

**1977 - 1987**

## **LOVE, CARE AND CONCERN**

IN the autumn of 1978, the Plymouth and District Baptist Churches played host to sixty Texan Baptists who were staying in the area for nine days to take part in "What the local churches are doing". A team came to take Sunday services and during the week every organisation was visited. A picnic-cum-barbecue was arranged at Cadover Bridge on the following Saturday and a Parade and Communion Service held on the final Sunday. Their visit to Salisbury Road Baptist Church was deemed a great success.

In 1979, Rev Potts asked the question "What are the aims of the Church"? After discussion with an evangelism committee it was agreed that the aim "To know Christ and make Him known" was the answer and should be acted upon. However, it was with regret that within a year Rev Potts decided to undertake the post of Army Chaplain and left his ministry on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1980,

It was 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1981 before the eighth minister of Salisbury Road Baptist Church was inducted. In the interim, it was decided to have a Moderator for the first time and Rev Reg Spooner of Old George Street Baptist took over the role, ably assisted by Life Deacon Ted Hitt and other members of the diaconate. During the absence of a minister, the Manse was refurbished, installing gas and replacing the bathroom suite and kitchen units, with the assistance of a band of trusty church helpers.

The new minister, Rev Desmond Butler came from Coventry and about fifty friends from there attended the induction service and celebration tea. He had a wife Fay and three adopted children, Darren, Charlotte and Natalie.

Miss Audrie Martin resigned as The Girls' Brigade captain after 42 years and Miss Anne Stapleton was appointed to succeed her. Mrs Emily Bowerman, who had given years of service to the Church, died. She had written the Church History for the 70th Anniversary, which has been of invaluable help to this writer now. In her will the Church was a beneficiary and an undisclosed sum of money was invested with the Devon and Cornwall Baptist Corporation in a trust to be known as the "George Samuel Bulley Trust" in memory of her father who was a founder member and former Church secretary. This fund would prove to be an invaluable asset to the Church in future years.

In 1982, the 75th Anniversary year, the President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Rev Fred Wilson led the morning worship on February 28<sup>th</sup> in the presence of the Lord and Lady Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs Ralph

Morrell. In the following week; many events were held by the various Church organisations.

Rev Butler put forward many new ideas, many to which the Church agreed. There were 'get togethers' on Wednesday mornings for the unemployed with a game of snooker and a cup of tea or coffee. This was later extended to Mothers and Toddlers and soon became known as Open House with the addition of light cooked lunches ably cooked by Mrs Sandra Northey and her helpers.

Counselling training was given through Crossline. Prayer telephone contacts were drawn up along with pastoral Care Visitation, Church Night and Bible Study on Thursday evenings, House Groups and Prayer and Healing Meetings. About this time the Junior Church was incorporated into the Sunday Morning Service.

The centenary of The Boys' Brigade was held on October 24th 1983, the guest speaker being Mr. Raymond Bray, Brigade Vice-President, Treasurer of the World Conference of The Boys' Brigade and kindred organisations, Chairman of the Brigade Training Committee.

Billy Graham brought his Mission England to Bristol in 1984 and coach trips were organised to Ashton Gate by the Church and other churches in Plymouth. This led to the formation of Prayer Meetings, video rallies and a wave of evangelism. Many young people made an open commitment to the Lord, twenty members joined a Celebration Choir and several young ladies participated in the sacred dancing for the Celebration Festival held in the Central Hall. Later this took place several times in Church and, although frowned upon by some, was very meaningful.

In Plymouth at this time it seemed that "God's people are coming together" and the congregations at Salisbury Road Baptist Church were increasing. It is also notable that in this decade forty-one people walked through the waters of baptism.

It was in September that the trainees of St. George's Adult Training Centre were invited to the Harvest Supper with their careers and they all had a wonderful time and enjoyed the musical concert afterwards. It was agreed that this should become a regular event in the Church calendar and Susan Heppel was delighted to bring her friends along to her Church. The next party was held on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1985, her 28th birthday and 'yours truly' made six enormous chocolate log-cakes to feed the crowd, always in excess of seventy. These 'get-togethers' with those less fortunate went on twice a year for several years and really brought the New Testament story alive, Luke 14 v 13-14.

