

EDITORIAL

Paul Beasley-Murray

Celtic spirituality has been all the rage for several years. For those who have yet to become familiar with this phenomenon, I dare to believe that no better introduction could be offered than that by Alun Brookfield, one of our RBIM Board members.

One of the down-sides of charismatic renewal in the non-liturgical sector of church life has been the virtual disappearance of intercessory prayer in public worship. Philip Clements-Jewery's article on "Persons in Prayer", in which he outlines the philosophical and theological basis for prayer, will hopefully act as a corrective to those who to all intents and purposes have given up on praying for others as well as an encouragement to those who still do.

Robin Greenwood is one of the theological heavy-weights of the Anglican communion; what is more, he is a theologian with a passion for ministry and mission. His *Transforming Priesthood* (SPCK, London 1994) was a distinguished contribution to Anglican thinking relating to the role of the ordained priesthood. It is good therefore to have this further thought-provoking and wide-ranging examination of present and future understandings of ministry

With ministerial appraisal in its infancy, we have yet further reflections on appraisal. In the last but one issue John Simmonds of the Methodist Division of Ministry shared with us the thinking behind the Methodist system of self-accompanied appraisal. Harvey Richardson writes from the grassroots and tells us how it really is.

A confession. To my great embarrassment I realised recently that - in spite of all my talk of excellence in ministry -I have probably tended to be a little sloppy when it has come to visiting the bereaved prior to a funeral. Unlike the times when I follow a fairly rigorous checklist to agree details of weddings, with funerals I have simply had a blank card in my hand and flown by the seat of my pants. But now I have now remedied the situation and produced a formal bereavement checklist, listing the things which I normally raise with the bereaved. A copy of this checklist is

reproduced in this issue. I would be delighted to improve on the checklist, so any critical comments would always be welcome!

An offer. Readers are reminded that membership of RBIM entitles members to a free, but limited, consultancy service. In response to written queries relating to issues arising from the practice of ministry we are more than happy to put members in touch with relevant resource material and/or people.

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CELTIC SPIRITUALITY

Alun Brookfield

Even the most casual observer of the religious landscape of Britain will have been aware that in recent years there has been an upsurge of interest in Celtic Christianity. Every month sees a new title on the subject reaching the bookshelves. Bands such as Iona have taken the Christian music world by storm (their recent album "Journey into the mom" sold enough copies to register in the secular album charts). Organisers of seminars on the subject of Celtic spirituality have to manage their publicity carefully to avoid being snowed under with more people than they can cope with. Shops are full of Celtic-style jewellery. Our worship services are becoming infiltrated with Celtic prayers, Irish and Scottish music. There is no doubt that to be Celtic is "cool".

So what is going on here? Should we welcome or resist this movement? Is this the New Age under another name? Should we be warning our young people to avoid things Celtic? And what do we mean by "Celtic" anyway?

Let me try to answer the last question first. Specifically, this is a movement inspired by the Christian community which was indigenous to these islands in post-Roman and pre-Augustinian times, although these periods overlapped considerably. It is