

Discerning Gifts & Ministries of Ministry Team Leaders & Members

- ◆ This is an exciting but rather lengthy process.

It should only be carried out with those people who have participated in the Dedication Service and so have

- a) already affirmed the Vision
- b) declared willingness to have gifts and ministry (re)assessed

Leaders This is an ideal opportunity to reassess leadership roles. It is recommended that their gifts and ministries are discerned in a separate group, e.g. a leaders' fellowship. If this is only a monthly group it may need to meet more frequently for a while. It is important to start with the Minister and spouse and then to work through the leaders. It is vital that people are prepared for change if necessary.

- Members**
- 1. Specialist Team Model**
Gifts and Ministries should be discerned after the Service of Dedication, in "Called to Serve" groups which continue to meet temporarily for that purpose. When gifts are recognised people should then be allocated to Specialist Teams.
 - 2. General Practice Team Model**
After meeting in Ministry Teams for a few months, one evening per month could be set aside in the team to discern gifts and ministries, perhaps dealing with two people per evening. Existing roles need to be reassessed and new potential discovered.

The aim should be to have completed the process by the end of the first year in Ministry Teams, so that evangelism can begin in earnest the following year.

Occasionally after that, an evening will need to be set aside to discern new members' gifts, after they have been in the team for a while.

Method

We recommend that:

- a) The team appoints an evening for the discernment of one couple's gifts or the gifts of two individuals, and prays briefly for those people during the previous meeting, that God will speak clearly.
- b) The individuals or couple set aside a quiet day or half day during the previous week for the purpose of seeking God about their gifts, using the material on pages 37-44, which should be copied for their use. There is additional material in Appendix 4.

- c) The team sets aside time individually in their own private prayers that week to seek God about the gifting of the individuals or couple concerned.
- d) At the team meeting the team members share first, in turn, about a member's gifts and then the member shares. Someone is appointed as scribe. Although it sounds threatening, it usually proves to be a special occasion, as people read out Scriptures etc. for the person concerned. No-one will have the whole picture - just a piece of the jigsaw.
- e) The aim is to discover one main ministry with perhaps two subsidiary gifts for each individual. There is usually wonderful harmony if done prayerfully. It is vital that those already fulfilling a role are prepared for change if necessary.
- f) It is important that the team leader then meets the individual to find in practice a role for that person to fulfil, using their gift(s). If leadership qualities are also discerned, it is vital that there is consultation with the Minister(s). The Minister should also be consulted if it is felt someone should give up a job.

NB If on rare occasions the end result is unclear, this may only mean that the Lord wants that individual to be used in various ways, and the time has not come for a main ministry to be revealed.

Some roles which can be fulfilled in the Ministry Teams

Pastor	-	This person would carry out the more sensitive pastoral visits and delegate the rest, and also liaise with the Pastoral Secretary (see Appendix 3).
Evangelist	-	This person would motivate the team in evangelism.
Teacher	-	This person would teach the team.
Intercessor	-	This person would lead the team in corporate prayer.
Administrator	-	This person would organise the team and liaise with the church administrator.
Worship leader	-	This person leads the team in worship.
Host	-	This person, with a ministry of serving, would use their home for the team if possible.
Leader	-	This person, with a ministry of presiding, leads the team, co-ordinating the different ministries.

There is also plenty of scope to serve the Lord in other ways in the church, e.g. assisting with the youth work, being involved in the worship group etc. Some people may be able to take on new leadership roles for the whole church, e.g. Evangelism Co-ordinator, Church Administrator, Prayer Secretary, Pastoral Secretary (but see f. above).

FOR FURTHER HELP SEE STRATEGY TAPE NO. 4

A PRACTICAL WAY TO DISCERN GIFTS & MINISTRIES

Advice to Ministry Team Member

With the co-operation of your Ministry Team, choose a time to have a Quiet Day, or at least half a day. You may use a Sunday if necessary. It is important to get away from home. You may use the church or some other suitable building, or go out into the countryside. Married couples may spend at least part of the time together. Here is some advice about your quiet day:-

- a. Your Ministry Team should be helping you discern your gifts. Ask them to pray for you as you have your quiet day.
- b. Don't worry that God may not "speak" to you and guide you. Many people worry about this, but are thrilled with what God says to them. A whole new realm of prayer can open up!
- c. Relax to begin with, e.g. go for a walk. Seek to "rest in faith", not to strive for guidance. Break up your time with relaxation, refreshments, walking.
- d. "Tune in" to God's presence for some time before becoming specific about gifts and looking at the list of gifts etc. Have a time of worship and read the Bible.
- e. As a definite act, give to God all your own thoughts and prejudices about your gifts as well as all you are doing in the church. Tell him sincerely that you don't want those thoughts or jobs back unless they are right for you. Repent of wrong attitudes to ministry, or of feelings of inferiority, especially if you are praying about serving God for the first time. Resist enemy attacks.
- f. Remember that having and using gifts without being Christlike and humble can be disastrous (1 Cor. 13:1-3). Ask yourself before God the following questions which refer to the spiritual basis for using your gifts:-
 - i. Do I really know Christ? Am I really sure he died for me personally? Am I really sure he would welcome me into heaven if I died right now? Have I really asked him into my life? If not, think about the Cross and Christ dying for you. Think of your sins for which he went through Hell. Ask him to forgive you, to come into your life, (read Romans 3:23; 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9; John 3:18, 36; 1 Peter 2:24; John 1:9-13; Rev. 3:20), and to give you eternal life.
 - ii. Is Jesus really Lord of my life? Am I aiming to please him in my thought life, my desires, my words and actions? Is he Lord of my relationships at home, in the church, at work and socially? Is there anything I wouldn't do or give up for Christ? Is there unconfessed sin in my life? (Ask God to show you the answers to all these questions. Read Matt. 5:21, 30, 38-48; 6:14-15, 19-34; 7:1-5, 21-23; 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:16-26; Eph. 5:21-6:4; Phil. 2:3-4, 14; 4:4-7; Col. 3; 1 Thess. 5:12-22; Heb. 13:17; James 5:9; 1 Peter 3:1-7; 1 John 4:20-21).

- iii. Have I had a definite experience of the release of the Baptism of the Spirit (normally through the laying on of hands with specific prayer for this release)? Do I know what it is to adore God regularly, on my own and in fellowship, experiencing being “lost in wonder, love and praise”? Do I normally have an expectation of God doing things in me, through me and around me? Has prayer come alive or is it normally a chore? Is the Bible fresh and challenging? Am I constantly discovering and obeying “new” truth in it? Do I usually sense a deep bond with other Christians? Do they sense it with me? Am I really excited about and committed to the Vision God has revealed to the church through the discernment of its leadership? Am I “eagerly desiring” (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1) all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including the “controversial” ones like prophecy and tongues? If not, am I prepared to humble myself and ask for counselling and prayer that I might know the full release of the Baptism in the Spirit and the evidences of it outlined in the questions in this section? (We find that some people have required such counselling after prayer for the release, before they entered into the experience of release). Or am I proudly refusing to do this? Am I going to ask for help about my fears and confusion on the subject? (Read Matt.3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; 11:5-13; John 1:33; 7:37-39, 14:12; Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1-18, 33, 37-39; 8:14-18; 9:17; 10:44-47; 11:15; 19:1-7; 1 Cor.2:14; Gal. 3:1-5; Eph. 3:14-21; 5:18-20).
- g. Ask God to show you what your gifts are. Check the following lists of gifts slowly and carefully. Do you think God is speaking to you about one or more gifts, or even a main ministry? (We would expect a person to begin to develop a ministry with one or two subsidiary gifts).
- h. Ask God to show you what things you should be doing, *especially in the church*.
- i. Ask God to show you what things you shouldn't be doing.
- j. Remember the church must discern and confirm your gifts, ministry and where you function in the Body of Christ, noting your spiritual maturity, etc. Don't share your conclusions with anyone else (apart from your spouse) until after your Ministry Team has expressed its thoughts about your ministry.
- k. Ask God to show you what your priorities should be in your personal life, your family, your occupation and the church, and thank him for all he has shown you.

