourage more British students to participate. Finding premises in the UK was difficult, but West Hertfordshire Community Churches generously made premises available on the site of their school in Harpenden. Barney and Janette moved into a house next to the Bible School in August 1988. David and Kathy Denninger came to the UK as Principal and Administrator respectively.

After three years in this location, it became clear that a base with more space and better facilities was needed. On a visit to the Yarm Fellowship in the north-east of England, Barney talked about the need for a settled base for KBC. One of the church leaders there, Albert Dicken, was a successful businessman who had established a Trust to support work for the kingdom of God. He was seized by the vision Barney presented and took up the cause. With a large and generous donation from his Trust, Albert purchased Whitcheater House, near Duns in the Borders district of Scotland. This was to become the home for KBC from 1991 until 2000. In addition to the main house, there were cottages in the grounds, one of which was to become the next home base for Barney and Janette – just a short distance from Janette's home town of Musselburgh. Here they would stay until their return to Vancouver in 1996. David and Kathy led KBC for its first year at Whitcheater; but David then returned to the USA to pursue doctoral studies in theology. Tony and Doreen Gray were invited to succeed them.

Tony had been with Barney from the early days in Basingstoke, and his teaching gift was widely appreciated. He had worked with David Church in the Basingstoke church plant in Milton Keynes, and then in Lutterworth. Building on David's biblical and theological foundations, Tony expanded the course to include more practical subjects. What to include in the curriculum, and what to leave out, was always a constant challenge. The Grays (ably assisted by Jeff and Rosie Pink in management), led the College until its final year at Winchester in 2000.

There followed a year's 'sabbatical' for the college during which time a whole new course was prepared, offering a dual track of 'Biblical and theological studies' and 'Ministry and practical training' studies, both arranged around a common core of foundational Biblical teaching. A new name was also adopted to reflect these changes – King's Bible College and Training Centre (KBCTC). Aled Griffith and Richard Colbrook have played key roles in these developments. The College's new home became the city of Oxford – for the first few months squashed into the offices of Oxfordshire Community Churches, until it could take up more spacious accommodation in OCC's new and extensive 'King's Centre'.

The value of KBC to the Salt and Light family of churches over the years has been enormous, and its former students are now serving in church leadership around the world. The KBC experience remains a significant unifying factor for our churches.

The example of KBC gave inspiration to others to embark on similar training programmes. Stanley Mehta established the Antioch Training Centre in Bombay, and many students have gone on from there to serve in the church in India. Similarly 'Faith Ministries' set up a Bible Training Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe. In addition, many of our churches have set up 'Year Programme' teams for young people.

Education

In 1979 Ron Trudinger visited a church in Manitoba, Canada and was deeply impressed by the church school he saw there, based on the Accelerated Christian Education ('A.C.E.') system. He said, "I began to realize that parents in a Kingdom community were totally responsible for

their children's education and that we have no mandate to delegate this to anyone outside the kingdom of God”.

On his return he challenged the Basingstoke church elders to establish education on a foundation of the values of the kingdom. This was not an easy task! Some of the leaders had been teachers and found the shift of philosophy a serious challenge! Tony Gray remembers that, “Many of us were initially cautious and defensive – it felt like a slight on our profession.” But eventually the elders proposed to the church that they establish “a community school which shares, on the parent's behalf, in the nurture of our children.” This was not to be an added extra to the life of the church, but “as essentially an integral part of the church as all the other activities – such as home cells, outreach. The school is not an institution separate from the church, but a life-giving aspect of it.”

So ‘The King's School’ Basingstoke was established in September 1981, with Peter Davis as its first head. The school soon served as a model for many others in the UK and overseas. The churches in Oxford, Edinburgh, Derby, Manchester, and elsewhere in the UK, established their own Christian schools. This required major investment from both church and parents to finance a school whose curriculum was based entirely around God, his word, and his kingdom – while maintaining excellent academic standards. Schools were established in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Niagara; then in India and Africa too.

