

Introduction

Wadham College, Oxford, OX1

Many thanks for your very kind letter and the copy of THE KEY TO THE DOOR. I have read this pamphlet with enormous pleasure, and I am writing to congratulate you and Mrs. Newton on your most impressive achievement. Your work deserves to have a wide circulation, and I trust that the demand has been good. I shall certainly be giving it a mention in the

The Key To The Door

ANNUAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF METHODIST HISTORICAL LITERATURE of which I am editor. With warmest regards,

TWENTY ONE YEARS IN THE LIFE OF CLIFTON METHODIST CHURCH

AUDREY HARRISON and BETTY NEWTON

Appreciation

Our grateful thanks to Mrs. Wendy Godfrey, who put right our mistakes.

PREFACE

Workers in the Social Services recognise one disadvantage of surveys, it is that an outsider does not always give the best description of events; there is a lot of "common sense" which you only know about if you yourself are part of the story that you tell. Mrs. Audrey Harrison and Mrs. Betty Newton have successfully recovered the feeling of the times, the atmosphere . . . and therefore what they have written is alive, stimulating and interesting. I have seen the work that they have done over this last year, the hours of checking, of re-writing and seeking advice and comment, and I applaud the result.

REV. GORDON SQUIRE.

Chapter 1

A new Estate, a new Life, and a new Church. The estate was provided, the life was there, but the Church was a question as yet to be answered.

Some time during the year 1954, the Quarterly Meeting, that august body of the Nottingham South Methodist Church, determined that the work of God should be part of the new estate and its life.

In an old builders' hut on Lanthwaite Road, a few Methodist laymen led by the Rev. A. Errey came together to form a Society. First came the Deaconesses, living and working in a Caravan, gathering together the children to form the nucleus of a Sunday School, and later the Sunshine Corner, with the help of Mrs. May Wright. Members came from all parts of the South Circuit, to help by distributing leaflets — no mean task on unmade and unlit roads! The Caravan, the Deaconesses and the Builders Hut became a focal point for the few Christians, and on August 8th 1954 the Clifton Methodist Church held its first service.

The Hut presented a problem, because it was used by all and sundry, for anything, from wedding parties to congregations at worship. One Sunday evening the Superintendent Minister, the Rev. James Jackson, preaching on the merits of temperance (temperance meaning the avoidance of too much alcohol) was rudely interrupted by the previous night's revellers returning for their empties!! Mr. Eddie Barber, cycling down to heat up the great cast-iron stove could never find the means with which to kindle the fire. When at last it was lit, clouds of smoke would envelope everyone, never-the-less it was here that the life and witness of the church grew and flourished.

Sunday services were always held at 8.0 p.m., as invariably the Preacher for the evening worship had already fulfilled one appointment elsewhere.

Many activities to encourage the people took place. In July, 1955, the Sunday School had an outing to Radcliffe on Trent, boarding the train at Ruddington (a treat to be envied by today's child). A Flower Service, and a parade through the Estate was held by the Sunday School, in spite of protest by Mr. Ken Hawkins, who deemed it somewhat old fashioned.

The first Society Meeting was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Thompson in September, 1955. Mr. Thompson agreed to take the minutes, and being an amateur in this field, was assured that what ever followed, the first and most important words to record were "The Meeting opened with Prayer!" The members present were The Rev. A. Errey, Chairman. Mrs. Beesley, Mrs. Coates, Mrs. Mayfield, Mrs. Bamford, Mrs. Edwards, Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Thompson, Miss Parker, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Barber and Mr. Thompson.

Many things were discussed at this first meeting; the future development of the church, selective visiting, house "parties," and as always, finance. A Youth Council was formed because there was concern about the growing number of Sunday School children. There was a shortage of staff and accommodation, and the question whether or not to limit the number of children attending arose. The time table for this period emphasises the difficult situation.

Beginners 10.15 to 11 a.m.
Primary 11.15 to 12 noon.
Juniors 2.15 p.m. to 3.0 p.m.
Seniors 3.15 p.m.

The teachers, concerned about their ability, met together for preparation and mutual encouragement. A Youth Club, Brownies, and Wolf Cub pack were envisaged, to provide activities for the ever-increasing number of young children on the Estate. At the corner of Rivergreen and Southchurch Drive, a plot of land was purchased for the building of a Church. A temporary Hut was built on the site and late in November 1955, the Clifton Methodist Church took possession. The first service was held on December 4th and the Dedication service was conducted by the Rev. James Jackson on December 11th, 1955.

There was much to be done in the Hut, but the cleaning, a mundane and arduous task, was easier when undertaken with others. Fittings had to be thought of and furniture obtained. By chance, a Trustee on a bicycle noticed a passing furniture van, and chasing it to its destination, hired it to transport church furniture from a redundant church in the Meadows area of Nottingham; in this way the new church obtained such essentials as a Communion Table and Rail, an organ and chairs for the congregation. Members remember this period as a time of great warmth and fellowship.

Chapter 2

While waiting to be assessed, the members, who now numbered eight with three on trial, offered to contribute £3.00 to the Circuit. The small community continued in fellowship, alternating Women's meetings with Church group meetings. All thought and discussion was centred on the business of "the church" and the work still needing to be done. Even at what was intended to be primarily the Christmas social, discussion took place on church affairs, but since the subject was close to everyone's heart, the "social" was a great success! On December 31st of the same year, the Methodists and Baptists joined together for a watchnight service at the newly opened Baptist Church.

The Estate was still expanding rapidly, and in the early months of 1956 the visiting of new arrivals was added to the pattern of meetings and fellowship, Members and friends went out in twos (as was the time honoured custom) to make contact with, and to encourage others to become part of the life of this young and hopeful church.

In order that a permanent building could be erected, the West Bridgford Methodist Churches formed a "Holding Trust" which accepted a plan submitted to them by Mr. Hardwick Dawson, F.R.I.B.A. for a proposed permanent building at a cost of £19,000. The sale of two churches, Radcliffe Street and Wilford Road, generous grants from the Joseph Rank Benevolent Fund, and from the Department

for Chapel Affairs, provided a greater part of the money; the sum of £2,000 was left for the Home Church to find. The members promised to do their best to pay this off, and some weeks later Mr. Eddie Barber, the treasurer, announced that local efforts had raised the grand sum of £22/4/6 — a far cry from £2,000! However, further efforts were to be planned, and there was no lack of enthusiasm for the venture.