Advice to Ministry Teams and Leaders

- a. Spend a time in prayer as individuals for the members of the group before the meeting at which you are to discern their ministries.
- b. Know the biblical teaching on gifts and ministries (see following pages).
- c. Submit your own ideas, especially preconceived ideas, about the person to God and ask him to confirm only right ideas.

- d. Expect God to speak e.g. through prophecy. Don't rely only on rational ideas. (In the Bible God often used people not naturally fitted for the task he had for them).
- e. At the team meeting the team shares its conclusions about a member's gifts before that member shares his/her conclusions.
- f. The leaders should sum up concerning a main ministry which has come to the fore in the time of sharing for the individual, and one or two subsidiary gifts.
- g. The leader should ensure that the Minister(s) know of the conclusions. It is important that no-one gives up or takes on a job without prior reference to the Minister(s). *Do your utmost to discover a role for the member which fits the gifts, whether in the Ministry Team and/or church, and to make it possible, as appropriate, for the member to give up any unsuitable role.*
- h. **Some people will be called by God to exercise their gifts in ministry to children.**

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- NB
- 1. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are still available today. 1 Cor. 13:8-12 is clear that the gifts will pass away "when perfection comes", and when we "know fully", in fact, when we see "face to face".
 - 2. The gifts of the Spirit are as important as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23) in loving others. If we love them we shall bring to them prophetic encouragement, supernatural guidance, deliverance, counselling, healing etc. The gifts must be exercised in love to be effective. (1 Cor. 13: 1-7).
 - 3. The gifts are really Jesus working through us in healing, prophecy, etc. So if you have Jesus in your life then you have all the gifts you'll ever need. The release of the Baptism of the Spirit (which normally comes through the laying on of hands with specific prayer) will encourage your expectant faith about these gifts. You will then see them operating regularly.
 - 4. Without all the gifts operating, the church will to an extent be held back from effective worship, fellowship, caring and evangelism.
 - 5. Sometimes it is difficult to be certain which gift has operated in a given situation. The New Testament is flexible in these matters, and some of the gifts are closely related.
 - 6. The Bible lists of gifts are not necessarily comprehensive. There will be some not mentioned in it. But we are looking for spiritual, not natural, gifts. The latter can be a problem if not truly submitted to the Lord.
 - 7. No genuine gift of the Holy Spirit is out of the control of the person who manifests it, e.g. a person speaking in tongues is receiving words from the Holy Spirit but has complete control of how and where he speaks.

Now turn to the following list of gifts. The definitions given are only guidelines, but should help you as you seek God about your gifts and role in the church. Section A is about key leadership roles, Section B is a list of gifts which will enhance the ministry of a Christian whatever his or her role may be, Sections C & D are particularly relevant to assistant roles in the church, with the exception of C7 (Presiding). Some of the other gifts in these sections could also lead to positions of leadership.

A. Eph. 4:8-11 Leadership Gifts (See also Section C overleaf).

1. **Apostle:** a person with a ministry of encouraging church growth or development, or sent out to pioneer new churches over a wide area. (There are no apostles like the original Twelve today. They were inspired to write scripture, for example).
2. **Prophet:** a regular ministry conveying a specific vision of God's will for the present and plans for the future so that God's people are challenged, encouraged or comforted.
3. **Evangelist:** a regular ministry of pointing people to a saving knowledge of Christ so that large numbers come to personal faith in Him.
4. **Pastor:** a regular ministry of caring for, guiding and protecting God's people so that they are encouraged to spiritual maturity.
5. **Teacher:** a regular ministry of explaining biblical truth simply and accurately, and ensuring that the hearers understand and are encouraged to obey God.

B. 1 Cor. 12:8-10 Inspirational Gifts

Any Christian can expect these gifts to operate through him on different occasions (e.g. in a counselling situation or in services or times of corporate prayer), and they are needed by the people having the ministries in Section A. (We give references to some biblical examples of these gifts). But some people will be used regularly in one or two of these gifts.

1. **Word of Wisdom:** a supernatural revelation of the solution to a particular problem or crisis. (Matt. 21:23-27; Luke 20:19-26; John 8:3-11).
2. **Word of Knowledge:** a supernatural revelation, concerning a difficulty or need, of facts not known naturally. (John 4:16-19; Acts 10:19-20).
3. **Faith:** a supernatural ability to go beyond general and saving faith, and to believe that the "impossible" will happen. (Acts 3:6-7).
4. **Gifts of Healing:** a supernatural ability to bring Christ's healing and deliverance to those who lack mental, emotional or physical wholeness, or are in spiritual bondage. (A person may be used more in one aspect than another). (Many examples in Scripture).

5. **Miracles:** a supernatural ability to bring God's power to bear on an "impossible" situation. (See 1 Cor. 12:28 and many examples in Scripture).
6. **Prophecy:** any Christian may in small ways speak prophetically to the church. The definition is the same as for A.2., but the contributions will not be so deep or as regular as the ministry of a Prophet. (See Rom. 12:6 and 1 Cor. 14:1-5, 24-40).
7. **Distinguishing Spirits:** a supernatural ability to discern whether a particular manifestation comes from the Holy Spirit, the human spirit or a demonic spirit. (Various examples in Scripture).
8. **Tongues:** the supernatural ability to praise God in a language never learned; an earthly or a heavenly language (1 Cor. 13:1), not understood by speaker (1 Cor. 14:14) or - normally - by the hearers (1 Cor. 14:2). Its primary use is private. (1 Cor. 14:4-5, 18-19), but it may be used in a meeting if interpreted.
9. **Interpretation of Tongues:** the supernatural ability to interpret a public message in tongues. (It is an interpretation, not a translation, and so may be longer than the message in tongues). (1 Cor. 14:13-17, 27-28).

C. 1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:6-8 Task Gifts

(The gifts in Sections C & D are those which may readily be matched to roles in the Ministry Team or in the church).

1. **Helping:** a supernatural ability to bear others' burdens, to strengthen the weak and to support them in prayer or to assist leaders. (1 Cor. 12:28).
 2. **Administration:** the supernatural ministry of efficiently organising people or things for the achievement of a common aim. (This can be a leadership gift). (1 Cor. 12:28).
- (The following are in Rom. 12:6-8)
3. **Serving:** a supernatural ability to serve God and others beyond natural talent and strength, especially in practical ways.
 4. **Teaching:** many Christians may be involved in teaching one person or a small group. But their ministry will not be so extensive and authoritative as the Ministry of a teacher in A.5 on p.41.
 5. **Exhorting:** a supernatural ability to inspire others to be strong in faith and serve Christ to the full (often displayed by senior experienced Christians).

6. **Contributing:** a supernatural ability to give sacrificially and to manage money.
7. **Presiding:** (The N.I.V. translates this “Leadership”): a supernatural ability to lead, exercising authority and discipline over others, making decisions and helping others fulfil those decisions. This is clearly a leadership gift.
8. **Acts of Mercy:** the supernatural ministry of showing compassion, and identifying with those in distress - giving advice, emotional comfort and practical help.