*"When you give a feast invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind and you will be blessed because they are not able to pay you back. God will repay you..."*

After twenty years of Christian love in action, Mr Stephen Northmore resigned as leader of the Youth Club. Other helpers rallied around and Rev Butler at a Church Members' Meeting asked youth leaders to "Love Jesus Christ, love young people and

to realise that the greatest joy would be when the young ones found Jesus Christ as their Saviour"

It was stated during this time that "The Church makes it clear that it exists for the Glory of God in this neighbourhood but also believes that it can do a great deal of work for those in need". In this regard permission was given to the elected County Councillor to hold a monthly surgery in the large hall to discuss housing difficulties, local amenities or any other local problems with people in the neighbourhood.

Care was continuing in Open House which catered for the unemployed, Mothers and Toddlers, the elderly and the lonely. Many came first out of curiosity and found companionship, love and laughter and a sense of belonging. A Christian Neighbourhood Scheme also helped those who needed transport to hospital, baby sitting and shopping, requests being made by local doctors.

With the opening of the new Lipson Comprehensive School there was no longer a need for the Senior Girls' School to use the large hall for PE. This meant a drop in revenue and it was felt that other uses for the hall should be found. In a short time the Leisure Services Department hired it on Wednesdays for Badminton.

In 1986 there was much controversy over differing styles of praising the Lord. Up to now Baptist Hymn Books, an organ and loud voices sufficed. But gradually in came the raising and clapping of hands, free dance, freedom on instruments and the use of choruses instead of traditional hymns. The Minister faced the membership and asked for love to be expressed in all worship whether it be ancient or modern and that something old and something new be used from the great treasury of worship material available.

It was late in 1986 that Miss Veronica Campbell, after a long stay at home, decided that she would not be going back to Dhaka as she felt her work of eighteen years in Bangladesh to be over and the Lord was calling her to work in England. This coincided with the Church's feeling that there should be a Christian Community Worker in the area, which over many years had become a densely built-up place of many old, lonely people, one-parent families and innumerable bedsits, many occupied by students away from home. With knowledge of this Veronica offered her services as a Pastoral Assistant to work in and outside the Church as the Lord led and at a Church Members' Meeting this was warmly accepted and prayerful support promised.

Just when Church finances were again beginning to cause concern—"Manna from Heaven"! A large cheque from the estate of Mrs Jean Porter was received, a lady who had loved the Church and a stalwart member of the Baptist Women's League. It was decided to redecorate, curtain and carpet the Lecture Hall, where she had spent many happy meetings, and to invest the bigger proportion so that the interest could finance the salary of the new Church Worker and also to increase the insurance on the church which had gone up by leaps and bounds and some for ongoing mission.

## A CENTURY OF LOVE IN THIS PLACE

Concern was also being felt about the Church buildings, the roof needed renewing in parts as leaks were causing internal damage and a new window was needed in the Ted Hitt lounge (now the Prayer Chapel). Toilets were also required on the entrance to the Church. Application for a loan for all the work was made, to be repaid over six years, rather than lower the amount of interest from the invested money.

The decade ended on a 'growing theme'. The Minister would be helped in pastoral work by Veronica, The Church would be 'spruced up' and plans were in hand for the Church's 80th Anniversary.

In its love for others the Church decided to 'tithe' £4,500 of its Jean Porter Bequest to three needy causes. Truro Baptist Church was given £3,000, Spurgeons Child Care £1,000 and Kingsteignton Baptist Church £500. All were greatly appreciative of these wonderful gifts.

1987 - 1997

## **"I ALONE KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU"**

EARLY in 1987 Veronica outlined a new "After-School Club" one afternoon a week from 3.30pm-5pm to cater for the growing number of children whose mothers were at work and not at home when they returned from school. Many people agreed to help and this sowed the seeds for the Funshine Club as it is today.

The 80th Anniversary saw celebration mugs given to all members of the Junior Church and a Church History written by David and Jo Johns. Special events were held during the week in the Church, although Rev Butler was again saddened by the lack of enthusiasm and poor attendance shown by members.

At the end of the year, Veronica stated at a Church Members' Meeting that she felt called to offer herself for training for the Ministry by way of a Distance Learning Course from Spurgeons College. The members were unanimous in their support and it was agreed to allow her study time for the course.

