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February, 1972

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## EDITORIAL

### FROM THE CHAIRMAN

It has been a tremendous privilege to be an officer of the B.M.F. for more than half my working ministry and to make friends of colleagues in the Lord's work here and overseas. I think of the wealth of trust and real Christian regard that exists for the ministry, from those to whom we minister and from brother ministers. It is an encouragement to look around and see the blessing of God and His work of grace in others, and we take heart because we are involved in it. What a variety we are! By many routes we have come to the Lord. He gives us different spiritual gifts to bear fruit in His service, and because we are different we are needed to support one another. I Corinthians 12 is well worth pondering whenever we think we have it all and know it all, or when we are down and feel that others are so much more gifted than we are. A sober reading of that chapter ought to lift us out of self depreciation and yet induce true humility.

These are days when there is need to make strong efforts to maintain fellowship. Many of our men spend part of their working hours in following opportunities for service apart from their immediate pastoral charge. There is a widening of what is understood to be Christian ministry. It is unfortunate if this means that they cannot fit in their local Fraternal and the larger more prolonged periods of fellowship at Association or Area Conferences etc. Each man has something to give to and to receive from his fellows, and together from our Lord. I would counsel my brethren to do their utmost to be good Fraternal men. Local Fraternal rise and fall in value as the members seek one another's good for Christ's sake. If a brother drifts and only comes infrequently, or not at all, see to it that you show a loving concern for him and let him know he is missed. Don't let differences of opinion and tradition keep you apart. I came across these wise words the other day.

"In order to be united it is necessary to love one another;  
In order to love one another it is necessary to know one another;  
In order to know one another it is necessary to meet one another."

C. S. HALL

## THE PASTOR AND MORAL QUESTIONS

At a recent Free Church Congress a speaker was reported as saying, 'I maintain that moral issues must always be clear cut. A moral choice is always our own and we always know which is right or wrong'. Should any reader agree with that speaker this article will not interest him. But I find it difficult to know how any Christian who had studied the Epistles and seen how the first Christians wrestled with ethical problems could so speak. It is almost inconceivable that anybody in the contemporary world can think that the moral questions which are now being discussed have obvious answers. My purpose is to consider the responsibility of a Christian pastor in the present situation.

Space need not be taken to illustrate the variety of moral belief and behaviour in our pluralistic society. However, it is perhaps worth stressing that we live at a time when moral concern is wide-spread and, I believe, increasing. Constant reference to the 'permissive society' should not blind us to this fact. 'Permissiveness' is a correct description of a wide-spread attitude to matters of personal, individual behaviour; it is not an accident that the word is most frequently used about sexual behaviour. There is a growing assumption that what individuals do is entirely their own concern provided that they do not injure others. (About that false assumption more is said below). But concerning social behaviour, that is, behaviour which clearly affects others, whether it be racial intolerance, war, developing nations, organ-transplants, eugenics or a hundred other matters, I doubt whether so many people, including young people, have ever felt more morally concerned. We have to ask whether sometimes this is less true of some members of our congregations than of many non-Christians and, if so, why this is the case.

One further fact about the present situation is significant for the pastor. Until recently many Christians were almost unaware of the moral convictions and actions of members of other denominations. One of the by-products of the ecumenical movement is that we are all getting to know each other. I have met many sincere, previously isolated Methodists and Baptists who have been shocked and bewildered to find that Christians, whose words and lives favourably impress them in many ways, think is quite right for a Christian to drink alcohol. Some of us may think this naive, but consider what it means to one type of Christian to discover that others 'believe in' the re-marriage of divorced persons. See how the recent controversy about the gifts to revolutionary African bodies made by the B.C.C. has spread across denominational barriers. The old divergence among Christians as to whether 'thou shalt not murder' does not include killing in a 'just war' and capital punishment (as the people of the Old Testament believed), or whether a Christian must condemn both, is not settled. Moreover, a host of ethical problems raised by new scientific and technological progress raise questions unknown to previous generations. It is in this kind of world that the pastor must help Christians to live.

There are three possible responses to this situation which I wish to reject.

1. We cannot say: 'These ethical questions are not my business'. In two different ways some Christians have said this. The first needs only to be mentioned to be dismissed. It is 'antinomianism', the belief that the saved man need not worry about sin or, indeed, that the more he sins the more grace will abound. The second way is more subtle. It is the belief that the 'saved' or 'converted' man immediately acquires moral wisdom and, thereafter, 'always knows what is right and wrong'. Conversion (whether 'sudden' or not) can indeed utterly transform a man's desires, goals and values. But the more truly he is converted the more conscious he becomes of his need to learn the way of goodness, to gain 'the mind of Christ'. This is a fact which I have learnt from some whose conversion has been most dramatic and far-reaching. Yet, in our thought and message about the new man in Christ, we must beware of implying that this involves, whether for the individual or for the Church, ethical infallibility.

