

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Fraternal / Baptist Ministers Journal* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bmj-06.php

The Fraternal

JULY, 1960

No. 117

BAPTIST LIFE AND THOUGHT IN AUSTRALIA

G. H. BLACKBURN, B.A., B.D., B.Ed., Secretary, Baptist Union of Australia,
Editor-in-Chief, Baptist Board of Christian Education and Publication.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR BAPTIST INDIVIDUALISM

F. P. McMASTER, Minister, Canberra.

THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINE

F. A. MARSH, President General, Baptist Union of Australia, Associate
Pastor, Collins Street, Melbourne.

A STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

K. N. GRIGG, Doctor, Rosanna Medical Centre, Melbourne.

AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

S. D. CUTHBERTSON, M.A., Minister, Grange Road, Darlington.

AFRICA'S YEARS OF DESTINY

J. POORTER, D.D., Editor, South African Baptist.

OF INTEREST TO YOU

THE WIDER CIRCLE

BOOK REVIEWS

INTRODUCTORY

THE Editorial Board is grateful for the articles describing Baptist Australia. In the first, readers can appreciate the difficulty involved in establishing the "All-Australia B.U." in so vast a country and a Union made up of State Unions comprising areas many times that of Great Britain. The second article reveals aspects of Baptist activity, some of which may well be attempted in Britain and elsewhere. The problem set by the Aborigines and the efforts made in this connection will interest readers in South Africa who, together with ourselves, may learn timely lessons. Dr. Grigg, son of the esteemed ex-Principal of our Victoria Theological College, writes persuasively on another subject which is of increasing importance to us all. Post-War conditions inevitably make Australia more dependent upon the United States and so increasingly affected by them in political and theological matters. The Editors hope that the *Fraternal* may contribute in some small degree towards conserving Baptist unity between the Homeland and the great country, in these days, not so very far away.

Possibly no other journal contains in so concise a form, such a compendium of Australian Baptist life and work.

BAPTIST LIFE AND THOUGHT IN AUSTRALIA

THE beginnings of Baptist work in Australia go back to the early days of the colonisation of this country.

In 1778 the first ship-load of unhappy convicts arrived in Australia from England to start the new colony of New South Wales. When those convicts were leaving England the English Baptists asked the Government to allow a Baptist minister to go with them. But they were told that they could not send a Baptist minister as there were no Baptists among the convicts. Forty-three years later, in April, 1831, the first Baptist church service to be held in Australia was conducted in the "Long Room" of "The Rose and Crown Inn", Castlereagh Street, Sydney. The preacher was John McKaeg. In 1834 John Saunders landed in Sydney and was minister of the church for many years. By 1868 there were 11 churches and 360 members.

In similarly humble circumstances Baptist work began in the other States of Australia—Hobart, Tasmania, 1835; Melbourne, Victoria, 1836; Adelaide, South Australia, 1843; Brisbane, Queensland, 1855; Perth, Western Australia, 1894. By the year 1900 the population of Australia was 3½ million and Baptist church membership 17,000.

In 1901 federation of the six States of the Commonwealth of Australia took place and seven years later, on 22nd September, 1908, the first Australian Baptist Congress was held in the Bathurst Street Baptist Church, Sydney, when delegates from the six States of Australia and New Zealand attended.

On the closing day of the Congress, the following motion was passed:—

“That in the opinion of this Congress, the time has arrived for the formation of an Australasian Baptist Alliance.”

The organisation envisaged was to embrace the Baptists of the six States of Australia and New Zealand. This was not realised; but it was the germ of the idea that led to the formation of the Baptist Union of Australia in 1926. The Baptist Union of New Zealand remained a separate entity, having no organic connection with the Baptist Union of Australia.

The federal spirit has been slow in developing in both the political and religious fields. While we are conscious of our nationhood and our oneness as an Australian people, State loyalties and prejudices still persist. This is reflected in our organisational patterns, political and religious. Our Baptist work is organised largely on a State basis. There are six State Unions, all of which train and ordain their own candidates for the ministry. These Unions are responsible for all Baptist work carried on within their borders— theological colleges, denominational schools, aged people's homes, children's homes, church extension, evangelism, Christian education, etc. Some of these Unions are nearly 100 years old.

The Baptist Union of Australia has been in existence only thirty-four years. To many of our churches it is somewhat remote as their affiliation is with their own State Union. The Baptist Union of Australia is a union of Unions, and not of churches, its constituents being the six State Baptist Unions. But it is growing in importance and through its various Boards—Home Mission, Foreign Mission, Evangelism, Christian Education and Publication, Annuity, Advisory, Men's, Women's, Educational—it is exerting a unifying influence upon our work. What State Unions cannot do individually, they can do collectively through the Baptist Union of Australia. Another unifying factor is the *Australian Baptist*, our federal denominational weekly, which commenced publication in 1913.

STATISTICS

Australia is a young country. It is growing and developing and so is the Baptist witness. For many years Baptist growth has not kept pace with the growth of population but a new era of expansion and growth in Baptist work has begun. The following figures tell their own story.

	1900	1930	1950	1959
Population ...	3,592,439	6,500,751	8,000,883	10,111,284
Baptist membership	16,484	28,343	31,335	37,283

In the last twenty years, remarkable developments in Baptist departments and institutions have been witnessed. Throughout

Australia there are now 4 theological colleges (another will open shortly), 9 elderly people's homes, 2 children's homes, 2 boys' grammar schools, 2 girls' grammar schools, 1 business college, 4 hostels (2 for young women, 2 for young men) and 3 mission stations among the aborigines. All of these, except three of the theological colleges and two of the schools, were opened after 1940.

The year 1940 is also significant for Australian Baptists in that we commenced publishing our own Sunday School literature in that year. Commencing with only three publications and a limited circulation, this work has grown until today we publish eleven Sunday School periodicals and numerous tracts and booklets. Practically all the Sunday Schools of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa take these periodicals. More than 100,000 teachers and scholars use these publications every Sunday. Half a million individual pieces of Sunday School literature are published each year.

Growth in overseas missionary work has been phenomenal. For years we had one field—India. In 1930 there were thirty-four Australian Baptist missionaries on that field. When our soldiers in World War II were fighting in New Guinea and the islands to the north of Australia, we became more aware than we were before of our neighbours. Suddenly the "Far East" became the "Near North". Baptists in the forces felt a concern for the spiritual well-being of these peoples. When hostilities ended steps were taken to commence missionary work in New Guinea. The development of that work is like a chapter from the Acts of the Apostles. Today, there is an indigenous church with a membership of 2,660. It is largely self-governing and our aim is for it to become self-propagating and self-supporting. The Australian Baptist Missionary Society now has four fields—India, Pakistan, New Guinea and Dutch New Guinea—and 104 missionaries on the staff.