As the prospect of a permanent building became a reality, all thought and ideas were centred on raising the necessary money. Every social event had the prefix "Building Fund" — Choir Concerts, Jumble Sales, Bring and Buy, Coffee Evenings, various other events followed in succession, each department of the church making its contribution. The fund raising and social evenings were not without mishap. A special event which is happily remembered by founder members of the church took place in July, when an evening social was held to bid farewell to the Rev. Albert Errey and his wife who had held pastoral oversight at Clifton. During the evening a noisy game was played which involved much foot stamping on the wooden floor. The next door neighbour complained to the police and along came a constable. By the time he arrived, however, the game was over, and Mrs. Errey was singing a quiet solo. The constable popped his head round the door, and then with a smile repaired to the kitchen for a quiet cup of tea!! In the midst of all the plans the money raising efforts, the constant visiting and meeting, time was set aside each Sunday evening, for half an hour quiet prayer and reflection before Evening Service commenced.

The proposed plans for building the permanent church caused much concern, as the original tender, which had been accepted, had to be withdrawn owing to a gross under-estimate of costs by the contractor, and after much deliberation and a delay of three to four months the tender was eventually given to Messrs. Bosworth and Co. The site too presented problems, being covered knee high in grass and weeds, and an enormous tree added to the difficulties. Various estimates were received for felling the tree, some including removing the stump and roots. It was eventually decided that the roots must remain, cost being the deciding factor. Then the Estates Department of Nottingham complained that the fencing surrounding the church constituted a danger to passers-by, so the offending wire was hastily removed and not replaced, as a wall was envisaged at a future date.

Chapter 3

In September, 1956, the Society was very glad to welcome its first appointed minister and his wife Rev. and Mrs. Clifford Bell. They lived at Trent Boulevard for some time and suffered the inconvenience of travelling by bus and bicycle back and forth to Clifton. Later they moved into a council house at Clifton until such time as a Manse could be built.

It was in May that Clifford Bell reported a membership of thirty eight, an

indication of the enthusiastic commitment. The continuing enthusiasm took many forms. Well known speakers came to address meetings, there was discussions about life on the estate, quizzes, there was no lack of topic and variety. Musical evenings were held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robinson and there was a cinema club for the children of the estate, the film being projected from the kitchen of the Hut. A marmalade making session organised by Mrs. Gladys Bell ran into difficulties when in the middle of this delicate operation, all lights fused and the ladies had to continue by torch light, during which time a constable came to investigate and apprehend "burglars."

The young Society was now looking forward hopefully to the completion of the Church building. Prior to the stone-laying ceremony an Evangelical Campaign was led by students from Richmond College and had as its title "Through the Barrier." A special feature of the campaign was the distribution of prayer cards which carried a prayer and devotional theme for each day.

The permanent building would of course, have to serve a dual purpose, spiritual and secular, and due note was made that emphasis be laid on the former.

The ceremony took place on July 13th, 1957. Members of the church and circuit gathered to join in the service which was conducted by the Superintendent Minister Rev. George H. Sulley, M.A. Greetings from the District were brought by the Rev. Kenneth L. Weights, and Mr. D. P. Blatherwick, O.B.E., laid the foundation stone.

Much thought was given to the type of furnishings required and other churches were visited in order to obtain ideas. After all things had been considered it was agreed that Thos. Long make a Pulpit, Lectern and Communion table with Rail and Chairs. Other chairs were needed for the Sunday School and Congregation and some were obtained from the old Methodist Church on Wilford Road, and others from the Chair Centre. A number of small wicker chairs needed renovating and a whole day was devoted to cleaning and painting them — a labour of love! Other chairs had to be examined for woodworm and only when the expert eye of Mr. Frank Thompson had passed them as sound, were they marked with a cross and accepted. Two of the chairs which bore tell-tale holes were left outside the church and overnight taken by some unsuspecting householder!

By April, 1958, the building was completed and the Leaders, looking to the future discussed the possibility of more helpful and interesting evening worship. They also gave thought to the arranging of a creche so that parents might enjoy worship together. The Women's Fellowship came forward with the offer of a "Working Party" to clean the Hall regularly for a trial period of twelve months, and the men promised that two of them would be available each Saturday to set out chairs for Sunday School and Evening Worship.

The Hut which had been home for so long and was still being used for worship, had now to be disposed of: the Parkdale Congregational Church offered £500, but this was considered to be too small a sum, £600 was asked but eventually the original figure was accepted.

The architect, planners and builders had now finished their work and all that

remained was to prepare the Church for the opening ceremony. All hands, young and old, scrubbed, cleaned and polished, curtains were hung, piano and organ installed, the furniture placed in position, chairs made ready and flowers arranged in the newly bought vases. The Church stood ready to receive its members! The Great Day, the opening and dedication of the Hall came at last! There had been wide publicity, hymns had been chosen and rehearsed, the congregation prepared, and now the dignitaries gathered. With solemnity they processed round the church and waited while the Rev. Clifford Bell knocked on the door and asked for admittance. The door was opened wide and to the music of the processional hymn, they entered and took their seats. It was a joyous occasion. Great Hymns were sung, Prayers said and the Congregation blessed. After tea in the Hut, this moving and memorable day, June 7th, 1958, was brought to a close with a service of thanksgiving in the new Church Hall.

Chapter 4

Much had been achieved in the previous years, and now came a period of consolidation. A pattern of traditional church life was evolving with all its attendant disciplines. The organisations were many and varied. Women's Fellowship, Young Wives, Brownies, and Guides, a Youth Club and Life Boy Company, Men's Fireside, and Church Fellowship, all groups that had been envisaged at the Church's inception. Some were to fall by the wayside perhaps to be restructured at some future time; others were to go from strength to strength. The creche was now a reality with a different member of the congregation taking care of the children each Sunday evening, and while this was all very well if the children were good, it could prove a tiring and daunting hour. One member of the congregation, while admitting that she hated this task, cheerfully and efficiently fulfilled it when her Sunday came round. To all decisions, projects and leadership, this young society brought strength of personality, openness to each other, youth, and ability to absorb traditional ways. They were also able to adjust themselves to new situations, and willing to work in every field for the extension of the Church at Clifton.

By November, 1958, membership had reached 47, and since new people were continually moving on the estate, it was felt that the Rev. Clifford Bell should be "planned" more often at Clifton, so that he might become a familiar figure to any new worshippers. To this end a special request was taken to the Superintendent Minister. The records do not show whether this unusual and perhaps difficult request was complied with. Door stewards were appointed to "extend the hand of friendship" and this they did with great warmth and sincerity. A magazine was distributed by church members, in order to extend the work of worship and fellowship.

Members past and present will recall different periods and events of the church

life. Some may well remember the Ladies' Working Party who energetically cleaned the Church each Thursday Evening and woe betide any one who attempted to hold either a meeting or a social after that day! (The church must be clean for Sunday!) They will also remember the well deserved supper which was enjoyed after their labours. This supper, which was never allowed to exceed 1/6d per head, provided an enjoyable social event for the young members, who were mainly tied down with small children and a limited income.

