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# The Fraternal

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# Editorial

To help celebrate the Newman centenary last year, a high tide swept many new studies of the man on to the shelves. His path and that of your editor crossed only in view of a common association with the City of Birmingham where he founded an Oratory, and where he died in 1890. One of his biographers, A.N. Wilson, writes of him towards the end of his long and influential life, "his frail figure in robes of black and scarlet was still a familiar one in the memories of old people I have met in the Hagley Road". And many who do not share his churchmanship find him of compelling interest – because of his moral courage, the beauty of his prose, his life-long fight against 'liberalism', his passion for holiness and integrity of life. Like so many outstanding Christians he belongs to us all, dwarfing both the Anglicanism which nurtured him and the Roman Catholicism which finally received him.

Not surprisingly, a number of the commemorative volumes have sought to relate him to our own day and age, particularly in terms of his ecumenical significance and his concern to develop doctrine in the light of contemporary actuality: "In a higher world it is otherwise; but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often". On the other hand, many will find him a man of his time, not ours, whose obsessions and preoccupations seem incredibly remote: when last was the Monophysite controversy a live issue in your Fraternal?

On balance, his ultimate significance could well be defined in terms of his concern to ask the big questions of life: the significance of Man and his place in the universe. In the dogmatic Catholic Church of his day such questioning was not welcomed, but Newman's mission was to present the faith intelligibly and cogently to thinking people at a time when the 'sea of faith' was perceptibly ebbing in nineteenth century Britain, racked as it was by Darwinism and the new German critical theology. It is this freedom to ask questions, searching and radical questions, which is surely one of the marks of a Church which is truly secure in the gospel; it is a sign of health. Herbert Butterfield's closing comment in *Christianity and History* is never less than valid: "There are times when we can never meet the future with sufficient elasticity of mind, especially if we are locked in the contemporary systems of thought. We can do worse than remember a principle which both gives us a firm Rock and leaves the maximum elasticity for our minds: the principle: Hold to Christ, and for the rest be totally uncommitted.

It is precisely questions which get us started this quarter. Three of our colleagues were faced with three 'live' issues and invited to respond. Their contributions serve as some indication of the thinking and convictions of the younger generation within our ranks. Following this, Michael Bochenski invites us to share the first of a two-part study in the theology underpinning an evangelism for today.

Originally arising from an editorial in *The Baptist Quarterly*, we commence a short series entitled *Dissent Today*. As Free Church people, we are children of the convictions and the battles of the past. To what extent, in a greatly changed scenario, are our positions what once they were? David Staple initiates the series. It's been remarked that the only way now you can identify a priest in France is by the shabbiness of his suit (so poor are the French clergy). For us clerical attire of any sort has become increasingly unacceptable, precipitating a heated reaction in some quarters. So is there any rationale for it at all? With tongue in cheek, yet an underlying, serious concern, Michael Sheen opens up the subject.

# Three Questions in Search of an Answer

Three of our colleagues, Michael McGill, Anne Wilkinson-Hayes and Paul Allen, were asked to respond briefly to three issues of contemporary relevance. We print below their submissions.

## **1. What is the major contribution Baptists can make to the wider Church?**

### **Michael:**

In the wider Church, Baptists can give clear leadership on a number of important issues, seeking to be a bridge between the wide diversity of churches we are in discussions with. Two of the fundamental issues are:

1. The position of the Bible. The wider Church consists of people who hold very differing views of Scripture. Baptists hold the view that the Scriptures, as the Word of God, are the ultimate authority for both doctrine and practice in the Church.

2. The view of the Church. Baptists have a clear and defined view on the nature of the Church. We believe that the Church is people – people who have made a personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and who gather together in their own localities to be a living expression of that faith.

To be a leader, however, is not about sitting in a corner stubbornly believing that we have all the truth, but rather it is about debating from the position of having a clear understanding of the foundations on which the debate with other Churches is founded, that enables us to discuss openly and positively all the issues before us.

### **Anne:**

Three aspects of our denominational life occur to me in response to this question. The most obvious contribution we make is our practice of Believer's Baptism by full immersion. It has theological appeal for the more evangelical wings of the other churches and also a dramatic appeal to sacramentalists. Increasingly, I am meeting people from a wide spectrum of church backgrounds who are incorporating such a service in the range of options they offer.

Secondly, our form of congregational government and local autonomy can be a positive contribution. With new emphasis on lay participation, and a rediscovery of the priesthood of all believers, many episcopal denominations are facing certain organisational crises. Whilst local autonomy can be a weakness, if it becomes insularity, our belief in the right of each spirit-fired individual to speak, be heard, and shape the life of the community of faith is something many envy.

Thirdly, and perhaps less obviously, there is something in our freedom that can potentially enrich the wider Church. I find that many visitors are struck by the personal nature of some of our services – people comment on the warmth and the immediacy. I believe this partly arises from the flexibility of our worship and organisation. As Baptists we have the freedom to choose from the very best of all styles and media of worship. We can use liturgy or extempore material. We can

embrace a full range of musical styles. We can encourage maximum participation and shared ministry. We can use the Church calendar, or not. We have the opportunity to shape the most exciting worship experiences possible. Sadly, all too often we do not exploit this potential and allow our worship to slip into a bland and predictable pattern, but our freedom, when fully and creatively harnessed, is probably our greatest contribution to the wider Church.

**Paul:**

I have some differences with Anglicans with whom I work closely. We have different ideas about Priesthood, Baptism and Churchmanship. But we can work closely together because we all affirm some major beliefs. We all affirm that God is creative, loving and forgiving, and that he is a God of justice and peace who has made known his coming Kingdom in Jesus Christ. To say we as Baptists have something else, something major to offer, makes me a little uncomfortable, giving me a sort of 'we are better than you' feeling.

But if we look to our heritage, then perhaps we do have something major to offer and that is religious tolerance. Our forefathers were marginalised because of their belief and their stand for religious tolerance. If we are to be true to that heritage then our ecumenical work will not be restricted to working with those of similar theology in other churches. In the spirit of religious tolerance, ecumenical work can truly happen, and the radical work with the fundamentalist, and the charismatic with the traditional, loving and respecting each other. To practice religious tolerance may make us vulnerable, but is not that a Christlike quality in itself?

**2. Does spiritual conviction imply political action?**

**Michael:**

For me the answer must be simply Yes.

Because the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is a gospel which talks about justice for the individual. It looks at people as having value, worth, independence, freedom and dignity, and each person being of infinite value to God. The gospel is for all people, regardless of race or creed.

However, what we discover in our world and in our communities often is totally alien to what we see in the gospel. We find all around us violence, fear, hatred, oppression and injustice. The media reflect the evils in our world where many adults, children, babies and unborn babies, are abused, used as objects, trampled upon and violated, where large numbers of people are oppressed because of their colour or their belief, all of them victims of man's inhumanity to man.

Therefore, the gospel calls me to stand up and fight – locally, nationally and internationally – against that which I see to be out of step with the life and teaching of Jesus. There will be times when the only way to bring society in line with the gospel, is for us to act politically.

**Anne:**

There is a deep fear and suspicion of politics in the Church at large; a concern that somehow it is dirty and polluting and therefore unsuitable for spiritual Christians. There appears to be an underlying belief that involvement in politics

involves compromise, and that political action will inevitably drag its participants down into a murky world. It seems to me that all the great affirmations we make about our God – his power and omnipotence – are no longer believed in the political arena; that the concept that a concerned Christian could, in the power of the Spirit, lift the level of a debate, or effect positive good, seems beyond the limits of our faith.

