

## Ramridge Baptist Church – A Pioneer Venture

How it all began!



Prior to this event, Rev. W. L. Wagnell, Secretary of the Federation at that time, arranged for some twenty visitors to make a census of the district. Homes with children of Sunday School age were recorded and a list of interested potential Sunday School helpers was drawn up. Armed with this information the enterprise could begin.

Signs of the seal of God upon the venture have not at any time been wanting, and the first of many indications of God at work through circumstances was apparent at the outset in connection with the site for a temporary building. No definite assurance had been given at that time that land on the estate would be available, though it was hoped to secure a plot. With high hopes, the district was surveyed, what appeared to be the most suitable site was located and inquiries made of the Borough Council whether a site could be allotted. It was revealed immediately that the exact position considered most suitable had been unaccountably left vacant. A corner plot, large enough for four houses, had been overlooked and left free. Negotiations were therefore made at once through Sir Herbert Janes, and the ground purchased for the sum of £400, generously raised by him, with support from the Baptist Churches of the town and county.

On 23rd October, 1954, a small wooden hut, hastily erected on the site, was officially opened by Mr. Robert Janes in the absence of his father who had loaned it, and a Thanksgiving Service held in the nearby school hall. Equipment consisting of two slow-combustion stoves for warmth, and four oil lamps for light, was also loaned. Other necessities consisting of wooden forms, a table, table-cloth, matting, fenders and a clock were given by the Methodists whose country chapel at Darley Hall had just closed. An organ was given anonymously and delivered free of charge.

The following day a Sunday School commenced. Forty-four children under eight years met at 2.15 p.m. and thirty-seven children over eight years an hour later in the second session. Sixteen helpers were in attendance.

Two weeks later the first evening service was held when almost fifty people crowded into the tiny hut. The subject of the address that evening was "Fellowship", and this has been a maxim ever since. The organ broke down during the service, but this, like many subsequent difficulties, did not impede the work.

In retrospect, the Church began, not with the building or with the Sunday School, or even with the commencement



"Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place." The prophet Isaiah denounced the greed and selfishness of grasping landlords with these words. In a modern context they bring to mind the changing English scene, where new towns and vast housing-estates are creeping across the countryside. The Church echoes, "Woe unto them that join house to house" if they make no provision for the spiritual welfare of these new communities.

Following the Second World War, Luton began to stretch itself, and new homes were built for the growing population. In two directions, Farley Hill to the south and Ramridge to the north, huge estates were planned. A community of several thousands was expected in each.

Free Churches of the town recognized that provision ought to be made for the spiritual needs of these new communities and contemplated Church extension. In order to avoid competition between denominations, Farley Hill was allotted to the Methodists and Ramridge to the Baptists.

The Luton Federation of Baptist Churches, consisting of seven Churches in the town and five country branches, met under the Presidency of Rev. C. H. C. Robbins to consider the missionary challenge presented by housing development at Ramridge. Under the inspiration of Sir Herbert Janes, the Federation agreed to grapple with the task by seeking a minister who would be prepared to pioneer in the district. Spurgeon's College, London, was advised, a young man invited, and on 18th April, 1954, Peter Tongeman accepted the Federation's invitation to "Undertake pioneer work in the area between Stopsley and the Airport . . . for an initial period of three years." On 23rd September, 1954, an In-duction Service took place in Wellington Street Baptist Church which had been given oversight of the venture.

of an evening service. The "Church" comprised a group of Christian people who met every Wednesday evening in a home for prayer and Bible-study. They had been contacted largely through the initial visitation and drawn in as helpers in the Sunday School. Together they prepared the lesson for the following Sunday. The group consisted of Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, an Anglican and a Quaker. Fellowship was rich, denominational labels were unimportant; all were united by a common love for Christ and a desire to serve Him among the children.