NB All these gifts need to be recognised and confirmed by the church. People can go seriously astray without a submissive attitude to the church. The gifts should be distinguished from purely human abilities, e.g. self-confidence (B.2., B.3.), a need to lead (C.7.), talkativeness (A.2., B.6.), enthusiasm (B.3.), a judgmental attitude (B.7.), rebellious delusions of grandeur (A1), or a weak, sentimental sympathy (C.1.,8.). Divine compassion is much stronger than flawed human sympathy and may at times be firm.

D. Gifts Stressed in the Old Testament

1. **Creative gifts** God-given abilities such as those displayed by craftsmen, designers, embroiderers etc. are often mentioned in the Old Testament (e.g. Exodus 35:35).
2. **Music:** the supernatural ability to use vocal or instrumental music to encourage and express spiritual worship. A person who is naturally gifted or highly trained in music will need to ask God to transform their gift, otherwise it will be a performance rather than a vehicle for worship. This gift is often mentioned in the Old Testament (e.g. 1 Chron. 6:32).

- N.B. 1 Gifts and Ministries can develop or change according to circumstances, e.g. a leader might be used in pastoring initially until other folk can do this and set him free, e.g. for teaching. After the discernment of your gift(s) and ministry remember God can still use you in one of the other inspirational gifts at any time, so listen to his prompting.
- N.B. 2 Gifts may be better exercised by some people in working with young people rather than adults.
- N.B. 3 Eph. 4:11-12 says that Christ “gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, *to prepare God’s people for works of service*”. That means that God wants you to be a minister in the Body of Christ whether or not you are or become a leader. The following passages make it clear that each Christian has a gift for use in the Body of Christ: Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11.

N.B 4 But this gift must be discerned by the church, and used so that the congregation can benefit from it. It is very inefficient in God's service to be doing a job for which he has not given you a gift. But there are occasions when everyone needs to get involved eg. in a practical task, or there aren't enough gifted people to do the tasks required, so others need to help out temporarily.

N.B. 5 Eph. 4:15-16 tells us that it is from Christ that "the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, GROWS AND BUILDS ITSELF UP IN LOVE, AS EACH PART DOES ITS WORK". So using the gift or gifts God has given you is vital to the growth of the church both in maturity and in numbers.

For more detailed teaching on : "Releasing the Local Church in Inspirational Gifts" turn to Appendix 4, page 78.

DISCERNING GIFTS AND MINISTRIES

(A form which may be used by the Ministry Team leader to summarise the discernment of the team for an individual)

GIFTS													TOTAL
Apostle													
Prophet													
Evangelist													
Pastor													
Teacher													
Word of Wisdom													
Word of Knowledge													
Faith													
Gifts of Healing													
Miracles													
Prophecy													
Discernment													
Tongues													
Interpretation													
Helping													
Administration													
Serving													
Teaching													
Exhorting													
Contributing													
Presiding													
Acts of Mercy													
Creative Gifts													
Music													
GIFTS SUMMARY													

More about the General Fellowship Groups

- a. *Where the Ministry Team Members are in the majority* one or two General Fellowship Groups could be formed for the few who did not make the Act of Dedication. One could perhaps be in the daytime. A good name for them is Barnabas Groups (Barnabas means “the son of encouragement”). They should always be run by Ministry Team members so that they do not become cliques, cut off from the mainstream of church life. They should be positive groups for fellowship and teaching. They could have times of prayer, worship and ministering to one another, as well as teaching. There will probably be good reasons why most of the members are not in Ministry Teams. **However, it is possible that there would be a handful of negative people in the group. The leader should be very firm about not letting unhelpful discussion take place in the group.** Hopefully he will be used to steer some members into the “Called to Serve” groups.
- b. *If the number in Ministry Teams is only about half the congregation*, General Fellowship Groups could be held fortnightly, alternating with the Ministry Teams, but open to all. Their main purpose is to provide good biblical teaching and fellowship once a fortnight for all church members, whilst the work of Ministry is carried out on alternate weeks by Ministry Team members.

The Groups should be led by Ministry Team members with a teaching ministry. Personal pastoral care should be carried out by having a system of allocating everyone in the General Fellowship Group to the pastoral care of a Ministry Team.

Opportunities should be sought gradually to encourage the majority of people to join a “Called to Serve” course and Ministry Teams as appropriate.

- c. The members of the General Fellowship Group do not, of course, participate in the ministry and mission of the church.

Setting up new “Called to Serve” Groups

As soon as the existing church members have completed the Course, they should be praying and expecting to see new people come to the church who can be encouraged to join a new “Called to Serve” Group. These will be both Christians moving into your area, and people who come to faith through your evangelism. Some Ministers may prefer **new converts** to be taken individually or in a group through a short basic “follow-up” or discipleship course covering such things as Assurance, the Quiet Time and Resisting Temptation, before they embark on the lengthier and more in-depth “Called to Serve” Course (see page 64). This can also help to fill a gap which may be present before it is possible to start a new group. If the leadership is available and the demand there, it is a good idea to have e.g. three new “Called to Serve” Groups running at seven or eight week intervals so that no-one has to wait more than that length of time after coming to faith before being invited to join a “Called to Serve” Group. Once in the “Called to Serve” Group they can be under pastoral care of a Ministry Team and be invited to attend the Ministry Team, say, monthly. The idea of this is that they see in action what they are learning about in the Course. However the basis of this attendance is in a sense probationary as, if the person did not in the end make the act of dedication, he or she would become a member of the

General Fellowship Group. You will find that once over the major hurdle of the first round of the “Called to Serve” Course, there are rarely any problems with new Christians joining “Called to Serve” groups. They take to the idea of serving God in unity as the norm.

Christians moving into the area who begin to attend your church regularly should *without exception* be invited to join the next “Called to Serve” group before becoming Ministry Team members. However mature they are in the faith, or however they have been used in previous churches, it is vital that they are taught the Vision through “Called to Serve” and are one in heart and mind. Division has been caused in some churches by Christians, who have been leaders elsewhere, coming to “take over” or exercise a ministry without affirmation from the existing leaders. A mature Christian with an attitude of humility will not object to studying “Called to Serve”.

However, care should be taken to ensure that Christians who begin to attend the church regularly are not left too long without regular fellowship. If it is not possible for them to attend a “Called to Serve” group immediately, they could perhaps be invited to a Ministry Team as honorary members, on the understanding that this is on a provisional basis only. They should be invited to a “Called to Serve” group as soon as convenient, and hopefully will be one in heart and mind with the Vision and willing to have gifts and ministries discerned. They can then become full Ministry Team members.

Paying Attention to Leaders

a. Departmental Leaders

Gradually, once ministries have been discerned, you will be in a position to delegate major aspects of the life of the church to others. There could be leaders over Ministry Teams, prayer cells, outreach, worship, young church, administration etc.

b. Ministry to Leaders

If you have not had time for the discernment of gifts and ministries of leaders in the first year of the programme, then this will need to be done as soon as possible in the second year. It will in any case be necessary once the Pilot Group as such has ceased to exist (after teaching the “Called to Serve” Course to the “whole” church), to form a Leaders’ Fellowship. It will entirely depend on the timetable in each church as to how often this meets. Its primary aim, once discernment of gifts has been carried out, is to care for and envision the leaders so that they will be more effective in their ministry. This was Jesus’ method, and will result in better delegation and more effective pastoring of members. Perhaps a monthly Leaders’ Fellowship can be set up, or smaller groups which the Minister leads, e.g. fortnightly, but alternating with a different set of leaders. It is good to include departmental leaders, Ministry Team leaders and spouses and elected representatives, e.g. church wardens or the whole church council, if these folk are in Ministry Teams. It can get too unwieldy if you include all young church leaders or all prayer cell leaders. The leaders’ meetings are not so much to transact business as for worship, prayer, sharing and envisioning. This can have a transforming effect on e.g. a church council who, when they do meet for a business meeting, have already shared time in prayer in the Leaders’ group. There is often not much time for prayer in a committee meeting, but there is no reason why all the major items should not be covered in prayer by the leaders beforehand. The formal decision is of course still made by the elected committee.