The problem seems to centre around our definition of the term “politics”. For many Christians “politics” means “party politics”. We need to promote in the churches a far wider understanding of the term. Politics is to do with human relationships, and the way such relationships are structured and organised. Surely the Bible has much to say about the way we should relate to one another, and organise our life together. Our spiritual convictions cannot be separated from political action even if we wished it could be so. Where people are oppressed, the Bible tells us to liberate them. How can we fulfil this spiritual conviction without entering the political arena? Amos certainly wasn't talking solely about the oppression of personal sin in his directives, any more than Jesus was. When we are told to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, we are unavoidably sucked into political action. Food Aid can change the power balance in a community. A new well in a village alters the power structure of that place, for who controlled the water supply previously? There is a shameful naivete amongst some Christians. Even to do nothing is to support the status quo and is hence political. Life is political, so spiritual conviction must imply political action.

#### **Paul:**

This question implies that a tension exists between people who understand Christian faith in terms of personal spirituality and others who understand the gospel as an incentive to engage in social and political action. This is often reflected in our theology. Those emphasising personal spirituality often appeal to Paul and his doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus. Those emphasising social and political action appeal to Jesus and his proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

Jürgen Moltmann<sup>1</sup> offers an interpretation of the Kingdom of God that draws together personal spirituality and political action. He argues that the Kingdom of God is not only about the Lordship of God in our lives; it is also about a new order, or a new creation. We see God's Lordship in the life of Jesus; we see his new creation in the resurrection of Jesus as sin and death are overcome. We experience the Kingdom of God as individuals as we become part of the new creation. But the coming Kingdom of New Creation also calls into question society's life and structures.

Spiritual conviction is about a personal relationship with God, living under his Lordship. But it is also about being identified with the cause of God's Kingdom of Justice and New Creation in today's world.

1. Jürgen Moltmann: *The Way of Jesus Christ*. SCM, 1990, pp97ff

### **3. In this Decade of Evangelism, how do you conceive of the task?**

#### **Michael:**

Evangelism is not something which we can enter into with our eyes closed. It is the important business of winning souls for Christ. For me, there are four areas

– prayer, discussion, training and action – which all play an important part in any evangelism.

Prayer is the foundation of evangelism. Therefore the first task before me is to encourage the people to deepen their prayer life. Consistent intercession and spiritual warfare are essential in evangelism.

The second thing we need to do is to include on the deacons' and church meeting agenda, the issue of evangelism: the whole Church family becoming motivated and involved in the discussions and the decision-making process, seeking to set realistic targets for the next few years.

The third area we need to look at is training – to enable, to equip and to inspire our people to share Jesus.

Last, but by no means least, to move thought and word into real action: this is the cutting edge of true discipleship. We need to get out of our pews, and take the gospel into the community in proclamation and action, making relevant – even radical – adaptations when necessary.

### **Anne:**

The results of the most recent English Church census (published by MARC Europe) show us that we have an enormous task in reaching the 90% of the population who do not regularly attend churches. We can no longer afford to be complacent as churches or assume the majority of people have made conscious, informed decisions about their attitude to Christianity. I believe we must be far more “up-front” about the real meaning of our faith, and give clear, relevant presentations and explanations of the gospel message. Of course the “how?” is the main question, particularly as many of us cringe at traditional, well-tried methods of evangelism. However, I think the task goes deeper than just more imaginative methods. We need to overcome, in a very radical way, some of the major prejudices and barriers in popular opinion.

For example:

1. “Christians can't agree about anything – look at all the divisions in the Church”.

We need to be seen as One Church, working amicably together, sharing resources, so that our public face is the best possible one – why put on a mediocre concert, when one could use the best gifts of every church in the locality to put on a superlative one.

2. “The Church is just a bunch of hypocrites”.

We need to be seen actively caring in the community, with no strings attached, so that no-one can fault our genuine commitment to the locality, and we earn the right to share our faith.

3. “Church is **so** boring”.

We need to seriously consider the alien culture we invite people into when they come to a church, and ask whether a service of worship is the best place to begin.

Finally, and most importantly, we need to be envisioning and equipping every individual Christian to share their own experience of faith as simply and naturally as possible with their relatives, friends and neighbours, and live it out in a distinctive, loving lifestyle.

**Paul:**

We are encouraged to think of mission in terms of proclamation and social and political action. I wonder if we are prepared for what that implies? As an Industrial Chaplain, I have recently attended two day conferences, one concerned with economic values in Europe, and the other with business ethics. At both of these conferences I talked with people who were concerned about social justice, but each with their own ideas. Some were business managers, some T.U. officials, some feminists.

If we are serious about the wider implications of mission for this decade, we must face up to the fact that we live in a pluralistic society. That may mean searching with others for a moral consensus. If we are prepared to enter such a debate, I believe we will find the Spirit of God at work. Take, for example, one concept, that of human dignity. In discussion, I hear some people affirming human rights as contained in the European Social Charter; I hear T.U. officials speaking of the value of their members; I hear feminists calling for women to find greater self-worth. Entering such a debate enables us to work with other people to promote human dignity, which we believe is affirmed at the heart of the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Perhaps our task in the Decade of Evangelism is to discern what God is already doing in his world and share with him in that purpose.

## **Towards a Theology of Evangelism for Today: Part One**

*This article was originally given as the Introductory Lecture to a course on "Evangelism Today" at the Northern Baptist College, Manchester, in Autumn 1989. The second part will appear in the next edition of The Fraternal.*

Many people, as the 1990's arrive, are involved in evangelism. Often very few are thinking about what they are doing or, indeed, have ever done so. The commands of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) excuse, impell and justify almost anything to some it seems. These are the days of multi-media presentations, computer follow-up, evangelistic videos, satellite relays, big and small screen evangelism. The recent Livelink Billy Graham Mission '89 saw thousands 'get up out of their seats'. So did the July '89 Mission in Budapest, Hungary, at which I was privileged to be present (95,000 attended and a remarkable 27,000 responded). Luis Palau has recently been telling Wales in the hopes of revival today and not just in lingering, longing memory. Evangelistic literature – from the professional to the disgusting – will again be thrust through tens of thousands of doors as, say, Advent, Easter or Harvest approaches. Tracts are still being thrust into hands in the town centre and market place as firmly as ever a Victorian Baptist could. They're probably the same ones! "Why you need Jesus"

alongside their secular double-glazing equivalents. Praise Marches are a growing phenomenon culminating in assorted evangelistic events. Churches will be continuing to hold Missions with homegrown ('the Minister is all we could afford') or imported evangelists. Hours of prayer and effort, geared at the unconverted will be followed (perhaps) by pious explanations as to why once again revival – probably – didn't quite break out but 'much seed was sown'. "I'm up to my neck in seed" one colleague complained recently! Testimonies on Songs of Praise reach millions each week. In the United States the faithful part with their money so that yet another evangelist might look and feel good on the little screen and send them helpful literature for only \$...Diffident young people and anxious older ones, fired up by the Pastor's latest sermon on the need for courageous witnessing, will gingerly approach friends at school, home or work. From pulpit to pulpit appeals, strictures, even taunts about being 'saved' will again issue next Sunday, and all the Sundays after that. Praise God that, in and through all these things, there will be 'sound conversions' as well. Many of us are doing it. Not enough of us are thinking about why we are doing it and how. Perhaps we would be more "successful" if we did? On the whole I prefer C.H. Spurgeon's celebrated response to some critics of his evangelistic methods: "I prefer the way I do mine to the way you don't do yours". Nonetheless, much more theological reflection needs to be put into Evangelism Today. To be put, that is, into providing a Theology of Evangelism that has intellectual integrity as well as being 'sound on the ground' as it were. To this end in this two-part article I will suggest 8 pointers, 8 ingredients that will need to be part of such a theology.

