

# Your Church Magazine

Gervase Duffield with Stephen Trapnell, June Reed, Max Wigley, Peter Phenna and Elsie Ellis

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## *Introduction*

WITH PROBLEMS OF inflation surrounding the Church magazine, many churches and local editors are worried. This article considers the problems and opportunity for the Church magazine today, providing practical advice in addition. Gervase Duffield, the author, is editor of *The Churchman* and also founder and editor of *News Extra*, the only recently established church magazine inset and one which has gone from strength to strength while some rivals have disappeared or amalgamated. The five shorter articles at the end each illustrate from practical first hand experience how particular problems are tackled and overcome. Stephen Trapnell is an incumbent at Richmond in Surrey, and has proved how to run his magazine's advertising successfully. June Reed trained as an art teacher, and now assists in *News Extra's* production. Max Wigley took over a parish near Bradford and conquered a major financial crisis for his magazine. Peter Phenna moved to a church in Cambridge and demonstrated how to use a special *News Extra* evangelistic issue to spearhead a successful promotion drive. Elsie Ellis tells how her Worthing church tackled a realistic price for their church magazine.

Of course we have picked on particularly enterprising churches and individuals, but their very diversity shows what can be done by vigorous and imaginative tackling of problems. Our belief is that many up and down Britain (and outside where church magazines are established parts of the local church) are facing the problems of constant inflation, and wondering just what to do about it. Our hope is that they will find helpful suggestions in what follows, and if they want more information or more help, those at *News Extra*, Appleford, Abingdon, Berkshire, England (Phone Sutton Courtenay 319) will be glad to assist if they can. *News Extra* offers the cheapest quality insets and covers on the market, has started its own printing service, and will gladly provide free design advice to firm customers. [No attempt has been made to standardise the articles, each contributor being free to express his or her viewpoint.]

### *Has the Magazine a Future?*

IT is as well to start with this question, for if the magazine has no future or if you are very doubtful as to its value, then you will not want to spend precious time working away at it. The background against which we consider the magazine is an age of Christian retrenchment in the increasingly wealthy and secularised western world. Whether this situation will develop or alter through some great revival is in the hands of God, but for the moment that is the background to our discussion.

Centuries of Christian heritage may produce the problems of a senile church and one which gathers to itself large numbers of nominal adherents. But the same heritage also means (except in countries where the major churches have been closely involved in political activity and anticlericalism has resulted; these are usually Roman Catholic countries) a vast fund of goodwill towards the churches, even if it is hard to turn this into committed faith and active church membership. In England at least this means a large number of persons in every parish with goodwill towards the church. Many of them would be shocked if you suggested they were not Christians. Most of them would stand firmly by basic Christian morality, not infrequently without realising the source from which their ethical values stem. They are not enamoured with permissiveness and *avant garde* behaviour. Such people ought, I believe, to be a major concern for the church magazine.

They are not likely to buy from the church bookstall, and may not even know that it exists. They are most unlikely to read any religious magazines, most of which in any case exhibit a clear trend towards falling readership. But the church magazine can reach them, if it is properly presented.

Another important group of readers is the younger generation. It is commonplace to talk of the generation gap, but if the church is to ensure a sound future, it must reach out to these people, grip their attention for which so many commercial advertisers from TV to glossy magazines will compete, and teach them the Christian faith.

Lastly, but of course not the least important, come the inner core of regular church members. The probability is that their loyalty will lead them to take any church magazine, but the shrewd editor will ask himself from time to time whether he is really helping them.

### *The Alternatives*

ANY alert church will want to reach out into the neighbourhood and the community, and inevitably that means literature. Broadly speaking there are three alternatives. First and cheapest the newsheet or newsletter, usually just one or two sides of straight duplication, though occasionally more ambitious. It serves a useful function in providing

basic factual information to church members, and perhaps just enough space for a few comments from the minister. It may be all that a new church on a housing estate can afford, and others have turned to it against their better judgment as a refuge from the endless inflationary spiral in the printing industry. But it has great limitations. Nobody really imagines that young people are going to spend much time with a duplicated sheet unless they are already interested. Even amongst church members we may suspect that duplicated newsletters, like a good many prayer letters, disappear into the waste paper basket unread. A newsletter is unlikely to have much more than local information. There is not space for more, and few churches have those to write anything wider in impact. In a TV age even the national newspapers are having to fight to get people to read them. They know that presentation matters, and that people will not go on taking indefinitely something they do not want to read. Some churches have been attracted to wholesale distribution of newsletters because they have thought that they can reach large numbers of people at low cost. The idea is admirable, but it is one thing to push a leaflet through a letter-box, and quite another to get it read and make its impact register.