Hymn-books first used for the evening services were loaned by Park Street Baptist Church. Later "Hymns for Today" were replaced by copies of the "Baptist Church Hymnal" (Old Edition) given by several Churches which no longer used them. Among the many gifts made at this time must be included Sunday School hymn-books, a pulpit Bible, a Communion-set, a cut-glass vase and a notice board.

Evening services did not continue to thrive. On 2nd January, 1955, seven people attended worship. The minister wrote in his diary, "Am I wasting my time in Ramridge? Could I exercise a more useful ministry elsewhere?" With the cold weather, Sunday School attendance diminished. Only the conviction that this was God's work, and therefore could not fail, sustained us at this time.

The work did however continue and the management of Church affairs has been dealt with throughout by the "Ram-ridge Committee". This consisted of seven people under the chairmanship of Rev. W. L. Wagnell, Minister of Wellington Street Baptist Church. Such was the challenge of the



situation and the subjects to be discussed relating to every aspect of development, that meetings extended to exceptionally late hours. Members of this committee were Rev. P. H. K. Tongeman, Miss D. Baker, Messrs. A. E. Harris, A. W. Lock, H. Silwood, E. Smith, E. Spivey (who was appointed Treasurer) and later Mr. L. Rumble was also included.

A week-night activity for children was urgently needed and led to the formation of a Junior Christian Endeavour Society on 13th January, 1955, under the leadership of Mrs. Silwood and Miss Baker. Starting with only seven children it quickly developed into an effective society which has three times won the District Efficiency Shield.

A weekly women's devotional meeting began on 9th March, 1955. With high hopes, five hundred letters of invitation were distributed in the district explaining the intention and offering free refreshments. Only six ladies attended the first meeting under the leadership of Mrs. G. Lewis. For many months it struggled for existence with a handful of members, but under the blessing of God the "Women's Hour" has since grown in strength and become an important stepping-stone to the Church.

The first of several pianos was given to the Church in January 1955. It was collected in a builder's wagon, belonging to Messrs. Chivers and Ward, which subsequently did yeoman service in dealing with all transport problems, thanks to the kindness of its owners.

During the first year of development, the houses continued to multiply, giving opportunity for a card of welcome to be sent to every new family moving in. Many responded by sending their children to Sunday School, some by attending worship occasionally themselves. Slowly the fellowship grew and those who possessed some connection with the Church multiplied.

On 21st August, 1955, the evening service at Ramridge was cancelled and the congregation travelled to Wellington Street Church for its first baptismal service. Mrs. Miller and Miss Mary Maxfield testified that evening to their new-found faith in Jesus Christ and were subsequently received into membership. These were the "first fruits" of the venture and occasioned great joy.

Ramridge Church is officially a branch of Wellington Street Church as it has not yet been constituted independently. Consequently the first five members received into fellowship on 9th October, 1955 became members of

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THE FIRST HARVEST FESTIVAL, SEPTEMBER 1955



REV. D. H. HICKS, AREA SUPERINTENDENT,  
LAYING A FOUNDATION STONE, JUNE 1956



THE WORK CAMPERS GATHER FOR MORNING PRAYERS IN THE PARTLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDING



WORKERS PREPARE TO LIFT A ROOF TRUSS INTO POSITION

the mother Church. They were the two recently baptized, with Miss D. Giles, Miss S. Giles and Mrs. C. Twigden, who were accepted by transfer.

The first Harvest Festival in September 1955, occasioned great encouragement. The small hall was insufficient to contain the congregation and several had to sit outside the building. Produce, given in abundance, was divided between needy and sick folks in the district and the children of Alexandra Hospital, Luton.