The Leaders' Fellowship should become central to the life of the church operating as a theocracy, so that when faced with important decisions, the position is frequently reached when you can say: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." (Strategy Tape 5)

c. New Colleagues

It is obviously vital that the entire staff are one in heart and mind with the Vision and should therefore be included in the first pilot group (if there are any problems, see Appendix 1). If a new appointment is to be made (e.g. a curate, pastoral assistant, full-time youth leader, etc.), the Minister should make a point of taking the prospective candidate through "Called to Serve" and ensuring he/she is one in heart and mind with the Vision, BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT IS MADE. If this is not done, the new colleague would have less understanding of unity of vision than existing leaders, or even worse, could be a divisive influence. NO ASSUMPTIONS SHOULD BE MADE, HOWEVER GOOD THE CANDIDATE MAY BE IN OTHER WAYS.

d. "Ephesians 4" Leadership Teams

As gifts and ministries are discerned and affirmed amongst leaders, it should be possible for the Minister to appoint a small team to share with him in overall leadership. Their gifts should complement his own on the Ephesians 4 model of apostle, prophet, teacher, pastor and evangelist. Some Ministers may prefer to have an Ephesians 4 team as the second circle of leadership, the first circle being a small group of "elders" gifted with prophetic vision for the church.

Corporate Prayer

Although there will be some corporate prayer in the Ministry Teams (for one another in the Fellowship and Teaching evenings and for evangelism etc. once a month), this is not adequate in itself. In Hawkwell we developed an effective system of prayer cells in the first ten years after starting "Called to Serve". After that there was more of an emphasis on regular larger gatherings for corporate prayer.

WHICHEVER METHOD IS USED IT IS IMPORTANT TO AIM TOWARDS THE MINISTRY AND MISSION OF THE PARISH BEING CONCEIVED, BORN AND BRED IN PRAYER.

a. How to start a system of Prayer Cells

As previously recommended, encourage your leaders who have been in the Pilot Group to set aside one hour per week to pray together for the rest of the church as it studies "Called to Serve", and for the setting up of Ministry Teams. The Leaders' Fellowship is then established. (See page 46)

b. Encourage Multiplication of Prayer Cells, involving Ministry Team Members

Leaders are already busy people, but God will often give a significant prayer ministry to other church members. The ideal is for all Ministry Team members also to be invited to attend a weekly prayer cell for one hour per week, after Ministry Teams have been set up. However, if 50% can attend that is a healthy sign. Leaders from the Leaders' Prayer Cell could now be asked to set up and lead other Prayer Cells. Eventually some may be led by people who do not have any other leadership role. Leaders can then just be members of Prayer Cells.

c. Allocate topics to each Prayer Cell, e.g. the youth work, the worship, etc.

d. Develop a Complete System of Communication through Prayer

- i. Appoint a trusted and discerning leader as Prayer Secretary.
- ii. Issue report forms to each prayer cell to be filled in monthly, listing topics prayed for and any main discernment received.
- iii. The Prayer Secretary collects the forms and passes on anything significant to the Minister or departmental leader.
- iv. In turn, the Minister or leader of a department may want a group or all the groups to pray about an important matter. This can be passed on through the Prayer Secretary and discernment conveyed back. An emergency telephone chain system could be devised for really urgent topics.
- v. When contemplating a major development, the Minister could ask all the Leaders' Fellowship members to pray. Through the Prayer Secretary he could share the prayer topic, e.g. about whether to have an evangelistic mission. A date would be set for a meeting of the Leaders' Fellowship when all would come together to share Scriptures, prophetic words, discernment, having prayed about the matter individually, so that agreement is reached. (Hopefully the stage will be reached when all the Church Council members are one in heart and mind, and can be involved in the Leaders' Fellowship. Then any official decision required can be made in the next Council Meeting, in the knowledge that it has already been a matter of prayer.)

e. Further points on prayer cells

- i. The reason for keeping to Ministry Team members is that it is vital to be one in heart and mind in prayer.
- ii. They could meet early morning before work,
during the morning,
lunch hour,
early evening before another meeting.
- iii. The meeting could last from one to two hours.
- iv. They could number between five and seven people. (Any less is too small if someone is away, any bigger inhibits contributions, although it would be possible to meet centrally & break into small groups e.g. prayer triplets.)
- v. Your aim could be for each prayer cell to cover two topics each e.g. one major aspect of the Ministry of the church, and one major aspect of the Mission of the church (perhaps on alternate weeks). There can also be other topics, such as prayer for the nation.

- vi. The Prayer Secretary can discuss with new members which group suits them in terms of time and topic. They should then be committed to that group, with a chance to change groups after 12 months.
- vii. Emphasis should be on outward-looking, intercessory prayer. There is plenty of time for prayer for personal needs on other occasions.
- viii. The Prayer Secretary could call the Prayer Cell Leaders together occasionally, to pray together, to ensure the groups are hearing God, and that the prayer groups are a healthy and vital “nervous system” for the Body.

(For further help especially on the relationship between corporate prayer and decision-making in the church, please listen to the Time Strategy tape 5 : “Motivating the Local Church in Corporate Prayer.”)

The Young Church

Although we do not recommend encouraging young people under the age of 18 to join “Called to Serve” groups, or to form “Ministry Teams”, yet similar principles can be taught and applied.

Before the recognised age of maturity some parents who are not believers might be unhappy about their children taking part in the Service of Dedication or playing a full part in Ministry Teams. We also do not want to “inoculate” the young people by teaching the Course or a “trimmed down” version prematurely. It is best that they can look forward to studying “Called to Serve” when they have left school, or after college.

We do believe that the young people are a vitally important part of the Body of Christ, and once they have become true believers, are capable of deep commitment, unity, serving God, praying together, worshipping freely, using the gifts of the Spirit, witnessing, etc. We do, therefore, encourage young people who are believers to take a full part in the life of the church, especially in the acts of worship, as appropriate. (However in Hawkwell we eventually set up a “youth church” because of the increasing cultural gap between adults & young people, which particularly affects appreciation of styles of worship).

What about young people going away to college? It may be thought preferable to wait until they come back to the church on a more permanent basis, before teaching them “Called to Serve”.

Between 16 and 18 years old it may be helpful to allocate believing young people who regularly attend their youth group to a Ministry Team. This would be to attend just once a month by invitation in order that they can experience something of the life of the teams. It is probably helpful if that is on an evening of general fellowship and teaching.

For **useful resources**

to integrate Sunday sermon, teaching young people on Sundays, & mid week groups we recommend:-

“Learning All Together”
Scripture Union
130 City Road
LONDON EC1V 2NJ

This has the advantage that

- a) It can be used regularly on a Sunday but only as often as necessary midweek.
- b) Members are not taught too many subjects in one week.
- c) There is an excellent handbook for the teacher.
- d) Families can share together as they study the same subjects in different groups.

In some church situations it may be too daunting for the Minister to consider any radical changes in the youth work until the Ministry Teams are well established. However, by the time you have reached the second year of the Ministry Teams the situation should be reviewed.