ALL-AGE SUNDAY SCHOOL

A most remarkable change is coming over all Protestant churches in Australia through the development of the programme of Christian Education. This movement has been the result of closer contact with America. England is still the "motherland" and the "homeland" to most Australians, but there is a growing awareness of the need for close ties with America. This is another result of the coming together of the two countries in World War II. In the religious field this means that American ideas and methods are influencing our work. We believe one of the main reasons for the growth of American Baptists is their programme of Christian Education for everyone, "from the cradle to the grave". This programme finds practical expression through the All-Age Sunday School. It is this new concept of the purpose and function of the Sunday School that is bringing about remarkable changes in Australian Baptist church life.

In the past, the emphasis was upon the *child*—"The child in the midst" was the slogan. Now the emphasis is upon the *family*. Previously, we had hoped to build our churches from our Sunday Schools—by winning the children as they passed through. But we lost 85 out of every 100 enrolments. We still hope to build up our churches from our Sunday Schools—but with the emphasis upon the family unit. Where this new idea has been really tried, it has been the answer to declining church membership. Adults, as well as young people and children, are being won for Christ in increasing numbers. The movement is too young to assess adequately its results but there are many pointers that it will revolutionise our church life in Australia in the next twenty years. One leader says:—

"The movement has caught like a flame, it is rapidly spreading, and now assuming the character of a divine imperative with immense implications for the future of Baptist work in this country."

Of our 570 churches, 40 have All-Age Sunday Schools. Many more are at the planning stage. They are found in all States and in a cross-section of our churches—in big cities, in industrial areas, in suburbs, in provincial cities and in small country towns. Every church that has followed the proved pattern has doubled its enrolment in the new departments in one year. More people than ever before are working in the church. The All-Age Sunday School has become the instrument of evangelism and service.

The movement has brought its problems. Church buildings in Australia were not designed to accommodate this kind of Christian Education programme. Consequently a major problem has been to provide space. Much improvisation has been necessary, but churches are now designing new buildings to fit the programme. We no longer build "Sunday School halls" but "educational units".

Another problem has been shortage of trained personnel to implement the programme. A few churches have appointed directors of Christian Education. These have usually been ministers who have had specialised training in this field. But by and large our ministers have been trained for the pastoral office, to fill the role traditionally assigned to them. Our Colleges are aware of the changing times. Some are establishing departments of Christian Education and are appointing professors with specialised knowledge in this field. There is no lessening of emphasis upon Bible exegesis, theology, Greek, Hebrew, church history, etc., but rather a growing awareness of the importance of Christian Education in theological training.

THEOLOGICAL OUTLOOK

He is a brave man who would venture to write upon the theological outlook of Australian Baptists. As in every Baptist community, there are various shades of theological thought. But the Baptists of Australia are one people. There are no splinter groups. We

have managed to live together as brethren in Christ with a respect for the convictions of the other fellow. Each State Union has a doctrinal basis, but no Union or individual church, to the writer's knowledge, demands acceptance of this as a pre-requisite of church membership. These doctrinal bases have usually arisen through legal, rather than theological, necessity, having been required for Trust Deeds. Our forefathers were truly Baptist and were suspicious of anything that savoured of a creed.

Most of our churches are "closed" but a few are "open" in membership. All have an "open" communion table. All are in the official Union of Churches of their respective State. There is a wide measure of goodwill among them. At the present time the matter that seems to divide us most is the question of affiliation with the World Council of Churches. We are not a member of the Australian Council for the World Council of Churches—the only major church group that is not. But we have an open mind on the matter as the following resolution passed at our last Triennial Assembly in Perth, W.A., in August, 1959, indicates. It reads:—

"That in view of the increasing desire being expressed in all States for a fuller participation by Baptists in the conferences and work of the Christian Church in Australia, all State Unions be asked to re-examine earlier decisions regarding affiliation with the Australian Council for the World Council of Churches and that another vote on affiliation be taken at the 1962 Assembly. Steps are to be taken to provide information to State Assemblies."

Australian Baptists are keenly evangelical. Our ministry, almost to a man, was 100 per cent behind the Billy Graham Crusade in 1959, and practically all our churches shared in its blessing. We are also theologically conservative. Ours is a "middle of the road" theology. By and large extremes of theological thought do not affect us. Many of our ministers are familiar with the writings of modern theologians and with current overseas theological trends, but not many in the membership of our churches are disturbed by the "findings" of theologians. We are not obscurantist but we do not rush to embrace something simply because it is the latest in theological thought. Rather do we suspect new theological ideas, particularly any that cast doubt upon the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God or upon the deity of Jesus Christ. Maybe this is due partly to our geographical remoteness from England and the Continent and partly to the influence of Spurgeon's College in the early days of our work. Until our own theological colleges began to train men at the turn of the century, many of our ministers were Spurgeon men.

Australia feels it has a destiny. In area, it is the size of the United States of America. It believes that by the year 2,000 the population will have grown from 10 million to about 20 million. In realising this destiny we, as Baptists, believe we have a God-given role. Our hope and prayer is that we shall be adequate to the task.

G. H. BLACKBURN.

SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BAPTIST INDIVIDUALISM IN THE 1960's

A mood of optimism seems to have taken hold of Baptists throughout the vast Australian Continent as a new decade has been ushered in. Many feel that this period could be one of the most significant in the history of the Baptists of this island Continent which has itself taken on a new significance in the life of the world. Australia has been called upon again and again during the decade just completed to lead in critical affairs in the world at large.

Baptists have not found growth natural or easy in this land of great distances, and varying traditions have in some instances stunted growth and stifled development. We have been rather over-awed by the larger denominations and have not carved out in the life of the nation the place which our history in the world suggests we should have done.

The time now seems ripe and the mood is upon us, to advance and to strike out into new fields, so that there may be a more effective witness "down under" to the great truths for which our fathers fought.