## **1. A theology of evangelism for today will need an agreed content.**

In his book *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (1936) the NT scholar, C.H. Dodd, outlined the following as the main content of the kerygma of apostolic evangelism: a) Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the promised One of God. In Him the Messianic Age, the age of fulfillment, has dawned. b) He lived a life of love and 'went about doing good'. c) He died for our sins on the cross. d) He rose again – death could not hold Him. e) He is ascended to God's right hand – the place of authority – as the Messianic Head of the New Israel. f) He has sent the Holy Spirit – His own Spirit, as the sign of His present power and glory. g) The Messianic Age will be consummated when He comes again – the parousia. h) He expects a response from us and that response includes repentance, faith and baptism. Then the life of the Age to Come can begin to be experienced by those who have thus joined the Messianic Community. Canon Michael Green, in his superbly researched and eminently readable work *Evangelism in the Early Church* (1970), whilst accepting Dodd's outline, in effect stripped away the Messianic dimension and summarized the content of apostolic preaching into three things: 1) They proclaimed a Person – Jesus Christ, His Life, Death and Resurrection. 2) They promised gifts to those who believed – the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit. 3) They preached for a response – repentance, faith and baptism. Thus the Gospel was adapted to the Gentile mission as well as the Jewish one. He qualifies this summary, however, with these helpful words: "It would be a mistake to assume that there was a crippling uniformity about the proclamation of Christian truth in antiquity. That there was a basic homogeneity in what was preached we may agree, but there was wide variety in the way it was presented... Evangelism is never proclamation in a vacuum, but always to people and the message must be given in terms that make sense to them"<sup>1</sup>.

One of the truly fascinating phenomena in world history is that process whereby He who proclaimed the Good News became Himself the content of the

Good News, to euaggelion itself! How do we begin to explain this? That a wandering Carpenter and Rabbi, with a clear sense of Messianic vocation, within a few years comes to be proclaimed as Kurios, 'Lord', a title reserved for Yahweh Himself in Judaism. How is it that prayer comes to be offered to Him? How is it that Joseph's son is soon hymned as the One with the Name above all names? (Phil 2:6-11) For Christians, of course, the answer here is quite simply because of His Resurrection which we both affirm and proclaim. Jesus Christ, His Life, Death and Resurrection, remains the essential content of Evangelism Today. We can ourselves only authentically testify, however much we accept the beliefs of others or the NT evidence, to what we have personally experienced and know to be true of Him. The Christ we know is the One we must proclaim, not the One we don't. One of the NT Greek words used for witnessing to the Resurrection, 'martus', and its cognates, has legal associations i.e. an eyewitness to facts, to truths personally vouched for: "...our testimony about Christ (to marturion tou Christou) was confirmed in you" (1 Cor 1:6) "God has raised this Jesus to life and we are all martures of the fact" (Acts 2:32)

## **2. A theology of evangelism for today will need acceptable motives**

Again, Michael Green's analysis is helpful here. He invites us to first seek, from the NT, appropriate motives for evangelism. He suggests three. 1) **Gratitude and Love:** The early Christians evangelised because of their overwhelming experience of the love of God and the forgiveness of their sins. These they had experienced in and through Jesus Christ the Lord. Evangelism, they saw, was grounded in the very nature of the God Who gave His Son to us in love: John 3:16; Rom 5:5; Col. 1:3-6 and 13-14; 1 John 4:7-21 (esp 14-15) 2) **A sense of accountability and responsibility.** Every action is subject to the scrutiny of One God and Saviour Who will judge the living and the dead. He has commanded that we go and make disciples. United with Christ we can face His judgment unafraid and help others to do so, released from the paralysing terror of wondering about rejection or acceptance. Such Good News **MUST** be shared; Matt 28:18-20; Rom 4: 21-25; 1 Cor. 4: 2-5; 1 Cor. 9:15-27; 1 Cor. 15: 20-28; 2 Cor. 5: 9-11 a; Eph. 3: 7-12; 2 Tim.4: 6-8; Heb. 10: 26-28; 1 Peter 3:15; and 5:2-4. 3) **A sense of concern.** A fear for the state of those who live and die "without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). The many Gospel warnings from the lips of Jesus about Hell, judgment, the division into two sides of humankind, all would have featured prominently here: sheep and goats: wheat and tares: wise and foolish virgins: the rejected at the Wedding Feast etc: 1 Thess. 1:8-10; Heb. 6: 1-3 and 10:26-31; James 5: 1-10; 2 Peter 3:7-14. These motives I suggest are all still helpful in Evangelism Today, however much we emphasize the first as superior.

## **3. A theology of evangelism for today will need an accessible eschatology.**

Love and gratitude for the Good News personally appropriated and experienced will – for some – be motives enough for evangelism. It can be argued, however, that the cutting edge of evangelism is lost if an eschatological dimension is absent. The missionary expansions of the C19th which have helped to transform Christianity into a truly world religion in the C20th were often inspired by a burden to rescue the unsaved from "a Christless eternity" from the "pains of hellfire" and from a vision of eternal judgment to come for the unconverted. Michael Green again: "The modern decline of belief in Heaven and Hell or even in any life after the grave among many professing Christians is an insuperable



# GREENWOODS

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Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother

Dear Fellow Minister,

Sunshine slants through my office window after rain. It speaks of God's love and our reaction to it.

When the last of the Mission's work in London closed down and the Greenwoods Community was called upon to 'go it alone' financially, we felt we could not take more responsibilities imposed over long hours of demanding work.

You probably know that in our large house 8 staff live with 20 needy folk, mostly young adults, and most of whom have psychiatric illness or crippling emotional disorder. There is continual tension as people struggle with chronic pessimism. Behaviour ranges from cheerful industry to miserable withdrawal. Personal staff relationship is vital to recovery from lack of self respect. The hand on the shoulder — sitting beside someone on the stairs — personal counselling or dynamic group reaction — these and many other qualities bring an initial glimmer of hope and finally, thank God, experience of healing.

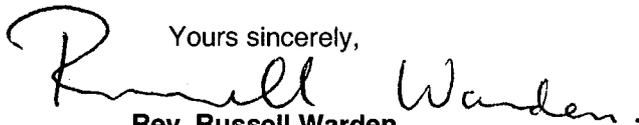
Our Lord Jesus found that involvement in healing takes power out of you. I must ensure that staff are not over-drained. Pity and love undisciplined can bring harm to the healer.

All our staff are radiant Christians. Most of our 'guests' have never known a faith or lost it long ago. We are in the forefront of the Christian battle. Please pray for us.

We have survived 3 months 'going alone' and are still in action. The sun is shining again — but what next? If you have received an appeal for your Church to be involved *systematically* in financial support of Greenwoods please consider it in a loving spirit. If the Greenwoods Community dies it will never be possible for the Mission to recreate it.