2. A second false response to moral questions is the one which is usually described as **legalism**, the assumption that we have rules which are adequate to decide all moral questions. On that vast theme there is room to make only three comments. The contrast between the teaching and practice of Jesus on the one hand, and the Jewish pattern of legalistic, rule-dominated morality on the other, is clear and supremely significant. In point of fact there are no rules, whether we look to the Bible or to Christian tradition or to a generally accepted Christian conviction, which **directly** solve or even refer to many of the most pressing current moral problems. However valuable we believe the Ten Commandments to be, no Christian known to me treats them as absolute guides: I know nobody who in literal fact does 'no manner of work' on the Sabbath. And once we begin to interpret we break with legalism, unless we vainly try to multiply rules.

3. More controversially, I suggest that one very popular current response to moral questions is inadequate. I refer to the theory of 'situation ethics'. This (often referred to, rather foolishly, as 'the new morality') makes a very great appeal to many, especially to young Christians. It is best described in Joseph Fletcher's **Moral Responsibility** (1967). I am much indebted to an article by Professor Kenneth Grayston in **The Church Quarterly** for January 1971.

Fletcher summarises his argument under six heads. Only love is intrinsically good; love is the ultimate norm of Christian decisions; love and justice are the same; love wills the neighbour's good; only the end justifies the means; decisions ought to be made situationally not prescriptively. This means that in every moral situation we must make our decision without reference to any consideration but love. I wish that all my readers could read Grayston's brief study of the New Testament in relation to this theory, or the fuller critical article by John Macquarrie in **A Dictionary of Christian Ethics**. The appeal made by this account of moral decision is obvious; it

looks simple and in harmony with our Lord's own summary of the Law, and it is in vivid contrast to the wearisome demands of legalism, the harshness of much professedly Christian moral condemnation and absorption with matters of individual salvation to the neglect of caring love for others.

But is this not a falsely 'simple' account? Does the fact that 'love is the fulfilling of the law' mean that all other moral principles are negated? Is love the only virtue or, rather, is love the summing up of all virtues? If, as Grayston remarks, Fletcher is right in saying that love and justice are the same, then justice and the rules that promote and safeguard it have as much claim as has the commandment of love. And what about honesty, purity of heart, and other aspects of the moral life? I would agree that all moral rules must be subject to fresh examination in new situations, that the supreme necessity is to learn what love really means and how it works and that nothing can be **right** which contradicts the way of **agape**. But we ought not to take every moral decision as though we were painting on a blank canvas; we cannot cope with all the decisions that have to be made if we have no working rules to guide us. To quote Grayston once more: 'Love must be worked out in a set of rules . . . and codes must repeatedly be referred back, very often under the pressure of crisis, to the critical and reforming test of love'.

I conclude with more positive suggestions which are offered simply as possible guide-lines for further thought.

1. Christian morality involves following a Person rather than a set of rules and Christian understanding of the good life is based upon what we believe has been disclosed to us about God's purpose for human beings. In the technical language of ethical theory this means that all moral questions must be thought about teleologically, i.e. by looking at the goal. More simply, about all moral duties we must say what Jesus said about the sabbath . . . they are 'for man', for his true good. It is this 'good' which our preaching must expound.

2. All moral questions, whether individual or social, demand our attention to the facts of the case. The Secretary of the Social Responsibility Department of the B.C.C. (speaking at the Congress mentioned above) said:

The Church has no more right to be listened to than any other body in society unless its contribution derives from a thorough understanding of the situation in which it presumes to speak.

To that extent 'situation ethics' is on the target. In relation to us pastors I believe that this means, firstly, that we need very much more opportunity to learn from all who have expert knowledge of the particular situations in which specific moral issues arise. This means that, in his crowded life, the pastor needs to take time to meet with doctors, social workers, psychiatrists and others—whether they be Christians or not—who can help him to gather facts. Secondly, his responsibility is to help those who look to him for help to learn about the facts which raise moral questions for them in their own particular circumstances. A great amount of work is being

done to help us in this task. I do not know how it is with Baptists, but I do know that we Methodists are largely failing to arouse general interest in the reports produced by our own Christian Citizenship Department, the B.C.C. and other bodies; reports based upon the kind of co-operative to which I have referred. The result is that our members (not to mention ourselves) find themselves confronted by difficult moral decisions, unprepared either by clear understanding of the way of Christ or by the fruits of other Christians' study.

3. We need, as pastors, to help our people to think about both individual and social (corporate) moral questions. The distinction itself is suspect. I believe that we must resist the tendency in a 'permissive' society to treat some matters, notably sex, as though they concerned only the individuals involved (see above). We need to show that, as a matter of fact, the most private actions always affect other people. More importantly, we need to show that a Christian cannot assume that it is his duty to help a man who is starving, whilst remaining indifferent to the needs of a man who is morally sick. It seems to me that both Methodists and Baptists (though for slightly different reasons) have tended to serious concern about the more personal moral issues; we should not be ashamed of this. I can only ask whether it has been true among Baptists, as I believe it has been among Methodists, that we have done too little to help each other with the more social questions which now so clearly and seriously call for answers.