A second alternative is the tabloid, newspaper format. This takes two main forms, either a nationally produced tabloid like *Challenge* or a group of local churches working together to form a kind of Christian periodical for an area or locality. The *Challenge* type of tabloid is evangelistic and non-denominational which means it can never have any church teaching. It is based on the premise that there are people who will only read *Daily Mirror* style literature, and so they should be given something Christian cast in that mould. Two large question marks hang over this approach. First, can you go on using this evangelistically angled newspaper month after month on the same people? Will they not become bored with its overt evangelistic twist, and eventually Gospel-hardened? Second, are there really large numbers of *Daily Mirror* type readers who will read tabloids regularly when they will not read other Christian literature? There can be little doubt that an evangelistic tabloid has its uses, in a mission, in certain types of new housing estate areas, and so on, but can it be a worthwhile regular diet for a settled church and its fringe members? My fear is that it will inadvertently stunt the growth of the former (plenty of other evidence of that immaturity in churches) and increasingly irritate the latter.

The other kind of tabloid has different attractions and different problems. The attractions are the larger circulation which helps the budget, local news, and the appeal to local advertisers. But there are problems, and considerable ones. First, if it embraces all local churches (usually essential to get a worthwhile exclusively local circulation), it cannot provide any church teaching, and worse than that there will be theological differences, and the lines of one church may

get across and irritate another. Either everyone has to agree not to say anything that might worry anyone else in which case the impact becomes less and less as the message grows more anaemic, or each church has its allocated space and the differences just appear as ugly and unfortunate juxtapositions, one church talking about mission, another about evangelism, one about adult baptism, one about seven sacraments, and another about revolution. There is no answer to this coherent overall message impact on this basis. Second, a further disadvantage is the extraordinary difficulty in sustaining quality after the initial bright ideas are gone. Few areas have a wealth of journalistic talent in the churches, and if those involved are local journalists, they are likely to have put their best effort into the local paper (after all that is their job!). To find a local tabloid that has consistently sustained its quality and not sunk into a slightly widened version of narrow parochialism is rare indeed, I think. Some such ventures start in a blaze of glory, achieve initial impact and then rapidly die away. They rarely contain anything informed on the wider aspects of church life, because to do that it is necessary to draw on a much wider range of talent and knowledge. A third disadvantage is that of production quality. A tabloid has to be on cheap newsprint to get its costs down. That means that it will go yellow after a day or two in the window, and will soon be thrown away with other papers unlike the magazines which stay around. There is the further problem that supplies of photographs are needed and that takes some sustaining when the local newspaper's goodwill has been exhausted. Blocks are costly too with such papers usually printed letterpress.

### *The Church Magazine*

ALL this leaves us with the church magazine, which I believe is the most versatile and the most effective. (If I had not believed that I should never have risked thousands of pounds in launching *News Extra* magazine insert!) It is adaptable in that it can be used in any church whether its circulation is 100 or 1,000, and both get the advantage of the cheapness/quality ratio in mass production. It is adaptable in that it will blend with any production method—letterpress, litho, or duplicating. It is adaptable in that it combines local news, local comment and local spiritual application (which an exclusively national cannot do) with the wider national and indeed international expertise (which a local tabloid never sees) in articles and design. It is durable in that an attractive cover can ensure that the magazine stays around the living room for the whole month. A yellowing newspaper will be tidied away by the houseproud, and a duplicated newsletter is apt to follow an office circular into a drawer or a waste paper basket.

A church magazine is effective because it is entirely controlled by that church. They choose their insert so that the message and witness

of that church from pulpit to literature blend in together with no awkward hiatus between what one church says and another as in the local tabloid. It is effective because circulation statistics show that unless a tabloid is very powerful nationally, the more sophisticated end of the magazine market keeps up better in our affluent age. It is much less price and inflation sensitive. It is effective because it can quietly go on getting across Christian teaching, including the evangel itself, indirectly month after month without readers feeling they are being got at as can be the case with an entirely evangelistic tabloid. It can further launch occasional evangelistic numbers such as those provided by *News Extra*.

### *Magazine Impact*

TO achieve impact must involve consideration of design and editorial policy. Design is a highly professional business. The church designer has to be very careful to avoid the old image of the church as dreary and old-fashioned in design, the misguided printer who points with pride to his outmoded Old English type and proudly announces that he keeps it specially for church work! And yet at the same time avoid extravagance which no church can or should afford. The quickest way to artistic suicide is to accept the advice of a well meaning but ill informed local enthusiast who offers to do the job for nothing. If he murders the magazine, it may cause acute embarrassment to drop him, and lots of churches do not realise until too late that an artist-aspirant has murdered their magazine. The only real answer is an expert and the expert will realise your problems of finance if you explain them, and probably give you a good economical style which you can use without further expense for several years.

Some churches realising how dowdy the general church image is rush headlong to the opposite extreme and try something they think is way out. This may satisfy a few enthusiasts but it may upset the old stagers, and unless the designer knows exactly what he is doing Dean Inge's warning to the ultra-trendy may apply. 'He who marries the spirit of today will be a widower tomorrow,' and the result as always for mistakes is increased cost.

Other churches in their attempt to get away from the dreary rush to colour. They then discover that it is costly, and go round the corner to a man who says he can do it cheap. The result is horrid: he gets his inking wrong, the register is wrong, the paper is wrong, and he has spent more money on what is an inferior product. It can easily happen. Once again I believe that on design it pays over and over again to go to a good artist, a really good one, even if you have to pay quite a lot. If he is really good, he will grasp your problem and be able to show you how to achieve good design and impact without being too lavish.