With Christian love,

Yours sincerely,

  
Rev. Russell Warden

barrier to dynamic evangelism. When we no longer see ourselves as dying men preaching to dying men, the absoluteness of the command to evangelise becomes muted and we draw back before a task which at the best of times is difficult, delicate and very demanding".<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this need for an accessible eschatology can be brought closer home when we ask what exactly we are doing as Ministers, at a Funeral Service? (i) Are we, as it were, witnessing the end of all there is left and releasing the deceased into oblivion? (ii) Are we commending him / her to the gracious and loving mercy and judgment of God to whom they now travel? (iii) Are we releasing him into a process of universal salvation? (iv) Or are we committing the deceased to a continuation of life-choices already made? C.S. Lewis says of Hell: "God sends no-one there. They walk their own way there and close the door behind them." You decide. I favour the second because God is the judge and never me and, pastorally, I believe this is the wisest way to approach such a Service. I personally believe from Christ's Resurrection, from Scripture, and from deep inner conviction that we do survive death and will each one have to give account to God for the lives we have lived – or wasted – on earth. I am also more open than some to the hypothesis that there may be hope of salvation for the deceased after death, though this is an enormous risk to take once the Gospel has been clearly heard and understood. It is not a risk I am prepared to take myself or encourage others to take: "It is too late to repent in the grave" (Matthew Henry) But again, God is the only judge of these matters, and mercifully not His more dogmatic and assertive followers. Paul Fiddes in his new work: *Past Event and Present Salvation* puts this possibility superbly: "Nor can we limit the scope of the searching love of God to the boundary of death; we cannot know over what precipices of the mind the Shepherd will travel in eternity to reach the lost".<sup>3</sup> But this is still a risk!

Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* may help us here if I have understood it aright. Those of you who have also tried to read him will appreciate my "if"! He sees humankind as journeying towards the Risen Christ Whose Resurrection is both the goal and meaning of humankind and history. Against the measure of His Resurrection all human life is to be understood and interpreted. The Resurrection contradicted reality and so must we, His disciples, as we journey towards Him. The present world, the Church's mission, the individual, must see reality contradicted and transformed by the God Who is coming and Whom we shall meet in the, as yet, not fully disclosed future, glimpsed in Jesus Christ's Resurrection. "This eternal life here lies hidden beneath its opposite under trial, suffering, death and sorrow. Yet this hiddenness is not an eternal paradox but a latency within the tendency that presses forward and outwards into that open realm of possibilities that lies ahead and so is full of promise".<sup>4</sup>

### **A theology of evangelism for today will need to be complemented by a theology of mission.**

To quote Moltmann again here: "The Church lays claim to the whole of humanity in mission. The Christian Church has not to serve mankind in order that this world may remain what it is, or may be preserved in the state in which it is, but in order that it may transform itself and become what it promised to be".<sup>5</sup> "This does not merely mean salvation of the souls, individual rescue from the evil world, comfort for the troubled conscience, but also the realisation of the eschatological hope of justice, the humanizing of man, the socializing of humanity, peace for all creation."<sup>6</sup> It is good to see Mission increasingly on the agenda of many including far more evangelicals. Witness eg. John Stott and Ronald Sider's writings, the Frontier Youth Trust and the tremendous growth of TEAR

FUND as instances here. It is better still to see those who have never neglected this dimension in their Ministries. Again, it would also be good to see those Churches and Ministers who are heavily involved in Mission, but only in Mission, similarly re-discovering that the Churches – to more fully share the Good News – must also have an evangelistic dimension. Rev Richard B. Cook in an *Expository Times* article: “St Paul – Preacher, Evangelist or Organiser” (ET 93:6) makes the case for a broader understanding of the term ‘euaggelizomai’. He argues that the term is much broader than simply ‘to preach’. Paul’s proclamation of the Gospel included his missionary strategy and goals, his lifestyle and all of his day to day activities. Evangelism was hard work. (1 Cor 15:10); it was dangerous (2 Cor.11:23-29); it involved signs of the Kingdom (Rom. 15:19) and the planting of Christian Communities in the hard places of the then known world (1 Cor. 3:5-11). “Evangelism means action in service and not simply preaching... Paul is to be counted among those Christian thinkers and doers who call the Church to live truly a life of service. Paul’s successors today are Christian activists who meet the executed Messiah in the person of the marginalised and oppressed, the sinned against, the struggling poor...”<sup>7</sup> Those who warm only to Evangelism surely need to hear this call more clearly? They also need to read some of the work of liberation theologians which represent new Roman Catholic thinking on evangelization (evangelism and mission fused in praxis) at its finest. Strange that these theologians (who make some of the most telling critiques around of contemporary Marxism) are not read by some because they have listened only to the words of that great contemporary theologian, Norman Tebbit.

#### **NOTES:**

1. M. Green *Evangelism in the Early Church* (H & S 1970) pp137-8
2. Ibid pp 334-5
3. P.S. Fiddes *Past Event and Present Salvation* (DLT 1989) p.186
4. J. Moltmann *Theology of Hope* (SCM 1967) p 213
5. Ibid p. 327
6. Ibid p. 329
7. Richard B. Cook’s article in *Expository Times* 93:6

**Michael I. Bochenski**

## **Dissent Today**

A few months after I began working for the Free Church Federal Council, I found myself in the lunch queue at a Ministers’ Retreat standing next to an old friend, or should I say, a friend of many years standing. He expressed surprise at my appointment, adding, “I never imagined you would be banging the Free Church drum!”

Now that may tell you something about him and his image of the FCFC in general, and of me in particular. The question it posed for me is this – is it our task today to be banging the Free Church drum?; to be shouting about our nonconformity?; to be vocal in dissent? And if not, what is the position of Dissent Today (the title set for me by the *Fraternal* Editor)?

## Some Historical Perspective

While I defer to the Church Historians, of whom I do not claim to be one, as far as consideration of the details of Dissent over the last three centuries or so is concerned, it seems clear that for many of our forefathers (and mothers), dissent involved opposition, especially to the Established Church of England.

Ernest Payne, in an essay on "Access to the Throne" <sup>1</sup> describes the way in which the ministers of the Three Denominations (Presbyterian, Baptist and Independent) waited upon successive monarchs with addresses of welcome. But the link between the addresses in 1688 and the Toleration Act of 1689 strongly suggests that the purpose was in part to secure support against the oppressive legislation of the 1660's which not only entrenched the Church of England, but forced the Nonconformists into a second class citizenship.

In 1732, this General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations, residing in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, formed a lay body, the Protestant Dissenting Deputies, "charged with the defence and extension of the civil rights of Nonconformists". C.W. Ikin, in an unsigned pamphlet <sup>2</sup> recently written for the two bodies, says:-

"The fact of the existence of the Protestant Dissenting Deputies led nonconformists who were in trouble of any kind to appeal for their help and advice. Since the Deputies included people skilled in the law, they were often able to help those, especially in the country districts, who did not know their rights or were subject to petty local persecution over the registration of chapels and meeting-houses, tithes and church-rates, and especially over burial laws. They campaigned for the opening of new Universities without religious tests, and for the removal of these at Oxford and Cambridge. During the nineteenth century, they took part in the campaigning for the disestablishment of the Church of England; but they never sponsored it. Their approach was practical rather than doctrinaire."

Dissent involved opposition in order to secure both freedom from the domination of state control over worship and also civil rights for nonconformists. It had to secure the right to our own form of church government, based on the local gathered church, consisting of believers only, and non-hierarchical. It sought to secure these freedoms for all (cf Thomas Helwys) and not just for itself. Because of that, at its best, it had respect for other viewpoints, and sought to avoid dogmatism, while emphasising the centrality of the Gospel.

