



Week beginning July 25th, 2010

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Bringing Life to the Heart of 1066 Country, and beyond

The challenge of numbers . . .

When people ask, "How big is the church you attend?" they normally have in mind either how many people attend on Sundays or how many names appear on the church Membership list.

Numbers can be misleading. *Occupying a chapel seat or having a name on a list is no guarantee that there will be personal faith and changes in behaviour and lifestyle to indicate that those people are really following Christ.*

Even counting those who have made "a decision for Christ" may not be much help. Those who "decide for Christ" do not always go on to maturity, reproducing disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Earlier in the year in "Eastenders" there was an episode after which cameras went around the set to show the viewer behind the scenes. We learnt that when people come out of the door of the Queen Victoria pub they are not really leaving the public bar we saw a few seconds earlier. The bar and external door are at two different locations, so separate takes of film are joined to give the illusion of continuity of movement. What seems like a busy pub bar is in fact completely open on one side to allow for film crew access.

Is there any danger that the experience of Christian worship can at times be like a film set where nothing is quite what it seems at first sight?

Number-counting is no guarantee that the congregation will function as an effective spiritual body. How many attend says nothing about the friendliness of the people, or whether they are building each other up, or ministering to the surrounding non-Christian population as effective disciples of Christ. Relationships require time and effort to build.

continues . . .

Battle Baptist Church is Life with Hope Trust; registered charity 1134288, Mount Street, Battle, East Sussex TN33 0EG. • Website: www.battlebaptistchurch.org.uk • Telephone and answerphone (01424) 774825 • Email: office@battlebaptistchurch.org.uk • Fax: (01424) 775875. • Caterpillar Preschool (01424) 774997, closed for Summer holiday. • This week our office will open from Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm. • Material for the *Weekly Bulletin* must be clearly written and signed in the special office book, or typed and signed, or emailed, *no later than Wednesday*.

Also, quantity is no guarantee of quality. Every attempt needs to be made to avoid the marketing techniques of the world to "pile 'em high and sell 'em cheap" where God's Good News is concerned.

Another danger in modern churches is that in an attempt to seem "relevant" they easily fall into the trap of trying to "package" Christianity, as if new converts are signing up for a Thomas Cook's Voyage of Discovery.

On a package holiday people may make casual acquaintances: the couple you share a drink with, the family with children the same age as yours, and so on. However, "church" as God intended, cannot function properly if our only relationship with others is a nod in the direction of other attendees, and the false bonhomie of sharing "the Peace," or "the Grace," when for 15 seconds it's easy to fake ecstatic delight at seeing a "brother" or "sister" whose name we don't know!

During personal conversations people often comment positively about how much they appreciate the practical care and concern shown to them by Members of our fellowship. This is good. It suggests that beneath the surface of Sunday worship relationships *are* being built, and needs both practical and spiritual, are being met.

I commend to everyone the work of our pastoral team. This also is a way in which relationships can be built across our various congregations. If it's not convenient to meet at your home, suggest somewhere else. *Christian discipleship involves more than a flurry of religious activity on Sundays.*

Good Christian relationships don't fall from Heaven. They have to be worked at, and *are* worth building.

Your friend and pastor,
Dennis

News, notes and prayer opportunities

Doug Nolan reaches a significant birthday this Thursday, July 29th! •

We extend our love and sympathy to **Polly Nicholson** whose stepfather has died, and to **Mary Jones** whose brother-in-law suddenly died last week.

Last year about 1,000 delicious cakes were donated for our residential youth-event **Soul Survivor**. This year **Pat and Dennis** are looking for 750 small cakes and cookies. Please bring cakes and cookies (in tins you don't need returned) to The Manna House *this week*, July 28th and 29th (Wednesday and Thursday). *Thank you!*

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

SUMMER PROGRAMME

— please note the changes —

In line with local schools we are taking our customary summer break from most of our usual activities. Be sure to collect our "Summer 2010" leaflet. Opened, you might fix the programme to your fridge door. *It will keep you up-to-date with what's happening until the end of August.*

Sunday, Sunday, July 25th. 10am: CHAPEL MEETING, plus Sunday Club and crèche. (Refreshments after.) • 6.30pm: Youth-style Meeting at the Chapel. *Open to all.*

Monday. 10am to 11.30am: Parent and Toddler Group.

Tuesday. 3pm: Thanksgiving Service at the Chapel to remember Barbara Key.

Wednesday 6.30pm: Youth and Adult football training at Claverham.

Friday to Wednesday. Soul Survivor Youth Camp.

Sunday, August 1st. 10am: CHAPEL MEETING, plus Sunday Club and crèche. (Refreshments after.) • 6.30pm: HEALING AND COMMUNION SERVICE at the Chapel. *Open to all.*

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH MEETING

At the recent church meeting we supported and agreed the transfer of the membership of Bob and Ellis Harper to Sidley Baptist Church. Rob, Ros and Becky Thomas are also moving to Sidley Baptist Church. We trust the Lord will bless and use them there.

- There was a discussion regarding our separate congregations occasionally worshipping together and it was overwhelmingly agreed that there would be 6 to 8 occasions in 2011 when we would all worship together at Claverham.
- Rob Duffill our treasurer reported that in the three months from April to June giving had been about £50 a week below target.
- John Southam reported the good news of recent planning permission for the proposed extensions to our buildings as funds permitted. It was agreed to hold a day of prayer and fasting in the early autumn particularly about the construction of a new and enlarged prayer room and an extension to The Manna House.
- Everyone was reminded of our policy of not canvassing for sponsored events in the context of worship or other church activities.

Concerning next Sunday evening's Healing and Communion Service: If you part of our Prayer-ministry Team, or Healing-prayer Group, or a member of the pastoral team, and will be attending, please let Francis know if you will be willing assist. Thank you. •

Applications for Membership have been received from **Chris Nolan** and **Joshua Thomas**. Observations are invited to an elder in the usual manner.

Please contact **Andy Garlick** before July 29th (this Thursday) if you can deliver Youth Team publicity leaflet for our Football Club to the small estates in Battle. Thank you.

Could you lend Dennis a cool box, please, for Soul Survivor later this week? *We need four in all.* Please let him know as soon as possible. *Thank you.* •

If you'd like to help with refreshments from September at our **Thursday After School Club**, please speak with **Andy Garlick** a.s.a.p. **Football.**

If you can wash the kit for our new Youth Team from September 10th to April 11th (expenses paid), please contact **Gary Walsh.** *Thank you!*

Caroline and Colin Oliver write: "Thank you **Andy and church Staff**, and all who helped and encouraged at the great SPREE weekend; *and a massive 'thank you' to all who donated cakes.* They went down a treat!"

This week please pray: for (1) those going to Soul Survivor on August 3rd; (2) next week's 6.30pm Healing and Communion Service; (3) our Football Club and teams. *Thank you.*

What if . . .

What if we treated our Bible like we treat our mobile phone?

What if we carried it around with us?

What if we used it several times every day?

What if we made sure it was always with us?

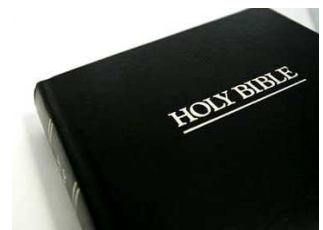
What if we used it for text-messages?

What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?

What if we gave it to our children as a gift?

What if we used it when travelling?

What if we had it with us in emergencies?



– Adapted from *Focus* (SOON Ministries)

Dennis Nolan (pastor); Francis Willoughby (associate minister);
Our other elders: John Southam (church manager);
Rob Duffill (treasurer); Andy and Jo Garlick.
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