After many years of compiling and printing the "Go-Between" on a typewriter (computers still in the distance), Mr Harry Harrison resigned after unassumingly spreading thousands of words of Christian love amongst its readers. Mr John and Mrs Janet Goodbody said they would take over this regular and demanding task, which they have continued to do so well!

After the death of Mr Don Beavington who had been Church Organist for many years, a bequest was made to the Church by the family. It was agreed that the fund should be used to train young persons in music and if the need arose to purchase instruments to enhance worship. Rachael Harris became the first student organist.

In April 1988, Mr J. Stapleton was inducted as President Of the Free Church Federal Council, a great honour for him and Salisbury Road Baptist Church.

In a Minister's Report in 1988, Rev Butler expressed a sadness in the many resignations from Church Membership. He felt that people had lost the 'team spirit' and that they believed that the large bequests of money we had been given would pay for everything. He said (the monies) "they are not ours, they are the Lord's for His work...any major work or Church expenditure we shall have to find ourselves. If that means the rebirth of team work, then I welcome it. Let's have a Church that is running over with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self control".

A short while after this it was agreed that Veronica should become Assistant Minister. The benefits of this would be two-fold. It would greatly help Rev. Butler and would prepare Veronica for her own Ministry later after the completion of her Spurgeon's course. It seems that the Lord had been preparing Veronica for this position for many years, for it was with great shock that the membership received notice of Rev Butler's imminent resignation in February 1989. He stated that there were, and had been for some time, very serious family problems. As a result of this and after much prayer he had decided to leave the ministry altogether. He therefore asked if he could give one month's notice instead of the statutory three as he had obtained work in London as a Funeral Director where he felt his bereavement and counselling abilities could be well used. Mrs Butler and the family would be staying in Plymouth and it was agreed by the Church that they could stay in the Manse until rehoused by the Council.

The membership applauded the Butler family for their eight years of service and the caring which had been the hallmark of Rev D. Butler's Pastorate. It was felt that the Lord had provided Veronica and that she was well able to take over the pastorate in her capacity as Assistant Minister. She expressed the Lord's wish in her reading of Jeremiah 29 v 11

*"I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for."*

In May 1989, Mrs Gladys Hellyer was presented with a memento and a bouquet on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of her becoming a church member.

As soon as Mrs Butler was suitably and comfortably housed in the St Judes area, the Manse was inspected and found to be in poor repair and in need of central heating. It was agreed that the work required would be very expensive and it would be better to sell it at a realistic price and find a new house suitable as a manse. In 1990 the former manse was sold and another purchased at the eastern end of Salisbury Road.

Midyear, Veronica was accepted for the accredited ministry of the Baptist Union and would be going to Spurgeons College in September 1990 for one year to study for a diploma in Pastoral ministry. Her invaluable help at Salisbury Road Baptist Church during the previous few years was acclaimed by the membership and prayerful and financial support for the year's study was promised. Veronica asked the membership to take more part in Church activities and quoted Micah 6 v 8 "What He requires of us is this, to do what is just, to show constant love and to live in humble fellowship with your God".

After much discussion and a visit to the Church, Rev Kenneth L. Davies from Bedworth was asked to be the ninth minister of Salisbury Road Baptist Church. It was put on record that Rev David Hamilton from Hooe Baptist had been invaluable in his guidance and leadership during the interregnum.

Rev Davies was inducted on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1990. He began by making Church Members Meetings a time of fellowship, not only a business meeting, with tea and coffee being served prior to the meeting. He stressed that the Ministry of Healing was central to his ministry—"Healing means Wholeness". Healing, the laying on of hands, would be brought into Sunday Services when appropriate. "Physical healing is only part, the Lord is concerned about the state of our hearts, minds and souls and what is worrying people."

January 1991 to January 2001 was designated as the Decade of Evangelism. Members were urged to pray together and organisations should endeavour to bring people in from outside the Church who do not yet know the Lord. In this respect expectations were not realised and over the next few years there was a sad loss of membership due to loss of interest and commitment.