Annie Crowe was a teacher at The King's School in Basingstoke. Barney's visit to Uganda showed him the need for quality teachers to help with the orphans in the nation. So he asked Annie if she would be willing to go and help. In 1986, just after the African Children's Choir visit to Basingstoke, Annie began work with Ambassadors of Aid to start and run three ‘catch-up’ schools for children who had missed their education due to the troubles and the civil war. One of the boys who attended one of the schools is now training to be a doctor!

In 1989 Annie went to work with the Deliverance Church. She rapidly won the confidence of Nicholas Wafula and the Deliverance Churches. “Annie is now Ugandan!” they said. Since that time, she has started and overseen the development of fourteen schools in Uganda, with more in the pipeline. The first school was the JOYCE School (**J**esus first, **O**thers next,

Yourself last, Centre for Education) in Kampala. This work with Deliverance Churches pioneered Christian education in Uganda. One of Annie's greatest concerns has always been to train Ugandan teachers to take over from her, which she has done very successfully. The Deliverance Churches' Christian Education Board now runs the whole school programme – originally there was only Annie!

The King's School in Witney, Oxfordshire, has become one of the largest independent Christian schools in the UK. David Freeman has been involved with the school since its beginnings and is now in demand to help establish other schools. His role has become an 'apostolic' one, particularly in helping churches in India, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, South Africa, and in other nations, to set up a good educational system with minimal resources.

Church Relief International

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw an explosion of activity in many different nations. The UK and North American churches started to work with and resource the churches in the emerging nations. Barney and other apostolic leaders had followed a policy of taking teams with them for ministry. As these people reported the needs and opportunities, their churches were often stirred into action. Many projects were started and soon some co-ordination was required.

And so Church Relief International (CRI) was set up in 1987 as an arm of Salt and Light Ministries. This more strategic approach to fundraising had the added advantage that funds could be obtained from Trusts, companies and other charitable bodies in addition to the giving of many churches and individuals within the Salt and Light family.

CRI's first goal was to provide emergency relief to countries affected by war, famine, or natural disasters. But it also aimed to develop longterm medical and educational projects and other relief work. There was particular emphasis on the need to work in partnership with local churches, and with government bodies where appropriate. CRI intended "to assure that all direct relief and development programmes be administered to all people without regard to racial or religious bias, while at the same time realising

that motivation for this work comes from the command of Holy Scripture and the example and teachings of Jesus Christ.”

Initially Bill Reed, a former director of Cadbury’s UK, began a fundraising programme. As contacts widened a team was put in place to develop the process. Funds are now distributed via both the UK and Canadian offices. Donors receive reports of how the work is advancing through the CRI Update newsletter.

The range of projects is enormous, and the commitment and dedication of the people who run them is an inspiration to all of us. At the time of writing, CRI-sponsored programmes include:

- The provision of homes and education for orphaned babies and children in Bujumbura, Burundi, under the oversight of Chrissie Chapman
- The New Hope centre in Uganda, currently caring for over 350 orphans in Kasana, providing primary and secondary education, nutrition, medical care, parenting and skills training
- The Kiwoko Hospital in Luwero, Uganda
- The Medical Clinics and Hospice in Uganda run by the Deliverance Church
- The Sahaara Trust, a ministry of Bombay Baptist Church, working to provide food and education in three schools for children in the slums, a home and pre-primary school for orphaned children, a feeding and first-aid programme for lepers, visiting of three prisons, and an adult literacy project for maids/men-servants.
- Relief work in Bosnia, to assist reconciliation
- The development of Christian schools in Burundi, India, Uganda, Zambia and Kazakstan.

Other nations where CRI has been, or is, active include Kenya, Nigeria, Romania, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Guatemala. During the year 2000/1, for example, approximately £150,000 was given to the various projects. Personal support for workers is provided by the sending churches, together with friends and relatives.

A Vision to Come Together

When Barney led the worship at Capel Bible Week he saw the faith-building dynamic of large gatherings for worship, celebration and prophetic teaching. Through the 1970s, many of the related churches in the UK attended the annual camps at the Lakes Bible Weeks and the Dales Bible Week. There were some occasional gatherings in the 1980s; but in 1990 an ‘International Family Camp’ was held at Stoneleigh in the UK, with Charles Simpson as main speaker. A certain number were also able to come from different countries.