4. The points just made suggest an impossibly large programme for the already busy pastor. I suggest that we need to make a beginning by discovering (which can be done only by listening) what are the more immediate moral questions for the particular people whom we serve. There is a sense in which deep consideration of any important ethical issue helps us to learn how to make further decisions. I have been deeply impressed in recent years by the readiness of young people—even if their contact with the Church is minimal—to listen to points of view other than their own. Is this equally true of the older members of our congregations? Is it true of us ministers? Dare I say that sometimes when we meet together and ethical questions arise, tempers also rise, some of us become dogmatic and others silent and we readily run away from facts and questions to assertion and condemnation? Perhaps we ministers have to practise this open, honest, humble enquiry if we are to help others to learn how to discuss not only with their fellow Christians but also with other neighbours.

I am well aware that these remarks are somewhat general and perhaps a little vague. They are made because of my conviction that the contemporary situation demands much searching examination of what is the good life, and that our Christian faith makes the same demand upon us. It is profoundly true that the Gospel is about forgiveness and grace; but we need to know why we need to be forgiven and to learn for what kind of life grace is given. In language which is now ignored rather than outworn, we are called to holiness. It is

often said rightly that religion is more than morality; but it is not less than morality. Paul, as well as James, taught that faith without works is dead. The One who destroyed ethical legalism called his disciples to a righteousness that exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees. The liberty of the children of God includes responsibility for moral decision. Among the many aspects of the pastor's ministry is that of helping others to fulfil their own ministry in the world. All that I have tried to say here is that their ministry and our own includes a search for answers to questions about what is right and good. As someone has said, 'The most neglected of all duties is the duty of finding out what our duty is'.

FREDERIC GREEVES

## LEARNING TO LIVE AND TO LEAD

Men and women in positions of leadership in any human enterprise, including the church, have to work with others either individually or in groups. They quickly learn that they cannot ignore individual and group needs when making their decisions. Many otherwise well-conceived plans fail because they meet unexpected and apparently irrational resistance to change. Commonsense is not always a sufficient guide for dealing with such problems. We are all aware at times of the need to know more about inter-personal and inter-group relationships and the way they work.

The 'growing edge' of the study of human behaviour (*e.g.*, practical psychology) in the past twenty-five years has, significantly, been in the area of the understanding of **group** behaviour. A good deal of research has gone on, and much progress been made in identifying and defining the unconscious forces which operate inside human groups and the irrational drives which motivate them. As with the development of individual psychology, it has become apparent that what goes on on the surface of the life of a group can be fully understood only in the light of hidden and irrational forces.

A group of psychologists, particularly those associated with the Tavistock Institute, have led the way in these studies, using their knowledge to improve the training of men and women for management and leadership in industry. But if we accept that there is such a thing as unconscious motivation operating in a human group, then it is important not only for business management but also for the churches, since much of what we do is done together. It means that there are dimensions of human behaviour that traditional training, both within the church and in the fields of management, has failed to deal with. If we are involved in leadership in any field we need to be able to read the language of human behaviour and to comprehend its non-logical syntax.

Bruce Reed, the leader of the then Christian Teamwork organisation (now the Grubb Institute of Behavioural Study), was quick to see the importance to Christians of the work of the Tavistock Institute and involved himself and his colleagues in it at an early stage. Because of this, it has been possible to relate the findings of secular psychologists to the life and work of the churches and of their associated organisations. The result has been some exciting and extremely stimulating work, the benefits of which have been enjoyed by individual ministers who have taken part in courses where the subject is explored; it is now beginning to appear in print with the first publications of the Grubb Institute.

Very little has been written about this subject so far, because one of the basic convictions of those who are involved in it is that this is a field of learning where **experience** is essential. This kind of knowledge and the ability to apply it cannot be gained solely through lectures, seminars, and discussions, and certainly not through the reading of books or articles. 'Knowing about' a thing does not mean necessarily that we are able to use our knowledge. Knowledge of the kind that leads to real understanding and effective use has to be based on direct experience—a point of view not unfamiliar to advocates of Christianity.

It is, therefore, dangerous to attempt to write about the subject at all, because readers are tempted to think that having read an article or a book they are qualified to pass judgement upon it. This is particularly so in the case of ministers, whose theological training is a highly intellectual process, all the time encouraging the idea that truth is something which can be written down in black and white, and learned by students of literature. Whilst it is true that there is a rough and ready process of 'education by experience' in human behaviour going on in theological colleges through the day by day inter-personal contacts, this education is entirely haphazard, undefined, and inconsequential. The 'real' work is felt to be done in the lecture room and at the study desk. This explains why so many ministers find themselves in difficulties when they get to a pastorate and have to cope with real life.