Christmas, 1958, approached, and the "Men's Fireside" made preparation for a "Christmas Market." With the greater facilities available it proved to be a great and colourful event that lasted all day and continued into the evening with dancing and jollifications, a highlight for the church and estate. Christmas itself was truly celebrated when the Sunday School performed a Nativity play, the congregation joined in the celebration of Communion with Carols and then re-affirmed their faith at the annual Watchnight Service.

A permanent home for the minister had been under consideration for some time, and an area of ground next to the church had been allocated for this purpose. It was proposed by the Manse Committee and accepted, that Messrs. Jesse Gray build a Manse at a cost not to exceed £3,000. Mr. Dennis Pare, the church treasurer, gave valuable aid and advice, as did Mrs. Jarvis wife of the Circuit Steward, who was responsible for all the furnishings and interior decoration. When the Manse was complete Clifford and Gladys Bell opened their new home for the day, and every one came to admire and exclaim! All signed the visitors' book and enjoyed light refreshments. It was a very happy occasion. People came from all parts of the Circuit to look at the Manse and offer their congratulations. This was part of their continuing policy to support and uphold the church at Clifton, and a great debt is owed to the members of the Circuit who gave so generously of their time and money, and in this way contributed to the general well being of the church.

It was unusual to have the Manse in the church grounds. It altered considerably the relationship between Clifford Bell and the members. He became an integral part of their lives, and they, in turn, learned to understand the problems of the ministry. Clifford and Gladys became our friends, so much so, that the Manse door was ever open to those whose requests ranged from keys for the church, to milk, tea and sugar, freely given. Clifford and Gladys were always available and involved. Whoever came for pastoral help and care had their needs attended to. It was not easy to live next to a church whose doors were never closed.

As time passed it became obvious that some members wanted to see a change in the pattern of church life. Evening Worship came under discussion and it was felt that the "sandwich type" service was, in many ways boring and not helpful. The feelings aroused were so strong, that a Society Meeting was called in order that the whole issue could be discussed. From this meeting came the decision to use a tape recorder and film projector in Evening Worship for a trial period. At the time (1959) this was a bold and unorthodox step.

Chapter 5

Over the years the Sunday School had continued to expand and in 1960 was bulging at the seams. The number of children attending stood at 342.

Under 7 years 130
8 to 10 years 135
11 to 13 years 72
Over 14 years 5 only

Both primary and junior departments had waiting lists. Every available inch of space was used; children overflowed from various rooms, on to the stage, into the kitchen and eventually into the corridor. Such was the problem, that another building was considered and Clifford Bell offered to earmark a room in the new Manse, for the use of the Sunday School. The problem was aggravated by a shortage of staff. Very often husband and wife would be teaching, whilst their own young children attended in another department. There simply were not enough people to do the work, even with the help of teachers from West Bridgford. In August, Sunday School, as such, closed in order to rest the teachers, but an open service was held on Sundays at 10 a.m., for any child who wished to come along . . . 250 came!

The Sunday School Anniversary was held for the last time in 1960. Over the years it had been a subject of controversy, and was the central topic of a very abrasive meeting of the Youth Council when it was recorded in the minutes that "after much discussion, the meeting felt that the Sunday School Anniversary served no useful purpose, was very poorly attended by parents, and it resolved that this be replaced by an Evening Family Service."

A Sunday School outing with a difference was held when the Junior and Senior departments ranging in age from eight years to thirteen years were given the run of Trentham Gardens, with the minimum of supervision for the children and maximum freedom for staff! Fortunately no one fell in the lake or was lost (the hand of Providence?). Some members voted the day a great success, others felt this was not the way to conduct a Sunday School outing!

Chapter 6

After the Church Hall was built there were plans and preparation for a permanent Church, to be used solely for Worship in the traditional pattern; as short a time ago as 1961 this was still a valid proposition and indicative of the thinking of the majority of ministers and lay people. To this end a Gift Day in May was established and to this all organisations contributed. For the whole of the Lenten period the collection from the mid week service was directed towards the

"Building Fund." Grants were made regularly from Society to the Trust. £100, £20, and £50. At this time in the Church life there were no financial difficulties; the membership numbered sixty-six, the assessment was low and there were no overheads worth a mention, (how times change). It was in later days that the building of a new church became financially impossible and unrealistic.

The Fellowship meetings, which had not been successful when held in Church, were transferred to the homes of members, meeting fortnightly. They were based on Bible Study and Prayer linked with daily Bible readings. The discussion which followed was energetic and stimulating, and a beginning of the strong fellowship which was to hold the Society together in times of stress.

The work of renewing the Church continued. Contact was being sought with other Churches on the Estate, getting to know fellow Christians was seen as part of the Church's on going task. The Ministers met each Monday morning in a Fraternal, and from these meetings the idea of an exchange of pulpits originated. A Church Forum was set up, with leaders meeting three times a year, and lay members met each month at different Churches for fellowship and discussion. These meetings covered a wide range of subject, and though they were discontinued they helped lay the foundation for later events. On Good Friday all Churches united in an act of worship and prayer.

The first exchange of pulpit took place in 1961 and the Rev. Frank Newton the Congregational Minister led the service in the Methodist Church. Despite the strangeness of the occasion, everyone was anxious that the service should go well.

The ministry of Clifford and Gladys Bell at Clifton was coming to an end and a farewell supper had been arranged. This was intended to be a secret, but at the last moment it was discovered that there was no cutlery . . . some had to be borrowed from the Manse! At the supper there were speeches and votes of thanks and a gift was given. Recorded in the minutes of the Leaders Meeting are the words "so many paid tribute to the Rev. and Mrs. Clifford Bell that it was impossible to record them all!"

[Chapter 7](#)

September, 1962, saw the beginning of another year in Methodism, and at Clifton the Manse was made ready and a meal prepared for the new minister and his wife, the Rev. and Mrs. Frank Godfrey and their two children Christopher and Ruth. The Society welcomed them at a social evening and the first leader's meeting took place late in the same month, a rather quiet occasion, since the leaders and their minister were, as yet, comparative strangers.

To encourage more people to attend, the Annual Society meeting was preceded by a supper. Reports from organisations were received and accepted. Some forthright opinions were expressed concerning the emphasis on youth and the lack

of concern for the adult community. It was resolved that this subject would be taken up later in the year.

"To provide a nursery to serve the Community." Wendy Godfrey made this her special venture, an indication of her awareness of, and responsibility to the community. It was a service, not a profit-making venture, designed primarily for the benefit of the children. Wendy herself was in charge and it was staffed by members of the church. The nursery was a great success and is known throughout the city as an example of all that is best in play-group work.