- ❖ Are the Young Church leaders Ministry Team members who have studied “Called to Serve”?
- ❖ Do all the youth activities fit in harmoniously with the aims and vision of the church?
- ❖ Is the Young Church seen as a vital part of the church?
- ❖ Are sufficient resources provided, financial and otherwise, for the youth work to be effective?
- ❖ Do you as a Minister have good communication with the youth leaders? It may be helpful to appoint an overall Head of Young Church Department to co-ordinate the Young Church Work. You will only then have to liaise with one person. (It is important that you take the initiative to ensure that there is regular formal liaison in this respect).
- ❖ It is important that Young Church Leaders feel called, affirmed and an important part of the fellowship of the church. They should therefore have had their gifts and ministries (re)assessed in Ministry Teams. It is vital that Young Church Leaders are regular in worship and Communion and if necessary they may need to be a priority for offers of Sunday evening baby-sitting.
- ❖ Does the Young Church provide the following for all ages:
 - a) Christian teaching.
 - b) Social activities.
 - c) Opportunities to be involved with the adults in worship.
 - d) Opportunities for serving God, e.g. witnessing, praying, practical jobs, contributing to youth or all age worship.
 - e) Help and follow-up for enquirers and new believers?
- ❖ Do not be afraid to close down areas of Young Church for a time if there is a shortage of resources, particularly leaders. However, if we neglect to aim towards providing proper facilities for both our own children and those outside the church, we may be in danger of missing an opportunity which will not be available again.

Developing Worship

Some churches long to see more freedom in their services but feel hide-bound by tradition or resistant attitudes on the part of some members. True worship comes from the heart and therefore, whatever the outward form, will have greater depth and meaning as people become more committed to the Lord and each other. However there are simple, practical steps which may be taken to encourage greater freedom, whether within a printed liturgical service or a Free Church unwritten liturgy.

A small group of two or three people from a Ministry Team, or a family, could lead a time of intercession.



A few weeks later part of the intercession could be opened up to the whole congregation (or they could be encouraged to contribute short prayers of thanksgiving, or to mention the first names of those who are ill).



This could subsequently be developed into a time of sharing contributions, e.g. an appropriate verse of Scripture. It is a short step from this to using the spoken gifts of the Spirit.



Appropriate worship songs could be sung before and after this “spontaneous slot”.



The development from there is to aim at a blend of liturgy (if such you have) and spontaneity (something planned specifically for that occasion with room for genuinely spontaneous contributions) so that both are regarded as a whole, vital to the worship.

- eg (i) In a liturgical service there could perhaps be an opening hymn, introductory liturgy (confession etc.), then a blend of more liturgy, readings, the Creed, intercession, sermon etc. with worship songs and opportunities for sharing from the congregation. The worship leaders will gradually become more creative, e.g. occasionally the Scripture reading could be to a background of suitable music, or credal-type songs could replace the Creed occasionally. Canticles, Psalms etc. could be said in an antiphonal way by either leader and congregation or two halves of the congregation. There may be a testimony or creative item.
- (ii) We have also witnessed changes in the worship of traditional independent churches from the Minister doing everything, leading the normal hymn-prayer-hymn-notices-hymn-reading-sermon-hymn, to a beautiful blend of worship interwoven with contributions from the congregation, creative items etc.

- (iii) There may be those churches which already have what they regard as completely spontaneous services. Perhaps these need to be examined for depth, e.g. do they include confession, statements of faith, intercession etc?

The aim, whatever our background, is to be open to what the Spirit is doing, without throwing overboard what is good and rich in any tradition. Unfortunately, as no individual or group of people is in tune with the Spirit perfectly all the time, there will be some Sundays when the worship “flows” less well than others.

Your worship leaders will not necessarily be musicians, but those who can work well with the Minister, who are sensitive to the Spirit and creative in worship. In a good service there will be many people involved: perhaps the Minister taking part of the liturgy and preaching; the worship leaders taking over some of the liturgy, leading in songs, drawing out contributions from the congregation; a group of musicians; Scripture readers; those leading in intercession; those involved in a creative item; those welcoming folk at the door, or doing practical jobs, etc., or ministering to people in need after the service.

If you have services at different times or places on a Sunday, it might be appropriate to have a variety of some which are more traditional than others, with perhaps a completely “free” service on occasions in an evening.

When a Minister moves on

It is better not to embark on the Time Strategy unless you are able to stay 3-5 years minimum to oversee its outworking. If there is a possibility that you may move to another church or retire, it is important to prepare the church for continuity of ministry. Failure to do this could lead to serious frustration and damage to the church. For this reason ensure that your leaders know the Strategy thoroughly, as described in this book and the Strategy tapes and notes.

Those involved in the appointment of the next minister should ensure that anyone interviewed has a full set of “Time” leader’s resources and studies them together with “Called to Serve”, before (s)he comes for an interview. If the Church Council has adopted a similar motion to that on pp.20 & 21 then they are in a position to insist that a new minister is one in heart and mind with the Vision, the teaching in “Called to Serve”, and will continue to implement the Time Strategy. Although you may not yourself be in a position to influence the actual choice of successor, you can at least prepare those who will make the choice. We trust too that you will implement the Time Strategy elsewhere. Please notify Time Ministries of the changes.

An Overview of Suggested Pattern of Groups in the Church

Year 1

1. Leaders' "Called to Serve" group (supported by Minister's prayer cell), followed by:-
2. Members' "Called to Serve" groups (supported by Leaders' prayer cell).

Year 2

1. Leaders and members allocated to Ministry Teams (these could include one afternoon group).
2. One or more General Fellowship group(s) (See detailed description on page 45).
3. Leaders' Fellowship (monthly?). (See page 46)
4. A small number of prayer cells (See page 47).
5. A new "Called to Serve" group (for any more churchmembers, new Christians, Christians moving into the area). (See page 45)

(During the first two years decisions should be made about disbanding any church groups which are no longer serving a useful purpose and to ensure that all necessary groups are run by Ministry Team members).

Year 3

1. Ministry Teams continue (and possibly the numbers of them are increased).
2. General Fellowship group(s) continue.
3. Leaders' Fellowship group continues.
4. Prayer cells multiply, including to pray for groups in (5) and (6) below as well as other aspects of the ministry and mission of the church.
5. A Faithsharing group is started for those *enquiring about Christianity*.
6. A Discipleship group is started for those who have just *come to faith*. (See page 64).
7. New "Called to Serve" group(s) are started for those who have been in the discipleship group, and for Christians moving into the area (Page 45).

Year 4

All the above are functioning, and we would expect to see Ministry Team members leading e.g. Mums & Toddlers, Men's groups with an evangelistic emphasis, or groups to broaden the social outreach of the church e.g. lunch club for the elderly.

- ◆ **We recommend an annual Rededication Service, in which leaders and Ministry Team members reaffirm their commitment to aim towards the Vision, by God's grace. New Ministry Team members could be publicly welcomed at this service. Ministry Team leaders should carry out a review with their members, prior to the Rededication Service, to check whether everyone is still aiming to fulfil the Vision, including serving the Lord in unity with the Body. (Where this is not the case, attendance at a General Fellowship Group should be recommended).**

Review the Activities of Your Church

By now the major part of the programme of the church should be taken up with worship, Ministry Teams, General Fellowship Groups, prayer cells, outreach and ministry to leaders, with committees meeting less frequently because each aspect can be covered in a prayer cell, and discernment conveyed. If the timetable is too crowded it may be necessary to take a fresh look at all the activities of the church. It can be an important exercise for any church to ask God what is in the centre of his purposes, or whether anything is being perpetuated for its own sake. One can also be more inventive about fitting some meetings into slots in the timetable rather than taking up a whole evening. E.g. musicians could meet for one hour prior to the evening service, to rehearse. It is important that people are not overburdened in serving the Lord.