My first direct encounter with group learning took place at a Conference at Cheltenham in 1964, and before writing this article I looked up the notes which I made at the time and which reflected my first reactions. They reveal a measure of bewilderment, a strong streak of resistance to the learning which was coming through the varying experiences, and a steady critique of the Freudian (using the term loosely) interpretations of behaviour which featured quite often in the professional comments that were being made. Nevertheless, it was impossible to resist the evident truth of a great deal that was being said, and after a year's assimilation of what were at first disturbing and threatening new ideas I returned for a second time the next year, and have become increasingly persuaded that this kind of work has a very great significance for Christians today.

Dangerous as it is to do so, I will attempt to describe first of all something of what happens in this learning process and then some of the leading ideas which are conveyed through it.

Although the pattern of Conferences changes as the organizers learn more from their own experience, there are basically three elements in such a Conference—the 'study group', the 'large group' and the 'inter-group exercise'. In each of these the method is to expose the 'hidden mechanisms' of the groups by removing the usual structures which are employed in human society. Thus, normally, when a group meets it has a chairman and an agenda or at any rate, a stated purpose and some kind of fixed point of reference. It has rules for procedure, someone to keep minutes, and so on. In the study group (or 'small group'), about ten people are involved, chosen from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. The task of the group is defined as 'to study its own behaviour in the "here and now".' Each member has an opportunity to observe his own behaviour and that of others, and to try out different ways of establishing relationships. Each group has the services of a Consultant whose task is to help the group to examine its own behaviour.

What this means in practice is that the ten people involved sit down in the room allotted, the Consultant arrives, and sits down, and then nothing happens. One of the more vocal members of the group will try to start something going by suggesting that people introduce themselves, stating their names and their background. When this is done (the Consultant does not usually take part), there is often a little more silence and then the embarrassed members of the group begin to ask what they are supposed to be doing, ignoring the definition of the task which has been provided in the prospectus to the Conference and also which has been given by the management in the opening session. Slowly the group tries to come to terms with the fact that the familiar structures are not there. There follow confusion, bewilderment, resentment at the Consultant; impotence, anger, mutual recrimination, the attempt to put the blame on one person ('the scapegoat'); protest, assertions that the whole thing is a 'waste of time', veiled attacks on one another, attempts to form sub-groups, bids for leadership, 'escape' into other situations, flights of fantasy about the management of the course, or about other groups—all these and other kinds of raw behaviour. The Consultant will not be manipulated by the group, and confines himself to making occasional observations about what he thinks is really happening in the group. The group gets angry with him, tries to 'kill him off' by ignoring him, or to pressure him into doing its work for it, and so on.

In group experience, surprising things are learned by individuals about themselves, for there is an inter-personal reaction at a level and of a quality not normally experienced because it is veiled by the traditional politeness and courtesies of structured living. Men and women see themselves in the mirror of the group's reactions to them in a way that can be

devastating. It is because of this that group experience of this kind has sometimes been labelled dangerous; but the fact is that we can become so hardened in our attitude and so impervious to criticism that only something of this kind will get through the crust of our defences.

The second type of activity in such a Conference is the 'large group'. In this the total Conference membership—perhaps 40 to 50 people, with two or more of the Consultants—meet together; again the object is to study the behaviour of such a group when there are more people than can easily form a face-to-face group. Again there is no formal structure or any direct leadership, and the Consultants simply intervene to comment from time to time on what they think is going on. This 'large group' exercise is particularly relevant to the life of the churches, since much of what goes on there is done in groups of this size. One quickly becomes aware of the latent power of the group, particularly of its destructive power, and its attempts to cope with this by splitting so that there is a group and an anti-group. Factions are formed for apparently quite irrational reasons and individuals are sometimes treated harshly, although it may all be done with a smile, under a mask of civilized tolerance. In other words, the removal of normal structures reveals something of the 'wolf pack' effect which is unconsciously at work, even though we are persuaded that the company is made up of highly civilized, self-controlled beings.

The third kind of experience, the 'inter-group exercise' very often provides the most surprising and disturbing experience of all. In this case the Conference is encouraged to form groups of about a dozen or fifteen, in different rooms, making its own groups as it does so. The task of the groups once they are formed is to relate to each other, but once again there is no formal structure laid down. Each group has to begin by working out some kind of internal machinery by which it can relate to others, for it is quickly obvious that whatever else anarchy may be able to do, it is quite impotent in matters of diplomacy. The separate groups quickly begin to build up their fantasies about the other groups, and the most surprising things begin to happen. At times one wonders how civilized and in many cases skilled professional men can be reduced to such levels of frustration, impotence, and folly. But what one is seeing exposed to full view reflects the invisible forces which so often control inter-group relationships. The relevance of this to matters such as, for example, Church unity needs no underlying.

A Course of this kind usually includes a series of application groups in which the membership of each group is made up of those who have similar interest and backgrounds, so that they may then consider how they can apply the learning of the Conference to their own 'back-home' situations. There is also a series of lectures which are given during the course of the Conference which help to illuminate what is going on by providing a theoretical basis for the practical experience.