As the Sunday School grew, the need for young people's organizations became more urgent. Our own accommodation was inadequate for this purpose, and again the way opened up without difficulty. Inquiries were made and permission was given by the Education Authorities to use Ramridge Junior School hall two evenings each week free of charge. On 6th September, 1955, a Life Boy team was inaugurated under the leadership of Mr. Rumble and Mrs. Spivey. A platoon of the Boys' Brigade also began the same evening with the help of N.C.O.'s from the 8th Luton Company. The following evening, a Girls' Life Brigade Company commenced under the leadership of Mrs. E. Smith, Adjutant of the Luton G.L.B. Battalion, and member at Ramridge Church. She was helped by Miss Anne Pollard and Miss Hazel Holdstock. Each of these movements developed rapidly, with the exception of the B.B., whose growth was less marked. These all proved helpful, both in training young people and in linking them more closely with the Church. A monthly Sunday morning parade service for young people was commenced in January 1956.

In September 1955, a Young People's Christian Endeavour Society was formed, under the leadership of Miss D. Baker, with a view to attracting more young folk in their middle "teens". Its development was at first disappointing, but later it became the home of a keen group of young people, several of whom professed faith in Jesus Christ and were baptized.

A bi-monthly News Letter, incorporating a brief Gospel message and interesting news of the Church, was started in May 1955. One thousand copies were produced for delivery in the locality. The cost of this venture would have been prohibitive had not Mr. T. Mower undertaken to duplicate it. He was able to do this through the kindness of Mr. A. R. Hills who offered the use of his duplicator. Everything went wrong in producing the first edition so that a printed slip was necessary to cover the mistakes, but subsequently

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experience triumphed and the News Letter has kept the district informed.

It was early felt necessary to make provision for a permanent Church building. In January 1955, Building Fund boxes were produced and distributed. In November that year a Sale of Work was held in the Ramridge School Hall which raised over £100. Children of the Sunday School collected threepenny pieces and raised over £40. After three years, more than £1,000 had been raised for the new Church.

In June 1955, Sunday School Anniversary services were held in a larger temporary hall erected on the site, of which more will be said later. As electricity was not available at this time, an electric cable was run from a nearby bungalow, thanks to the kindness of our neighbours, and loudspeaker apparatus installed. This enabled two overflow services to be held in the small hall next door.

The growth of the Sunday School soon made it necessary to arrange a separate Beginners' department under the leadership of Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Simmonds. No room was available for this on Church premises, but accommodation was providentially provided by Geo. Wimpey and Co. Ltd., local contractors, whose store hut stood only fifty yards away. They gave permission for this to be used on Sunday afternoons by the tiny children. The watchman himself cleaned this hut every Sunday morning and lit the fire, to make the children comfortable. As builders' huts are never very clean, the leaders decided to ask permission to curtain off part of the hut every Sunday. To their surprise, when intending to inquire next Sunday, they found the builders had already neatly partitioned the building, better than they themselves could have arranged it. The Lord had made provision again. When further development made it necessary to arrange a Senior department under Mr. A. W. Lock, Mr. and Mrs. R. Follows kindly offered their bungalow, two rooms of which were used many months for this purpose. The Sunday School has continued to grow and numbers at present approximately three hundred children.

The growth of the Vauxhall Park Estate, adjacent to the Airport, presented a new challenge, and in January 1956, a branch school was opened, under the leadership of Mrs. M. Caddy, which met in a builders' hut belonging to Messrs. H. C. Janes, Ltd. Numbers increased rapidly, but the available accommodation became more and more cramped, and in June of that year this experiment was unfortunately closed.

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years, from a number of friends in the town. Rev. W. L. Wagnell was largely responsible for arranging this system without which it would have been impossible to commence work. At the end of the period, these loans were repaid and a long-term loan received through the good offices of the Baptist Building Fund.

Plans were drawn up and submitted to the Borough Council. In January 1956, these were passed, and on 24th March of the same year, work was inaugurated at a Turf-cutting ceremony performed by Sir Herbert Janes.

Until the beginning of 1956, the life and work of the Church in its changing situation was constantly upheld in prayer at the Teachers' preparation classes. It was now felt necessary to begin a separate prayer-meeting. This was done on 10th January, and took the form of a prayer circle preceded by a Bible-study discussion group. Books of the Bible were studied and discussed chapter by chapter, then the Church's task brought to God in corporate prayer. For the joy of those who attended, there were not a few clear answers to prayer.