*Editorial Impact*

DESIGN can make impact, and so can the editor. Editors vary of course in their outlook so I can only explain my own. I have an overall plan for the year designed to give a balanced spiritual diet across the wide range of *News Extra* inset readers, something for each of them, and then leaving certain areas to the local editor. Obviously he handles the local news, and I normally leave him most of the devotional material since he will know the way to apply this locally, and a minister is in any case likely to cover that in his monthly letter.

In my editorial planning I try to cover some basic teaching which includes the evangel, a serial story with Christian content which of course also teaches, a woman's page with particularly feminine issues covered (professionals tell me that women's pages are avidly read by men, so I regard that as just a bonus!), something to encourage Bible study or unravel a tough Bible problem, something to show church outreach whether in traditional missionary form or some new advance or social outreach, matters of morality and ethics in the life of the wider community (recently of course the permissive society challenge), a selection of news items and quotes which the ordinary reader will not have seen (it is surprising how many people will read a snippet rather than an article; ask *Reader's Digest* about that), something to encourage Christian reading either in the form of general popular books where we hope simply to urge readers to the church bookstall or occasionally something more solid at greater length.

It is probably more important to explain what we avoid. I always avoid the sermonic, which is the occupational hazard of the clergy, few of whom seem to realise that it is quite possible to preach the same sermon in print without being sermonic *provided* one gets the idiom right. I avoid long sentences in popular journalism. Cicero was a master, I know, but he did not write popular journalism! Likewise long paragraphs though for a different reason. Most magazine readers are not academically trained, and thus not used to the long paragraphs in a book. A slab of type subconsciously frightens them. If you want to check, ask yourself how often you have put aside a long newspaper or journal article saying to yourself that you would read it later when you had time, and then never did. The page must be well designed with solid wadges of text broken up with crossheads and illustrations.

A few other editorial points. Imaginative titles and good first sentences are essential. Otherwise the rest will never be read. Conclusions are the next most important. Some articles just stop; others peter out; others run to an anticlimax. Articles should end with an impact.

A word about copyright. It is disturbing how casual some editors are about this, their casualness based, I suspect, on ignorance. Actual type is not copyright, so there is nothing to prevent you 'borrowing' a

heading from another magazine or even pasting it down for the litho camera, but designs and drawings are copyright, and so is all written material. Just to lift an article from a magazine may seem harmless, but it is actually illegal and immoral since you may be inadvertently stealing another man's living. Many Christian periodicals and some secular ones are glad to give permission for reproduction free, but they should always be asked first. Others will make a charge. It is hardly a good Christian witness for the local editor to get involved in copyright rows, and the answer is to know the law or take the trouble to enquire.

### *Producing the Magazine*

PRODUCTION falls into two parts, editorial and printing. In church magazines the first is somewhat neglected, and money wasted. A good editor understands his printer's problems, keeps to his deadlines, takes in typed copy on one side of the sheet only, properly marked up with a master lay out sheet showing what goes where in the overall plan, with articles the right length for their allotted space. This may sound technical and troublesome, but it is not really. The editor who does all his work at proof stage is just wasting money, since corrections cost time and money. Part of a designer's service should be to give an editor a cast off chart, showing exactly how many words will fit into a certain space in a certain size of type. If he is prudent, the editor will then rule up or duplicate off some paper marked so that a printed page fits exactly into an area ruled out for the size of his typewriter. That saves counting every word every time, which is tedious.

The actual printing production is likely to be one of three kinds, and the editor needs to understand the pros and cons of each so as to judge for himself which is more suitable and how he can save money. First, duplicating which is of course the cheapest. It is surprising how few churches realise the capability of duplicators these days. My duplicator which is not all that recent has three colours on it, so colour is there. Agencies will make special stencils for illustrations, and they can be run off in colour in bulk if they are to be used each month. There is also duplicating and duplicating, and it is not just a matter of turning a handle. An operator can get very good results if the machine is properly understood, run at the right speed with the right inks. A lot of the art of duplicating is in cutting the stencil, and some typewriters are better than others. A large face is desirable as duplicating makes type infill, and a sharp type to cut the stencil cleanly. I never find that corrections come out as well, so an accurate typist is an asset. Design should not be neglected even with duplicating, where one typewriter limits the operator.

The second method is letterpress printing, which can be either monotype (each letter separate) or linotype (one line of metal). Books are traditionally done in the former since the type is tougher, and small

changes like adding a comma mean only one small piece of type to be changed, so corrections are cheaper. But overall linotype is cheaper though remember it will not be, if you correct a lot. The same comma correction means a whole line reset, so you might as well change every letter in the line!