A different form of Women's meeting was introduced when Wendy started the "Wednesday Cafe." It was for mothers to meet and just chat and drink tea while their babies and young children crawled and tottered about the "long room." It was an informal gathering of women and much needed on an estate where there were few parks or places to meet. No demands were made, just the opportunity provided to get away for an hour from the continual round of household chores.

Wendy was concerned with the community and related herself to its needs. She took a stand on behalf of the estate, by refuting all suggestions that it was "full of secondclass citizens and a poor place in which to live." A survey of the whole estate was carried out by church members, it was a very comprehensive document, its object being to define the needs of the community and if possible answer them.

From this, survey the action group "Community Care" came into being.

Under the guidance of Frank Godfrey the leaders agreed to have a weekend conference entitled "Where is the Church going?" Starting on Friday night with a House Fellowship called "How shall we Build?" it was continued throughout Saturday. Frank was by nature a teacher, he was an exponent of group dynamics and interested in Church theology; this was the church's first ever conference and a new experience which aroused some mixed feelings and stirred people in a way which was to be a feature of Frank's ministry. Some appreciated the wider vision of his teaching, outreach, and sensitivity, others were not so happy, because they felt the strong core of the church was being weakened by the emphasis on the wider community. From the conference emerged a re-structuring of weekly activities. A new "Adult Evening" was planned to embrace the community at large. It was designed as a free evening where those who came, could enjoy table tennis, music, play reading, quizzes and other interests. Many came who were not Church members and for two winters this evening was a great success, but finally suffered through lack of support by church members, who were committed to so many business meetings, that one more night out was just impossible, (we are left wondering, did we get our priorities right?).

The House Fellowships continued through September, 1964, and while many enjoyed them as an intellectual exercise they were judged to be becoming sterile and unsatisfactory, tending to be an end in themselves rather than a basis for Christian action and care. A paper on the subject was presented to the leaders in September, 1964, and after a lot of thought and discussion it was decided that a different approach should be tried. The leaders and those involved, to take the Fellowship to various parts of the Estate (geographical) and immediate neighbours

specifically invited to them. This was to entail a personal involvement with a wider group of people. The new format was accepted and some of the groups were reasonably successful but the members missed each other and experienced a real sense of loss. The new people invited were not used to this type of gathering, and as the numbers lessened it became impossible to discuss any subject adequately or in depth.

By September, 1965, the House Fellowship was back to original form, but with the subject matter often secular in content. New areas of thought and conception were explored against the background of Christian Faith and experience. We read John Robinson's "Honest to God" parts of Tillich and Bonhoeffer. Members were encouraged to choose a topic and lead the discussion. This was a; great challenge, entailing study and preparation, a source of pride and achievement.

The New Sunday Pattern. . . . Although no mention is made in the Leaders minutes prior to May 24th the idea of a radical change in the Sunday Pattern of Worship must have been under consideration by three or four members for some time, before being presented to the Leaders Meeting in the form of a proposed "Alternative Sunday Pattern" set out as follows.

Points about our Sunday Pattern to be discussed at the Leaders.

1. We have no provision for worship for Parents and their children together.
2. In winter, our old folk hardly come in the evenings. Perhaps they would in the mornings.
3. Our present system involves a large step from S. School to Church.
4. We cater for large numbers; would it be better to cater for smaller numbers more adequately.
5. At the moment the Minister can only attend irregularly. Could it not be arranged for him to come regularly, i.e. early?
6. If our main act of worship can be moved to the morning, then could we use Sunday evening to greater advantage? With these points in mind, which of the following patterns is the best.

A) Occasional Holy Communion 9.15
Younger Dept. Sunday School 10.00
Youth Departments 11.30
Baptisms as required 3.30
Evening Service 6.30

B) Family Service 9.30
Coffee 10.15
Classes for all ages 10.45
Sunday School 2.30
Variety within a routine 6.30

C) Family Service (Young children exit half way through) 9.30
Coffee 10.30

Younger Departments 11.00
Service (or Variety within a routine) 6.30

D) Family Service 9.15
Classes for all ages 10.00
Coffee 10.30
Sunday School 11.15
Service or variety within a routine 6.30

NOTES

1. Patterns B. C. D. would allow Mr. Godfrey to organise the Family Service.
2. Baptisms could be included in the Family service? Present arrangements of Baptisms is poor.
3. Family service (I think) should be for adults and their children, not children without parents.
4. Variety with a routine means 6.30 p.m. start with communal meeting (10 minutes) then any of the activities, then a cuppa. Activities. Holy Communion, Film Speaker, Concert, Class meeting, or United House Fellowship. Dinner. Perhaps. 1st Sunday Holy Communion.

2nd Film or Speaker

3rd Conference

4th Class meeting

5th Dinner, (i.e. four times a year)

There were many reasons for this "unnecessary, unworkable, dynamic, marvellous" proposal, but the main reason, was the desire to have more often the benefit of Frank Godfrey's teaching ministry. The leaders felt unwilling to accept such a radical change without the full support of the Society, and so a meeting was convened. Unfortunately there are no records of this event, but memory has it that there was a great deal of friction between the members, with violent feelings aroused. Some were immediately enthusiastic, others strongly opposed, while many felt that they must have time to dwell on, and think through the new ideas. The necessity to inform and gain approval of the Circuit allowed a breathing space, in which passions were able to die down and more rational thoughts to take over. The members now really did try to be reasonable and objective, and there followed over the next few months a continuous round of meetings, Sunday afternoon, after Evening Worship, and Midweek, everyone involved and caring profoundly. Eventually it was agreed by the Society that the new Policy was acceptable, and the Leaders at an extraordinary meeting on September 11th, 1964, agreed and voted for the proposed details. However at the Society Meeting on the Sunday following there was a complete about turn. Although the policy had been agreed upon, the details were found to be unacceptable, and were completely rejected! The evening was a distressing and unhappy experience, and the letter written by Frank to the Leaders expressed this.

The Letter, as follows, is published with Frank Godfrey's permission.
Clifton Methodist Church, Rivergreen 212, Rivergreen, Clifton, Nottingham.
A letter to the members of the Leaders Meeting Our Sunday evening meeting made one fact quite clear — that our society is at present not wholeheartedly in favour of the new Sunday Pattern proposals as they stand. It did seem to me that there was little point in pursuing the matter further. Whatever we do, we want to be able to do together, of one mind, despite areas of private thought.
I am persuaded however by conversation with several Leaders (leaders who, incidentally voted against the proposal) — that the matter should not rest here. They do not feel that the whole plan need be abandoned but rather that it could gain general support if there was more research into the relation of our Sunday School work to this plan. It is the threat to the work amongst the children that is a chief concern and the present scheme (rather like the report of Anglican/Methodist conversations!) contains uncertainties and ambiguities which ought to be thrashed out; no one wants to buy a "pig in a poke." We ought therefore to fulfil the decision of an earlier meeting and call the leaders together again to consider this. In preparation for this I have asked Eddie Barber and Ken Harrison to convene a meeting of Sunday School departmental leaders to work on this problem and present some conclusions to guide the Leaders. I should like at this point to present apologies to those who were upset by the violence of our argument on Sunday. We stand judged by our own dialogue used in the service. But at least it shows that we are together in being deeply concerned over our work, and that largely not for personal reasons of status, but for the mission and work of the church we love. No child conceived in love and passion is brought to birth without travail. Let us pray that Christ's new life for his people is brought to birth safely through our travail.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Godfrey.