The guidance of God was again manifest about this time in connection with accommodation. In view of the time anticipated to build a Church by voluntary labour, another temporary wooden hut was required to meet the growing requirements meantime. What should be done? The local contractors had now almost completed their work on the estate, and inquiries were made concerning the purchase of their large stores hut. This was in poor shape but would possibly serve our purpose. In April 1956 it was purchased for £25, a sum which was quickly subscribed in answer to a Sunday evening appeal. This hut was soon dismantled with a view to re-erecting it on the Church site, but to our dismay it was found that only the floor was suitable for further use; the walls were too weak to take the strain. Just at this time, two large wooden huts were offered cheaply by a church in Watford, both in good condition, neither of which included a wooden floor. Unfortunately transport costs would be heavy, and in any case two huts were not needed. The situation was resolved happily in the following way. The local builder, who at that time was seeking a site hut for a private building project, heard of our predicament. He offered to transport both huts, pay the bill for transport and cost, if the Church would provide him with one for his own use. Needless to say, this suggestion was willingly accepted. Thus a fine wooden hall was obtained, far larger

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The problem of inadequate accommodation was a matter of concern almost from the outset. The urgency of obtaining a larger building, either temporary or permanent, led the Church to much thought and prayer. Little capital was available for the erection of a permanent Church, and merely to obtain another temporary building was considered bad policy. Discussion followed the evening service on 16th January, 1955. What could be done? Some asked, "Why not build a Church ourselves? It will reduce the cost by more than half." To build by voluntary labour seemed the only way. Subsequently, parents of Sunday School scholars were visited, many showed interest and others indicated willingness to help if necessary. Bricklayers and carpenters were discovered nearby, together with various unskilled but willing men. This gave great encouragement. It became clear, however, that these were in themselves not sufficient unless a master-builder was available to co-ordinate and oversee the work, and an architect available to draw up the plans. These two requirements seemed insuperable obstacles, but prayer continued. If God would provide a builder and an architect, we should consider that sufficient guidance—"Go and build!" Shortly afterwards, a Sunday School teacher offered her husband's voluntary services in drawing up the plans, which was done subsequently most effectively by Mr. A. Pickering. Later, Mr. A. Chivers, a builder who lived only a hundred yards from the site, most kindly offered his assistance in advice, obtaining of materials and technical oversight. Our prayers had been answered. In the Ramridge Committee on 29th August, 1955 the sequence of events was recounted and a step of faith undertaken in the following resolution: "That a Church be erected on the site by direct labour and that the work should begin in the Spring 1956." God had said, "Go and build your own Church!"

The capital required for purchasing materials was obtained by securing interest-free loans, for a period of two



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than the first, for the cost of the floor alone—£25—and erected by the men of the Church.

On 16th June, 1956, a Stonelaying Ceremony, for the permanent building, took place, when five foundation stones were laid as follows:

On behalf of the Baptist Union by Rev. D. H. Hicks.

On behalf of Ramridge Church and Sunday School by Rev. P. H. K. Tongeman.

On behalf of Beds. Union of Baptist and Congregational Church by Mr. H. F. Gale.

On behalf of the Luton Federation of Baptist Churches by Rev. C. H. C. Robbins.

On behalf of Wellington Street Baptist Church by Rev. W. L. Wagnell.