The third method is offset lithography, printing chemically without any hot metal, from either a paper plate (much cheaper) or a metal plate made from film (the latter of which is costly). The saving by this method is in the setting since you can do it on your own typewriter if you do not mind the right hand margin not being justified (level to the layman). Of course you will only get as good a result as your typewriter. Electric machines are much better if an executive in your church will allow you to borrow his for the job, and carbon ribbons improve the image. More sophisticated typewriters will justify for you but they are dear. On litho you are limited with display type since it all has to be lettraset (quite skilled when well done) and then photographed, thus cutting out the much cheaper paper plates. But photographs can be used without blocks, though they are harder to print well and require a careful matching of the right paper. A disadvantage of litho is that it is much more fussy about paper, and also more wasteful. As a publisher I find very little to choose between litho and letterpress whether the run is 500 or 150,000. If anything I think letterpress probably has the edge, but then you have to know exactly what you are doing and where to go in letterpress, and so probably for the ordinary church magazine litho by means of photographed typewriter is the most economical, though only a fool would set up large display ads litho, if there are complete pages of them which can be done on their own.

### *Costing the Magazine*

I CANNOT give you any exact figures partly because inflation is constant and they would be out of date at once, and partly because most church magazine printers are small firms who never have a professional estimator and vary from those who work out a quote on the back of an envelope while you wait to those who will send you a typed estimate in detail. But the important things in keeping down costs are watching corrections and getting the space allocation right first time, which are the editor's field. Then making certain that adverts are not in fact subsidised. You can only determine this by getting the actual cost of ads per page. Economies can be made by printing up non-changing matter for the whole year, but do remember that so simple an item as a month date change will mean stopping a large machine 12 times in your run, and that costs a lot of money. All you have to do is to use covers like those of *News Extra* which change every month, and just put the year and price on the cover, and that will



save you a few pounds, believe it or not! In cutting down an estimate the key thing is to dissect an estimate and understand how the printer works his job. You want him to use his maximum machine area at one time. Variation in machine sizes explains why printers can produce very different estimates for a similar looking job.

As a rough rule of thumb, the components of a small magazine bill are likely to be setting and correcting (easily the highest, and why litho where you do your own typewriter setting may be cheaper), machining, folding and collating, wire stitching, and of course paper. Paper has increased enormously in price, especially in small quantities. Also paper has changed a good deal and the general public is very ignorant about this. What a person thinks is what matters, not what is really the case. I once produced a cover on a good coated paper and on a cheap paper bulked up with air but which happened to have a springy feel to it, and I was promptly told by several churches that the latter which cost about two-thirds of the former was much superior and a great improvement! Small printers often stick to paper they know and try to discourage you trying anything else because this means they have to keep another line, and get a worse price rate on that paper. Others try to impose a handling charge if you buy your own paper. Few try this with a publisher as they do not get away with it, but a local church is in a much weaker position. As paper increases in price, the only way to combat this is bulk buying or printing centrally which is why *News Extra* has installed a printing plant to give customers the benefit of their bulk buying as well as economic local printing where we can work several magazines together at once.

As to sizes, the whole paper industry is in a state of flux while changing to metrification, but don't panic! Crown is the main size to be phased out, but demy octavo ( $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ ) will be around for years yet, and it is in any case very close to the continental A4. The whole matter is complicated by the Customs and Excise failure to bring their purchase tax into line with metrification, and this affects envelope sizes and costs. But beware of a few unscrupulous paper sellers, especially in our experience those who sell duplicating paper, who have been known to tell straight lies about what is available in order to boost their own sales of some new continental size. I have met several examples of this, which is why *News Extra* now stocks  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$  duplicator to help customers who have been deceitfully told that it does not exist any longer.

### Covers

THESE require separate treatment. There is a great temptation to design a local church cover and use it until it is worn out. I have even seen a church magazine cover which depicted two churches one of which had been demolished several years back, because the editor

would not sanction a new block! I believe it is unwise to use the local talent in this way, for local blocks are very costly (far more so than to publishers who bulk buy), they are often used long after their natural life is over which hardly makes the cover inspiring. Some realise that they cannot use the same cover year in and year out and so they keep changing the colour of the ink which just adds greatly to the overall bill, and without any corresponding gain. My conviction is that such local talent should be used to replace that hackneyed block of the study over the minister's letter, where a regular small drawing heading of the local church would be very appropriate. Using mass produced covers which can be professionally designed is the best solution for several reasons. You get the benefit of a first class artist (don't fall for those multi-coloured covers which are costly in their field of daffodils which turns out on inspection to be a yellow splurge), and good design is worth a mass of inks any day to the discriminating, and most people are that in time, even if they cannot tell you precisely why they like one more than the other. Bulk covers save a lot on paper where heavy cover paper is costly in small quantities. They also save on overprinting since you can overprint for the whole year without stopping to change each month if the cover is different. The number of churches including the month on their covers is still disturbingly high, and just wastes money needlessly.