The changed theological outlook overseas has not been without effect here. The return to Biblical Theology has been for us a great encouragement and an indication that our hour has come. The Baptist distinctives are being helped by this return to Biblical authority. However, it is being increasingly appreciated that if fullest use is to be made of new opportunities we must be prepared to venture forth and to develop denominationally and locally within the churches a policy which meets current needs and honours the truths which brought us into history.

MEANING OF LIBERTY

Baptists have been trying to discover the meaning of liberty today and its bearing upon our growth in this continent. There have been controversies over the years which have held back progress and made liberty a meaningless word. This period is passing and we are more able now to think clearly and independently, although always we should have thought fearlessly. Although we have inherited a lot from our forefathers and have benefited from overseas, we have to accept the fact that we have been commissioned under God to preach to an Australian people and to build up an Australian Church. There should be no denomination in this country more able to adapt itself and to frame a Church life to meet distinctive Australian conditions than the Baptist denomination. We are not bound by ancient law and custom to observe a particular form of life and worship.

But to succeed we must have liberty. The individual and the Church must not be bound outside the limits by which we are bound

to Jesus Christ. We must not crush this faculty so vitally important for the Kingdom of God, by falsely seeking uniformity throughout and conformity to an unwritten creed. There is scope, as our Baptist World Alliance Fellowship demonstrates, for variety of methods of work whilst we maintain our undivided allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Potential leaders have been lost from among the young through failure on the part of some to accept this truth. The crisis that we all face in this age is driving us all back to deeper foundations and a more determined effort really to let men and women see Jesus Christ. The greatness of the times is driving us together and will, if we are responsive to the Spirit of God, lead us out clearly into the direction in which we will build most speedily and effectively the Church of Jesus Christ.

A glance around the States which go to form our Commonwealth and our Baptist Unions which unite to form the Baptist Union of Australia will indicate that great advances along these lines have been made in the past ten years. We gladly recognise our indebtedness to those overseas brethren who by their wide experience and longer history have contributed to our growth and experimentation.

NEW METHODS

During this period there have been Commissions investigating the life of the Church and the work of the Ministry. Far reaching changes of administration have taken place as a result. New methods of work have been introduced to try to preserve in organisation the principle seen more clearly in review.

In New South Wales, for example, the whole structure of Home Missions was re-organised in an attempt to preserve the autonomy of the local Church. For many years there had been a system of independent churches which called their own ministers and were quite free. Smaller churches were under the Home Missionary Society and Ministers were appointed by the Society. Latterly an area system, similar to the English system has been adopted. This sought to give autonomy to all churches irrespective of size. One full-time Metropolitan Superintendent has so far been appointed with Superintendents of the various areas appointed from among the Ministers already in the Area. The system has not worked long enough to see its overall effect and whether in practice it will achieve all the results desired.

New and encouraging advances are being made in all States with regard to Ministerial Training. Baptists have felt that Canon Winterbotham's remarks at the beginning of this century were somewhat prophetic "unhesitatingly it may be claimed that the whole trend of modern religious opinion is towards the Anabaptist position". (Expositor VI 5/378.)

PERSONAL RELIGION

The Baptist movement arose as the fruit of a revival of personal religion, a firsthand experience of repentance and faith and communion with God in Christ. We recall them coming into Gainsborough seeking to constitute the Church of Jesus Christ. Their covenant was "We covenant with God and with one another to walk in all His ways made known or to be made known unto us according to our best endeavours whatsoever it will cost us".

Australia has seen a great movement towards personal religion. The recent Crusade of Billy Graham had some most encouraging results and in many cases Baptist churches have been working to full capacity to keep pace with the continuing effects of the Crusade. The need to instruct new converts has in some cases hastened on the movement towards the All-Age Sunday School which has proved such an effective medium of work and witness in the Southern Convention of the United States.

The early Baptist Confessions made it quite clear that the Church is not a group of individuals who agree to live and work together. The Church is not self-created, self-appointed or self-perpetuating. It is a Divine institution. While the assertion of Christ's Lordship is extremely personal, yet it is by no means merely individual. There were deep and abiding bonds which bound them to all believers and especially to those of their own faith and order.

CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISE

This spirit of fellowship was most clearly evidenced when in 1959 Baptists crossed their vast continent to visit for the first time Perth, the capital of Western Australia, for their Triennial Assembly. It is clearly evident that we are working together in the fields where such co-operation is advantageous to all. Through this spirit it has become possible, with some help from the World Alliance Relief, to bring to Australia White Russians who have been without a country since the 1917 uprising.

Movements in the field of humanitarianism are taking place and splendid homes are being provided for the aged and for the unfortunate. Baptist schools, both primary and secondary, have gained public acclaim. Everywhere an attempt is being made to match the action of the Gospel to the Word of the Gospel. Processes of change and experimentation are never easy. Some have felt the strain and the insecurity which comes with changing patterns of living and working and have withdrawn. We are all pretty well men and women of our age and subject to the moods and spirit of the age in which we live. But despite all these discouraging factors, there has been growth in every State, not only at the level of the local church but in the Unions, which demonstrates that we are doing things together.

CANBERRA

The scene in Canberra, the Nation's Capital, is one of great encouragement. When the Commonwealth Government began to develop Canberra thirty years ago our Baptist leaders had foresight sufficient to see the significance of Canberra. Under the leadership of Dr. A. J. Waldock the first Baptist Church was opened in 1929. He became its Minister until 1947. There are two Baptist Churches serving a present population of 45,000. Growth is expected at a great rate, approximating 70,000 by 1970 and passing the 100,000 a few years later. Both churches for geographical reasons are linked with New South Wales but do not come within the Area scheme operating in that State. Both churches have been free to develop a tradition which they feel will benefit most the citizens of this city. The members come from all States of the Commonwealth and from Diplomatic missions and from the transient scholar attending the National University.

Baptists have been able to play an important role throughout the years in the city and are given a place by Governments of this land so different from the treatment of our fathers in the days of the rise of the Baptist movement in England.

A growing Baptist fellowship is forming throughout this Southern Island, with many varieties of expression but a growing spirit of brotherhood. It is hoped that during the next ten years a clear pattern will evolve in each State, and a distinct Australian Baptist witness will rise to challenge our generation with the healing of the Gospel.

F. P. McMASTER.

THE AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINE

THE story of the Australian aborigine since the beginning of white settlement is a sad one. An estimated population of 300,000 at that time has dwindled to 70,000 odd, the majority of whom are mixed-bloods. Very few of the present aborigine population are integrated into the Australian community. Most of them live in shanty camps on the fringe of country towns, or on settlements maintained by Governments (Federal and State) and missions. A few thousand in the Northern Territory and Western Australia continue their primitive nomadic existence.