In part, this tolerance of others has proved a weakness. In 1981, the FCFC Education Committee<sup>3</sup> published a set of documents including one on "Some Free Church Principles and their implications". The flexibility and variety of Free Church life is noted. "They have also learned...the importance of different emphases and the need to practice toleration, both within their own churches and towards other denominations of Christendom – and indeed towards other religions and philosophies." The implications of this are worked out, including a resistance to "the imposition of formulas from outside" and the resultant acceptance by some of other "exclusive emphases". The plea for a balance implies that sometimes there has been no balance.



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## A Changed Situation

But does dissent still require opposition? I note that my dictionary uses words like 'difference of opinion', 'disagreement' and 'separation from', but does not refer to opposition. In politics, we have in England a set-up which is confrontational, government versus opposition. Does this have to be the pattern in Church life as well (or is that merely to allow cultural environment to dictate our behaviour and attitudes)?

My first vivid experience of ecumenical matters was at the first Youth Conference, organised by the (now defunct) British Council of Churches at Bangor in 1951. Memory suggests that the Baptist delegation numbered about 50. While there were similar numbers of Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian young people, the overwhelming majority present were Anglican. At that time, there would only have been one or two Roman Catholic observers. The denial of the bread and the wine to the Free Church members at the Anglican Eucharist caused an uproar. Rarely since have I heard the Free Church case so forcefully and persuasively put. The debate raged for two days, and invaded every discussion, whether in small group or in plenary. In the end, it was Douglas Stewart and Edwin Robertson who took us Baptist youngsters on one side and tried to get us to understand two things: - a) you have won your point and the Anglican young people now agree with you, and b) keeping on about it, will be totally counter-productive. It took a quarter of a century, but now, it is the Anglican who joins us in debate at the Roman Catholic denial of the bread and wine. Plus ça change!

Today, many of the items for which the Dissenters of previous centuries fought, are no longer matters even for debate. They have long since been achieved. Other matters are now no longer the exclusive preserve of the Dissenting Free Churches, for our influence (maybe) has spread, and we have allies among our former opponents. Roman Catholics emphasise the Scriptures and personal faith, <sup>4</sup> and the importance of the local Church (their word is 'subsidiarity'). Anglicans increasingly accept that this country is a mission field to be evangelised, and dissent more strongly from government opinions than we would have dreamt of at that conference forty years ago. "Faith in the City" or David Sheppard's emphasis on "Bias to the Poor" rings bells in our hearts and minds. If this point is so largely won, may it not be counter-productive to persist?

" 'We are all dissenters now' it might be said" <sup>5</sup>. "It can no longer be affirmed that the Church of England is the Tory Party at Prayer. Rather the churches together, often under the leadership of the Church of England, have become the most consistent and persistent of government critics, seen particularly in the refusal of the Archbishop of Canterbury to engage in a triumphalistic celebration of victory in the Falkland Islands war, and the tough analysis of urban deprivation contained within the "Faith in the City" report.

Two factors may help to point out why that editorial comment in the *Baptist Quarterly* is correct. In the hey-day of Dissent, few dissenters accepted those in the Established Church as fellow-Christians, and the non-acceptance was mutual. Today, perhaps because of the secularization of society, very few Baptists would exclude all but Baptists from heaven, or the kingdom of God. Indeed, in many of our Churches non-Baptist believers are welcome to join our Open Membership. We have learned to accept each other in Christ, to work together for Christ, and to trust one another to such an extent that we can differ in fellowship, rather than in opposition to each other. Our dissent then becomes a joint one, dissenting

together from customary secular morality and behaviour, often as exemplified in Government legislation.

It is also perhaps to be seen in the fact that dissent has to do with authority. In previous generations, our dissent was in part against a hierarchical structure. today, hierarchy in the Church of England is balanced by synodical government, and the priest consults his Parochial Church Council. Even Roman Catholic bishops will admit in private that they cannot rule by fiat and dictate what shall or shall not be. They too consult, and increasingly listen. That from which we once dissented has changed, so that today all our denominations have an authority structure which is simultaneously from the top and from the bottom. (We expect David Coffey to lead. We shall be disappointed if he does not prove to be a leader. But that lead will depend on the confidence and support of our people. It is both from the bottom and from the top!) If that analysis of authority in the various denominations is in any way correct, we do not need still to dissent, when that from which we have in the past dissented now bears so much similarity to what we ourselves practise.

### **Priority of the Secular Challenge**

Which is why my old friend of paragraph 1 has not heard me banging the Free church drum very much! I believe that my voice, on behalf of and true (I hope) to the dissenting tradition, is more likely to be effectively heard within the ecumenical debate, together with the other (historically non-dissenting) Churches. To shout from outside in vocal opposition may from time to time be required. But more often, effective dissent will be achieved by sharing in the debate, so that the Churches Together may express their combined dissent at that which is lacking or wrong in the state and its culture.

In "Better Together"<sup>6</sup> David Sheppard and Derek Worlock write of their work in Liverpool. The blurb runs thus: "They discuss the spiritual principles which have come to unite them, and assert that each Church must learn to work with the other, remaining mindful of those areas where disagreement will remain. The result is uniquely powerful: a common Cristian witness to a troubled world."

Dissent today should take note of where disagreements remain. But in the face of the world as it is, that which we share and which unites us is far greater than the things over which we may dissent. God's will is surely that we are "Better Together".

### **Notes**

1. *Access to the Throne* by Dr. Ernest A. Payne, C.H., published in the Free Church Chronicle (Vol XXXII no. 3) Autumn 1977
2. Obtainable from the FCFC, 27 Tavistock Sq., London WC1H 9HH (please send stamped and addressed 9' x 6' envelope)
3. "Education for the Eighties" (now in course of being revised for the 90's)
4. See Editorial Comment in *The Month* (April 1991), which was drawn to my attention after this article was written. The Editor notes the results of a survey which found that "of all religious groups, Roman Catholics were the most pro-(Gulf) war". His Editorial is a plea that dissenting voices within the Church (on the matter of whether war is just or not) must not be discouraged. The whole argument stems from these paragraphs:-

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I refer to the requirement that accidents must be reported to us as soon as possible. We live in very litigious times and all too often what appears to be a simple accident, with no thought on the part of the injured person of claiming against the church officers, emerges many months later in the form of a Solicitor's letter claiming damages.

It is essential that we are told at the time of an accident causing injury or damage. In the light of the details we can decide whether an inspection of the situation should be arranged, statements taken from witnesses, etc. After some months have elapsed it may be impossible to obtain vital information which could provide a defence for the Church against a claim or mitigate the extent to which the Church can be held liable.

Yours sincerely,

M.E. Purver

"We are presuming that we have something valuable to say to non-believers, and indeed we have: salvation for the nations under the mercy of God. And how was that salvation accomplished? We know full well: through the death of Jesus, in which he took upon himself the violent sinfulness of the world, broke the cycle of evil, and poured out his forgiving love on those who sin against God. In his self-emptying even unto death, he rejected the use of force and retribution..."

"This is the heart of our faith, both morally and doctrinally enjoined by Jesus, exemplified in his life and death, and central to the renewal of human relations which the kingdom of God brings".

5. See *Baptist Quarterly* Volume XXXIII No 5, January 1990. Editorial on "Dissenters still?"

6. *Better Together* published by Hodder and Stoughton (1988) at £12.95

**David Staple**

### **Erratum**

We apologise for a printing error in the April *Fraternal* in the Baptist Insurance Company's advertisement. The second sentence of the first paragraph should have read: "In company with all general insurers we have experienced a costly year with claims arising from the January/February storms and subsidence claims for private houses resulting from a prolonged period of below average rainfall."