### *Towards a Philosophy of the Church Magazine*

THERE is a natural resistance to increasing the price of a magazine from sixpence or ninepence to a shilling, but it is basic to my philosophy of church magazines that this must be done if the magazine is to survive. And anyhow do you not think most people (except the occasional old age pensioner or needy case which can be met from special funds) would rather pay a shilling for a good magazine than get a scruffy one for sixpence which they really take so as not to offend the minister? Advertising must be on a professional basis not a charitable one. The advertiser should feel that he is getting value for money, not being charitable, or he will just cancel at the first credit squeeze. Certainly an advertiser will want a quality product not one which he privately might be willing to pay not to be associated with!

But there is a profounder reason than pure economics for a good magazine at one shilling not a scruffy one at sixpence. If we are to reach those groups whom we described at the outset, quality is important. The young, more affluent than their forbears, are brought up to modern styles and good design in the glossies that they buy on the bookstalls. Church magazines cannot compete with their multi-colour secular rivals but they need not encourage the illusion that the church is dowdy, square and out of date, and they can have good design with economy if they use mass produced covers. The

cover is vital for the young or the outsider since it creates a subconscious first impression, and often determines how much the potential reader will bother to look inside. You do not have to be a sales director to know that packaging matters, and the cover is the package in which the Gospel message comes. Design matters inside, for you want the fringe member and the outsider to recognise that the church is up to date when they look inside, and the first visual impact you want to make is that of a modern relevant world on which the church is to beam its message.

Many churches, and some inset producers are caught in their own past successes, for decisions about insets are made by PCCs some of whom are elderly in outlook whatever they are in years. They have always had their prancing lambs and daffodils on the spring covers, and they rather resent any change, so set are they in their ways. Likewise some of them have got so used to Monday's washing hints and Tuesday's gardening and the serial love-story inside that they resist change, and by so insisting on what they have always had, they thereby ensure a diminishing circulation and the alienation of many young people who will read a woman's magazine for household hints or a gardening magazine for the garden. I believe that we dare not to water down our magazine impact to ecclesiastical trivia or mere secularities, but must make every bit of it count for Christ as best we can. Keeping up circulation by sticking to old designs, household hints and gardening tips is very shortsighted in my view, though any inset producer knows the temptation to give in to this pressure. Our philosophy is quality in production standards, paper and printing (none of those large letters which look as though someone has taken a bite out of them—actually battered worn out type), quality in design, spiritual impact blended with good journalistic approach in the content, and all this mixed with economy. That means economy in production of covers and insets, and also economy in the price which should be a commercially viable one, hence my plea for a shilling, something which is quite comparable and reasonable when you consider inflation elsewhere, not least in other kinds of magazines.

## Advertising

Stephen Trapnell

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IN THE DEANERY of Richmond and Barnes, a survey of parish publications showed that the majority of Churches were producing a monthly magazine at a loss, and that the loss in some cases was quite sizeable. If this pattern is typical of the Country as a whole, there must be few who manage to make a profit. Surely, on the face of it,

this situation reproduced on a national scale, spells 'death' to the Church Magazine. It would appear that there are only four ways to turn a magazine that is running at a loss into a paying proposition: 1. Reduce production costs. 2. Increase the circulation. 3. Put up the selling price. 4. Look to advertisements for the increase of income needed. Taking a broad look at these possibilities, by far the most likelihood of success lies in the field of advertisement. One advertiser is worth a dozen subscribers. In the Deanery survey, the only Churches to show a profit on their magazines were those which had a decent revenue from advertising: without this, Church Magazines will become almost certainly a thing of the past. It is a luxury that few Churches can afford.

### *The old idea*

IN many Church Magazines, advertisement is frowned upon. It is an evil (albeit, a necessary evil) that has to be endured, and usually leads to the advertisements being tucked away at one end of the magazine or the other, so as not to spoil the appearance of the rest of the magazine. Frankly, this attitude is no longer realistic, for if an advertiser is to pay a reasonable rate for space in a magazine, he expects to 'get a look in': anything else is less than just to the advertiser. The alternative is to give the advertiser a prominent place in the magazine, and make him pay for the privilege.

### *Dividing the space*

A GOOD guiding principle is to divide the pages of the magazine equally between the text and the advertisements, and secondly, to arrange each page of advertisements to face a page of text. Next divide each page of advertisements neatly into regular shapes (some horizontal, some vertical), so that the page is split up into halves, quarters, thirds, and sixths. Fix a price for each page, depending on the magazine circulation, ranging between £20 (at least) and about £30, and divide by the number of spaces available. Because of the eye-catching value, you can charge correspondingly more for the bottom section of the page, and more still for the top portion. The outside back cover is one of the most valuable advertisement spaces, and the charge for this should be almost double the space on the inside pages. It is good to offer this space to a public service or utility (like a newspaper or a removal firm) so as not to appear partial to a particular local trader. Again, if your magazine is printed in two colours, you can offer coloured headings to your advertiser for an extra charge, and at no extra cost to yourself (this only applies to certain pages of the magazine). In the interest of economy, all the advertisement pages should be printed for the year, and any increases in printing costs at

the end of the year might be passed on to the advertiser, who is usually very understanding when the situation is explained to him.