A final paper was prepared with amended details, and a programme for Sunday Worship completed. On October 25th, 1964, the "New Pattern" in all its detail was accepted.

Here follows the arrangements made for the first quarter in 1965.

CLIFTON METHODIST CHURCH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Sunday arrangements for January, February and March, 1965

10.00 a.m. Family Service.

Activities for the little children. 11.30 a.m.

Sunday School and Bible Class. 6.30 p.m.

People's Service (as arranged below).

January 3rd. Annual Covenant Service. Rev. F. C. Godfrey will lead us in a renewal of Christian Vows.

January 10th. Opening Worship Led by Mrs. A. Curtis. Mr. F. Riddell,

Fairham Housemaster and Parliamentary Candidate, will speak on "Christianity in the World."

January 17th. Opening Worship led by Mr. Eddie Barber "Hymns, their Message and their Meaning" with Community Singing led by Mr. T. Holt.

January 24th. Opening Worship led by Rev. F. Godfrey. "My Faith" Minister and members will speak about their own Christian experience in the Christian Life.

January 31st. Opening Devotions led by Mr. Ken Hawkins. Mr. Charles Ackroyd, well known to Clifton Methodists, will speak and answer questions about his work in Borstals and Prisons.

February 7th. Rev. F. C. Godfrey will lead a service for Youth with modern Hymns and Music. The theme will be "Why be Moral?"

February 14th. Opening Worship led by Mr. Phil Anthony. "Marriage and You," an address by Mr. W. C. Jarvis with prayers of reconciliation.

February 21st. Opening Worship led by Mrs. Ann Curtis. Discussion groups and questions on "Loving your Enemy" led by Mr. P. Johns.

February 28th. A participation Service of Communion led by Rev. F. C. Godfrey. Theme "Real Life."

March 7th. Opening Worship led by Mr. Ken Hawkins. Rev. Albert Kay of the Clifton Training College will give an address on "The Man for Others" a Chapter out of "Honest to God" by John Robinson.

March 14th. Opening Worship led by Mr. Eddie Barber "Songs of Praise" Hymn singing led by Mr. D. Marshall.

March 21st. "A Crusader" Service. All uniformed organisations are invited to this special service led by Mr. D. Batchelor, and members of the Crusaders.

March 28th. Opening Worship led by Mr. Philip Anthony. An address on "Christian Education" by Mr. Ken Hawkins. Christian teachers in Clifton will answer questions.

April 4th. Mr. W. Hughes will lead a service for the over fifties. All are welcome but the emphasis is for the senior citizens.

WE BELIEVE that God calls his Church to open his doors wider, so that all people will be welcomed.

WE SERVE the community by providing social activities for all ages.

WE PRAY that a renewed church may revitalise the community with the spirit of love, joy, and peace.

Observations on the Theological background to this scheme

1. The world is God's and those holding a full faith must believe that all things are to be brought within the creative and redemptive arena of Christian prayer and conversation. (Read Colossian Ch. 1 especially 10 and 20).

2. Christianity is primarily a matter of new relationships of new life ... or living together. Therefore it is not enough to receive "Christian teaching" like facts from a book; much more sharing of conviction and thought, of problems and answers is necessary.

3. The church does not exist for its own good. It exists for the world, as with Jesus, so are we to be in the world. When we plan our church activity, we are not just to

plan according to our own convenience, but all the time with an eye on our mission in the world.

The whole of Sunday Worship was revolutionised. The 10 a.m. Family Service was blessed with Frank's presence and the Evening Service underwent a tremendous change. It became "The People's Service" a completely different concept of worship. On most occasions there was a speaker instead of a Preacher. The opening worship, with hymns, reading and prayer was led by a lay member, who introduced the speaker, and later drew the Service to a close. To many who had never conducted worship before, this presented a great challenge. It was the source of joy and pride in achievement which all shared. There was a feeling of nervous excitement among the members. They were apprehensive and unsure of re-action yet stimulated by the new approach. The congregation were expected to participate by question and discussion. This sometimes led to argument, which made some people uneasy; they felt it was not fitting to argue in church on Sunday Evening. Many were in sympathy with this point of view, so all discussion was deferred until later, over tea in the "long room." The subject matter was challenging in its difference and often carried a startling title as "Was Jesus Christ a Socialist?" this led by Mr. F. Riddell. "Curing Clifton" by Mrs. D. Millichamp, "Separated unto God" by Mrs. Spencely. The Rev. Albert Kay from Clifton Training College gave a series of lectures on "The Creed." Mrs. Ruth Johns talked about "Family First," a project which was then in its infancy. Another innovation was the movement of the Evening Service from 6.30 to 8.0 p.m. during the months of July and August. It was done that people might enjoy the full benefit of a summer Sunday afternoon and early evening, and still be able to attend worship. Along with the many changes, the day to day running of the Church continued. The Sunday School, House Fellowships, visiting those who were sick, each member continuing his or her work in the Church. There were however, highlights and fun . . .

During the summer months July and August, and with the alteration of the Evening Service to 8.0 p.m., everyone enjoyed the longer Sunday afternoon. On one such Sunday all took a picnic tea to Thrumpton Hall and then went on to Church in the evening. It was a beautiful day and much enjoyed. Another Sunday, Rempstone Hall was visited, again with a picnic tea, and rounders and cricket played on the grass. An evening's bus ride to Blake-hays Farm in Leicestershire made a memorable occasion.

After a good helping of ham and eggs, all joined in a "sing-song" with Frank Godfrey playing an ancient piano. On the bus coming home, hymns were sung in good Methodist fashion, and Leicestershire villages echoed to the sound. Many will remember how Vera Barnwell stood in the bus and conducted with true spirit! In January, 1966, the "New Pattern of Worship" was further reviewed and to emote in the minutes "in the main it was agreed that the previous year's experiment was something on which to build." Unfortunately, for some members this was not the case, they felt their own particular needs were not being met and were unable to come to terms with the situation.