## **The Dilemma of Dress**

I suppose articles in this *Fraternal* magazine come to birth in all sorts of ways. This is no profound piece of work, as witness the fact that I have managed without one single footnote. It was conceived over the kitchen table.

Sheila kept suggesting that it was about time I bought a new Sunday shirt. She was not talking about a direct replacement, but a new kind of Sunday shirt. She was insisting that the old form of clerical collar, one that studs onto the neckband of a black (or possibly grey) shirt, was getting to have a distinctly passe look about it.

I felt like replying wearily that perhaps, then, it was just right for a parson within ten years of superannuation. Except that I don't really feel that old, and I've never actually enjoyed mucking about with those studs. Of course, it used to be linen collars instead of plastic ones, and you sent off your dirty ones by the dozen to Collars in Glasgow in a special box and eventually got them back again all clean and razor sharp.

Mind you, when I was first ordained you didn't have to worry too much about the shirt you were wearing, because you had a stock (worn with a waistcoat) or a vestock to tuck in under your collar and cover it up. You knew where you were in those days! Not that I ever wore the standard black coat and striped trousers.

With some dog collars have gone tabs, of course. David Buttrick writes, "The little white tabs that dangle from some preachers' necks are said to symbolise the two tablets of the law (a good reason to toss them away)". That's on page 458 of his *Homiletic* (to save a solitary footnote) where he is arguing that preaching from scripture does not guarantee that the sermon will be the Word of God. Ministerial dress guarantees things even less, but it can be a helpful indication.

It is my confusion over the present situation that lies behind this article. My ministerial colleagues seem to wear such a variety of clothing. I look back to the good old days when we weren't spoiled for choice. Memory is selective, of course, because there have always been plenty of Baptists ministers who wouldn't be seen dead in a dog collar, on principle, some of them espousing a particular kind of tie.

Anyway, more to give vent to my frustration than to seek for help, I wrote to the General Secretary asking if the Baptist Union couldn't light on something to set up as the norm in official wear for our Ministers. His way of humouring me was to suggest that I write an article for *The Fraternal!* I eventually had a stab at that, in an idle moment, and the Editor's response was to ask me to broaden out the subject somewhat. This is the result, for what it is worth.

## **Uniform and Representation**

Point One. One has to wear something.

Point Two. What one wears says something. When I put on clean clothes, clothes that fit, match with one another and suit me, I am seeking to present a pleasing spectacle to anyone I may meet. It may be that I am trying to say to another person, "Look how clever I am at presenting myself." Or it may be rather that I am trying to say, "I'm seeking to please you with my appearance because I have some regard for you." Think of lovers meeting.

If you were invited to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, you would wear the formal clothes required of you. You wouldn't be let in if you didn't. But you would probably be glad to anyway, to show some respect for the monarch of your country. Your clothes would be saying, "God save the Queen!"

You wouldn't turn up to a church service in dirty clothes. That would appear to be a studied insult against your heavenly Father. You wouldn't be able to complain if you met a fate like that of Jesus's Man Without a Wedding Garment.

These days people attend church services in casual clothes. They seem to be saying, "I've come to spend a relaxing hour with a Friend". If so, the traditional idea behind the Liturgy seems to have gone out of the window. Some of us would see a considerable element of work in worship. The explanatory notes that go with one church's Order of Service say, "The headings give some indication of purpose. We have come to do business with God, or rather to let Him do business with us."

Mind you, some people today wear casual clothing as they earn their living. Schoolteachers are not usually required to dress like office workers, though this relaxed air can be seen to suggest to the pupils that school is play and not work. That may sometimes be the intention.

In other places of work the wearing of uniform or pseudo-uniform ( a suit etc) is seen to be old-fashioned, unnecessary and restrictive. So dressing in casual clothing to go to church may reflect this same attitude and be saying, "This is no stuffy exercise. I'm free to come as I will. I don't want any uncomfortable clothing to distract me in my desire to worship God with all my heart."

What about those leading the worship? They may well feel under some pressure to wear "Sunday clothes" if those whom they are leading (or some of them) will be distracted by casual clothing, feeling that it represents carelessness before God. There is clearly something to be said for clothing that is unremarkable. Which was why ministers, choirs etc took to wearing gowns, wasn't it?

When I go to the doctor and am seen by his nurse I find it re-assuring that she is wearing a uniform. Attire that emphasized her femininity might be distracting! Her uniform assures me that she is qualified. The doctor himself doesn't wear a uniform, perhaps because I'm expected to know him, but then neither does a locum. In the hospital doctors wear white coats and most of the staff are uniformed, so that you know who's who and shouldn't be prey to some woman coming in off the street and pretending to be a para-medical in order to kidnap your baby.

By analogy it is re-assuring to casual worshippers if one ( at least) of those leading the worship wears a uniform that identifies him ( or her, of course) as someone who has been assigned this task, having had training, experience and "certification". This person can be seen as being "in charge" even if the actual part played is a small one. The person in the pew needs to know that he can reasonably trust himself to be led by the person "out front" if he is to enter fully into the worship.

This argument is particularly strong in the case of a wedding or a funeral, when the proportion of those who do not know the leader of the worship personally is likely to be high. Over the years many a Baptist minister who, like me, has not really wanted to wear a dog collar has nevertheless done so on particular occasions, in order to be identified as a responsible (church-) person by those who have no reason to be acquainted with him. The concern, then, has been to remove a stumbling-block from the path of someone outside the church fellowship.

At strictly internal gatherings there seems little point in such distinctive clothing. That is, if you view the ministry ( or whatever) as to do with function. The leader is not essentially different from anyone else, except in that he has been given a task to perform. Amongst those who readily recognise his appointment to that task there seems little need for him to be identified by the wearing of special clothing.

Since we do still "ordain" men and women and put them on an "accredited list" we do seem to understand that those people have been generally set aside and assigned the task of ministering the Word and Sacraments, though others may be involved in leading worship, preaching, baptizing and presiding at the Lord's Table in a particular church as that church chooses to authorize them. It does seem helpful if in some circumstances those so set aside are recognizable by their wearing readily identified clothing.

## **Clothing and Making Statements**

There are some who conscientiously refuse to wear a dog collar: they will presumably seek the dark suit and quiet tie of my old Principal's recommendation.

There are others who want to wear a light suit and a loud tie. What are they saying? They appear to be indicating, "Look, I'm a trendy parson. I'm 'with it'!" If that is the case, they are implying that the rest of us are 'without it', which seems unbrotherly to say the least. They are taking advantage; their act is parasitic upon the rest of us, because if we all wore light suits and loud ties, they would find no point in it. The same applies to those who wear a sweater and jeans, added to which there is a studied carelessness which Jesus appears to condemn.

Within the wearing of a dog collar there can be seen the same attempt at trendiness. A black shirt may be old-fashioned, grey and brown and blue ones are fairly normal, but the various other colours that one sees do seem again to indicate an attempt to be different and to stand out from other ministers.

On the other hand, in our Area the wearing of a blue clerical shirt could be seen as an indication that we are Neil's boys and girls, since our Area Super is normally to be seen in such a shirt on formal occasions.

If the attempt is simply one to appear more joyous, that is fair enough, except that many who come to worship do so with heavy hearts and may be affronted by a brightly coloured shirt, at least until in the worship we have confronted the darker side of life and found the Cross there to lighten our darkness.

Then there are different styles in dog collars, aren't there? The bit of plastic that slips into a tunnel collar I have always found comfortable, except that I feel rather Roman in it, especially when a child in the street greets me as "Father", and with all due respect to my RC friends I'd rather people saw me as what I am, a non-conformist.