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In the area of small group behaviour, the pioneer work was done by W. R. Bion, whose seminal book, **Experiences in Groups** defines three basic behaviour patterns. These are normally termed 'basic assumptions'. There are (a) the basic assumption of dependency, in which the group is dominated by the will to depend on its leaders or on somebody else, and which comes nearest to being the norm of church life. A second group pattern is that of 'pairing'; this is obviously directly related to sexual feelings, and very often consists of a group being content to leave two of its members, usually a man and a woman, to do all the work, apparently in the hope that they will 'bring to birth' the idea or whatever is needed for the group's salvation. A third basic assumption is described as 'Fight-flight'; here the group seems to work on the principle that it has either to run away from an enemy, or to attack him, and very often it oscillates between these two. The snag with the fight-flight behaviour pattern is that the group usually makes no attempt to find out the reality of what is going on, but run around blindly either fleeing from or chasing after the 'fantasy' enemy that it has decided it is threatened by. Here again the implications for the understanding of the Church are too obvious for words.

The Christian Teamwork/Grubb Institute staff have worked hard and long at relating the meaning of this kind of experience to the theological definitions of the Christian faith. In particular, they have worked out the biblical basis, especially the importance of the doctrine of God as Creator and as King and Judge; and of man as His dependent creature. Thus, for example, in a paper dealing with personality and community which was given at one of their courses, the point is made that the individual is incomplete and needs other people if he is to be a person at all. Our personality is a blend of our biological inheritance and of the experiences of other people which we have had. Man is socially incomplete—as God indicates, 'it is not good for man to be alone'. He is physically incomplete, needing food and a place to live. He is also incomplete in that he needs fellowship with God—spiritually incomplete because he needs to make a relationship with his Creator. This incompleteness is part of God's design, intended to lead man to reach out beyond himself continuously for that which he lacks. The effect of sin is that man seeks completeness in the wrong way, distorting this basic creative urge. He satisfies his own need at the expense of others. He denies his spiritual incompleteness and 'worships the creature rather than the Creator' (Rom. 1.25). Man's incompleteness is in this sense more fundamental than his sin.

In the Bible the isolated individual is regarded as hardly a person at all, in contrast to a contemporary individualism. The fact of sin creates problems for man, because it interferes with the possibility of his inter-dependence and life in community. The covenant arrangement means that a number of people enter into certain rights and obligations towards one another which are often expressed in the same way that God made His covenant with Israel and gave the Commandments

as a sign of His love. In this way community, biblically speaking, is not a collection of individuals, but rather a 'corporate personality', Israel, for example, is referred to as a 'son' (Hosea 1.10), as a servant (Isaiah 49.3) or as a bride (Jer. 2.2). The leader or King embodies the whole tribal nation, and followers tend to idealize their leaders, projecting their good parts on to them. Similarly the Leviticus scapegoat was an object on which every one could project their sins. This solidarity with one another is seen most clearly in Rom. 5, with the discussion there of the first and the second Adam.

Although many psychologists who are involved in the study of group behaviour do not see it in Christian terms, and some would understand religion, as Freud did, as the end-product of the tensions and conflicts within the primitive tribe, the Christian Teamwork/Grubb Institute studies show that it can equally well be interpreted in terms of the Christian revelation. We see in the behaviour of groups a confirmation of what we understand man to be; we may also learn a good deal about the relationships between God and man as we study leadership in this kind of context.

Because of the importance of learning by experience, those involved have been reluctant to put down their thoughts in writing until recently, but they have now reached the point where they begin to feel able to do this. Two recent new publications by the Grubb Institute would be a very helpful introduction to this kind of understanding. They are **Theology and Group Study—Points of Contact**, by Barry Palmer, and **Going to Church** by Bruce Reed. They can be obtained price 30p and 35p respectively from the Grubb Institute, 1 Whitehall Place, London S.W.1.

To those who have not been involved in group behaviour learning of the kind described, a good deal that is written in these two books will at first seem to be either strange or indigestible. But there is more to them than might appear at first sight, and they will repay the careful study that they deserve for they are the distillation of a very great deal of experience, study, and discussion.

A. MORGAN DERHAM

## NEW CAUSE WORK—A QUICK COMMENT\*

1. All pioneer work has to be highly selective. Needs are innumerable and cries of help endless. To know when and where to pass on people with needs is one thing. To know which of the remainder to select is another. To attempt to do everything is to end by doing nothing effective. We need a continuous examination of ourselves and our work to ensure that we are not missing the real targets by aiming at too many.

2. Some of the principles of our work here at Chelmsley Wood have been:

a) to select work not so much by the priority of needs as by the gifts of the members God has given to us.

