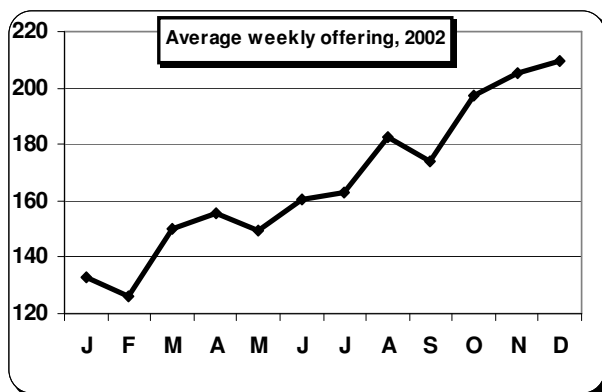


"My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."
[Phil 4.19]

GOD'S AMAZING PROVISION

2002 was a remarkable year for Durham Road Baptist Church in all sorts of different ways, not least for the wonderful ways in which God provided so generously for our financial needs. Our **income** last year (at just under £37,000) was over twice that for the previous year (just over £16,000). During the year, our **weekly offerings** rose from £133 in January to £210 in December. In addition, **donations** of one kind or another from members of the congregation amounted to over £9,000.



This is all the more remarkable considering the economically depressed area the Church is situated in, and the fact that there are only 9 wage-earners (three of whom are in part-time employment) amongst our 32 members! *We give God all the praise and glory for touching people's hearts to give so willingly, joyfully and sacrificially to his work at Durham Road.*

Just over half our income was contributed directly by members of the congregation, the rest being made up from a **variety of sources**, for which we are immensely grateful to God: a Baptist Union Home Mission stipend grant (£6,500); rental income from use of the Church and manse (£4,200); an insurance claim for a roof repair (£2,500); investment income (£1,200); and contributions from people outside the Church (£2,000), for which we are especially grateful.

We thank God for all our supporters, near and far, who remember us faithfully in their prayers month by month through these News Letters. 44 are sent out

each month by e-mail to places as far flung as Singapore, India, Peru and the USA - not to mention Northern Ireland and Scotland! We are deeply touched by those whose hearts have been moved by God to become partners with us in a tangible way, in the spirit of the Philippians:

"You sent me aid again and again when I was in need. ... The gifts you sent are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God."
[Phil 4.16,18]

Our **expenditure** was somewhat higher than budgeted, mainly due to unanticipated expenditure on mission activities, the insurance repair to the roof, the carpeting of our main hall, and the purchase of extra Bibles and new hymnbooks for our Sunday services. The costs of some of these items were covered by specific gifts. We had anticipated a **shortfall** of almost £8,000 for 2002 (of income against expenditure), but in the event only a little over £1,000 had to be drawn from reserves.

THIS YEAR AND BEYOND

At our quarterly Church Members' Meeting in January we agreed our **budget** for the current year and sought to forecast our income and expenditure for next year. The latter exercise was to help us prepare our grant application for Home Mission funding, for 2004.



For the current year, we have budgeted for a **weekly offering** of £200, in line with the level reached by the end of last year. Allowing for various other sources of income (donations, our annual Thank Offering, rental and investment income, and our Home Mission stipend grant of £7,000), we are projecting a total income of £31,400 for the current year. As our projected expenditure is just over £37,000, our budget anticipates a shortfall of almost £6,000 to be drawn from reserves.

But having seen the wonderful way in which God blessed us financially as a Church last year, we look *(cont.)*

to him with renewed confidence to provide for all our financial needs in this current year. In this connection we are reminded of Abraham who re-named Mount Moriah *Jehovah Jireh* meaning ***The Lord will provide*** (Gen 22.14). That is our confidence as we move ahead in his purposes.

GIVING GOD'S WAY

At our quarterly Church Members' Meeting in January, we looked at the subject of giving from 2 Corinthians 9.6-15. Here are some of the key thoughts we shared together for the benefit of those who were unable to attend the meeting.

- **God himself, by nature, is a Giver.** Everything that exists is his by right and his great joy is to share it with others. He supplies both our physical needs (v10) and all our spiritual needs (v8). He has given us a '*gift beyond words*' in giving us his Son (v15). ***Whenever God gives, his giving is always super-generous!***
- **God's giving provides the pattern for our giving.** We give not just to meet the *needs* we see (v12) - still less, the requirements of a church budget! Nor do we give simply out of a sense of *obedience* (v13). Our giving to the Lord's work must never be regarded as an onerous duty, or a church levy imposed on us, like an 'ecclesiastical income tax'. ***We give because God has put it in our hearts to give (v7)!*** Giving to the Lord's work is the eager response of hearts that truly love him and deeply appreciate all he has given to us, both materially and spiritually, for this life and the one to come.
- **God is honoured by our giving.** It results in *thanksgiving* (v11,12) and *praise* (v13) to his name.
- **So our giving is to be generous!** The more generous our giving, the more God's work will prosper (v6). And Paul promises us that ***"you will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion"*** (v11)!

PROGRESS REPORT

Please continue to pray about our plans to refurbish our premises by installing an access ramp and toilet facilities for the disabled, and converting some of our meeting rooms into office spaces for letting. The process is likely to be somewhat long and drawn out, calling for both patience and persistence on our part!

- Outline *plans* are with Gateshead Council and

the Baptist Union Corporation (the trustees of our building) for planning permission to be granted.

- A draft ***schedule of work*** to be carried out has now been drawn up. This will be passed to contractors, along with the architect's plans, to enable estimates to be submitted for the cost of the work. Pray that we won't omit anything from the schedule. We want a thorough job to be done, that will stand the test of time, and be of a quality that honours the Lord.
- Draft ***proposals*** have been drawn up for submission to potential funding bodies. GVOC have been extremely helpful in identifying possible sources of funding for us, and they will assist us in applying for grants.
- Pray that God will move the hearts of those with resources to contribute to this vital work. We set aside £12,000 from our General Fund last year to kick start our ***Building Fund***, and we anticipate setting aside a further £3,000 this year and next. However, the overall cost of the work needing to be carried out is likely to be well in excess of the £18,000 we have allocated to it so far; hence the need to look for other sources of external funding.
- But behind every source of funding, whether from the Lord's own people or from charitable foundations, lies the hand of ***Jehovah Jireh, our Provider!*** The experiences of both Ezra and Nehemiah teach us that when there is building work to be done for the Lord, he will supply all the necessary finances, material resources, and manpower to ensure his name is fully glorified.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- ***Games Night:*** 7.00-8.30pm, Tues 11th Mar;
- ***Five-a-side Football Knock-out Cup:*** Saturday 29th March, Cramlington Sports Centre - spectators/supporters welcome!
- ***Easter Special:*** 7.00-8.30pm, Tues 8th April;
- ***Easter Coffee Shop:*** Saturday 12th April;
- ***Jesus Video distribution:*** Sunday 13th and Wednesday 16th April.
- ***Good Friday Service:*** 12.00 noon - 2.00pm led by the deacons, Friday 18th April;
- ***Easter Day services:*** 11.00am and 6.30pm, Sunday 20th April.

David Hunt