Mrs Glenda Davies formed a sewing party with interested ladies and beautiful banners soon embellished the Church walls. They had an immediate impact and as soon as more were made (hours of work and expertise!) suitable banners were displayed at Easter and Christmas. Some said, in jest, that they covered up damp patches on the walls and many found them a welcome distraction, yet full of prayerful thought, in times of lengthy and difficult sermons!

In mid-summer 1991, Veronica received her diploma from Spurgeons and many from the membership organised a trip and joined in her end of term celebrations. She later joined the Baptist Church at Cricklewood, London and began to minister there. As the Church had effectively lost its Assistant Minister, it was agreed that the Rev David Hamilton, newly retired from Hooe Baptist Church should work alongside Rev Davies on a part time basis. David was warmly welcomed as he had helped a great deal during the interregnum. His wife Lilian also became a staunch member of the Baptist Women's League.

In 1992, shoe-boxes first appeared in the Church as a container to hold gifts for the needy. They were first introduced for Harvest Festival to hold suitable items for the refugees in Croatia. This idea escalated over the years and has become an annual event in the Women's Meeting where the ladies work throughout the year to fill as many shoeboxes as possible with small delights for underprivileged children abroad.

Children nearer at home were causing concern too. The annual Holiday Club was always a success bringing in 95 children in the summer of 1992, 50 children weekly at Funshine Club (new name for the after-school club) now ably led by Mrs Sheila Keast, yet only 12 to Junior Church on a Sunday morning. It was felt that special attention should be given to improving the latter attendance figure. It was even suggested that Junior Church should meet on a Saturday to cater for children who in single parent families may not come on a Sunday. However it was good to remember that the

Gospel was still available mid-week at the Funshine Club and the Youth Club, led by Pearl and Doug Gill and a band of helpers.

During this time, church finances were again causing concern, the weekly giving was well below average and cuts would have to be made in expenditure. Financing the photocopier under its existing contract was difficult and costly and for many months this was discussed and eventually Mr Gary Streeter MP helped to solve this matter. Finance got so bad that on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1993 there were insufficient funds to pay the Ministers' stipends. This prompted Rev David Hamilton to say he would resign his position as Assistant Minister in July 1993 unless there was a drastic increase in the weekly offerings, which were £110 per week under budget. Through careful handling of the finance by the Church Treasurer, as and when offerings and donations came in, the Senior Minister was paid, although sometimes later in the month than usual. However, the resignation of Rev David Hamilton was accepted with deep regret at a Church Members' meeting early in July and all approved to appoint him Pastor Emeritus (honourably discharged).

Funds began to trickle in from new sources for the hire of the large hall. The Theatre Royal was interested in rehearsing there and a Playgroup wished to use it twice a week. All the light bulbs in this hall were replaced with fluorescent tubes at a saving of 70% expenditure. There were also three legacies from previous loyal members amounting to £1,050. The Theatre Royal were permitted to rehearse apart from Sundays and the rental by the Playgroup led to environmental health issues as the existing kitchen, where juice and biscuits would need to be prepared, would have to be brought up to new standards. Again, a team of willing workers did what was required.

The Minister summed up the year by asking all the members to pull together, 'to be interested in the whole church and not one's own little corner.'

October 1994 saw the 50th Anniversary of The 1st Plymouth Boys' Brigade, formed in 1944 by Eric Chapman. A special celebration was held to which old boys were invited and a Church Parade held to commemorate this special occasion.

The Baptist Union Assembly was held in Plymouth, at the Pavillions, for the first time in May 1995 and many plans were drawn up by Mr Alan Keast, the District Secretary. It was estimated that approximately 1,600 delegates would attend and many events were scheduled for the week.

Crossline approached the Church with a view to using offices at the front and under the entrance to the Church. This was considered a valuable use of available space. They had their own entrance and telephone so didn't need to venture into the Sanctuary.

In January 1996 Mrs Joan Stapleton was inducted as President of the Free Church Womens' Council, a great honour for her and Salisbury Road Baptist Church.