In February, 1966, Mr. Phil Anthony tendered his resignation as a Leader and Member. "The Pattern of Worship was not fulfilling his needs, and he could no longer follow, let alone lead." His resignation was accepted with reluctance, everyone sad at his going. Mr. Arthur Wright was later to resign for similar reasons. The Church was to lose a number of members during this year. Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Curtis, moved to Keyworth, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Hawkins went to Ravenshead. Barry and Annette Garner left, eventually to live in Canada. The Society was much depleted and lonely for their presence. Mr. Ken Harrison voiced the feelings of those members left, when he said "it is essential that the Society should be built up, and friends and adherents concentrated upon. Until this was done it would not be possible to carry the burden of Social Care and Outreach."

The Church continued its work, the lay people taking a greater responsibility and although they were unable to support Social and Community Care as they would have wished, they played a full part in the national Church Campaign "People next Door."

By the time it came for Frank and Wendy to leave, the members had grown into a new maturity.

After Sunday service one August Evening, the Society met together and presented gifts to Frank and Wendy and their three children, and, in return received a gift of cutlery. "Thanks" were expressed "farewells" said, and much happiness wished them in their new Circuit.

Chapter 8

The Rev. William Barrett, his wife Winifred and their four children came from Monmouthshire in September, 1967. He was immediately plunged into the difficulties of the financial situation, which had become more apparent and were to last a number of years. They were brought about by the decreased membership, a higher assessment and the steadily increasing running costs of the church. The September assessment had been paid less £10.00. The Superintendent Minister strongly advised that the money be found and in due course it was borrowed from the Manse account, to be paid back later. Mr. Ken Harrison and Mr. Eddie Barber, on a directive from the Leaders, met the Circuit Stewards to see if a way could be found to reduce the assessment. They felt that Clifton was in a special position, a young church in a missionary situation with no other persons or strata of society to call upon for funds or resources. Everything . . . ideas, backing, organisation, all had to come from within themselves.

At the Society meeting in 1968 members were told there could be no lowering of the assessment. The financial situation was desperate. The average collection below £6 per week and costs were continuing to increase. Again the Covenant Scheme was recommended and explained in the hope of getting more people to

join. A letter was sent to all members reminding them of their obligation to the Church and a graph showing income and expenditure was prominently displayed so that all might understand the seriousness of the situation. The only way to meet the necessary expenditure was by a loan from the Building Fund, and even with this, not all the obligatory donations would be met. Finance dominated every meeting and ways of raising money were discussed at length. All the usual things were done, jumble sales, bring and buy, coffee evenings. One novel idea put forward and received with enthusiasm, was based upon the parable of talents. A willing member was given 5/- from the funds and asked to increase it five fold, this in a given time. One person made shortbread and sold it at her place of work, another made chutney and did the same. A car and driver became available for short distance outings. Cakes were made and sold with a cup of tea after evening service. A member whose husband was a traveller, bought samples from him, and sold these. Although the people concerned enjoyed this particular project, they all came to the same conclusion: it was difficult to make any amount of money on this small scale, it was hard work and very time consuming.

Planned during Mr. Barratt's ministry and fulfilled later were larger monthly events "The Chaucer Players," a group of blind performers presented a play, which was a huge success; a member of the church Mr. Arthur Ford was one of their company. There was a large audience for the Neilson Singers. A "Dinner Dance" was another attraction. There were holiday slides and an illustrated talk by the Barton Bus Company. Last, but not least, the Manse had a new carpet, and everyone paid for the privilege of viewing it and exclaiming . . . "Never mind the quality, feel the Width!"

In spite of the Church's financial problems a contribution was made to the Bridgeway Hall appeal, the Manse Circuit Appeal and to the beneficiary of Mrs. Wade, whose husband, the Chairman of the District, had died suddenly. It should be recognised here, that in finding most of the necessary monies, the Church had no recourse to fund raising outside of its own members. This made it doubly difficult, since the same people had to support all events, and was therefore the more praiseworthy.

The Church found in Mr. Barrett, a stabilising influence. His approach to all matters was fair minded. He was wise in the fundamental teaching of the Church. He was strong on its constitution, yet not hide-bound by tradition. The whole Society was comforted by his presence. It was in the Home Fellowships that he was appreciated. He was good at bringing us back to fundamentals, after various flights of fancy and extremist views. At the end of the evening, all that had been discussed and debated was related to our Christian Faith and we were left with a firm foundation for belief.

The Experimental Evening Service, as such, was coming to an end. It had required tremendous organising ability by members, who had now left, and without them it was impossible to continue. There followed a series of monthly film services. These were advertised and each member was given invitation cards and expected to pass them out to as many people as possible. The services were quite

popular, and thanks to the hard work done by the members drew a bigger congregation than usual.

Chapter 9

The Anglican Methodist Conversations, which were being held throughout the country now gave the Church much to think about. Mr. Barrett was insistent that the booklet be read and thoroughly understood, and so we gave ourselves heartily to this task. Under his guidance, at the Home Fellowships, we studied and discussed all the implications. At the Quarterly Circuit Meeting the Clifton Church (now thoroughly conversant with the situation) voted in favour of the resolution! As early as 1969 we were taking part in united Fellowship over the Lent period — the beginning of a closer relationship with other denominations. Although the vote for Unity had been rejected at a National level, at a local level the idea had taken root. Geographically the St. Francis Anglican Church was our natural neighbour. They were "just down the road." It was to St. Francis and its congregation that our thoughts turned when we spoke of Unity. In the Ministers Fraternal the opportunity was given to Mr. Barrett and the Rev. Chris Aldridge of St. Francis to conduct worship in each other's church. The rector Rev. Wilf Wilkinson gave this his blessing.

It was in small beginning and events that confidence was built. The invitation and acceptance by the Church Stewards to St. Francis' Patronal Dinner, and a reciprocal invitation to our Christmas Dinner . . . further joint fellowships, and a joint conference on Unity conducted by Canon Norman Todd. The exchange of pulpits became established.

All these things worked on the minds of both congregations, so that in June, 1971, it was possible for the Leaders Meeting and P.C.C. to meet together to consider how the two churches might work more closely. There had been progress, but it was a mainly talking situation. Unity was acceptable, in theory.

In August of the same year, Mr. Barrett, was, without any prior warning asked to take up the position of Superintendent Minister at Clay Cross. During his time at Clifton, he had learned to drive, and as parting gift he and Mrs. Barrett were given a picnic basket in anticipation of summer days spent in Derbyshire. As a result of the June meeting, it was decided that we should join with St. Francis in their 9.30 a.m. Parish Communion, and a joint evening service to be held at the Methodist Church. This was started in August, 1971.