In order to give encouragement to the men of the Church committed in their spare time to building, inquiries were made of the World Council of Churches, by the Pastor, whether an International Work Camp could be held in Ramridge during the summer of that year. After lengthy negotiations and careful preparation involving a visit to the World Council Headquarters in Geneva, twenty-four campers from the following countries visited Ramridge and shared in the task of building for three weeks during August 1956; from U.S.A. 4, from Greece 1, from Austria 1, from Finland 1, from Norway 1, from France 1, from Germany 2, from Holland 3, from India 1, from Ireland 1, from Great Britain 8. Led by Sipke Houwing of Holland and our own minister, they represented thirteen different Church traditions as widely separated as Greek Orthodox, Lutheran and Mennonite. Men lived in three bell tents on the site, women in the large hall. Their main task was to assist the work of building, to which six hours were given daily, but other activities included Bible-study, discussion groups, daily worship. Campers worked willingly. They built a site-hut to house tools and materials (this has since been converted into a fine Bible Class room for the young people); they built the baptistery; they concreted the floors; they engaged in brick-laying. The new temporary hall which had been erected by men of the Church was lined and decorated, making a fine building for worship. All meals were cooked by the campers themselves and the total cost of the camp was met by their own contributions. During their sojourn, visits were made to local homes for baths and Sunday hospitality. In all, their

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practical help gave great encouragement to the Church; their enthusiasm left the neighbourhood in no doubt about the reality of their faith; and their ecumenical witness demonstrated the unity of all believers in Jesus Christ whatever their nationality or denomination.

During the period in which Work Campers were in residence the hall was not free for the use of Sunday School scholars. In place of the usual school, a series of three open-air children's rallies were held. These helped to publicize the presence of a Sunday School and gained a number of new recruits.



In October 1956, the new temporary hall was opened for worship, and regular morning services commenced. The pulpit and platform were given by Croxley Green Baptist Church who had themselves used them in similar circumstances. The arduous duties of preparing the buildings for meetings, maintaining them in a clean condition and lighting the fires, were now increased. These have been carried out splendidly by the devoted service of our caretakers, Mr. and Mrs. S. Maxfield.

Details from the story of the building, if told in full, would fill a book. We have recorded here a brief account only. Progress was less rapid than we hoped due to the failure of many men in the locality to keep their promises. The plan to complete the roof before winter was frustrated. But the weather during the winter 1956/57 was the mildest for several years and the interior brickwork was thus preserved from deterioration. Building equipment in the form

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The record is not complete if the consistent help and self-sacrifice of half a dozen men in the Church is not mentioned, for without them the project would never have reached completion.

The main hall has been designed to seat approximately 180 people. In addition, there is a spacious vestry, a small hall, kitchen, vestibule and toilets. Plastering and decorating of walls have been largely eliminated inside by using an attractive buff-coloured brick; externally, the walls consist of sand-faced flettons with bright red soldier courses. The roof is built entirely of timber, surmounted by felt and antique clay tiles. White acoustic panels comprise the ceilings, with flush strip-lighting in the main hall. Sapele mahogany wooden blocks complete the floors, except the kitchen and toilets where tiles have been used. In the kitchen, electricity, gas and water supplies are incorporated. Heating is provided throughout by thermostatically-controlled electric convector heaters.

Space prevents mention being made of every answer to prayer, but three instances of the way in which God has provided for us are given here.



It was clear at the outset that scaffolding would be required. One could hire this easily, but the fact of building by voluntary labour lengthened the period it would be needed (almost two years) and made the cost of hiring prohibitive. A builder nearby, who had recently changed from timber to steel scaffolding, offered to lend his discarded stock for the whole period.

It transpired this was just enough to complete the building.

Erecting the timber roof-trusses was a difficult task in prospect. Each weighed 8 cwt. and measured 30 ft. in length by 12 ft. in height at the apex. They had to be raised twelve feet from the ground and set on the walls. Two steel scaffold poles were needed for this, together with ropes, pulleys and as large a gang of men as could be mustered. A few days before the task was to be tackled, an unexpected friend came and offered the necessary equipment which he delivered; a gang of sixteen men assembled

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of tools, planks, barrows were purchased. Cement-mixers were at first loaned freely when required, by various friends; later, one was loaned for the duration of our requirements. Just when rubble was needed as hard-core for the concrete floors, two lorry-loads were delivered freely by local contractors.