Who is responsible for this unhappy state of affairs? The white Australian population (past and present) undoubtedly but, although there has been much wicked mistreatment of the aborigine, there has been more ignorance than guilt in Australia's failure concerning him.

DIVERGENT CULTURES

The white man and the black man were doomed to conflict from the outset because of their utterly divergent cultures and their inability to understand one another. The land-hungry white man did not

understand that, in appropriating the black man's hunting ground, he was destroying his totemic link with the ancestral spirit world which gave meaning to his existence. The black man did not understand the white man's laws of property and continued to act upon the belief that he was entitled to hunt any animals on his tribal grounds, including cattle and sheep. Thus the one was a sacreligious intruder and the other an incorrigible thief. Bad blood became worse until sense and humanity began to assert themselves and the white man realised that he must begin all over again in his relationships with the aborigine and attempt reparation for the wrong which had been done. In the early days the white settler took for granted that the aborigines would gradually forsake their traditional manner of life for the greater benefits of the white man's civilisation. As their tribal areas were appropriated, the aborigines were compelled to forsake their traditional way of life, but the alternative did not automatically follow. With few exceptions, they proved themselves incapable of adjusting themselves to the white man's ways without loss of human dignity and independence.

When this became apparent there was much talk of segregating the aborigines in reserves where they would be insulated from the contaminating influence of white civilisation. Even if this were a practicable remedy, which is highly doubtful, it was too late to attempt it because the majority of the aborigines were already detribalised and a new way of life had to be found for them. The present policy of the Federal and State Governments is assimilation of the aborigines into the Australian community, using the segregation method only in so far as it is useful to prepare certain classes of aborigines for participation in the general community. Implementation of this policy is much more difficult than most people, especially short-term visitors from overseas, realise.

A SOCIAL PROBLEM

Were you to ask the average rural citizen of Australia to indicate the characteristics of the aborigine which make him a social problem, he would probably list the following: he is lazy, improvident, unclean in his living habits, inconstant and intemperate. (The last mentioned, by the way, is by no means a monopoly of coloured Australians.)

For these reasons many white Australians are unwilling to employ aborigines or have them as neighbours. Some do not care to have their children go to the same school as aborigine children, although there are many schools in Australia where white and black children learn and play together quite naturally. Although there is a great deal of compassion and good-will for the aborigine, there is a widespread disposition in Australia to regard him as a no-hoper, lacking the will to do anything for himself or even respond to what others are trying to do for him. It seems desirable therefore that there should be more knowledge of the causes of these defects to encourage that tolerance and patience needed to help the aborigine to make good.

NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING

It must be remembered that for unknown generations the Australian aborigine was a food gatherer and not a food producer. He had no knowledge of cereal and vegetable crops for his food supply. There was no beast of burden which he could use for cultivation and transport. He was by necessity a hunter, wandering the bushlands to stalk the prey and to collect edible berries and seeds. In this he became extraordinarily skilful, acquiring a facility for subsistence in terrain where the white man would quickly die of hunger or thirst. Each day he acquired the day's food and no more because anything uneaten would go bad. He did not exert himself therefore beyond the day's requirements. Now that he shares the land with the white man, his attitude to work is the same. To do more work than is necessary to secure a day's food is unnatural to him. The white man calls this laziness.

The primitive aborigine does not store food. That is a waste of effort and of food. If the hunt produces more food than he needs, he gorges; if less, he goes without. Literally he takes no thought for the morrow. That attitude of mind is ingrained. He is irritatingly careless with the things the white man supplies to him for tomorrow. A Government welfare officer showed the writer a nice line of women's overcoats which were distributed to the women of the camp. They wore them proudly for two or three times and then—well, they would be serving as beds for the camp dogs or would be plugging a draughty gap in the wiry (bough shelter). And so the aborigine—in the white man's judgment—is improvident.

The aborigine for centuries was a nomad. His house was a bough shelter to protect him from cold wind or hot sun. He would not need it for more than a few days, as he would have to keep moving in search of food. The wandering instinct is irresistibly strong in him. He can't settle in one place for long. He takes a job and then, without warning, he's gone and the employer left in the lurch. "Inconstant! Unreliable!" says the white man.

For the same reason, houses do not appeal to him. He hates to be enclosed. Give him a house and his dogs will enjoy it while he lives in the yard, if there is such a thing. Keeping a house or any place or thing clean is something foreign to him. In his primitive condition he didn't use his bough shelter long enough for hygiene to be a matter of importance. When he left it, a fire-stick would do all the cleaning necessary. Such experience is not good training for permanent and settled residence. The result is offensive to the white man.

Most aborigines cannot resist liquor. The reason is that their traditional manner of life has never demanded restraint and therefore no opportunity to cultivate self-discipline. The aborigine's problem has usually been scarcity; he is not accustomed to plenty. When he has access to liquor he can't stop until either the liquor or he is

finished. This is one of the biggest obstacles to his integration into the Australian community, for the white man will not do without his liquor for anybody.

TRAINING FOR ASSIMILATION

It is obvious therefore that the aborigine needs to be prepared for assimilation by training which will overcome the inherited tendencies which unfit him for it. That is a big task calling for infinite wisdom and patience.

Governments and missions are engaged in numerous and costly projects throughout Australia for this purpose.

They are, in the main, of four kinds:—

1. The Government settlement where the physical (food and health), mental (education) and social needs of the people are met. Usually some kind of industrial training is given. The settlement may be a cattle-station.
2. The mission station where the above-mentioned services are provided, plus a spiritual ministry. A certain Presbyterian mission is an enormous sheep station for the purpose of giving aborigines employment as shepherds, which, it is considered, is a natural transition from nomadic to settled life. Religion is treated as the integrating factor, not merely a useful extra.
3. The Government plus mission station—government supplying medical, educational and social services and the mission the spiritual ministry. Despite government co-operation, it is difficult to avoid religion being regarded as an unrelated extra. The Baptist Union of Australia has missionaries working in this way on two government settlements in the Northern Territory—at Yuendumu, about 185 miles North-West of Alice Springs, and at Warrabri, about 230 miles North of Alice Springs. The missionaries are in contact with about 400 natives on each of these settlements and visit other groups periodically on surrounding privately owned cattle stations. The Baptist Union of Western Australia operates a school farm for aborigine children known as Marribank about 130 miles South-East of Perth. Unfortunately Australian Baptists were late in the field of missionary work to the aborigines, by which time the support of a large number of Baptists had become committed to un-denominational missions.
4. Homes and hostels run mainly by missions for orphans and unwanted children or for young people employed in towns and cities.