A number of leaders’ meetings have been run in several nations. In the late 1970s and 1980s teachers at these events included Bob Mumford, whose teaching on relationships, and the kingdom of God was foundational; Derek Prince on prayer, spiritual warfare, and the church; Charles Simpson on pastoral care and integrity, and the nature of success – “success is in having successors”.

These occasional gatherings had enormous value, and by the late 1980s European leaders met for three or four days together every January. They were times of vision, practical help and fellowship, and an opportunity for new members of the family to absorb some of the “family genes”. Similar gatherings have been regularly happening in North America, Africa and India.

The UK churches held a successful weekend camp in Brentwood, Essex, in August of 1995, with a series of messages by Terry Virgo making a major impact. It was decided to run an annual camp for the next five years, at least until the year 2000. In 1996 the camp was held at Stoneleigh near Coventry, then in subsequent years at Harrogate in Yorkshire. Keynote speakers have included Tony Morton, Bob Mumford, John Paul Jackson, and a memorable visit by Claudio Friedzon from Argentina, who brought a breath of the life and power of revival with him. ‘Days of Destiny’ has now become a regular fixture in the UK church calendar. In recent years there has been a significant emphasis on going to the nations.

A clear prophetic word, brought to the Salt and Light team by Kjell Tofters of Sweden in early 1999, sounded a trumpet call to “go to Europe.” The lessons learned in church growth and planting in the UK, the word

said, should be directed to Europe. One result of this word was a moving of ‘Days of Destiny’ from one large event at Harrogate to two smaller events at European locations in 2001.

On 5th August nearly 300 people – French, British, German, Swiss and Corsican – gathered by the banks of the River Loire for the first of these camps – ‘Destinée’. The theme was ‘The Church in Ephesians’, with main talks from Steve Thomas, Dave and Chris Richards, and Jean Pillonel. Morning seminars, led mainly by French leaders, gave insight into the church situation in France. Throughout the week there was a mix of French and English spoken, with everything from notices to prophecies translated! One French delegate summed up the week: “It was our first Destiny camp with the English brothers and sisters and we feel that it has truly broken the barriers of language and woven strong ties between us in the Spirit.”

After the camp in France, there followed a second one in the beautiful area of Zegiestów in Southern Poland. Despite certain challenges in travel and accomodation, everyone soon settled in, and there was a sense of grace and anticipation around. 580 people gathered from Poland, the UK, Slovakia and Ukraine. The worship was especially memorable, with songs sung in Polish and English simultaneously. Through the theme of ‘The fatherhood of God and His family’ many hearts were touched and there was a fresh sense of the unity of the body of Christ, working together, not in isolation, to fulfil God’s purposes.

Turning Outwards

Pregnancy crisis

The increasing availability of abortions in the West became a serious concern for the churches in the UK and North America during the 1980s. Most churches felt a sense of outrage, but were unsure often how best to respond. Many protested at a political level. In the UK the polarisation between ‘pro-choice’ and ‘pro-life’ became increasingly bitter, with the women who were actually in the crisis often being forgotten. Joanna Thompson remembers that “a few of us in Basingstoke were convicted and began to understand a little of God’s heart and compassion. We felt that time, space and care needed to be given to help women in crisis. This

is not achievable within a climate of judgement and condemnation. We felt we were called by Jesus to show his care and compassion while giving information and support.”

So initially with the organisation LIFE, Joanna and others began to plan a centre for crisis pregnancy counselling, which opened in the Basingstoke church office premises in 1985. She says that “in Basingstoke today there are many children alive and at school because their mothers came to the centre and chose to continue their pregnancy rather than abort.”