A month later, storm clouds gathered! In February 1996 a Special Church Members' Meeting was held under the chairmanship of Rev Gwynne Edwards, the South West Area Superintendent. There were multiple reasons for this meeting. Many members had resigned. It was felt no longer to be a happy Church but an old people's Church, the younger people were being lost as their needs were not being met and finally, income was not meeting expenditure! In discussion it was felt that the membership had failed in its commitment and giving. As the Minister's stipend involved thousands of pounds (Rev. Davies stated before the meeting that he had not taken his full stipend for the last three years), it was suggested that the Minister might consider part-time Ministry to save the Church money. However, Rev Davies stated that he still had a daughter at school, had seven years before retirement and needed security. The meeting ended with no resolution being made and Rev Gwynne Edwards was thanked for his guidance.

A month later, another Special Meeting suggested a two-thirds Ministry, two weeks on and one week off. There were a number of difficulties with this proposal and by this time many members were disillusioned with the pastorate. It was pointed out that Rev Davies had been appointed on a Team Ministry and the Church had failed to provide an Assistant Minister due to lack of finance. Resolutions suggested were not carried and there being no alternative, the Minister was given nine months' notice of termination of the pastorate!

The membership was left reeling by these events, yet agreed in principle that there must be prayerful unity and committed giving to increase Church finances and bolster confidence. There already was a glimmer of hope at their singing at the Annual General Meeting in March, "Love that will not let me go". It was also interesting that regardless of the low spirits prevailing, there were forty two boxes of gifts and a cheque for £50 donated at Harvest for the Homeless Project later in the year.

Rev Kenneth Davies' full time pastorate finished on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1996, but before this a Special Church Members, Meeting proposed and passed an invite to him to preach each Sunday in January and February 1997 for a preaching fee and also to lead the midweek Bible Study for an appropriate fee.

In this less than secure vein, the decade came to a close. Looking back, it had been an uneasy time and the future without a minister was looking very uncertain, but the committed nucleus was firm in the faith and love of the Lord!

**1997 - 2007**  
**THE END OF A CENTURY**  
**THE BEGINNING OF A MILLENNIUM**

AGAIN the Area Superintendent came to the Church to discuss the way forward. He considered that the membership should prepare themselves for the future ministry of the Church as the stipend alone would be increased in 1998 and thus finances must get healthier. It was accepted that a Moderator would take over and this was to be Rev Brian Love, a retired minister residing in Cornwall. It was also agreed that a Church Profile be drawn up giving a detailed plan of organisations, movement and vision and the kind of minister the Church required. This was then forwarded to the Area Superintendent for transmission to prospective ministers. But it was essential that the Church could support a fulltime Pastor and all be committed to him before thinking of bringing ministers to preach "With a View".

In the meantime, the Church Secretary, Mr Jim Stapleton, provided a galaxy of preachers for many months so that the Word was heard constantly and Rev Love endeared himself to all in his quiet, unassuming and helpful manner.

The Area Superintendent, Rev Gwynne Edwards said farewell during 1998 and was replaced by Rev Johathan Edwards. The Church put on record that it thanked him for immeasurable support over the years and his love and Christian service.

Repairs to the buildings were constantly being made, roof repairs were completed, old outdoor toilets knocked out and used as stores and windows at high level painted and repointed. A new amount of matching crockery was purchased for the large hall, being catering units they can be replaced as needed.

It was decided to scrap many old items of furniture such as eighty green canvas chairs and to purchase ten new folding tables. The Lord does work in mysterious ways as within months new chairs were provided at a minimal cost from Derriford Hospital and the University. Tables too which would be required for parties and the occasional summer and Christmas Fayres, would be used more than ever for a new venture shortly. A complete clean-up of the building was organised and rubbish scrapped. The floor in the large hall was thoroughly cleaned and, like the Forth Bridge, painting was always there! All this 'spring-cleaning', was in preparation for a new minister sometime soon. Several had been short-listed but did not proceed any further. But the Sunday Services were always blessed by the Moderator or visiting preachers and the members were enjoying the variety of Message!

But in November 1998 the membership passed a resolution to invite Rev John Adams to take up the Pastorate. Rev Adams came from South Africa and had a wife Janine and teenage children, so the old manse was deemed too small and it was decided to purchase a bigger property in the area. During the two years interregnum the Church balance had become much healthier, but this would now remain steady with the new minister's stipend. The minister at his first church meeting said "We should show good stewardship and not see the accrued money used for salary". He wanted to prepare the Church for the Millennium and to bring in young families via the Mutley Parents and Toddlers Group with a view to starting one as soon as possible at Salisbury Road Baptist Church. The minister had spent some time at Mutley Baptist Church before going to South Africa so had some friends there. He was also very keen to get music groups up and going in all areas.