### *Selling the space*

THE minister himself is usually the best person to sell the advertisement space in the Church Magazine: not only are the tradesmen more favourably disposed when it is the Vicar who calls, but it is a useful contact with the tradesmen of the locality. It is time consuming, sometimes requiring two or three visits to each advertiser, but it is time well spent. Similarly, any enthusiastic layman can do this, provided he stresses the following selling points.

1. Regard each person you approach as a prospective advertiser. Don't take No for an answer, but, so to speak, set about selling your goods. I usually start, 'Would you like to advertise in the best Parish Magazine in Richmond—at only six pence?' (adding the last part in case my opening proposition might be questioned!). If the man says, 'I can't afford it', I reply, 'you mean you can't afford not to'. Point out that since tax can be reclaimed on advertisement expenditure, it makes the cost considerably less.

2. Make it quite clear that this is not charity, neither is he doing the Church a favour. This is business. He may be helping the Church by advertising in the magazine, but you are helping him just as much.

3. Mention that this is the best possible form of advertising, because the greater part of the circulation is entirely local. The rapid mobility of population, with people moving in and out of the area, makes this a very worthwhile form of advertisement.

4. The advertisement, being printed for the year so as to keep costs down, is repeatedly before the public eye, month after month.

5. Point out that each page of advertisement faces a page of text.

6. Mention that there is no competition between the advertisers, as only one of each trade or profession is allowed. This principle is worth keeping to, as it is a good selling point, and means that you can charge more than otherwise would be the case.

7. If possible, point out the attractions of your magazine format and lay out (such as cover designs, colour changes, news items, etc.), as the general appearance of the magazine is its own best selling factor. Given an attractive magazine, it is not difficult to find advertisers.

8. Maintain contact with your advertisers during the rest of the year, supporting them all you can, and encouraging others to do the same. It is obviously rather artificial if your only appearance before the advertiser is when you come to renew the space for another year. Similarly, suggest that when members of the Church support one of the advertisers, they mention the fact that it is because of the advertisement in the Church Magazine.

'It pays to advertise'—not only is this true for the advertiser: it also

applies to those who produce Parish Magazines, for it is only through advertising that the magazine is likely to pay. Yes, it *pays* to advertise.

## Art and Design

June Reed

**ART IN CHURCH MAGAZINES?** Obviously not art with a capital A, but art in a more general sense very definitely. Part of the artist's purpose is to establish visual order in his surroundings, and the organisation of a magazine can be approached in this way. Ordered arrangements are not only more immediately pleasing, but also eventually more satisfying and informative. Even if the budget is limited, the aims can and should still be high. Publicity as such is now a much accepted part of everyday life, and any sort of publicity is bound to reflect the character of the establishment concerned. Present day publicity is a highly influential and powerful machine.

It seems astounding that people who are adjusted (albeit unconsciously) to contemporary high standards in the mass media, TV, the Press etc. should accept the poor production and quality so often offered to them by 'The Church'. The church magazine is the vehicle and the reflection of the local church. So often dowdy Victoriana is the image projected, and accepted without question by the faithful congregation.

Surely part of the contemporary Christian's task is to convince his fellows that Christianity has relevance, so why should not Christian publicity be relevant and up-to-date? Much of it is, but locally standards can be a let-down. Publicity in this sense comes in many guises, the mere outward appearance of the church for example, that noticeboard, that YPF poster, that Harvest leaflet and of course that magazine. Just what do these things say about your church? Low standards and carelessness about such things—is this really of value as a projection of the Christian message?

The church magazine can, and should, be a more influential extension of local church work. A visually pleasing product will obviously attract and stimulate, and ultimately could contribute towards lifting the general worship of the church. One of the first points to consider is the immediate whole appearance of the magazine. The product should look as though it has been designed as a whole, with a style of typesetting or typing consistent throughout to establish a basic unity on each page. The pages should appear balanced with reasonable margins and line spacing, not wrongly trimmed through carelessness or because the paper did not fit. Headings should be clear, attractive and easily read. Illustrations are a help and if used imaginatively can add immeasurably to the total effect.

*Insets and Covers*

THIS is where a reliable inset is valuable, consistent standards of design and presentation are available which would not be possible on a local level. If an inset is used the local matter can be set out in the same style to complement it, and so provide a guide and a stimulus to improve the whole production. Magazine covers can add or detract greatly to the end result. Cluttered, scruffy covers, dated in design can surely deter any improvement in circulation. A pleasing effect can often be achieved with a simple one colour design overprinted with the church's name in a second colour. This type of thing is often more striking and certainly cheaper than the beloved and often sentimental photographs of well-worn themes frequently seen in use. If the cover design can be related to the general appearance of the interior of the magazine, as with *News Extra*, so much the better. An ordered, attractively balanced, clear array of pages deserves similar care on the cover. Part of the artist's purpose is also to interpret his surroundings and to enlighten and enrich the vision of others by establishing a visual order in his work. I believe some of this purpose can and should be achieved by the Christian artist through the church magazine. Why should we not enrich the physical vision as well as the spiritual with the church magazine?