Those bits of plastic that slip under an ordinary collar may be useful when a quick change is called for, as when slipping out from a meeting to conduct a funeral, but they still look odd to me.

A few of our ministers (but amongst them some whom I greatly respect) wear cassocks, which have the advantage of covering a multitude of jackets and trousers, and can be worn with a tie and a minimum of it showing.

It's all very annoying, because I could hardly care less what I wear. The problem is that it seems to matter to other people, people whom I want to serve in the name of Christ. Since I seek to be a humble servant of Jesus Christ, it may help me somehow to look like one. But how?

I can see the need for some kind of uniform, for Baptist ministers to wear when they need to be seen as official representatives of their churches or something, without it indicating any special level of divine or even human approval, but I would like it to be something reasonably fitting, in the sense of not appearing odd, and it would be effective only if it were in regular use amongst us.

So I am left with the question as to what I am going to wear in future. Having enjoyed a term of Study Leave based on Glasgow University I am inclined to take up wearing a white shirt and a tie in that blue and black and white tartan reserved for the clergy. Yet that would be to proclaim something of my own peculiar privilege. Unless, of course, it catches on!

**Michael J. Sheen**

## **Book Reviews**

**Together On The Way** by Christopher J. Ellis (BCC, 1990, 160pp, £6.95)

Baptists have made notable contributions to ecumenical developments in Wales over a good many years. Chris Ellis is one whose origins are in Wales, who believes in ecumenism, and who would urge the ecumenical vision on us all.

And a great vision it is! In his book, subtitled, 'A Theology of Ecumenism', a wide range of Bible passages is considered, taking us beyond the handful of classic texts, because "Ecumenism is for the whole of creation". Concern for peace, ministry of reconciliation, unity in the Church, being one, the love of Christ and the Will of God are categories used for reviewing the biblical case.

But with "the whole inhabited creation" as the context, the emphasis of much of the book is the place of the Church as a sign: "If we believe that the Spirit of God is at work transforming this growing world into a new creation, then we must not shield the world of the Church from the transforming power of his Spirit". Diversity or division; visible versus invisible unity; whether there was ever a golden age of unity are among the issues taken up. The importance to the writer of visible unity is well argued, while at the same time he is able to affirm the principle of diversity in the outworking of it.

The book is intended for study and reflection, and while ecumenical writing is rarely quite as exciting as its theme, the committed will certainly find solid "rations for the troops". There is also the hope that through reading the book, written as it is by a Baptist, there will be more Baptists who will come to doubt that it is possible to be a contemporary disciple of Christ without receiving increasingly from the ecumenical vision.

**Kenneth Walker**

(Copies may be obtained from Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, SE1 7RL, or from Baptist House, Didcot)

**Latest C.T.P. Manuals**

**Sovereign God – Servant People (C10) Howard Gordon, 44pp, £3**

**Being a Christian Leader (D1) Fred Bacon, 112pp, £4**

**Enjoying the Greek New Testament (C2) John Barfield, 72pp, £4**

**Life Story – Life Style (D9) Harry Weatherley, 92pp, £3**

**English Baptist History and Heritage (G3) Roger Hayden, 176pp, £7**

Five new books in the upgraded CTP format. The presentation is attractive and clear, and the books are for students of the various CTP courses, for study in church or housegroup, or for private reading. Compromises are necessary because of the three different readerships. The private reader is likely to be irritated by grey think-boxes, useful for group study. The Yule-Log style Assignment Boxes are for the CTP student. You feel you are handling a school textbook. Now for some comment on each:-

*Sovereign God – Servant People* is a study of Isaiah 40-55. The style is chatty, the drawings fun, but functionless. The level is between the popular and the academic. Hedges its bets on the authorship question. Several themes: God in History, Hope, Israel in the Purposes of God, Sin and Forgiveness, the Servant of the Lord, The Prophet's View of God, Worldwide vision. Suited for group discussion, where a chapter by chapter approach can be disastrous. My feeling? A competent book which I would consider for group study, but the serious student could go straight to the reading list at the back.

*Being a Christian Leader* More of the commonsense we have come to expect of Fred Bacon. Reading it would benefit anyone with responsibility in the life of a local church. Includes a useful extended training course adaptable to most churches, and good resources in appendices. Quibbles: the cover says the pictures are by Jane, the inside by June Gascoigne; and *Gentle Jesus meek and mild* is not a Victorian hymn, but a genuine Wesley. Personal reaction? I will use it and recommend it.

*Enjoying the Greek New Testament* is an introduction to Greek for those who may not wish to study, but would like to get a taste and feel for it. Places more confidence than I could on obtaining the meanings from roots of words; surely usage is the only reliable guide. Places more confidence than I could in finding theology in words; surely one has to look at concepts. But these are quibbles. The book is fun. Make sure you have the second edition, which has been corrected.

*Life Story – Life Style* is the best personal evangelism course I have seen. Friendly, uncritical evangelicalism, which will almost convince you to tell someone your own Christian story. Maximum common sense with a low cringe factor. Might not convert Jill Tweedie, but you never know. Plus imaginative church activities. Plus the outline group training course. My reaction? The check list shows that I am not gifted as an evangelist, so I shall have to settle for church-watering! (June is both inside and outside this time.)

*English Baptist History and Heritage* is a first rate book by one of our leading historians. Quibbles? June on the outside, Jane on the inside! Exercise boxes seem just silly in a book like this, and some of the illustrations would be better omitted. Such trivialities apart, it is a book to give to every Baptist deacon or elder, and to have in the church library. Thoroughly recommended.

## **Michael Humphreys**

**The Christian Healing Ministry** by Morris Maddocks (SPCK, 1990, 288pp, £8.95)

Interest in the healing ministry is producing numerous books on the subject. If

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you want a comprehensive, balanced, scholarly, yet down-to-earth approach, then this must be it. It first appeared in 1981, but is now thoroughly revised and updated.

Morris Maddocks is an Anglican adviser for the Ministry of Health and Healing to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. He and his wife Anne are founder-directors of the Acorn Healing Trust. The book comes from the head and the heart of a man who understands the problems that churches and individuals face. Coupled with this is a deep love for and commitment to God in Jesus Christ. Bishop Morris has written in a lively, readable way. The whole subject is dealt with systematically, starting with the basic questions on healing and wholeness and how it relates to the Kingdom of God.

There is plenty of biblical exposition, showing how Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom in his healing ministry. There is much sermon material here, each page packed with stimulating thought. From many angles God is shown working in the world scene. The section about the Church moving outward shows how the early Church accepted the commission of Jesus to proclaim the gospel by preaching *and healing*. They didn't make a fuss: just got on with it. We're challenged to discover for ourselves the obedience and expectation experienced by them. Individuals functioned only as members of a fellowship. They recognized that they were gifts to the Body of Christ. For 300 years the Church continued its proclamation of the risen Christ through preaching and healing. The section on Church history is good: we're led through the Church's decline in spirituality which resulted in the healing ministry being ignored. It is largely in this century that it has been revived. It makes for fascinating reading.

Medicine and spiritual healing walk hand in hand. Counselling is seen as a bridge between medicine and the Church. Every possible area and aspect are aired, including death and dying well.

The final section, "The Fulfilment of a Vision", has pointers for anyone who wants to discover the way ahead. Resources of all sorts are indicated: books, organisations, centres of healing. There are even prayers and orders of service. It is a superb book; I heartily recommend it.