Help was given at almost every stage of erection by men who do not attend the Church. An advert in several religious weeklies inviting the help of bricklayers during Whitsun 1957, hospitality provided, brought the assistance of Mr. P. Weston from East Finchley Baptist Church. He subsequently travelled up on numerous occasions, sometimes bringing friends, and assisted greatly with laying of bricks.

The greater part of the work has been done on Saturdays though evenings have frequently been employed. A system of Saturday building "drives" was successful in the later stages when as many as twenty men at a time engaged in team work to complete a particular project. These often began at 6 a.m. Much of the bricklaying (over 40,000 bricks) was completed by amateurs among whom the minister regularly took his place.

Wooden window-frames were helped along by several carpenters from other churches besides Ramridge. The leaded-light windows were the generous gift of the Treasurer of the Bedfordshire Union, Mr. H. F. Gale. The oak front doors were made and given by a friend of the Church, Mr. P. Chapman. Guttering, water and gas-fittings, were undertaken by two most helpful Baptist plumbers, Mr. R. Brandon and Mr. Mackenzie. Toilets were plastered by the secretary of a neighbouring Baptist Church, Mr. H. Endersby. The electrical installations only were contracted out, as adequate skilled voluntary labour to carry out this work was not available. All men sharing in the work were insured against accident, only one of which occurred during the whole building operation. Happily, Mr. R. Follows, whose determination, persistent efforts and leadership in the enterprise, have meant so much, soon recovered from his fall from the scaffolding and returned to the task.

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COMPLETING THE FRONT GABLE, SEPTEMBER 1957



A VIEW OF THE ROOF TIMBERS, TAKEN ABOVE CEILING LEVEL, ILLUMINATED BY THE GLASS CROSS IN THE FRONT GABLE

for the work and the five trusses were set in position without mishap on one Saturday afternoon.

The roof was to be tiled. None of the men engaged in helping to build were experienced in this trade. Certain that the way would open up, the tiles were ordered and delivered. A few days after delivery, a stranger came to the minister asking who was to tile the roof. Hearing there was no one available, he disclosed that he was a professional tiler and offered to undertake the work voluntarily. This he did, and finished well over half of the roof. He was then unable to continue, but by this time sufficient of the "know-how" had been gleaned for the local men to complete tiling without difficulty.

In November 1956, prayers were answered in connection with the office of Church Secretary. This had long been a matter of concern. At length, a schoolteacher, Mr. P. N. Eccles, moved into the district and was invited to take up this office, which he has since fulfilled most capably.

When the need for new hymn-books was most apparent, friends of Wellington Street Baptist Church gave one hundred copies of the Baptist Church Hymnal (Revised Edition) complete with a glass cabinet for storage, in September 1956. Each book was inscribed with the name of the donor.

Until the close of 1956, light was provided by paraffin "Tilley-lamps" which had to be filled and primed before every meeting. The provision of a much-needed electrical supply came in circumstances which reflected again the goodness of God. The cost of running an electric cable to the temporary buildings was at first prohibitive, so the paraffin lamps were endured patiently. At length application was made for an electricity supply to be installed in the partly constructed new Church (at a nominal charge, compared with the previous estimate, for this was a permanent building). Normally the Eastern Electricity Board required a building to be completed before arranging an electricity supply. In this case, the application received prompt attention, their normal procedure was waived, and by January 1957, temporary lighting was in use in the partly constructed new Church, and electrical fittings provided light for meetings in both wooden halls. The fittings were obtained cheaply from discarded stock at the Sefko Ballbearing Co. Ltd.

The work of building has clearly occupied a place of prominence. It has not eclipsed, however, the greater task of missionary outreach and the spiritual development of the Church itself.

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In January 1958, a modest visitation scheme was launched. Visitors were sent in pairs to homes of Sunday School scholars in an attempt to establish a bridgehead of friendship. Every month, each pair made two visits, giving at each house a personal invitation to a special Family Service. The warm response and subsequent growth in interest and attendance has been most encouraging.