A new manse at 68 Greenbank Avenue was in the hands of Solicitors. Previously divided into two flats, this required complete new wiring, new kitchen units, carpets and over all redecoration at a cost of £5,250. The expenditure precludes any major work needing to be carried out in the next five years and is a well-appointed home for the Pastor and his family living near the Church and in the neighbourhood it is hoping to reach.

Miss Audrie Martin resigned after thirty years as the Flower Convenor for Church. Her displays had always been memorable and her commitment outstanding. Miss Kathleen Dalton agreed to take over the post having helped Miss Martin on many occasions.

Part of the back rows of the Sanctuary were replaced and many deacons constructed a huge glass creche where small children could play during the Sunday Services while mothers could still observe through the windows and hear the sermon via loudspeakers. This proved to be a valuable asset of unused seating.

A new 'art form' came into the Church in Line Dancing! The Minister had mastered it abroad and many people were interested. As a good form of exercise and definitely one of fellowship, Wednesday evenings in the large hall found many people 'having a go'. This also brought in a small charge which soon mounted up over the weeks. Those who didn't dance, enjoyed the amusement.

The Minister started to use the expression "The Side Door" for all the people entering the side door in Rosebery Avenue to gain access to Line Dancing, Barn Dances, Women's Meeting, Brigades and all other events in the Large Hall. He said that with Church Members and newcomers alike coming in that way, relationships will be built on a firm basis and hopefully the Side Door would soon prompt people to use the Front Door of the Church.

The beginning of the Millennium saw seven people apply for membership and Funshine numbers were increasing so that more helpers would be needed enabling age groups to be divided.

A new playgroup was interested in building a register of twenty-four 3-5 year olds. The Pastor and two Church Members were invited to serve on the Management Committee. This group would provide valuable funding and children to, perhaps, join Junior Church. A Youth Group was also started by the Pastor and his daughter on Monday nights as this area was not previously covered.

The millennium saw the 90th Anniversary of the Women's Meeting. My verse covers all I feel about this:

### A MILLENNIUM NINETIETH BIRTHDAY

Ten years into the 20th century,  
Ninety years young at the dawn of the new,  
For its age it's as sprightly as ever,  
Through time its renown and fellowship grew.  
This stalwart league is the Women's Meeting  
Held at the Baptist Church at Salisbury Road,  
Over years the ladies have not faltered  
In helping others to carry their load.  
Despite its age, very little has changed,  
Hymns of praise and prayers to the Lord above,  
The beat of Choruses may have quickened  
But they still convey a true Christian love.

Through two long world wars ladies prayed for peace,  
During the anxious times they asked for strength,  
No radical change altered the pattern,  
Only their dresses, specially the length.  
Gone are hobble skirts down to the ankle,  
Button-up boots, blouse lace collars so high,  
Like huge meringues, they pinned fussy veiled hats,  
The men, stiff, starched collars with silky ties.  
The ladies always worked religiously,  
In wartime, sewing groups with make and mend,  
Knitting blanket squares for bombed-out people,  
What would they have made of decimal pence!

The first ladies who joined in 1910  
Have now entered Heaven's realms above,  
But they passed us their faithful commitment,  
Which we now endorse with our Christian love.  
At the end of this 21st century  
We pray the rooms here will be too small  
To seat the many committed ladies  
Who want to come, praise the Lord God of all!

After many decades, it was decided to remove the stage from the Large Hall as it was rarely used, gone the enjoyable days of concert parties! This led to a number of proposed alterations. The old cupboard at the back of the stage, which had housed enough crockery and cutlery to fill many kitchens over the years, was removed and a serving hatch built into the kitchen to ease the serving of refreshments. A large storage area on two levels was built on the rear wall to cater for the huge toys and equipment which were needed by the Toddlers' Groups. The severe damp Gents' toilet had the plaster removed, walls treated and a boiler and radiators installed in the kitchen and toilets. Finally, a UPVC porch and disabled access was built at the entrance to the hall in Rosebery Avenue. This work was carried out over a time scale as funds became available.