With mixed feelings, a small number of our members attended Parish Communion. They were welcomed by the Rev. Christopher Aldridge, but still felt strange and rather lost. While knowing some of the congregation they were for the first time sharing worship with a great many people they had never met, or even seen before (a rare experience for a Methodist). The structure of the Service was unfamiliar to them and they were anxious to conform, feeling as guests. They were

unused to kneeling, and their voices, when raised in song, sounded unnaturally loud against the quieter tones of the Anglicans! For a number of weeks they followed the Communion Service and made the responses without being able to share the Bread and Wine. The Bishop had not yet given his permission. This was a deprivation which isolated them and made them sad. The Anglican friends were in turn, affected, feeling sympathy for them. Happily permission was given at a later date for Methodist members to share fully the Communion Service. Some Anglicans attended the Methodist Service and there is no doubt that they experienced similar feelings. Gradually support for the service fell away. The Rector Rev. Wilf Wilkinson and the priests Rev. Ian Gatford, Rev. Trudy Norris, and the Rev. Chris Aldridge all preached in the Methodist Church, thereby signifying their approval of all that the two churches were trying to achieve. In to this situation came the Rev. Gordon Squire with his wife and three children, a young enthusiastic, impulsive man. A little while later St. Francis Church also had a new vicar. The Rev. Frank Crowther. "The entry of the Gladiators!"

Chapter 10

The Rev. Frank Crowther came from a recognised area of Ecumenical Experiment, a shared church on the Rise Park Estate, Bulwell. He was no stranger to the kind of situation existing at Clifton, and welcomed the opportunity to be involved, to work with the Rev. Gordon Squire.

Through the year of August, 1971-72 events moved quietly. A representative from each church attended the other churches P.C.C. or Leaders' Meeting. They had no power to vote, but observed and made a contribution to any discussion affecting the cause of Unity.

In August, 1972, the beginning of the great upheaval came. On the evening of August 11th there was a joint meeting of the P.C.C. and Leaders, with the express purpose of furthering relations and finding ways of closer co-operation. All who were at the meeting recall the wonderful spirit abounding, the feeling of warmth and closeness. There was a willingness to go much further together to serve Christ and the Cause of Unity. It was suggested that Evensong be held once a month at the Methodist Church, but it was decided that neither congregation would find this helpful. Following upon this, and in the atmosphere that prevailed Gordon Squire was led to make the proposal that the Methodists take their Evening Service down to St. Francis Church. This meant that there would be no regular worship at Rivergreen. It came like a bolt from the blue, breathtaking in its apparent simplicity. It is indicative of the spirit of the meeting that everyone accepted immediately and wholeheartedly agreed. To make it constitutional the two churches voted separately, and there was no voice of dissent. It was when they reached home that the full impact and realisation of what they had done hit the leaders. They gathered together saying "Do you realise what we have done?" They looked at each other and said it again and again. There was no feeling of regret, only delight, amazement at what they had done and pleasure in each

other's reaction. They felt truly they had been "moved by the spirit."

On August 24th the Leaders of the Methodist Church met and agreed that all members of the Society be advised of the decision and asked to attend a meeting to discuss the implications. At that Society Meeting on September 10th many more than ever before were there. Tension was in evidence even before the meeting started. Because of the strong feelings involved, strict rules were applied. Only one person at once to speak, and this through the chair. Opposing points of view were put by the two Society Stewards. Mr. Arthur Wright spoke against taking the service to St. Francis. He personally felt that he could not go, and many respected his views. Mr. Ken Harrison spoke in favour of the move and there was support for this also. A number of members were absolutely against the decision. They said that all the giving and sacrifice had come from the Methodists. Some who had been in the church for many years were afraid the building would close, the work put in over the years, lost. There was fear of loss of identity, anxieties about finance and for some, just a general feeling of apprehension. All this, and much more, the majority of views held in all sincerity. There was a great violence of feeling. Much of the discussion was angry and unkind, with bitter words exchanged. Some of the members were brought to tears.

At length, the meeting was adjourned, because it was obvious that nothing could be done in this atmosphere. In the ensuing weeks effort was made to close and heal the breach, persuasion and reconciliation was sought by many members, but some made strong efforts to reverse the decision.

During this time Gordon Squire was meeting and taking counsel of officials of the Circuit. The Chairman of the District, Rev. Christopher Bacon advised the church "to look upon the decision of August 11th as a recommendation rather than a decision" since there were many committees to be consulted. This was put to the Society at another meeting on September 17th. Mr. Eddie Barber then asked the question "Do we want Unity?" "This is the fundamental issue!" He then spoke on the "non effectiveness of the present situation." This was followed by questions of the "future of our building." Would it close in the foreseeable future? How could we serve the immediate community, if this happened? What of the work that had been done, was it now to be undone? Gordon gave assurances that the building would not close. Again feelings ran high and the meeting was adjourned. However, people were thinking and many who had been undecided began to hold more positive views.

The Chairman of the District called a joint meeting of Ministers and Clergy, and from this meeting on September 18th came the suggestion that a Negotiating Body be appointed jointly by the Leaders' meeting and St. Francis' D.C.C. (previously P.C.C.) this body to seek a way forward.

On October 29th at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Leaders, three representatives were elected. There were to be six in all and three had already been elected by the Trustees. The Superintendent Minister, the Rev. Leslie Mitchel, came to chair the next Society Meeting held on November 5th. A resume of the situation was given by Gordon and it was then announced that resignations and requests for transfer of

membership had been made by eleven members. The original proposal made on August 11th that the Methodist take their Evening Service to St. Francis Church, was to be implemented, but not without some battle scars. Those members left were saddened at the loss and again every effort was made to conciliate. They made special effort to visit those who were to leave. The Superintendent Minister called upon them and one evening during October met five of the eleven at Rivergreen. It was felt the parting must not be acrimonious, but in charity. Those who remained took comfort from the Superintendent's words "Our next step should be to seek the way forward of furthering joint Christian witness."

A special Leaders Meeting was called on November 23rd in order to hear the findings of the Negotiating Committee. The Committee reported, it considered that the Methodists should hold their evening service at St. Francis Church from Easter or Whitsuntide 1973. The meeting then approved a statement of general intent "Of the willingness of both Churches to work together towards the creation of one Christian body on Clifton Estate." The Negotiating Body were much helped by the wise and objective guidance given by Mr. John Atkins, Circuit Steward, who was present at their meetings.

On December 8th the Leaders accepted that the Methodist Evening Worship be held at St. Francis Church from Whitsuntide 1973, and that it should be for an experimental period of one year. The situation was to be reviewed every three months by Leaders and D.C.C. meeting separately and the Negotiating Body to be kept in existence during the trial period. These propositions were placed before the Trust and Society in January, 1973.