Of the first three, number two is undoubtedly the best. A spiritual ministry is essential. With the break-up of his traditional system of totemic belief, the aborigine is in a spiritual vacuum. This is largely the cause of his lack of effort to fit into the civilised community.

His ancestral beliefs gave meaning to his life. Without them his life has lost its meaning and he has lost the will to achieve. He must be given a philosophy of life to replace that which he has lost. The government station cannot do that for him; the mission station can.

Number 3 is not satisfactory because it suggests to the aborigine the isolation of the religious part of his life from its other parts. In his primitive condition his religious beliefs integrated his whole life. Anything else he doesn't understand. The difficulty about making Number 2 of universal application is that it is very costly, far too costly, for the churches to maintain. If government money could be made available for a comprehensive mission technique to provide for all aborigines throughout the Commonwealth, the assimilation of the aborigine would be eventually achieved. It would be a long and slow process and would require careful organisation and full co-operation between the churches, but it could be done. At present government appears to be confident that it can accomplish the task by method Number 3.

A process of official disillusionment leading to further discussion and a technique of tutelage with religion at the centre rather than on the fringe may be necessary before a satisfactory solution of this problem is achieved.

F. A. MARSH.

RETROSPECT THOUGHTS ON A STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

MANY sincerely believing Christian people have had grave reservations about stewardship campaigns because they consider that the emphasis is on collecting money, and that such an appeal is on a purely human level and has no spiritual basis or bearing. This attitude has been fortified by the knowledge that an outside organisation with American "know-how", to whom a substantial fee has been paid, has been used by a number of churches. I have myself taken part in such a campaign, and while I have had certain reservations about its conduct, nevertheless, I have reason to be grateful to the campaign and to its organisers for starting me out on my own spiritual pilgrimage in this matter of stewardship. Out of what was originally entered into as a Fund-Raising Canvass grew the concept of a Stewardship Mission.

In the course of working in two campaigns, the stewardship committee of which I was a member started to realise the relationship of stewardship to other aspects of the Christian life. We had to face some intense opposition and, looking back, we perceive that this was good for us because we had to rethink and pray our position through. As a committee we owed much to the original Fund-Raising organisation for the purpose it served in showing us how to get an idea across to people—the fellowship dinner, personal visitation, etc. This

method could well be applied to other projects besides stewardship. What we now recognise is that all life is a sacrament, that working and praying and worshipping and *giving* are all inseparable parts of that one sacramental act. God requires the commitment of our total personality.

This means that our lives are not our own. For example, what we do with our time is important. To waste time is a sin. How conscientiously we work is important. To be slovenly is a sin. How regularly we attend the House of Worship is important. To neglect it is to dishonour the Body of Christ which is His Church. How liberally we give of our material possessions is important. The Lord will only honour a cheerfully given gift. How much time we give to various aspects of Christian service is important. It is a sin to see a need and yet not to meet it, if it lies within our power to do so. In other words, how far does our conception of the stewardship of our whole selves make us willing to contribute to the total work and worship of the church?

There are many facets to individual and corporate Christian living. They may all be legitimately emphasised in their turn. In a stewardship mission we are but emphasising one of them. And why not? We are emphasising one of the most important of them; for it is true that when you touch a man's pocket you quickly arouse the tiger in him. Mere words come easily enough, but most men will defend desperately the citadel of their pockets. One wonders whether at least some of the bitter hostility that has been experienced against stewardship missions, even against those conducted under the aegis of the Baptist denomination at Union level, does not come from rationalisation on this very point.

Such opponents are quite prepared to pray in public; but they are determined that they will give in secret. They have yet to learn that the sacrament of living involves *giving* as much as *praying*. The prayer, "Lord, what would'st thou have me to do?" is a mere shibboleth if a man's lips are publicly full of prayer and praise while his purse is strictly his private concern.

This idea may sound new and revolutionary. It is certainly a far cry from the superficial level of mere fund-raising, and no regular church member should be blamed for not wholly endorsing it at first sight. Nor would I myself, in all probability, had I not undergone the chastening experience of serving on a stewardship committee. Like most other households, that in which I was brought up had always used the envelope system of giving, and the idea of secret and systematic giving was regarded as the normal thing. The idea of strictly tithing was not pushed. However, my wife, ever since she was in Y.P. Endeavour, and on student teacher's wages, has tithed, and we have adopted the principle as a guide ever since. Moreover, as a matter of ordinary common sense it has in the past seemed to me that regular giving using weekly envelopes, has been a practical way of ensuring that the work of the local church is adequately

supported. Nevertheless, as a result of a stewardship mission, I have come to see that not only is there no particular virtue in secret giving but also that the very act of regular giving should be placed in the wider setting of the whole sacramental act of Christian living, and that it is therefore illogical to accept certain of the disciplines of the Christian Life and steadfastly to refuse to recognise others.

It has been said that a man's character may be judged by his cheque butts. Where his money comes from and what he does with it is directly related to the question of stewardship. For if it is not, then why should we object to gambling, or why should we not run up a load of debt and let our creditors wait? The Lord is no man's debtor; we, on the other hand, are eternally in His debt. What do we owe Him of our material possessions? Do we live frugally enough? Have we prayed sufficiently for guidance in such matters? Have we with determination sought His will on how much money we should lay aside, as citizens of Heaven, for the work of the Kingdom in this colony on earth? We know by faith that He will let us lack for nothing needful, for so He has promised. But this business of stewardship is not so much a matter of what the Lord will give to us as what we should give to Him. It is, as it were, the other side of the coin. It does not rule out faith, but rather requires faith coupled with intelligence and obedience in order to arrive at the right answer. God who looks upon the heart will reveal to us, in our varying circumstances, what is the right and proper amount for each of us individually to give if we ask Him to reveal it, humbly and in faith.

But rest assured that the gift required of us will be sacrificial. The Lord will not be interested in token or unconsidered giving. I refuse to accept the proposition that considered giving cannot be both glad and spontaneous; on the contrary, the more deliberate it is, the more God-honouring it becomes. Again, token giving cannot be witnessed to our brethren in the fellowship with a clear conscience. I place on record my much-shared discovery that when one's conscience is right with God in this matter, then one does not care who knows what one's giving is. The matter becomes of no importance. Besides, what man could presume to judge?

