

Account of Purley on Thames

A Five Year Plan for the Church

R200543 24/2/2018

By Derek Taylor 2nd April 1970 - original is N001149

A FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR PURLEY PARISH CHURCH

Forward in Faith

As a Church in the 1970's we need to be clear in our minds as to where we are going and why. It is essential for us to be forward looking and keep pace with the rapid development in Purley and the changes in the life of the Church as a whole.

Many people are out of touch with the Church, although in sympathy with its ideals. We must be seen to be active in the community, concerned about the community, showing the relevance of the Christian Faith to the community.

Through much agonising prayer, we must seek to know the will of God for us today and not shrink from following it. Our aim is to build up God's kingdom in Purley in his way.

THE PARISH CHURCH

It is obvious to all that the Parish Church is extremely badly sited for the parish. It can never become a building into which people call for an odd five minutes. Because of its isolation it has to be kept locked. It is useless as a site for advertising and publicity posters. It is doubtful if it could ever become the centre, even in the spiritual sense, from which the Christian outreach is made.

Purley must be unique as a village in having no physical centre of the community - no public house, no shopping centre, no central Church. The schools and the Memorial Hall provide certain centres of focus, but are inevitably limited in their approach and appeal.

The Church is thus presented with an opportunity for becoming the centre of the community if it takes the formidable step of moving its building to a more central site.

There is such a particular site on the main road which, it has been ascertained, could be made available.

A Church complex could be built with a Church of traditional style, which could incorporate many of the furnishings and features of the existing building, and a small hall for Church use, which would in no way rival the existing Memorial Hall but rather could encourage and complement it.

Vast problems are raised by such a scheme, but, with the realignment of the main A329: road, Purley will become a more readily identifiable unit, and the Church must be in advance of such a state.

Much prayer, thought and planning will have to be undertaken before making any irrevocable decisions, but if such a scheme is to go ahead it will have to be officially launched by September, 1970. If this be God's will (and he will make it plain one way or another) then we must not allow tradition, prejudice or self-will to frustrate his plans. We must go forward in faith.

PLANNING

In whatever direction God leads us, we need to be efficiently organised for effective mission. It is hoped, therefore, to divide the Parochial Church Council into three sub-committees, each with delegated authority and responsibility and each with a lay chairman. These will be concerned with,

1. Mission
2. Finance
3. Building.

The P.C.C. as a whole will meet regularly to formulate policy on such issues as Sunday School work, Baptism preparation and follow-up, Confirmation preparation, evangelism.

MISSION

As part of the outreach of the Church it is planned to establish the following:

HOME MEETINGS - for discussion of the faith and for drawing in outsiders.

HOME COMMUNIONS to be held mid-week in various homes especially to enable the more elderly and less mobile members to receive Communion regularly.

PERSONAL EVANGELISM - deliberate, planned evangelism by individuals or pairs, for which some LAY TRAINING will be essential.

GREATER RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS OVERSEAS MISSIONS especially our own missionary link in India.

FINANCE

Any new building programme will entail considerable expense on the part of the Parish Church. Some help could be forthcoming from the diocese, but we need to raise at least £20,000 by ourselves. This may need a miracle, but it is not impossible and miracles do happen.

In September, 1970, a NEW BUILDING FUND will be launched and a few sizeable donations to initiate it would be most welcome. At the same time we must seriously consider our own standard of giving to the Church and encourage more people to covenant and to join the Free-will Offering scheme. Christian Stewardship of money need not involve a high-pressure sales campaign with signed pledges, but it does require every member of the Church to consider his giving prayerfully.

The most satisfactory and satisfying method of raising money is by direct giving, with the occasional fund-raising event that has a social and community angle in addition.

The P.C.C. or its sub-committee will have to review the whole income and expenditure of the Church.

BUILDING

Apart from the new building which must be undertaken, we have to ensure that our present plant is attractive, for people will not come to a cold and dirty building with a standard of care and furnishing considerably less than in their own homes.

The Spring Clean before Easter, 1970, made a start, but this needs continuing and the following items need consideration:

The cleaning and maintenance of the Church.

A new carpet for the aisle, chancel and sanctuary.

A more up-to-date hymn book.
New kneelers for Pews and communion rails.
General levelling and tidying in the Churchyard.

WORSHIP

The onus of the actual services falls largely on the Rector's shoulders but all must strive to make our worship warm, welcoming, relevant and congregational. The newly instituted Family Communion is undoubtedly filling a need and becoming a focal point for all our work.

Other aspects of worship under review are:

Revitalisation of the Choir.

Assessment of Sunday School times and teaching.

Courses of sermons, some on questions raised by the congregation.

Variety in Evensong, e.g. Songs of Praise, Mission films, group discussion.

The time and place of Evensong in the winter, with the possibility of Youth nights and T.V. religious viewing groups.

SOCIAL

To bind the members of the Church together in fellowship and to draw the community together, the Church needs to sponsor a number of social activities. Among such projects are the Harvest Supper, Church Socials, Parish Church Outings, Young People's Drama. Possibly some social, study and working group for men could be started, although as far as possible one needs to encourage families to do things together.

CONCLUSION

All the above presents a formidable task and an exciting challenge. It IS possible.

The Church in Purley must be prepared to look ahead in this way. Members of the Church must be prepared to sacrifice both time and money to the Church if God's work is to flourish here. If we fail then the only logical solution would be for Purley to cease to be an ecclesiastical parish on its own and become a daughter church to Pangbourne.

Relying solely on the power, strength, and inspiration of God, we can do great things for him.

Let us, therefore, go forward in faith.

C.Derek Taylor. (Rector)