**From Loss to Profit**

Max Wigley

ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS I was told when I moved into this Parish as Vicar, was that the Church Magazine was losing £120 per year, and although a Committee had done quite a lot of work on possibilities for a new Magazine, it was shelved until the new Vicar arrived. After having been in the Parish a month or so, I recalled the Magazine Committee. Everyone agreed we could not go on losing £120 per year as it was bad stewardship. No matter where we looked, or to what Printer we went, it was clear that it would be very difficult indeed to have a Magazine printed 'properly' without incurring a deficit.

It is at this point that many Churches give up, i.e. decide to duplicate a Newsletter which I feel is a shame, and often not necessary. In our investigations, we were told by a Printer of a printing method called Photo-litho. A photographic process of printing, sometimes much cheaper and obviously a possibility. I must confess I was not keen on the idea at first, but we decided to pursue it. Photo-litho is basically material typed out by a good typist on a high-quality typewriter (she also sets out the material), then photographed and reduced down. We have found the best size is to photograph down to 75% of the original

type size. When it is photographed down, set out well, it can look very much like printing.

We opened up a Cover Competition, telling people the size we wanted. We were fortunate to have a professional photographer in the congregation who designed a cover using a contrasting negative print of the Church. This was agreed. The Committee also decided upon *News Extra* as Insert.

Having decided upon cover, inset and size, we had long talks with the Printer concerned. We aimed high in that we were determined as a Committee to have the best we could using this method of printing. We decided on good paper, and proceeded to work from this point. Cost had, of course, played a large part in all our discussion, and we had only gone as far as we had because we knew that we would not only break even with our new Magazine, but make a profit.

### *Printer's Cost*

THE printer offered us seven sides of news plus the inside of the front cover, which we used for Parish Notice Board. For this the Printer asked us to provide him with thirty Advertisers at £4-4-0 each. The Printer concerned said that he collected the money with the first issue. He went round each Advertiser, taking the Magazine and Invoice. He also asked for £50 from the Church on top of this. The Magazine was then given to us to sell. We were given 500 copies per month for this amount. If your maths are good, you will see that the Magazine costs us £176 per year. £126 of this is obtained through advertisers. Our costs then were £50 for the Printer, plus £42-3-6 for insets, making a total outlay of £92-3-6 per year. If then we sell 500 copies at 6d each per month, we shall have an income of £174-0-0 p.a., giving us a profit of £82 approx. Profits would go up with increased circulation.

Having decided on most things the Magazine Committee were formed into an active Committee. We appointed a Treasurer, Editor, two men to organise distribution and promotion, and a roving reporter.

The Editor's job was a difficult one at first as he did not know what exactly he could do with this method. Experience is teaching him this. The first issues were very much trial runs and the Magazine is improving all the time. It is essential to break up the printing with headings. CPAS allow the reproductions of their 'Pictures for your Parish Magazine' at one guinea a series.\* These are a tremendous help. All the printer has to do is photograph the reproductions. It is impossible using Photo-litho to get bold headings, but we have found that if you cut out headings from other Parish Magazines, the Printer can photograph these and use them.† I do not think this is unethical

\* *News Extra* offers blocks at very competitive prices, or alternatively reproductions for camera.

† See earlier comment on copyright.



but I did write to my first Vicar asking for his permission to use the headings from his Magazine—of course he agreed!

### *Selling*

AS far as promotion went it was decided to 'hit' a street in the Parish every month with a free copy of the Magazine. Inside each copy was a duplicated note telling the people about the Magazine and saying a distributor would call back to see if they wanted a regular order.

It is not possible to put the month of the Magazine on the front as the plates are produced for the year, therefore in order to prevent confusion the Printer changes the colour of paper used for the cover each month. Three colours are used in rotation, and the month is at the head of the Vicar's letter on the opening page.

The Advertising is not spread through the Magazine, but placed all together at the end. Three pages having ten adverts each, all the same size. We have had no complaints from Advertisers. The adverts were obtained from local Tradesmen by a member of the Magazine Committee.

To conclude, let me say that our aim has been to produce a Magazine that was of good quality, not cheap and nasty; a Magazine that was not a financial liability but gave us a profit, if possible. I think we have achieved this. The reaction of Parishioners has been mixed. Some like it, some hate it. We knew we could not please everyone. We are not saying the Magazine produced is as good as one 'properly' printed. I do not think it is. However it is good, and it is financially viable.

## **More Circulation**

Peter Phenna

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ST. MARTIN'S is a typical suburban parish in a residential part of Cambridge. It is made up of half council houses and half private semi-detached houses. Just prior to Easter the circulation of its magazine, *The Martin*, stood at 425. Of these 375 were distributed within the parish and 50 outside.

The previous year *The Martin* had consisted of the **News Extra** insert surrounded by 12 pages of unrelieved duplicated typing. The cover had been printed locally by letterpress at great cost with advertisements on the inside front and back, and on the back page.