**WE TRUST YOU WILL EXPERIENCE GOD'S RICH BLESSING AS
YOU SEEK TO IMPLEMENT THE THREE-YEAR TIME MINISTRY
PROGRAMME**

See pages 55 - 61 re development after the first three years.

Wider Mission

After three years, as well as developing the ministry and mission of your church through the Ministry Teams and prayer cells, you may be ready to consider looking beyond your parish or area at your wider mission in the spirit of Acts 1:8.

AS PART OF THAT, IS THE LORD CALLING YOUR CHURCH TO PROMOTE THE MISSION OF TIME MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL?

- a) By setting up a prayer group, and/or
- b) By giving, and/or
- c) By being involved yourself and with your church in sharing the principles with other ministers and their leaders, encouraging churches to use “Called to Serve” and to implement the Time Strategy.

Jesus says to each church: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

If you encourage other churches to be :

“Together for Intercession, Ministry and Evangelism”

using the Time Strategy, this is an ideal way of releasing churches in evangelism and therefore reaching greater numbers for Jesus Christ.

Do not wait until your own church is perfect or your evangelism to your own “Jerusalem” is thorough. Start reaching out now to your “Judaea and Samaria” and even further afield and God will bless your church as you give out in this way. (Contact Time Ministries UK for details)

The Lord may also want you to develop other ways of reaching out with the love of Christ beyond your immediate geographical area. It is better to specialise as a church in order to make an impact. e.g. is there an aspect of social care which you should major on, or should you campaign about a particular area of injustice in your country? You may also want to review the missionary societies which you support. Are there one or two which should be your speciality, so that you can become informed as a church, increase your giving, have a personal link with a missionary, or even send out missionaries “to the ends of the earth”?

Church Planting

As you apply the Time Strategy principles, your church should develop a healthy life of every member ministry and on-going evangelism, on a basis of unity and covered in prayer. You may well soon be ready to plant a new church.

Church planting is sometimes dismissed by ministers as a task only for specialists with big ministries and big churches. This is not correct. It is a vital part of mission which *every church* should consider once they have gone through the Time Strategy. It is not only the method of evangelism which the early church quite naturally used, but it is still the most effective means of evangelism today. So, any church with over 100 adult members ought to begin considering a church plant once it has implemented the Time Strategy.

Why plant a new church?

There are probably as many reasons for church planting as there are new churches, but here are some of them:

- It is biblical and the most effective method of evangelism.
- It increases the variety of Christian witness and worship and makes it culturally relevant to specific communities.
- It enables closer personal relationships within the (smaller) church.
- it brings a dynamic challenge to discipleship whilst creating new and greater opportunities for development of an individual's gifts and ministry.
- It is the most positive solution to a full church building.

What type of new church?

Each church must develop its own character and sense of identity within the biblical principles and practical methods of the Time Strategy. This should take shape before the public launch and must:

- Be relevant to the surrounding community.
- Reflect the characters of the individuals within the church.

The relationship between the “mother church” and the new church needs to be worked out at an early stage. It is important to make a clear decision on this and **agree how authority and decision making will work out in practice** before planting, in order to avoid problems at a later stage. There are basically three types: a daughter church, a linked church and an independent church.

A *daughter church* will simply establish a separate morning congregation, but all other groups (discipleship, “Called to Serve”, prayer cells etc) remain combined.

A *linked church* starts with a close relationship with the mother church but they become sister churches once it has become established. They share some resources, worship together (e.g. at least monthly in an evening) and the overall leaders will meet together regularly. However a separate system of mid-week groups etc. is gradually developed.

An *independent church* will aim towards independence as soon as possible.

(There is also a *shared venue church*. e.g. one over-large congregation divides into two and meet in the same building at different times on a Sunday. However this is not ideal for evangelism as it is not breaking new ground geographically.)

How to plant a church

There are three basic methods of beginning a new church:

1. A Church Planter

Here an individual with a special gifting moves into an area and begins the work on his own. This method is not recommended by Time Ministries except in exceptional circumstances and with substantial church backing.

2. A Mission Team

In this situation a leader with a nucleus of people begin a work in a new area or amongst a new group of unreached people. A Ministry Team could be relocated to meet in the geographical area planned for the church plant, but the new church should only be started when this group or groups have borne fruit in evangelism.

3. Sub-division

This is where a single church decides to set up a new centre of worship and witness within the (large) area which it already covers. Existing Ministry Teams are divided up (with possibly some change in membership) between the two churches and given newly defined geographical areas which they will cover for evangelistic and pastoral purposes.

Preparing to plant - 10 steps

1. Prayerfully consider the plan to plant a new church

- a) The church leadership prayerfully considers the plan.
- b) It is shared with the Ministry Team members for further prayer.

2. The whole church is prepared through relevant biblical teaching

It is just as important to prepare the existing church for a sense of loss and period of readjustment, as it is to prepare those who will be involved in the church plant.

3. Communicate with other churches

Choose an area where there are no other churches or where there is little life in existing churches. Speak to the leaders of other churches in the area where you are considering planting the new church. Assure them of your support and seek theirs. Make clear your intention is not to steal their congregation but instead to work with them to evangelise the area. It is unwise to plant a church using a building too close to an existing church building, as this gives an impression to the wider church and the world of division.

4. Set up a core leadership group of around 10 people

Initially this group should prepare more detailed plans for the new church. It should be anticipated that they will go on to spearhead the new work (though this should be reviewed before the church is set up). But you may also want to include others with particular gifts e.g. administration, who may be brought in to help at the preparation stage only. There may be other changes and additions to this group as things develop.

5. Investigate the area

The core group should pray, discuss, survey the area and formulate plans.

6. The decision to plant is made by the Church Council

7. Recruit the core members of the new church

Indicate any special factors such as the geographical area or cultural group which has been targeted and the number needed to start the new work. The latter will largely depend on the size of the “mother church” but about 30 is workable, 50 provides a strong start and over 50 is a bonus (and rare).

Invite members to offer themselves after prayer, on the understanding that some may not be accepted. Be prepared to pray yourself and approach people who have not offered, if necessary. You will also need to be prepared to send some of your key leaders. The core group should be existing Ministry Team members or leaders.

8. Build the team

Begin to meet together for worship in the new location to build relationships. Do not rush straight into the public launch. Wait until you feel relaxed together and have begun to develop your own approach to mission and ministry.

9. Break the ground

Begin to pray for the area/people (e.g. use prayer walks), use public witness (e.g. Praise March), conduct a more detailed community survey, introduce yourselves and offer your services to schools and other agencies in the community, and begin personal evangelism in the area. Make plans for enquirers’ groups, discipleship groups & “Called to Serve”.

10. Plan the launch

This should be a high profile event with lots of publicity and perhaps a big name speaker. It could also be planned to coincide with a major festival. Use the media and leaflet the area. It is quite possible to double the size of the church from this event, so think and plan for immediate growth.

IT IS VITAL THAT THE CORE GROUP IS FORMED OF MINISTRY TEAM MEMBERS WHO ARE ONE IN HEART AND MIND WITH THE VISION. THE NEWLY PLANTED CHURCH CAN THEN BEGIN TO DEVELOP ON THE LINES OF THE TIME STRATEGY, AS NEW CHRISTIANS JOIN “CALLED TO SERVE” GROUPS. THE NEW CHURCH WILL BE

“TOGETHER FOR INTERCESSION, MINISTRY AND EVANGELISM”.