**Barbara Heather**

**Mission To The World** ed by Paul Beasley-Murray (Baptist Historical Society, 1991, 68pp, n.p.)

It is surely fitting that this collection of essays in honour of George Beasley-Murray, should have "Mission to the World" as the central theme, for he has a deserved reputation as a gifted scholar committed to the proclamation of the Gospel; his half-century of ministry and his extensive writings bear witness to a heart for mission.

These essays are a worthy attempt at showing the scope and relevance of Christian mission in our own generation (particularly in the Decade of Evangelism). Here is a healthy corrective to the limited stereotypes of "mission" which frequently afflict the Church with a spiritual myopia!

"Mission to the World" begins with a resumé of George's life and work, which helpfully sets the scene – each of the essays has been written by men who studied with or under him at Spurgeon's College or in Louisville. The range of

ministries and the topics covered by the contributors reflect the positive influence that George has exercised within the Baptist fold.

The historical dimension of Baptist mission in Britain is the subject of Mike Nicholl's essay on the church planting activity and training of preachers by C.H. Spurgeon. Colin Marchant then seeks to bring these pioneering concepts thoroughly up-to-date in the context of modern urban mission.

Theological and scriptural issues are addressed, including the implications of Marcan mission perspectives (by Athol Gill); the challenge of liberation theology is sympathetically presented by Derek Winter in the light of missionary service in Latin America.

No modern theological debate can ignore Karl Barth, who helpfully distinguishes between "mission" and "evangelism", and whose later views on Church-State relationships and paedobaptism are so close to the Free Church and Baptist positions (John Colwell). Bruce Milne's reflection on John 20:21 shows the inherent involvement of God in mission as both the Sender and the "sent". The cost of mission is thus highlighted: "As the Father sent me, so I send you.."

Our doctrine of the Church and our ecumenical involvement affect our understanding and practice of "mission". The Free Church tradition has tended towards an active missiology; Nigel Wright, in a stimulating look at these issues, points out the potential value of a Baptist contribution and the loss that would occur if we gave up our distinctive heritage and our ecclesiology.

The collection is rounded off with Larry Kreitzer's thorough bibliography of the writings of George Beasley-Murray. This study is in itself some measure of the contribution of this Baptist scholar whose influence reaches far beyond denominational boundaries. All in all: a fine *festschrift* for a fine scholar.

### **Dick Starling**

**Good for the Poor** Christian Ethics and World Development by Michael Taylor (Mowbray, 1990, 128pp, £4.95)

In the preface to this book Michael Taylor speaks of the "confidence reborn in me as often as not by the poor themselves, that together with God we can make something good out of this sorrowful world". And this remains his central message. As part of the series **Ethics, Our Choices** the book sets out to examine the ethical basis for world development. But it is always at its most stimulating when it abandons the attempt to debate ethics and becomes a declaration of personal doubt and faith.

Although Christianity is not at heart an ethical code, and although Christians can claim no monopoly of knowing or doing the good, the author finds in Jesus of Nazareth a faith from which to draw his understanding of what is good. The unpossessiveness of Jesus, his redeeming intervention, his sacrificial generosity and his fellowship with the poor exemplify true humanity and point to divine reality.

In the following chapters the author sketches some of the ethical problems involved in Development. There is a discussion of those issues that are technical rather than moral in character; he considers the difficulty of unpredictable consequences flowing from our efforts to help; there is a brief but thoughtful section

on the relationship between aid and mission. At various places, particularly in the chapter concerning the empowering of the powerless, individual examples are movingly employed and the creative power of individual effort and sacrifice is affirmed.

The conclusion, that despite the problematic nature of most of what we do we are obliged to act for the poor, comes as no surprise. But here are no utopian dreams. Instead a brief survey of Christian eschatologies leads to a statement of the author's own very modest hopes for the future.

So what is his motivation? At last we come to the nub of the question. He acknowledges in himself an ethical drive, a moral imperative to help. But in the end the mainspring of his action proves to be evangelical. We must act because the Gospel declares a life of creative cooperation with a creative God. And in the mind of God all our efforts, successful or unsuccessful, form part of the glory which is coming.

As a survey of the ethics of Development this book is over-brief and unsystematic. It is worth reading for the rigorous honesty, the agnosticism and the daring vision of Michael Taylor's own faith.

## **Pat Took**

### **Books Also Received**

- Prayers for Pilgrims* ed Margaret Pawley (Triangle £3.50)
- Grown Men Do Cry* (Experiences in ministry) by Roy Catchpole (Triangle, £2.95)
- Silence in God* (prayer) by Andrew Norman (SPCK, £6.95)
- My Kind of Day* (life experiences) by Margaret Cundiff (Triangle, £2.95)
- O Love That Will Not Let Me Go* (George Matheson anthology) ed Ian Bradley (Fount £3.50)
- Night Thoughts* (meditations) by Martin Israel (SPCK, £5.95)
- A Guide to Acts* by John Hargreaves (SPCK, £7.50)
- George McDonald Anthology* ed. C.S. Lewis (Fount, £3.50)
- Grasping the Nettle* (facing pain) by Ursula Fleming (Fount, £2.99)
- Confession and Absolution* ed Martin Dudley and Geoffrey Rowell (SPCK, £9.95)
- Another Way of Looking* (today's culture) by John De Wit (Bible Society, £1.95)
- A Guide to Galatians* by David H. van Daalen (SPCK, £7.50)
- The Gospel and the Catholic Church* by Michael Ramsey (SPCK, £8.95)
- All My Road Before Me* (early C.S. Lewis) ed Walter Hooper (Harper Collins, £19.99)
- Praying With The English Mystics* ed Jenny Robertson (Triangle, £2.95)
- The House of Prayer* (prayer life) by Josef Pichler (Fount, £4.99)
- How Long, O Lord?* (suffering and evil) by D.A. Carson (IVP, £7.95)
- Seasons of the Spirit* (poetry/prose anthology) ed G. Every, R. Harries, K. Ware (Triangle, £3.25)
- The Eye of the Eagle* (meditation on "Be Thou My Vision") by David Adam (Triangle, £3.25)
- Something of a Saint* (famous Christian lives and prayers) ed David M Owen (Triangle, £2.95)
- The Music of Love* (meditations) by Judith Pinhey (Fount, £3.99)
- Francis: A Call to Conversion* (St Francis' life and message) by Duane Arnold and George Fry (Triangle £2.95)
- Welcoming the Light of Christ* (liturgical commentary: All Saints to Candlemas) by Michael Perham and Kenneth Stevenson (SPCK, £5.99)
- And They Shall Prophesy!* (Prophetic Movement) by Clifford and Monica Hill (Marshall Pickering, £3.50)

## **The C.R. Batten Lectures**

Since its Diamond Jubilee in 1966, The London Baptist Preachers' Association

has held an annual public lecture in honour of C.R. Batten who had been a distinguished member of the Association since 1936, its Book Fund Secretary for many years and its President in 1949. He died last year at the age of 95.

These lectures have been given by eminent preachers, scholars and church leaders of varied Christian traditions, and have included Lord Stuart Blanche, Dr. Raymond Brown, Lord Donald Coggan, Dr John Huxtable, Dr Rex Mason, Dr David Russell, Bishop David Sheppard, Dr Barrie White and Dr Howard Williams.

A selection of 10 copies of the lectures delivered between 1966 and 1986, which are in printed booklet form, are being offered at the bargain price of £2 post free from Mr Henry Lawrence, 114 Ash Grove, Palmers Green, London N13 5AP (tel: 081-886-6998). Cheques should be made payable to the LBPA.

## **Holiday Accomodation: Snowdonia, N. Wales**

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