\* Originally part of the article by Lewis Misselbrook in our October issue, this section had to be omitted for shortage of space and so we are glad to publish it now.



b) to give priority to adult work over children's work so that children have a strong worshipping and obedient Christian fellowship to grow into. An emphasis is always put on the whole family sharing the experience of worship together.

c) to do nothing for the community which we can encourage or help the community to do for themselves, thus helping to build community responsibility.

d) to give a clear and central place to mission. Our service to others is genuine service and in no sense "bait" but at the same time we serve as Christians and are always willing to speak a word for Jesus.

e) neither to seek nor to reject traditional ways and methods, but to seek at every point the meanings and purposes of God in every situation and to give ourselves to them as clearly and as efficiently as we are able. At the same time we guard against pioneering a new set-up and settling down comfortably into that. All forms and expressions of church life exist solely for Christ and the Gospel and must always be open to every movement of the Spirit. They must therefore be flexible.

3. Our aim throughout has been evangelical. Our role is the prophetic one of seeing men and their needs not as they see them themselves but as they are in the light of the Gospel. The Christian Body is to be a creative and renewing force in every part of life but it is not simply a body for social work. I do not, of course, imply any denigration of social work. The works of love must ever flow out from the church if it is to be known as a church of Christ. But we have our distinctive tasks that no one else can perform. We have a worship to offer to the living Lord. We have the task and privilege of prayer for ourselves and for the estate of which we are part. We are commissioned to pass on a message, the Good News of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. These things are central to our work.

4. Just as we need to be selective and concentrate, so does the whole Denomination. We need to think out in fellowship the strategic areas for Baptist new causes and for ecumenical experiments on a national scale and concentrate our resources on a small number of selected places. Our present method of allowing churches to sponsor new causes whenever and wherever it seems right in their own eyes is bad stewardship of God's resources and comes pretty well under Paul's judgement of "not discerning the Body". I am not here attacking our Independency but I am attacking the twisted form of it that makes us independent of each other and sometimes almost independent of God!

The Baptist Union ought to consider carefully the possibility of calling and sending teams to selected areas. The teams should consist of two ordained men and half a dozen lay folk (excuse the language!) who have been given training together and who have found that they can work together with a common vision and approach. Out of the fellowship and commitment of such a group, creatively open to the Holy Spirit, a People of God will grow.

LEWIS MISSELBROOK

## NEW TOWNS: URBAN LIVING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The concern for inner city residential areas, new estates and new towns that is evident today is a healthy one. It is proof that the church is not pre-occupied with survival or with just keeping up numbers. The burden of the report recently published by the Evangelical Alliance on New Towns\* is that concern is not enough when it comes to dealing with the changing distribution of the population of our country. They have looked at the new towns because it was felt that although no single item in the new towns is unique there is a unique mixture of factors present, and the measure of the problems are such that the new towns needed separate appraisal.

Many of the factors unearthed by this report are important to the other areas mentioned above. It is not without significance that the correspondence 'Christians in Industrial Areas' has included articles on new town work, commissioned by the study group of the Evangelical Alliance. One is by Graham Thomson of Crawley and another by Cyril Rusbridge recently of Basildon. It is for this reason that the report should be read by a wider group than our people in new towns.

There is a danger that once we have met one new town we assume that they are all the same. Even if we look at the London ring of new towns we will find very wide differences. Perhaps there are similarities in Crawley and Hemel Hempstead, but Basildon and Harlow are again very different. Different policies exist on owner-occupier housing. Different employment patterns are found in the towns and different policies on transport, education and so on. To look at the latest towns that are only partly built, and perhaps are still being negotiated is to find a different situation again. Thamesmead is a 'total planning' town, being built by the G.L.C. with some private co-operation; Milton Keynes is much more open in its planning and is incorporating ideas for flexibility that Thamesmead could never have. Despite all these factors, which do effect the life of the people living in them, and therefore the work of the churches in them, there are some things that can be said by way of generalisations. I want to look at three such general statements and ask a few questions. None of these statements or questions are new, but it is my contention that the church has largely ducked the significance of these points, and it is in our new towns that the price is seen to be paid.

**New towns bring together a totally uprooted group of people with problems of beginning again and finding a way of life in a new setting.** It must be recognised that in this they differ from the inner city areas because much remains constant whilst many things change in that setting. Also in the new estates built on the edge of towns the idea is that the estates are dormitories (usually) for the larger town. In new towns you have a situation in which almost everybody is uprooted and is having to cope with all the changes that cut across every