Whether the church plant is of the “linked” or “independent” type, if both the planting and the planted church are using the Time Strategy, there is obvious harmony of vision between them.

Developments in Local Evangelism

Not only will suitable methods of evangelism differ according to the cultural context of a local church, but it will also be necessary to review what is appropriate in a particular area every few years. Eg. in the 1970s and early 1980s, door-to-door visitation was still a relevant method of evangelism in parts of the U.K., building on the residual faith in a community. In the 1990s this method had actually become counter-productive in our post-Christian society.

At the turn of the millennium friendship evangelism appears to be the way forward, ie. discovering contexts in which bridges may be built and relationships formed between Christians and non - Christians, leading to the presentation of the gospel (usually over a period of time). It has been increasingly recognised that most people come to faith gradually and, for most, involvement in the faith community pre - dates their own personal commitment. It is also important to build bridges with the non - Christian friends of a new Christian, because the longer a person has been a Christian, the more his friendships are likely to be with Christians. The "Alpha" Course (pp. 64 - 65) has been so successful partly because new friendships are made over meals, the Gospel is presented over a period of time, and those coming to faith invite their friends to the next course.

What is the future for Ministry Team Evangelism?

A Specialist Ministry Team may want to organise on-going evangelistic programmes such as "Alpha", men's breakfasts or suppers with testimonies, mothers and toddlers groups (including a brief Bible story for the children) and youth outreach. Special evangelistic events may also be organised.

A General Practice Ministry Team needs to retain and enhance its evangelistic concern for the unchurched people in the Team areas. Methods need to be continually reviewed, lest they become stale and unfruitful.

- * Ministry Teams could run an "Alpha" course on a rota basis, or organise Bereavement or Parenting courses etc. (Resources available from publishers such as CPAS or Bible Society).
- * One Ministry Team could become an open homegroup (on the cell group model) perhaps just for one year, inviting in neighbours and friends. They could run a simple Bible study course leading into "Called to Serve".
- * Bridge-building social evenings (occasionally with an evangelistic epilogue) always seem relevant.
- * Blanket leaflet distribution prior to evangelistic services is always worthwhile, with one or two strategic visits being made to contacts formed through friendship.
- * Ministry Teams can support centrally - organised evangelistic efforts in prayer and practical ways (eg. ministry to men, mothers and toddlers groups etc).
- * Ministry Teams could be rostered to take part in evangelistic services.

10 Years On

A testimony about the Time Strategy in Hawkwell Parish Church, UK, ten years after the first Dedication Service (1983 -1993).

“TOGETHER” Before the implementation of the biblical principles and practical methods of what is now called the Time Strategy, Hawkwell was a very divided church. The change after prayer, spiritual warfare and teaching the Vision through the ‘Called to Serve’ Course, was remarkable. The church began to function as a dynamic, living Body. Initially there was a reaction on the part of a small number to the Dedication Service and Ministry Teams. One existing home group refused to co-operate with the Ministry Team system. It was allowed to continue informally, but was no longer announced officially as part of the church structure. It eventually dissolved itself. The steps of church discipline outlined in Matthew 18:15-20 were taken in a few extreme cases. A small number of leaders and members left. Most of the opposition to a biblical challenge to deeper commitment had in fact surfaced before the introduction of the Vision. After about two years, negative reaction to the Strategy ceased. Meanwhile the foundations for future development and growth were being laid very carefully, so that the “building” would be strong enough to withstand temporary internal weaknesses or shocks from external attack. The enemy has tried all kinds of tactics to seek to damage us, but we praise God that the overall picture is of a united, healthy Body, full of life and with a sense of purpose.

“Intercession” The church seeks to operate as a theocracy, hearing God, interceding, communicating matters for prayer and conveying direction given through prayer. The first prayer cell multiplied to 25 prayer cells, covering different aspects of the life of the church and Time Ministries International. Approximately 50% of the Ministry Team Members attend these prayer cells in addition to their group. The Leaders’ Fellowship also meets for prayer. We normally reach unity of heart and mind over major issues which are then actioned by the Church Council, which only meets six times per year. Any difference of opinion in the Council is usually over smaller, practical matters which may not have been made a matter of prayer.

“Ministry” The system of sharing the work of ministry with Ministry Teams works extremely well. They carry out practical jobs on a rota basis; contribute to the Sunday worship e.g. in leading the intercessions; make pastoral visits; have regular times of prayer for the church and parish and engage in monthly evangelism. Each member’s gifts and ministry are discerned. More recently we have found the need to re-discern the ministry of more long-standing members, and pay greater attention to matching gifts to an actual job. “Ephesians 4” Ministry Teams now take a lead in the congregations including the Minister who has oversight. The leading pastor, teacher, evangelist and prophet encourage those with related roles in the Ministry Teams. Prayer co-ordinators, administrators, and those involved in the worship and Young Church also meet together. It has been found that those who did not have to go through the struggles of the earlier years take all this for granted. We have found it necessary from time to time to re-emphasise different aspects of the Vision and put new challenges (usually connected with outreach) to the congregation. Constant vigilance is necessary to “guard the flock” and ensure that problems are dealt with at an early stage.

“Evangelism” It was about three years after the first Dedication Service before evangelism in our “Jerusalem” could really be said to be a major feature of the life of the church. Ministry Team members were initially fearful or apathetic about doing evangelism. We had to meet together for prayer, voicing our fears, confessing, resisting the enemy and asking for God’s power. We also had to be very systematic about planning evangelism into the Ministry Team timetable, making practical suggestions and asking for a report after the event. In addition we held parish-wide evangelistic events. It was not long before evangelism became integral to the life of the Ministry Teams and the whole church. As people saw results from their efforts and prayers this provided a stimulus to further growth. In the UK only 10% attend church regularly, but some may only be nominal Christians. In a materialistic post-Christian society, evangelism is hard-going. We found that with a continuous programme of evangelism, between 20 and 50 people made a profession of faith each year. There was a net average increase of 15 each year to the Ministry Team Membership, from approximately 100 in 1983 to approximately 250 by the end of 1992, the vast majority of whom live within a short distance of our church buildings. The Young Church grew in similar proportion to approximately 200. Most of our young people, except for those who move away geographically, study “Called to Serve” when they are 18 and join Ministry Teams. There are approximately 30 folk who attend church regularly but for various practical reasons (e.g. some are members of an old people’s home which has its own mid-week events) are not involved in the Ministry Teams. There is one Barnabas Group and the majority of its members eventually transfer to ‘Called to Serve’ groups. There are also enquirers and visitors who attend on Sundays. Two congregations have been “planted”, and we need to plant another. A full-time staff of two clergy oversee the development of the three churches, assisted by their wives and volunteer administrators. The Rector and his wife concentrate on the wider mission of the church, which another couple are employed to administer.

The wider mission has flourished with social outreach developing in particular to our “Judaea” through a Cancer Support Group and in numerous other ways. We have witnessed to our nation by taking a stand over biblical truth and morality. Our wider mission “Time Ministries International”, which promotes the Time Strategy in both the UK and many other countries, is flourishing and is now shared by a network of churches in the UK and abroad. Many hundreds of churches have used or are using “Called to Serve”.

It is a joy to be part of the Body of Christ in Hawkwell. We are an ordinary group of imperfect people whom the Lord chooses to use to extend His Kingdom. We continually review the outworking of the Time Strategy and are convinced that it is a God-given tool for church development and mission. To God be the glory.

