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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1995
as presented to the Annual Meeting held on 6th March, 1996.

We are still without a Church Secretary and the need for one is as urgent as ever. I am continuing to carry out the duties in my capacity as Elder but after 40 years it is, as I said when retiring in 1992, time for change. Please make this a matter of urgent prayer that God will provide us with someone to take on this important work.

Once again our membership has declined and now stands at 44, a decrease of one caused by the death of Bertha Splaine. There have been no new members during the year. One reason for our steadily declining membership is that many of our congregation seem unwilling to enter into full commitment by taking the step of baptism and full membership. Don't get me wrong! We do value the work done by these loyal and faithful people who support us week by week but their contribution to our Church life and work could be so much more effective as full members.

What of the year 1995? The work has continued and followed the customary pattern. We began with a Covenant Service to rededicate our lives to God's service - and a New Year Party to enjoy each other's company in a spirit of friendship and fellowship. We shared with other Churches in Hebden Bridge, through Christians Together in Hebden Bridge, in Lent Lunches, Lent House Groups and Easter celebrations. We continued with our special Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday; a real inspiration to meet at Horsehold at 6.30 a.m. to worship God as we welcome Easter Day as the sun rises over the eastern horizon. In August we have our Children's Holiday Club, followed by the Harvest celebrations, the Church Anniversary, Advent with the now established Christingle Service and finally Christmas. We try, with these highlights and other means to expand our work but, as I said last year, it is hard going. We long for an influx of younger people, families with children. We need to continue to make this a matter for urgent prayer.

We continued throughout the year to support other causes, and expand our vision beyond our own horizons. The main ones are the Baptist Missionary Society, Home Mission, The Leprosy Mission, Christian Aid, Spurgeon's Child Care, the Bible Society and the Northern Baptist College.

During the year we played our part in the wider denominational work, being represented at the Baptist Assembly, in Plymouth, as well as meetings of the Halifax and Calder Valley District and the Yorkshire Baptist Association.

I must pay tribute to the work of our Minister, Rev. Stan. Kirby, whose hard work, dedication and pastoral care are an example to us all. Without his devoted leadership, and all the assorted tasks he does, we could not carry on. We offer him our very sincere and devoted thanks.

Finally we must remember that it is God's work we are doing. We need more prayer and we appeal to all friends to share in our two prayer meetings. The average attendance at these is six or seven, we need more. We read in the Baptist Times earlier this year of a Church in the Lake District whose membership had trebled in a few months; the Minister says, "I can only put it down to prayer - we have done nothing different - it is God's work not ours." So let us all pray for the work of our Church; that more will share in the work, that more will be converted, that membership will increase and that we shall get more children. Remember, the Prayer Meeting has been described as the power house of the Church. How strong is our power!

Stanley W. Shackleton