Chapter 11

In the ensuing months both congregations met at St. Francis' Vicarage for informal evenings. Over coffee they talked about the small details that could loom large if not given due attention. Questions were asked: where would our flowers go? (St. Francis always having a beautiful flower arrangement). What about our hymn books? Could we light the candles? This last question caused some concern among the Methodists. One member was heard to remark that we "were going to Rome!!" Some one asked if we could "toll" the bell, only to be informed that the bell was "rung." It was a marriage we were having, not a funeral! The much cherished "cup of tea" after evening service brought the request for the use of the kitchen and "their cups and saucers." A local trustee having the church finance at heart wrote to the insurance company to confirm that the communion vessels would remain insured when deposited in the Anglican Church safe.

A problem arose over Communion. True to custom small glasses were used in the Methodist service, but there was no place for them on the altar rail at St. Francis. Later this was resolved by the use of a Chalice. Compared with the greater issues, these seemed small difficulties, but it was in resolving these difficulties that

a closer bond was knit. The evenings were relaxed and pleasant and helped us to know one another better. Tremendous discussion took place at one of these meetings, on how we would actually arrive at St. Francis on the chosen Sunday Evening. There were many light hearted suggestions — Gordon on a horse as in John Wesley's time!! Flags, a Band or Roll of Drums! but wiser counsel prevailed, everyone was anxious that all should go well, and the occasion be both moving and memorable.

The members of the Methodist Church met at Rivergreen. Led by Gordon the entire congregation walked in procession down Southchurch Drive, carrying our Methodist Hymn Books and singing that great hymn "The Churches one Foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord." They were met half way by the St. Francis congregation, led by Rev. Frank Crowther followed by the Cross bearer. The two ministers shook hands and the whole body of the two churches, walking as one came triumphantly to St. Francis praising God in song! At the Church door waiting to welcome them, was the Rector, Rev. Wilf Wilkinson, he greeted and shook hands with Gordon and the Church Stewards, and the congregation passed into the church. Our own organist Mrs. Maisie Snell was playing the fine organ and some members of the circuit were already seated, their presence assuring us of their continual support and interest.

Gordon led the service and, assisted by the Rector, administered our first communion at St. Francis Church. A truly great occasion. During the next few weeks Mr. Arthur Fearn, a Church Warden, was happy to introduce us to the building proper. He showed us the various rooms and corridors, cupboards, etc. He did this each Sunday with warmth and tact, thereby helping us to feel that this was indeed "our church." The Rev. Frank Crowther displayed the Church Vestments and told us of their usage and ecclesiastical meaning.

Mrs. Maisie Snell, our organist for many years, loved playing the organ at St. Francis. It presented a challenge which, after some initial trepidation, she accepted joyfully. It became a source of pure pleasure for her, and so for the congregation. The majority of members had not worshipped in a Church of England before, and although our distinctive Methodist Service was kept, some felt a certain strangeness and isolation. Owing to the structure of the Church, its resultant length, we felt cut off from Gordon, when he was in the pulpit or choir stalls. We were used to a closer contact with each other. The pews didn't lend themselves to our looking round and "nodding" or having a quiet word before the service started. In time we overcame these very human difficulties and relaxed, we started to appreciate the different atmosphere. There was much of interest to observe, the altar cloths and their different colours, signifying change in the Christian Calendar. The absence of flowers during Lent, the pictures in the side Chapel, the great Cross on the wall, the ceiling of painted saints and martyrs and a host of Christians gone before. We lit the candles on the Altar a deed which united with the rest, enriched our service.

Chapter 12

The life at Rivergreen continued as busily as ever. The Sunday School was thriving with much good work being done. The Boys' Brigade and Junior Youth Club flourished as did the Playgroup. The rooms of the Church were let to the Karate Club, Weight Watchers and the Senior Citizens' club. Some members anxious that the building should look cared for, repainted the outside, the inside being cleaned and refurbished at the same time.

Gordon Squire, an "ideas man" inaugurated the monthly preparation class for the whole Sunday School (previously the departments had met separately). It was in the preparation class that the Monthly Family Services were planned. Under Gordon's direction these services were very often a delight, open and informal, with complete involvement of Minister, children and congregation. There was movement, dialogue and active response, sometimes brilliantly successful, other times not so much so, but infinitely worthwhile. It was Gordon who instituted the Circuit Training Scheme, whereby everyone involved in Youth Work had some tuition. He organised the Christian Aid Movement on the Estate which resulted in the receipt of over £1,000.

House Groups were specifically called together by him to discuss the Baptismal Policy and its implications.

The Methodist Church, along with the Anglican and United Reform Church voted and agreed a policy of Baptising only the children of worshipping parents, a policy which provoked some ill feeling but also a measure of support from the secular community.

Along with other Methodist Churches we struggled with the Restructuring Committee!!

A stewardship Campaign had been muted once or twice in previous years but had come to nothing. Now Gordon Squire brought the idea firmly to the minds of the Finance Committee and then to the church members. In consequence Mr. Charles Cherry, regional stewardship director, was invited to come and talk to us. He spoke of the clear advantages of having such a campaign. He was a persuasive and determined advocate, answering all our questions and encouraging the faint hearted. Members were convinced by the soundness and sincerity of his argument and so put their hearts and minds to this new challenge. There were other visits and continued support from Mr. Cherry as the mechanics of the campaign got under way. A great deal of organisation was required to achieve success and a lot of hard work was put in by our own campaign director Mr. Eddie Barber.

The names of one hundred people who might be approached were taken from the community roll and hostess were chosen to invite them personally to the family meal which opened the campaign. Also present were the Chairman of the District, the Rev. Brian Greet, and his wife, the Superintendent Minister, the Rev. Vernon Hamer, and his wife, the Rector, the Rev. Wilf Wilkinson, two church wardens from St. Francis and Mr. Charles Cherry. The meal, beautifully prepared and presented, was held at the Rivergreen premises and speakers were drawn from the

visiting dignitaries and church members. At the end of the evening the guests were asked to accept a "time and talent" folder and a money pledge. During the next fortnight the campaign visitors went to see those who had been to the meal to answer any questions and seek a firm commitment to the "time and talent" folder and to pledge weekly giving of money.

The response was heartwarming and rewarding. A service of thanksgiving was later held at St. Francis.

In this year, 1975, it is our intention to enter into a Shared Church Agreement with St. Francis Church. This will entail a Church Council jointly responsible for the pastoral care and worship of the "United Anglican Methodist Church" of Clifton. From this will follow joint control of finance and upkeep and usage of buildings. In the words of the Declaration of Intent "To work together for the union of our two churches in order to be more effective in our mission to Clifton and in order to encourage the co-operation of all Christians in Clifton."

We thank God for Twenty One years of Christian Witness and Worship in His Church at Clifton. We thank Him for all the people we have known and loved, and for the privilege of serving Him, but above all we rejoice in His abiding Love.