EDITORIAL: Communication

Paul Beasley-Murray

It is amazing how the world-wide web has revolutionised, not just life in general, but also the practice of ministry. Thanks to the internet a vast range of resources for ministry are available. Thanks too to the internet, we are able to correspond with one another through e-mail. And yet there are limits to what the web has to offer. The web has not replaced the printed page: indeed, experience shows that even with web-journals, subscribers almost always print out the articles which are of particular interest to them. Just as the microwave has not replaced the 'old-fashioned' gas or electric oven, so the web has not replaced printed word. Books will still to be the tools of a minister's trade, and although emails may account for most of our correspondence, there will still be a place for letters. Certainly, when it comes to expressing condolences upon the loss of a loved one, I would never dream of sending an e-mail. Rather I take out my fountain pen and write a personal letter of sympathy.

Even more important, the electronic word does not replace the spoken word. There are times when we need to speak to one another face-to-face. There is a place for debating issues on line, and there is also a place for debating issues together. This certainly has been my experience when seeking to resolve contentious issues in church life. A meeting may be more time-consuming, but it is often more effective in bringing about agreement.

EMERGING ... WHAT?

Andy Goodliff

I am not sure when I first heard the words 'emerging church', but it immediately caught my interest. I guess the word 'emerging' gave the impression of something new and not quite formed and, in a church culture which seems to fall too easily into uniformity and blandness, this word suggested something different. The last few years have seen something called 'the emerging church' appear in UK church life. The words have become part of church