“Second Generation Syndrome”

When “Called to Serve” is first launched in a church and the Time Strategy, in one form or another is implemented, there is usually great excitement. There may be hurdles to be overcome but that causes those who are enthusiastic about the Vision to be even more determined to see it fulfilled.

Once all is running smoothly - either a whole church or a core group are united in serving the Lord - discouragement may set in. It might be over evangelism, usually because new methods need to be tried (as described on p. 59). It might be over prayer. Prayer cells may be right for some churches - others prefer prayer triplets or perhaps an emphasis on all the leaders meeting together for prayer. Different methods should be explored. It could be over every member ministry. Sometimes the challenge is that many began to serve the Lord for the first time in Ministry Teams, then took on a role in the church and perhaps have become over-loaded. Whilst still attending their homegroup Ministry Team, do they need to concentrate on their role in the church, whilst others step into their shoes in the Team?

However, as the years go by, those who study “Called to Serve” do so because it is normal church practice. There isn’t the same sense of excitement. It could be that people go into Ministry Teams as a matter of course when they may not really be ready. There may be a grave danger of old problems recurring - whether disunity, or half-hearted discipleship etc.

One solution after several years of implementing the Strategy, could be for **new Christians** to study Sessions 2 - 10 only of “Called to Serve” before going into General Practice Ministry Teams as Associate Members. (Older teenagers and students could also follow suit). Then those who show deeper interest in serving God in more challenging ways, do a training course - which consists of Sessions 1 and 11 - 20 of “Called to Serve”. In that way, in a “Second Generation” church, one can ensure that only those *actually ready* to serve the Lord, study the whole of “Called to Serve”, make the Act of Dedication and have gifts and ministries discerned.

In the case of existing members of Ministry Teams, who still agree with the Vision in theory, but have become apathetic about fulfilling it in practice, especially serving God, Associate Membership of the team should also be considered. This needs to be managed carefully, but it could be explained before the annual Dedication that to make the declaration involves putting the Vision into practice. Obviously anyone who disagrees with the Vision, or is undermining the unity of the team or church, cannot make the Act of Dedication and stay in a Ministry Team. But some may still agree with it all, but have cooled off in enthusiasm. It should be explained that such people are loved and affirmed and may remain in the Ministry Team as Associate Members (as long as they are not divisive), until such time as they feel ready to take on responsibility in the team or church once more. We did this in Hawkehill without causing any ill-feeling - in fact about a dozen people after many years of active service, were relieved to have a respite for a while. For the rest there was a sense of having firmed up on the practical implications of the Vision.

Although Jesus’ standards of discipleship are very high, in reality we all vary at times in our lives as to the depth of our allegiance to Him. Every local church should allow for this reality in its structures, making it possible for people to move in and out of positions of responsibility and active service. If there is no room for such a possibility, people will remain in Ministry Teams through fear of having no fellowship, rather than for the positive motive of actively fulfilling the Vision.

My Church is not ready for the Time Strategy

The majority of your church members may not be ready to study “Called to Serve” in its entirety, or form Ministry Teams, but there are steps you can take:

1. Consider teaching “Called to Serve” in 3 modules:

In the index to “Called to Serve” you will notice that the contents have been divided into 3 sections. It is possible to use Section 1 (Sessions 1 - 6) for enquirers or to clarify the faith of Christians; Section 2 (Sessions 7 - 12) are a follow-up/discipleship course or to lead any Christian into deeper understanding of the Christian life; Section 3 (Sessions 13 - 20) may be used to prepare those willing to be involved in active service in the church.

There are some advantages in this approach for new Christians even where a whole church has initially tackled the “Called to Serve” course and the Strategy in the recommended manner. In this way those who come to faith are not rushed into making the act of dedication.

2. Consider teaching “Called to Serve” to a pilot group who go on either to form one “General Practice” Ministry Team, or to be used by the Minister in key roles in the church. Later there may be other people ready to study the Course.

N.B. Loose-leaf edition of “Called to Serve”

This may be ordered either for church members who would feel daunted by a whole book, but would cope with receiving a Session at a time;
or it may be bound by the Time Office in 3 modules for use as described above.

If there still appears to be hindrances to renewal in the life of your church, consider the following possibilities:

Scenario (1)

You may need
a breakthrough in Renewal

Perhaps there are only two or three people interested in renewal and new ways of serving God.

- Do you teach Baptism in the Spirit in a definite way and offer to pray for people individually?
- Have you taken church members to a conference on renewal, or invited a renewal team to your church?
- Have you invited church members to study a renewal course such as “Saints Alive!” (Address on page 65).

After that you should have enough people to form at least one “Called to Serve” group and therefore one “Ministry Team”.

Then see the following Scenario.

Scenario (2)

You may need
more church members to come to a personal faith.

Perhaps you have enough people who are at least interested in renewal, to form one “Called to Serve” Group, but the rest of the church seem unlikely to respond to an invitation to the “Called to Serve” Course.

We recommend the approach of offering as much opportunity as possible to the church members to grow in faith, before going to the “highways and byways” (Luke 14:15-24).

- Do person-to-person evangelism with church members. It may be that they have become “gospel-hardened” by sermons, but would respond to a personal approach, or they have made a private response but are unable to verbalise it, or have no assurance of salvation.

Evangelism Explosion (U.K. address on page 65) is one excellent method of training leaders in personal evangelism, especially in discovering where someone stands spiritually and leading them on to assurance of faith, in the context of a pastoral visit.

- **Organise an “Alpha” Course** (or any course suitable for enquirers or new Christians). This is also an excellent method for clarifying the faith of people who have attended church for a long time, but may not have assurance of faith.

The Alpha Course is a ten week practical introduction to the Christian faith. It is designed primarily for non-churchgoers and those who have recently become Christians. However it is also useful for clarifying the faith of church-members. Alpha is a flexible and practical model which can work for any size group. It is a simple and effective way of presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ in a clear and non-threatening manner to people from all walks of life. Several hundred churches use it in the U.K. and overseas.

After the Alpha Course or Discipleship Group, those who make a profession of faith go into “Called to Serve” Groups, followed by “Ministry Teams”. Although there is some initial overlap of subject matter with “Called to Serve”, this is beneficial for a young Christian.

Further evangelism should then take place, particularly concentrating on newcomers or outsiders, and the same system of groups repeated.

Scenario (3)

You may have
a blockage in Evangelism
if neither of the above approaches has been successful.

It could be you are facing some major demonic opposition and you need help in Spiritual Warfare. It is possible there is an entrenched “power block” of inherited leaders in your church who may be resistant to evangelism, or unwelcoming to newcomers.

See Time Strategy Tape 4 on “Overcoming Obstacles”.

N.B. It is important to state that we are not casting doubts on the genuine faith of many church members who are more traditional in approach, or who would not apply terms such as “born again” or “saved” or “renewed” to themselves. Many churchgoers with traditional attitudes have a deep faith, but some are not open to learning more, or to serving the Lord, or discovering more of the ways of the Holy Spirit. This can become a problem if such people form a majority in a church, or if they are resistant to changes in others. However, during the “Decade of Evangelism”, many churches came to recognise that constructive developments in the church are necessary, if newcomers and young people are to be made welcome and encouraged to grow in the faith.

Addresses:

“Evangelism Explosion”,

228 Shirley Road, Southampton,
Hants. SO1 3HR, U.K.

“Saints Alive”,

Anglican Renewal Ministries, 45 Friar Gate,
Derby. DE1 1DA, U.K.

“Alpha”

Holy Trinity Brompton, Brompton Road,
LONDON. SW7 1JA, U.K.