aspect of their lives. People are not new people, although the town might be new. They have come from somewhere, and their sense of commitment to that place from which they come often makes it difficult to settle into the new situation. The commitment might just be memories and feelings, but sometimes it is an elderly father or mother, and other times it can be a way of life which although not fitting into the pattern of 'acceptable living accommodation' was a very comforting and supportive one. The kind of isolation that can come about when people who have lived very close to all their friends and family find themselves miles away from their home town and living in a cleaner and greener environment mixed in with thousands of others suffering the same stresses is very great indeed. The situation for the housewife is different. She has been used to one set of shops, knows where the clinic is, and can pop in on the way back from the school. She has friends she has always been used to, and apart from the borrowing of cups of flour, or whatever, they have been a good standby when childhood illnesses strike or visits to hospitals have to be made. It takes most people a great deal of time to fit into new surroundings and cope with the changes. Even when it is recognised that everyone is in the same predicament it does not help very much, because someone has to make the first move. For the housewife too the cost of living has gone up with her move to the new town. This is partly because the shops have greater overheads and partly because the standard of accommodation the family now enjoys makes greater demands on the pay packet. Most people move to new towns to find accommodation. If you have never had your own front door before, the chances are that you heated your one or two rooms with an oil-heater. Smelly, and dangerous it may have been, but it was cheap. Now you have an immersion heater for your water and it has been known for development corporations to fit under-floor electric heating elements. The cost of such heating is very great. On top of this you have a much higher rent to pay, and although you have substantially more for it, the cost still has to be borne.

If you are a child moving to a new town you have to go to a new school. Perhaps it will have a uniform which everyone is expected to wear, and this could be the first time you have to submit to such a rule. Your old friends from the street are not at your new school and the club in the church basement is not at the end of the block. The teachers are all different, and although each school has its bouncing extrovert teacher and its cuttingly sarcastic senior teacher you have to learn their new ways. The school is likely to be better equipped and the playing field facilities very good indeed when compared with where you have come from. Even so you have to cope with the new house, the new school, getting into a new circle of friends, travelling a much longer way to school, and a host of other new things. As a child you probably get on better than your parents in building a new structure to your life, but it has to be done. Dad has to face new things as well. He has a garden to tame, and jobs around the house, as well



## **Notes and News :**

Last October we published a biography of

**DONALD SOPER**

by *Douglas Thompson*;

this is a fully bound hardback of 224 pages and is price £2.50. Lord Soper has been described as "one of the most dynamic Christian advocates of our time".

In December we published

**SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES**

for the 8-13s.

by *Diana J. Prickett*

—this is a fully bound hardback of 160 pages and is price £1.75. The author is a day school teacher who is concerned that the School Assembly should be seen, not as an isolated event, but either as the culmination of classroom work or as the initiator of it. Religious Education—Diana Prickett says—should be seen as an integral part of the school day, linking individual activity with the whole school activity. This book provides Assembly material under five main *Themes*, which are broken into *Sections*, each of which is, in turn, divided into *Topics*. Ministers may care to bring this to the notice of Schools with which they are in contact.

NCEC publications can be obtained through a local Bookseller or direct from 'Robert Denholm House'. Mail orders should include 10% for post/packing.

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as trying to understand some of the new moods of his wife and family. He finds that his money doesn't go as far, and although probably working conditions are better and the job is much the same, he hasn't got the usual crowd at the local pub. He may have been used to meeting some of his pals after work, but they could be a long distance away over the other side of the town, and transport is expensive. All of this is to do no more than list the kind of areas that people find difficult to cope with. If you have lived in the same house for a long time you appreciate the stability of life. In a new town this is not the lot of one family, but of hundreds and even thousands, and of this number within one area in a short space of time. The uncertainty is real, and the sense of being abandoned is very great.

From the point of view of the church this is not all loss. If people have been adventurous enough to move home and to attempt to change their style of life by moving to a new town, then they are likely to be open to change on other levels as well, and that can mean they are open to the gospel. If they are in a state of transition in terms of work, residence, education, leisure and life style then they are in a state of transition in their values and can look more happily and easily at the gospel we present. This is not to assume that evangelistic campaigns and meetings are going to confront them adequately with what we have to say and the power of the living God. It is to make the statement that we can expect them to be ready to hear and to act upon what they hear. Here comes in the perpetual problem of strategy. Many ideas have been tried, but the one general rule that seems to apply is that whatever the church says at this crucial point in the life of any family must be seen to tie in directly with their new aims and aspirations. It cannot be that religion can be tacked on to authenticate the changes, but that it must be woven into all the aspects of the new life they have taken on.

#### **New Towns are, by their nature, unbalanced communities.**

It is possible to look up the statistics about new towns and to get a fairly accurate picture of the nature of the towns, so long as enough pieces of information are knitted together. Some factors are usually agreed upon however. New towns have a preponderance of younger couples with families, many of whom are in their own home for the first time. If you say that you are also saying that few older folk live in the towns, and the number of pensioners is very low. Any society with that kind of emphasis is going to have problems, just as a mother with four children under the age of five finds that life is rather different from her neighbour who has four children spaced over twelve years. Apart from the stresses upon the clinics, schools, etc. it means that you have a large number of people all experiencing the same stresses at the same time. This means that support for those stresses is not present. The older age range is not available to provide some relief for a while, it is not there for advice, even if the advice would be ignored. Things which are shared with other young mums are

often seen as bids being made in competition. The possibility of young people becoming the pre-occupation of the town is also very real. The 'youth problem' can be seen in many ways, from boredom and vandalism to ganging in crowds in public places and in youth clubs. Often the leisure activities are swamped, and the level offered deteriorates even further.