In 2001, a small room known as the Ted Hitt room, in memory of a long ago deacon, containing an assortment of old armchairs which were used for small informal meetings, had a rebirth! Small pews from the Sanctuary, surplus to the creche, were tastefully seated, the walls painted in pastel colours and it became, rather lovingly, the Prayer Chapel. Here people could go quietly to sit either alone or with a group, it became an oasis in a busy, crowded church. Many deacons gave their time to make this place possible.

Although the first edition of "Safe to Grow" was published in 1994, its full impetus came into prominence early in the millennium. Up until that time, churches and institutions working with young children preferred to think that they were immune from the problems of child abuse! But with the late 20th century it became obvious that some places and people were not places and people of welcome and security! The Baptist Churches have been to the forefront to review their work with children and young people (and in recent months, vulnerable people) to introduce principles of good practice where children may experience the love and peace of Jesus Christ. "Safe to Grow" offers a practical way forward where those who are going to nurture tomorrow's Christians are selected and appointed under close scrutiny. Each worker with children must know the guidelines and recommendations and undertake to observe them. In this regard Salisbury Road Baptist Church adopted the "Safe to Grow" policy and a Child Protection Policy Statement is read out annually at the Church Members' Meeting to ensure that all Church Members are aware of the policy

and are alert to situations where children may be vulnerable. To make children aware of people to trust and seek out when troubled, two "Advocates" have been appointed and their photographs displayed where children can see them. The policy will be constantly updated.

The early days of the millennium were an exciting time for the reintroduction of the Alpha courses in Plymouth and it was agreed to run a course in the Church in September 2001. This would be weekly meetings of prayer and fellowship culminating in Alpha suppers. Alpha a Greek word meaning 'at the beginning' a chance to learn about Jesus and get to know Him. From this more people came through 'the Side Door'. Unfortunately, few extra trickled through the Front!

In Spring 2002, the Baptist Assembly was held in Plymouth. Over the four days, two thousand people attended, the theme being "Jesus in Wide Screen", looking at today's life styles and their affect on society. Mr Alan Keast and Mr Hugh Porter helped with registrations and many others provided accommodation for delegates from afar.

Again concern was voiced over the state of the 'electrics' due to age and their ability to meet insurance requirements. A quote of £15,570 was obtained for the work required and this was accepted with the emphasis that finance would have to be raised. This would be explored by remembering the parable of the Talents, the money raised by the Summer Fayre, interest-free loans and, hopefully, donations. Work commenced in August when most of the rooms were not being used. The final amount came to £16,038 and was raised quite quickly.

The rooms previously used as offices at the front of the Church were vacated and the rooms extensively cleared and decorated to provide a computer suite, bookshelves and a more convenient office for the Minister. His wife Janine was proposed as a clerical assistant to him.

In mid-summer, it was agreed to change to Sunday morning service the 10.30am and for refreshments to be served in the Large Hall after the service.

Around this time Miss Hannah Goodbody began to train in youth and children's ministry over two years. For one year she was to train at Mutley Baptist Church and take the Discipleship Course with YWAM, the majority of her experience would be gleaned at Salisbury Road Baptist Church taking various youth activities. After this period, she took an interdenominational course two days a week at Bristol Baptist College and the rest, a placement at Swindon Baptist Church. It was good to see one of 'our babies' giving her life to the Lord!.

An excellent week was enjoyed by the Holiday Club in the summer holiday under the leadership of Anne Stapleton and her many helpers. This task had been undertaken over many summers and had brought new children to Girls' Brigade, Boys' Brigade

and the Funshine Club. On September 6th six people went through the waters of baptism!

2003 saw the beginning of Table Top Sales once a month on a Saturday in the Large Hall. This was the 'brain-child' of Mrs Elaine Giles who offered to organise the setting up of tables at £3 each and the provision of cooked meals at a very appealing price! These were an immediate and outstanding success and brought a substantial income to the Church monthly! In fact many people make a date once a month to have Saturday lunch at "Elaine's"! The Church thanks Elaine and all her helpers for their hard work and true Christian Commitment and for all the items which have been able to be bought with the proceeds - the latest to be a stainless steel industrial oven for the kitchen at £1,500 to prepare for more sumptuous meals!