Giving in secret has no particular virtue other than that it prevents pride from preening itself. The sin of the Pharisees was not that they gave in public, but rather that they thanked God that they were not as other men. Nor is giving in secret a universal custom. How, for example, would a New Guinea native give a pig in private? The big danger in secret giving is that it lets a person, who has not faced up to the fact that true stewardship involves regular, sacrificial and frank giving, take the easy way out.

How then can we be sure that in the stewardship of our money we are really doing God's will?

Firstly, we must catch the vision that Christ calls us to, the total commitment of our personal lives in the service of the total programme of His church.

Secondly, we must beware of any rationalisation which would lead us boldly to declare that our will is His will. All of us have much yet to learn and should realise that, although we may be well grounded in certain aspects of the Christian faith we may yet lack in others. There was a time, it might be recalled, when William Carey had to convince his fellow ministers of the need for missionary enterprise; for this vision they lacked! Today we have that vision and give thanks for it. But one thing many do lack, and in the conduct of a stewardship mission within a church fellowship, we are drawing Christian people's attention to it without apology. We say: "Be prepared to witness to God in your giving, just as you are prepared to witness to Him in your worship. See it in its proper context as part of the sacrament of the spirit-filled life!"

Billy Graham, in powerful and effective fashion, has been bringing people to the crisis of conviction. Whereas they were blind to spiritual values, now they interpret the world in terms of them. But conversion is only the starting point. As we mature in the Christian life we have more and more lessons to learn; and in a stewardship campaign, those taking part are burdened with the mission of bringing folk face to face, many for the first time, with this one aspect of the full-orbed gospel which they have never previously recognised. Where a man's treasure is, there is his heart. Many people are so wrapped up in material things that a challenge along these lines gets them at the core of their affections. Some of them, like the rich young ruler, will go away sorrowful; some will cover up in a blaze of righteous indignation. Others will, in the final event, experience a fresh crisis of conviction no less profound than that which occurred when they took the first step of their Christian pilgrimage. A stewardship mission has in fact become the portal through which they have passed to a profounder realisation of what their Faith demands of them. They have drunk of the sincere milk of the Word; now they are tasting of its strong meat.

And what of the pledge? It is true that, being all tinged by human frailty, we are helped to some degree by tangible tokens of things unseen. The bread and wine, commonplace articles, have been ordained of God to help us to be constantly mindful of His sacrifice. Pledging is an aid to help us to stand by what we have committed ourselves to. It has no ulterior significance or motive. I myself as a child signed a conversion card and a temperance card, and have no regrets over having done so. In these acts, as in baptism, I signified in a tangible fashion that I had set my hand to the plough and would not look back. In more recent days, by means of the signing of a pledge, I have witnessed to the fact that I shall try to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in the matter of my material possessions. Christ, of all men, did not need to be baptised, yet He was so for the sake of the precept and example. Those of us who have matured sufficiently in the question of the stewardship of our money, likewise have no need to pledge; but let us do so to signify where we stand—

and to encourage those who have not yet faced this issue squarely, to face up to it, and so to grow more fully into the stature of Christ.

In making this plea for stewardship, for pledged giving and a willingness to witness to it, we speak confidently, because this method has been a source of blessing to so many fellowships already. There are many highly spiritual and intelligent men within the ranks of the Church who believe in the relevance and value of stewardship campaigns. Let those who disagree with them look carefully to their own spiritual standing before they evaluate such men as worldly; and let them realise that in influencing anyone against taking part in a stewardship mission, they may well be preventing them from facing up for the only time in their lives to the challenge of total consecration to the service of God. If any members cannot conscientiously enter into a campaign which a church meeting has duly authorised, then let them keep a tactful silence, indicative of their spiritual graciousness.

In conclusion I would affirm that any method of giving stands or falls by the inner attitude of the giver. May we in all things continually give Him the pre-eminence.

K. GRIGG.

AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO BAPTIST POLITY

THIS article arises out of the work of a Commission on Baptist Polity appointed by the Northern Baptist Association, which has been meeting regularly since Easter 1959. The Commission was set up at the suggestion of the Moderator, the Rev. A. R. Liston, "to investigate the Biblical and historical principles on which our Baptist polity is founded, and to consider how our polity may be adapted to meet the needs of the twentieth century".

The need for such investigation was itself suggested by considering the failure of all the evangelical effort that has been made in Baptist churches since the war. With few exceptions they have not gained numerous converts to the Kingdom. Much of the reason for this lies in their unreadiness to receive new members and to absorb them into the fellowship. Our churches have not been sufficiently strong in fellowship or in Christian understanding. This arises largely from exaggerated ideas about independence, especially in regard to polity which shapes the fellowship.

The question of authority is obviously fundamental to any discussion of polity and it is necessary to be clear about the reasons why it is needed. Christians, like their Master, should be men "under authority", but Baptists are far too deeply imbued with independence, not only in their churches but in themselves. According to the Gospels, our Lord gave authority in some measure to the Church and to those who are sent on His Mission. It is not

THE BAPTIST INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED
4, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1

To the Members of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal.

Dear Friends,

G.C.E. & Volunteers

By the time you read this letter thousands of students will be thinking of G.C.E. examinations.

If I were asked to prepare a General (Administration) Church Examination paper for Church Officers, one of the "must" questions would be:—

"If a volunteer is worth two pressed men is a voluntary worker worth double benefits or more under a Voluntary Workers Accident Policy.

Do not give reasons for your answer but take action immediately."

Many of you will know that in 1952 we introduced a special Voluntary Workers Policy providing benefits of £300 at death or £3 per week during temporary total incapacity for a premium of £1 10s. 0d. Latterly we have been issuing policies for a benefit of £500/£5 per week for a premium of £2 10s. 0d. In either case benefits may be doubled (or increased in some other proportion) for a *pro rata* increase in premium.

If you or your Church Officers are interested, please write.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN,

General Manager.

authority to "lord it over others", but it is authority which takes well into account human frailties, it is the authority which makes men responsible.

Linked with the question of authority is that of freedom. Baptists are free and will not be dictated to—except by the Master. But freedom for its own sake can become freedom from obligation and it then ceases to be Christian freedom. The freedom which the Baptist Fathers claimed and suffered for was freedom to obey Him. Anything, therefore, which hinders this freedom is to be rejected and anything that enables them to enter into it more fully is to be accepted and used.