Since October 1957, when a young people's Bible Class was formed, under the leadership of Miss D. Baker, the young people have grown steadily in numbers and awareness of their own potentialities. A large group of youngsters seated together in the evening service was soon noticeable. A weekly young people's prayer meeting before the evening service was started. They began to hold house-meetings in the homes of elderly folks who were unable to attend a place of worship, and soon discovered the joy of service.

On the financial side, mention must be made of the Baptist Home Work Fund. This central fund, maintained by the liberality of all British Baptist churches, made possible the Ramridge pioneer venture by supporting its minister from the outset through the Initial Pastorate Scheme, generously aided by Sir Herbert Janes who contributed half the first year's salary. The growing Church has itself contributed increasingly to the support of its minister, but at present is still dependent upon and deeply grateful for the Fund. Beside this, all running expenses and the greater part of the Building Fund have been contributed by the giving of the local community.

The interest and generosity of the local Churches has been expressed most recently in their gifts of furniture and fittings for the new hall. Among them have been promised a Communion table and chairs, a vestry table and chairs, front gates, a book-rest, a number of congregational chairs and numerous other items. This tangible evidence of fellowship in Jesus Christ has been received with great gratitude.

Throughout the experiences of this venture in faith and missionary enterprise, certain lessons have been learnt. This record would not be complete without reference to them, and it is our prayer that they will inspire others to dare all in the cause of the Kingdom of Christ.

It has been our experience, reiterated again and again, that God will honour and reward a venture of faith. There has never been a guarantee that any step forward would not meet with failure, but it is our testimony that God has never failed to make adequate provision in opening up the way and

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THE RAMRIDGE COMMITTEE, JUNE 1958

*L. to R.* MR. E. SPIVEY, MR. H. SILWOOD, MR. A. W. LOCK, MR. E. H. SMITH, MR. L. W. RUMBLE, MR. P. N. ECCLES, REV. W. L. WAGNELL, REV. P. H. K. TONGEMAN, MISS D. BAKER

providing personnel. It is our belief that when a believing man, or group of people, ventures in faith and sincerity upon an enterprise of Christian advance, that faith will be abundantly rewarded.

Further, it seems to us that Jesus' injunction, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33) represents a principle of Christian living applicable equally to a community as to an individual. Our primary purpose has been to advance the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men and women; to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in revelation and redemption. This has been our first consideration. In consequence, for our joy, material necessities have never yet been in short supply. Accommodation, finance, equipment, have been provided to meet the growing requirements at each stage of development.

Finally, though the story is still in its infancy, it is a record of prayers answered, faith rewarded, and above all a demonstration of the actuality of Jesus' promise—"Go ye . . . and lo, I am with you alway". This record will not have been written in vain if others are constrained to take up the challenge and press onward in answer to the Master's call.

"To God be the glory, great things He hath done."

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### *Ramridge Dates*

Minister called to begin pioneer work:	18th April, 1954
First hut opened:	23rd October, 1954
Sunday School commenced:	24th October, 1954
First Evening Service:	7th November, 1954
Ramridge Committee first met:	5th January, 1955
Junior Christian Endeavour formed:	13th January, 1955
Women's Meeting commenced:	9th March, 1955
First Baptismal Service:	21st August, 1955
Life Boy Team formed:	6th September, 1955
Boys' Brigade Platoon formed:	6th September, 1955
Girls' Life Brigade Company formed:	7th September, 1955
Young People's Christian Endeavour formed:	8th September, 1955
First Harvest Festival:	25th September, 1955
First members received in:	9th October, 1955
Sale of Work held:	12th November, 1955
Bible-Study Circle commenced:	10th January, 1956
Turf-Cutting Ceremony:	24th March, 1956
Stone-Laying Ceremony:	16th June, 1956
World Council of Churches' Work Camp:	8th—29th August, 1956
Extra Hall opened:	2nd September, 1956
Morning Services commenced:	7th October, 1956
Church opened:	21st June, 1958