### *Promotion*

A NUMBER of factors combined to make a circulation drive seem appropriate at Easter:

1. The magazine had not been promoted for a number of years.
2. With a new incumbent a number of new things had been introduced into the life of the church, principally a regular Sunday morning family service, and people were beginning to talk about these things.
3. With the January issue we had switched to using *News Extra* covers which immediately gave *The Martin* more cover appeal. We used the ones printed on a heavy matt paper so that we could duplicate the front heading and the advertisements. This reduced the cost of the covers considerably. At the same time we began to use illustrations produced on an electronic stencil—stripping one in on each page. The appearance of the magazine was therefore very much improved. (At the same time we raised the price from 4d to the much more realistic one of 6d.)
4. *News Extra*, as in the previous year, were offering an evangelistic insert for Easter which, together with special material in the duplicated section, made the issue very suitable for new people.

#### *Our procedure*

1. We produced a copy for every letterbox in the parish (1,602), as well as those that were ordered for extra-parochial use.
2. Inside each magazine we put an envelope with the following wording duplicated on it:

St. Martin's Vicarage, Cambridge.

Please supply me with a copy of *The Martin* each month for the next eight months to the end of the year.

\*I enclose 4s. for the eight months.

\*I would prefer to pay 6d monthly.

BLOCK    Name ..... Date .....

LETTERS    Address .....

PLEASE .....

3. We got our young people (Pathfinders) to distribute these to every household in the parish.
4. About a week later the regular magazine distributors, reinforced here and there with a few extra volunteers, called at each house asking for the envelopes. This job had to be done in the main by the 'regulars' as they were the only ones who knew which houses already took the magazine.
5. These distributors were equipped with a note for the houses where there was no reply which read:

St. Martin's Church.

A representative called to enquire whether you wished to take the parish magazine regularly but could not get an answer.

If you would like to have the magazine delivered every month, would you kindly return the envelope to your street distributor who is:

or to St. Martin's Vicarage, Suez Road.

PETER PHENNA, *Vicar*.

6. The visiting was done in sufficient time to allow for ordering extra inserts and covers for the following month.

**The result was an additional 150 subscribers**

### *Important factors*

1. We had new things to write about.
2. We had given the magazine a face-lift with the help of *News Extra* and pictures produced on electronic stencils.
3. We took the job of 'blanket' distribution off the shoulders of the regular distributors and got the young people to do it instead.

We feel that this has been an altogether worthwhile project. The magazine is now going into one house in three in the parish and is a valuable medium in our public relations programme.

## **Charging a Shilling**

Elsie Ellis

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AFTER A DISCUSSION at last year's Annual Church Meeting, we were given the opportunity to form a committee and produce a magazine in place of the Broadsheet we had used for two years. The committee made plans, visited local printers and produced a report for the Parochial Church Council. We suggested two alternatives hoping to keep the price as low as possible, and were pleased when they decided on the better quality magazine which we hoped to produce for 9d per copy, changing to 4 new pence on decimalisation. We were determined to offer a good magazine in modern format, using the *News Extra* insert, and with this the PCC agreed, but the Rector felt that a new magazine would have to be sold at 1s. per copy, or 5p. Members of the PCC with previous experience agreed with the wisdom of this in view of the sure increases in price of paper, printing costs, etc. This price also agreed with other advice that we had received. The committee had to accept this decision taken by the PCC and after

discussing the matter, resolved to have a magazine that felt and looked a good shillingsworth and could be offered at this price.

We called two meetings, the first one to meet leaders of organisations and groups from whom we were hoping to receive our copy for the magazine. Most of these were PCC members and already willing to help. The second meeting was with the magazine distributors or rather those who were already distributing the Broadwater Broadsheet mainly free of charge. It was more difficult to convince these friends that the new magazine could be sold for 1s. per copy, but, by then we had drawings available of cover, blocks, etc., and the magazine was already taking shape. (We were fortunate to have the professional help of the Christian Publicity Organisation whose office is in our parish; we explained to them what we wanted and they produced designs for us.) We were thus able to show the distributors that the new magazine was going to be worth the price. We all agreed that they could use their discretion if they called on elderly folk who just could not afford 1s., and it could be offered at half-price. It was suggested that we charge 10s. per year if the money was paid in January, but we felt we would rather offer the magazine at 10d. per month to all, than 10d. per month to those who could afford to pay in this way.

We realise that some are refusing the new magazine, but feel that some at least have made the increase in price an excuse to decline whatever is produced in way of a Church magazine. Many have been pleased to accept it and indeed were looking forward to receiving a copy and were all ready to pay 1s., as the Rector had mentioned the new magazine in the November and the December issues of the Broadsheet (the new magazine came into being in January). He explained that it would be 1s. but that we felt the new magazine would be acceptable and well worth the price.

We approached local tradesmen, telling them first by letter of our proposals and following up a few days later with a personal visit by one of the committee. We had no difficulty at all in selling our advertising space at the price that we felt we must charge, and all have paid for the space they accepted.

We printed 1,200 copies for January and were quickly sold out; we have increased our number and now have 1,400 copies printed each month, though we actually sell about 1,300. Some distributors feel that it will be easier for them to sell more copies during the summer weather, as much of the earlier selling was done during rain, wind and snow during the first three months of the year.