The early Baptists, therefore, asserted their independence from the ecclesiastical hierarchy and from the State, so that they could obey their Lord. In time, however, the purpose of independence was lost to sight and independence itself became for many the one thing needful. Baptists today are in far greater danger of allowing independence to make them too free; even from the Master's authority.

The present form of polity allows those who have a tendency to grasp power to do so, whether ministers or laymen. Power is bound to assert itself in any human society. Where, therefore, there is no provision for the necessary measure of authority, anyone with the desire and personality to dominate is free to do so.

The Commission's contention is that the present lack of authority in Baptist polity is a positive hindrance to this essential freedom to obey Christ. The members believe that the provision of such authority will enable all our churches to gain fresh vigour from a new and practical sense of responsibility for all the work of the Lord.

Today when Baptist polity is mentioned, independence is the first word that springs to many minds. It is quite true that Baptist polity in Great Britain does centre on independence. It has not done so until the last 150 years, and in many other countries today, it is very far from doing so.

The Commission had first to assert that Baptists are in fact free under God to alter their polity. This has already been clearly established by Dr. Henry Cook ("What Baptists Stand For" p. 175) and by Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson ("Baptist Principles" pp. 28-29).

The New Testament evidence of the early Churches does not disclose any single form of Church polity. Every denomination has claimed support for its polity from the New Testament and B. H. Streeter ("The Primitive Church" pp. 261-2) sets out generally accepted conclusions about New Testament evidence: "In the primitive Church there was no single system of Church order laid down by the Apostles. During the first hundred years of Christianity, the Church was an organism alive and growing, changing its organisation to meet changing needs. Clearly, in Asia, Syria

and Rome during that century the system of government varied from Church to Church, and no one system prevailed. Everywhere there was readiness to experiment."

The Commission's paper on New Testament evidence continues, "if we are to base the government of our Churches on New Testament ideals, the spirit of our churches will be the most vital factor of our church life; this spirit will bring us to experiment to find the system of church order most suitable to the missionary situation and the needs of the Church; and our over-riding conception will be of the unity of the Churches within the whole Church of Christ".

The history of Baptist churches in the United Kingdom covers three centuries and is an involved one. It is, however, clear that in face of persecution the independency of the early Baptist churches enabled them to survive what might well have destroyed any system depending on connexionalism. At the same time it is also clear that Associations were formed in the early days and from what is known of them, the impression is gained that as long as they retained the sense of being themselves "under authority", they themselves from time to time exercised considerable authority among the churches.

With the rise of individualism in an industrial society, the independence of Baptist churches was asserted for its own sake and, with little change, the situation has remained the same until now.

Dr. Payne sums up the causes of such changes as have taken place in our Baptist history ("The Baptist Union—A Short History", p. 254): "Baptist life in general and that of the Baptist Union in particular, have been shaped partly by inner conviction and partly by the pressure of outward circumstances". In this way the Baptist Union was created 150 years ago and a measure of authority was necessarily given to it; and, in later times, in such things as the administration of the Home Work Fund and its predecessors, we see it operating. It is impossible to deal with trust funds without making rules that have to be respected, and as a result the whole Denomination has benefited.

The contention of the Commission is that the recognition of authority should no longer be governed by sheer economic necessity, as in the case of aided churches. The time has come for a measure of authority to be given particularly to the Association and also to the Baptist Union in relation, not only to aided churches, but to all, by a voluntary submission on the part of the churches.

The Commission has heard evidence from responsible representatives of all the major denominations on their own system of church order. It has also heard evidence of systems in Baptist churches in other parts of the world. Out of all this it has drawn the following conclusions:—

1. No other denomination has tackled the problem of ministerial settlement as successfully as the Baptists have through the appointment of Area Superintendents. What faults there are

in present arrangements arise when churches or ministers fail to co-operate or when Superintendents have given insufficient thought to a situation.

2. Where many Baptists believe there is far too great a delegation of authority, e.g. in the Presbytery or in the Anglican Episcopate, the authority is always limited and is rarely used, nor does it destroy the freedom and initiative of the local church. But the church, both local and in its wider form, is constantly made aware that it is living under authority and must act responsibly.
3. Baptists elsewhere in the world have adapted their polity very freely. In Germany there is what we believe to be undue centralisation. In the United States the State Conventions have a much wider authority than any Association ever had in this Country and the National Conventions wield power to an extent never even advocated for the Baptist Union. Again, because of the demands of particular circumstances, outlying churches in the B.M.S. and other Baptist Missionary fields are very much under the authority of the central Mission Stations.

Against this background the Commission made the following recommendations to the Association Assembly at Easter this year.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE ASSOCIATION

In the New Testament it is not the independence of the churches that was of prime importance, but the unity of the Church. Some of our churches make such a fetish of independence that they are not even free to co-operate through the Association. There is today urgent need for the individual church to acknowledge that in certain matters its own wishes should be subject to the approval of the whole Church in the area.

Each local church should, therefore, make a voluntary submission to the authority of the Association in the following fields:—

1. In matters of church extension and of the closure of churches the Association is better able to assess the relative needs of the area than the local church. Therefore, all proposals for church extension should be submitted from the start for Association approval and the Association should have the right to submit proposals for closure in appropriate cases.
2. In the interests of the Denomination, the Association and the local church itself, an invitation to a minister to accept a pastorate should be submitted for Association approval.

ASSOCIATION ORGANISATION

The Northern Association's General Committee is at present composed of elected members from the churches. Many churches are therefore not represented and a number of Ministers do not share in Association work. Each church should be able to contribute

in thought and service to the work of the Association and it is recommended that in future each church should nominate its minister (deaconess or lay pastor) and one deacon to serve on the Committee.

The work of the Association would then be done largely through the following sub-committees:—

1. *Care of the Churches.* To deal with church extension and closure, ministerial appointments, appointment of interim moderators and the bi-ennial visitation of the churches. The area superintendent would be chairman of the committee.
2. *Evangelism.* To deal with the Ter-Jubilee and other similar national or Association schemes and with regular work in this sphere.
3. *Christian Citizenship.* To deal with all matters of education and of spiritual and moral welfare.

Other appropriate sub-committees would be concerned with the work among women, men and youth and there would also be a lay preachers' sub-committee and one for B.M.S. work.