Other churches asked for help in opening similar centres, and a creative partnership was formed with the CARE organisation. There are now more than 140 Pregnancy Crisis Centres open in the UK. There are also centres in Romania, Russia, Cameroon, Sweden, Belgium, Zimbabwe and more than 50 in South Africa. All these are affiliated to ‘CARE for Life’, of which Joanna is now Director. She speaks regularly at churches and conferences in the UK and overseas. A particular current concern is to develop adoption (reflecting the redemptive nature of God) as an alternative to abortion.

People are important

After working with Barney in Vancouver, Vic Gledhill returned to the UK, spending time in Oxfordshire and Basingstoke. In 1982 Vic and Jenny were invited to work with a group in a former Brethren assembly in Birmingham. A new church was planted and began to grow. Over years of ministry, both in Birmingham, Walsall and on regular visits to India, Vic became concerned that a ‘words only’ gospel was not reaching people.

Our responsibility, Vic felt, is to love God first; but the second commandment – to love our neighbour – has huge implications (Matthew 22:34-40). Where were the acts of kindness? Where were the demonstrations of the sheer goodness of God to people? So, under a slogan that would become his ‘catchphrase’ – “People are Important” – Vic began to preach, teach and live a new ‘evangelistic reformation’. In Walsall, street teams reached out to the poor, the prostitutes, the gamblers, and the drug addicts. Through his visits to the churches in Britain, North America, India, Nigeria, and Scandinavia, others caught the vision. Many new initiatives sprang up to take the gospel to the needy, to pray with non-Christian people

wherever possible, and to see good works as valuable to the King in themselves, and a means of touching needy people with the kingdom of God.

In the workplace

Dave Oliver, a business consultant and one of the church leaders in Basingstoke, has spearheaded the encouragement of many people in business, government and education to fulfil their role as Christians in the workplace; to have a kingdom vision rather than just seeing work ‘in the church’ as the only thing of real value. Dave’s book, *‘Work – Prison or Place of Destiny?’*, has spread this message more widely, and many of our leaders are now seeking to re-emphasize the value of what we do in the workplace, and to equip Christians to live as effective disciples in their daily job.

One fruitful example of this was Dave’s meeting of Kiell Tofters from Sweden at a business conference in 1989, where they became firm friends. Kiell was soon to come to England to visit the Basingstoke Church where he became friends with Dave and Chris Richards. This resulted in many visits from Basingstoke to help Kiell and his wife Gertrude start a new Church, at a time when this was not very acceptable in Scandinavia. Many teams have visited since that first work-related encounter, and now several other churches in Sweden have become close friends too. Perhaps, more remarkably, it was Kiell Tofters’ prophetic word at the Bristol Leaders’ Conference that has propelled us into Europe. And all from a work-related ‘chance’ encounter!

Chapter 7

Where Next?

Over these last thirty years, hundreds of leaders and churches have felt drawn together and joined in heart, and today there exists a network of leaders and churches that spreads across Africa, Asia, Europe, India, New Zealand and North America. This growing international family has a richness and diversity based on good relationships and shared values.

The group that initially gathered around Barney's leadership had been captured by certain insights and values: the conviction that the Body of Christ is essentially 'relational' in its character and makeup; that everyone in the church has a role to play within the Body; that the gospel focused not only in the Cross, but also in the Kingdom; that Jesus would return victoriously, and not secretly, to earth. These convictions have not changed, and still remain at the heart of our family.

Recently Barney reflected on the question "What was important to us in those early days?" He listed the following:

- Christ as the only foundation
- The centrality of the word of God, worship and prayer
- The church as the body of Christ, with every member playing its part
- Relationship at the heart of how we build together
- The Holy Spirit's ministry in the life and worship of the believer and the church
- Cell groups as foundational to building up a healthy body
- Personal pastoring as a key to care, accountability and discipleship, resulting in personal maturity in Christ

- Mission, which is about God's people being thrust out into God's world to be 'salt and light'.
- The kingdom of God as a dynamic reality among us, and as the thing that Jesus calls us to 'seek first'.

There are many different expressions of these convictions in the cultures of the different churches around the world, but Barney believes "these were the things that launched us into being – and that still lie at the heart of all we seek to do."