In March 2004, Rev John Adams surprised the Church Members' Annual General Meeting by stating that he had agreed to take up a new pastorate at Exwick in the summer. Taking into consideration his outstanding annual leave it was proposed that he ended his service at the end of June.

Following this announcement, Rev Johnathan Edwards and the Diaconate recommended a Moderator and this was Rev Jon Bush, who with his wife Kim had become Church Members only recently. Rev John and Janine were thanked for their many innovations which had brought colour and added interest into church life.

It was estimated that further repairs and redecoration would be required on the manse, before a new minister moved in. It was also suggested by the officers of The Boys' Brigade that some of the boys should 'have a go' at dedecorating the Lecture Hall over the winter months. This was accomplished over a period of 3-4 months, many officers and friends taking the strain, and several ladies giving time and sewing machines to add curtains. The finished product was most acceptable after many years of drab curtains and washed-out wallpaper!

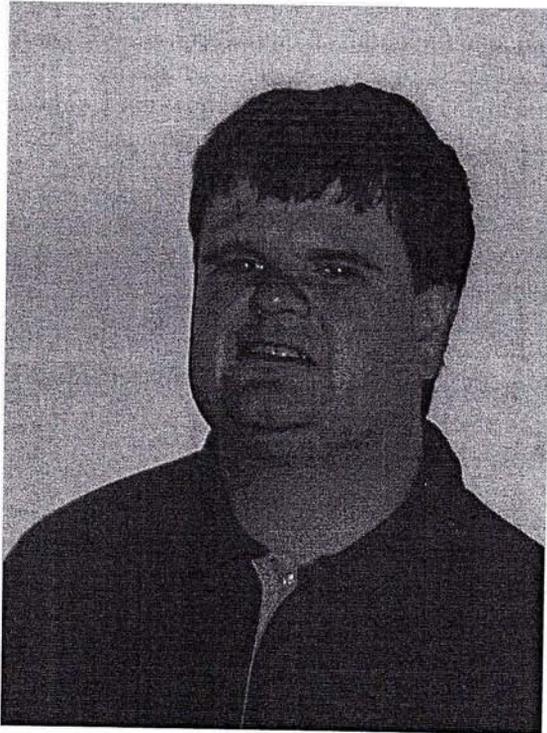
For some time, it had been suggested that the pews be removed in the choir stalls to give more room for the increasing number of musical instruments now used in worship. With this in mind, it was considered whether this could be made a larger open area to accommodate larger choirs, acting and concerts. It was also agreed that the sound system needed upgrading. Taking all this into consideration, specialists were consulted to survey the Church and their report for new equipment and installation was £7,889. Then drawings of a new platform were presented by the Moderator, Jon Bush and estimates considered for a new pulpit as both side ones would not comply with the extended platform. The central, movable lectern cost £879 and the platform was drawn into the front of the baptistry very tastefully during the summer months of 2005.

From Rev John Adams' departure to January 2005, seven ministers were submitted to the deacons for consideration, but all were rejected. Then a name was

## A CENTURY OF LOVE IN THIS PLACE

brought forward for preaching in May, Rev Glen Graham and his pastorate was ensured by an almost unanimous vote in July 2005. Rev Graham's induction took place on December 3rd. His ministry would set an enormous challenge to him and his wife Rowan, his guide dog Dell and Rowan's retired guide dog Guy and the entire membership at Salisbury Road Baptist Church! Before his appointment there had been many questions about the suitability of the premises for them both and many weeks of quiet prayer and contemplation wondering whether we could support this wonderful man who had survived so much in his young life, having felt the call to Christian Ministry while studying politics at Swansea University. Only in 2003 had Rowan decided to share his life after a farspread friendship of fourteen years.

However, as always, the Lord knew how blessed we were going to be as Glen has untold strength in his hearing ability and his rapidity to use, what we would consider, his invisible rows of braille. His message is clear and vibrant and he offers to all an overwhelming humility and strength in the face of adversity. We leave as much of the next century as possible in his most capable hands.



REV GLEN GRAHAM BA