The Advisory Committee would have executive powers between the meetings of the General Committee and would deal also with Ministerial Recognition arrangements, recommendations for Home Work grants and other financial matters connected with the churches and the Association.

It is necessary for the Association and the churches to know each other well. To this end a minister and layman should be appointed by the Care of the Churches sub-committee, to visit all the churches in alternate years.

THE BAPTIST UNION

The Council at present includes many elected members as well as representatives, and it is recommended that it should now be more representative of the Association, representation being based on the size of the Association.

In certain fields, e.g. finance, Associations should make a voluntary submission to the final authority of the Council.

The Annual Assembly of the Union should be held in alternate years in the provinces and further provision should be made for deliberation.

MINISTERIAL STIPENDS

The variation in stipends in the Denomination is not so great as is sometimes thought. The variation, however, is still such that ministers are often faced with the unreasonable dilemma of choosing between an aided church which needs his experience urgently and a church which is established but is independent of the Fund and able to offer a larger stipend. Ministers must as far as possible be free to make these vital decisions without reference to such a degree, as now exists, to financial circumstances.

When preparing winter programmes for 1960/61 please do not overlook questions of Christian conduct and of the Church's social witness in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Cleal will be pleased to make suggestions on subjects and speakers.

The Rev. C. H. Cleal, M.A., B.D.
Citizenship Department, B.U., 4 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1

CELEBRATIONS

YOUTH
SHEME

Ter-Jubilee of The
Baptist Union

YOUNG
PEOPLE
INFORMED
TRAINED
COMMITTED

Details from:

YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT, B.U.
4 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1

It is recommended that:—

1. All churches should contribute to a central denominational fund an annual amount towards stipends which shall be determined by the Association in co-operation with the Area Superintendent on the following basis:—
 - (a) the size of the church
 - (b) the financial resources of the church, taking into account maintenance, repairs, etc.
2. Additions to stipends may be made:—
 - (a) from the central fund—for length of service.
 - (b) from the individual church—for special responsibility.

These recommendations will now go to all the Association churches for prayerful and careful discussion during the summer. In the autumn a Conference of church representatives will be held at which the whole matter will be considered and hard conclusions reached about what is to be done at once, what is to be left for the time being and what should not be done at all. We hope that nothing will remain in the last category.

S. D. CUTHBERTSON.

AFRICA'S YEARS OF DESTINY

We are grateful for permission to reprint this article from the "South African Baptist", written by Dr. John Poorter, the editor. It appeared before the tragic event at Sharpeville, which heightens the significance of what he says. We give to him and to all our Baptist brethren in South Africa, the assurance of our concern and our prayers that they may be given grace to witness a good confession of their faith in Jesus Christ, in this hour of destiny for their country.

THE word "Africa" arouses interest in almost any part of the world. We who live here have entered upon the most exciting decade of its history. The accelerated pace of events today is making the forecasts of recent years look silly. Only four years ago, when a United Nations commission went to Tanganyika and cautiously suggested that the territory might achieve its independence by 1971, African "experts" had their grave doubts. Yet now, suddenly, Tanganyika is about to assume self-rule.

Think of the vast Belgian Congo. A year ago there was no official word of independence. In the vague future, yes. Yet today, after a series of upheavals, the Congo is on the threshold of African government.

Such is Africa, baffling, unpredictable even to those who have lived here all their lives. The "African revolution" for which we have been waiting the last few years is in fact in full swing, and before these ten years are out it will be all over.

There are already eleven independent states in Africa: South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia,

Liberia, Ghana, Guinea, and the French Cameroons. How instructive it would be to take a map of the continent and mark these territories, to see the developing picture. And then add to them the following: Tanganyika, the Congo, Togoland, Italian Somalia, Nigeria, Uganda. These are the territories which have been pledged to self-rule this year, 1960.

White South Africans, of whatever language group they may be, must mentally prepare themselves for the inevitable changes that the re-shaping of nations in Africa will bring. We must not view these events with alarm, as if only evil can come of them. Fear paralyses and obstructs clear thinking. Fear gives birth to prejudice, so tragically evident in our midst.

Christians should be grateful that they are living in a society where such dramatic changes are taking place. These are stirring days. There have been other epochs in history when the Christian Church has found herself squarely in the midst of a tempestuous situation. The need for a clear and uncompromising witness to Christ is not greater, or less, according to political circumstance. Rapid social changes do not make a spiritual need more urgent. The urgency springs from higher motives. Paul said "the love of Christ constraineth us". The Church of the book of Acts lived in a disintegrating society. The elements of change were alarmingly visible. But there is no sign in Acts that these things of themselves were the motive-power of the Gospel's urgency. The Apostles were overmastered by their commission from God. And therein lay their authority.

It seems to us, then, that two things confront us in the face of Africa's decade of destiny. First, we must accept, as from the hand of an over-ruling God, such changes as the years will surely bring us in Southern Africa, avoiding bitterness, prejudice and *shunning any thought of being more concerned with our own material comfort than with the progress and dignity of our fellows*. This does not mean that we are to be complacent or indifferent. But it does mean a willing acknowledgment that certain things are inevitable; that they will affect our way of life and our material ease. For this we shall have to make big adjustments in our thinking. Strangers and pilgrims in this world, however, must not shrink from personal discomfort or sacrifice.

Secondly, in these years of Africa's travail we must regard the unsettled conditions as seed-plots for faithful and zealous Gospel-sowing. Our missionary work may suffer material loss. We may yet have to face crises in meeting the future. But the things which restrict us in one way may eventually work out to the furtherance of the Gospel. Paul found this so when he was bound and imprisoned. The Church at Jerusalem found this so when its persecuted members were scattered abroad. Much seemed to have been lost. But it was not so in God's plan. The very agencies which unsettled

the Church were in fact the instruments of her growth, so that eventually there were no frontiers on which Christ was not known.

Let us apply this to Southern Africa, and to our own work and organisation. No gloomy pessimism must paralyse our strength. We believe that God, who rules on high, rules also in the affairs of His Church. Our optimism, therefore, is not an easy-going "all will be well". But it certainly is a conviction founded upon His Word, and tested in the crucible of history. We may be troubled on every side, yet we dare not be distressed. We may be perplexed, but not despairing. We must ask for grace to acquit ourselves worthily, to act and speak as Christians should, and then, whatever the confusion of our time, our testimony will bring light and order to people of all races.

J. POORTER.