Barney Coombs remains very much the 'father of the family' of our churches. While many of the men in the national and international teams function as fathers in their own relational spheres, it is Barney's fatherhood and apostolic gifting which provides the unifying factor. Salt and Light Ministries has become a team of international ministries who serve, each with their own teams, in a variety of church situations across many nations.

There is no binding constitution or doctrinal statement for Salt and Light Ministries, though all the churches believe in the fundamentals of biblical, evangelical faith. However, the key factor is a clear sense of being joined together in relationship, by the Holy Spirit. This is the key distinctive: genuine relationship, tested by time, and proven by the trials of change. Many of the senior leaders have worked together for more than 25 years.

A unique characteristic of our family is that leaders and churches from very different backgrounds have come together. Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites, Pentecostals, Brethren and many others have found a unity that is stronger than their denomination.

A small central office helps co-ordination and communication; but our real strength is in relationships. The great concern of all our teams is to see strong and vibrant local churches affecting their town, nation and the nations.

The mid 1990s was a time of transition and asking questions for many of the leaders of the UK churches in relation to the future direction of Salt and Light Ministries. For what purpose, specifically, was God calling us together? What were we here to do? Out of a gathering of leaders for two days of prayer and fasting in 1996 in Oxford to consider these questions, God clearly called us to be committed to –

Equipping the church

- teaching, training and encouraging
- developing apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching ministry
- strengthening discipleship and the pursuit of holiness in the local church
- resourcing the local church by the ministry of the Apostolic team

Extending the kingdom

- promoting personal growth
- encouraging church growth and church planting
- influencing business, education, social needs and public policy

Blessing the nations

- a commitment to a philosophy of going, not staying
- sending teams and individuals to equip the church and extend the Kingdom in those nations God opens up to us
- supporting aid projects.

There are many issues to be faced in the future. The transmission of leadership to the next generation and discipleship of young people and future leaders must remain a priority. For the European Team, church planting is high on the agenda: What has to change to get the job done? How can we make the gospel attractive, but without trivialising God? What should be the response to the prophetic word concerning Europe?

The North American churches face the challenge of building together in an environment where there is a lot of independence, distance, disloyalty and superficiality. The Indian churches face increasing political pressure from state and national governments that are no longer sympathetic to the gospel. The African churches often work in situations of dire poverty, political instability, and where AIDS is a scourge. How do the churches meet the desperate needs in our different nations?

It requires the whole church to fulfil the great commission to make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:19). One family of churches like ours can never accomplish the task on our own. But people joined together by the Lord, can certainly play a vital part in God's ultimate intention.

Afterword by Barney Coombs

As I read through the amazing history of God's faithfulness in the pages of this book, I am reminded of Samuel: "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far has the Lord helped us'." (1 Sam 7:12)

There are literally thousands of people who have been involved in the life and ministry of our family of churches but whose names are not included in this book. We dearly wish it had been possible to name them all. All we can say is that your name is written in *God's* book!

But one name I must mention! And that is my dear wife Janette whom I want to honour for all her loving support. The truth is, Janette sees *her* ministry as *me*. God spoke to her many years ago from a Scripture paraphrase: "It is a privilege to serve the man of God." Janette has faithfully obeyed that word from God to her, and has done so way beyond anything that I deserve. I am so grateful to her and I esteem her highly!

What of the future? It is as bright as the purposes, promises and power of God! If we avoid the temptation to preserve old wineskins, if we refuse to create the bureaucracy of central denominational government, if we reject every inclination to rely on man-made rules and our own good ideas, then future generations will be spared the task of tearing down what we have built. If, instead, we hold government lightly and relationships strongly (yet with open hands), and if we set ourselves to be Father-glorifying, Christ-centred, Word-based, and Spirit-led, our future is secure.

We see in our short history many instances of radical obedience to God in the face of difficulty and misunderstanding. I trust we never lose that willingness to take risks in God. Yet the Scripture also tells us that the man who fears God will avoid all extremes (Ecc 7:18). As a family of churches, we have not always succeeded in that balance; but by the grace of God we shall go forward in the faith and wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, to take hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of us (Php 3:12).