It is interesting that new towns also are unbalanced in their class structure. The figures show a high proportion of professional people, but this is partly because of the specialised services for the young, and partly a cover to the fact that many professionals in new towns are not committed to living in the new towns themselves. It is seen as a stage in their career, and when opportunity offers in two or three years time they will be on their way. If some are more stable it is likely that they will move out of the new town to some house in a village nearby, and drive in to the town for work each day. Either way the number of professional people who participate in the life of the town in a significant way is likely to be small. It means that the majority of people in new towns would be classified as coming from the skilled and semi-skilled manual worker group. It is to be noted that it is not in this group that the Christian church has made its most important contribution. It may be said that this group provides a small number of faithful people in many of our churches, but it is not from the group that the impetus and leadership of our churches come.

The new towns are also unbalanced in that they are success orientated. People come in with a need to succeed above the level of survival. A great deal is done to make provision for the people in the town. There is a sense of moving forward, and this becomes part of the ethos of the town. When people moan it is easy for them to project failure on to the new environment. The Development Corporation becomes the scapegoat of many individual and collective failures. It is possible to expect everything because so much is provided. In such an environment the Christian Church has to come, and take roots and work out its pattern of worship and witness. Again it is not all negative. If our traditional leaders are missing then it is open to look for other leaders and other styles of leadership. If the community is balanced in one age group then perhaps we can look at helpful ways of meeting the needs of that group, and even provide some balance in the other direction by way of stability, security, and advice. If many are moaning and critical then the real issues can be looked at by the church and positive action taken towards justice in this new kind of society that is emerging.

**New Towns tend to be marginal to the active life of the Churches.** If you pick up a stone on some lonely hillside miles from anywhere you can be sure that some Anglican parish priest is responsible for the spiritual welfare of it. Every inch of our country is divided up into parishes for the Church of England to oversee. However this does not mean that the Anglican church has been prepared and equipped for the

growth of new towns. They have tried many very interesting and imaginative experiments, and have been courageous in their plans and work. However it is clear that not all Anglicans would share the evangelical concern that the E.A. had when it set up its study group, and it is also clear that many evangelical Anglicans are as aware of the problems as other churches.

Methodist churches have been already in existence in every new town that has been planned. It is worth noting that in some cases the coming of the new town has meant that Methodist churches have been closed down in a rationalisation of buildings and pastors. For the most part Baptist churches have either been started from scratch or have been developed from tiny country churches, overwhelmed by the new urbanisation that has engulfed them. It has meant that something has been present in plant, traditions and structure that has been built upon. All of this is important to note. When churches have 'gone in' to new towns they have frequently gone in with many assumptions carried over from the previous areas of success, that is the more suburban churches. The pattern that has been used has frequently been a suburban pattern of church architecture and church life. Happily Baptist churches have tended not to have the money to build large status buildings in the public squares of the new towns and have been able to work up more useful and adaptable sets of buildings to meet the developing needs of the growing town. It is also important to notice that the ministers who have gone into the new towns from our Baptist churches have tended to be younger men, usually with young families themselves, and working with minimal financial support and very little spiritual support from an eldership or diaconate. It has been a young church in a young town in very many ways. As the towns tend to be some distance from each other the kind of sharing that is important has been minimal also, and it is here that a group like the New Towns Ministers Association has been very helpful.

If you add all this together you have a picture of a struggling church with little support, little experience, and very heavy demands. It is one of the amazing stories of the present day faithfulness of God that so much has been accomplished. However it is not to be seen as a reason for exonerating the wider church from its responsibility towards the churches and ministers in these new areas.

The kind of question that I would like to pose in conclusion relate to the way in which our population is going to be housed in the future and the role of the church in these areas. As city centres are cleared and the infilling of housing estates goes on we can see a need for many new plans for total re-organisation of living. Some years ago people put forward the idea that we are all becoming middle class now, and yet there is evidence that this is not so. However many times it is denied by influential people it is still true that the churches have no grasp upon the typically manual worker who inhabits our inner cities and new towns. In view of this the churches

need to look at how this affects the way in which churches are begun and sustained in these areas. My problem relates to the overall strategy that is needed for such areas. We recognise that the mission field no longer starts at the coast of Africa, but are we willing to have a long term commitment to evangelism in new areas in our own country on a par with the commitment we have to Congo and Pakistan. How is it that grants can be curtailed for work after a period of a decade when that work is in Basildon or Peterlee, when we have given for 150 years or more to India? I am not sure of the answers to all these questions but I hope that the report published by the Evangelical Alliance will stimulate a useful and profitable discussion.

ROY DOREY

*\*Evangelical Strategy in New Towns*, report of the Evangelical Alliance New Towns Study Group, published by Scripture Union, 126pp. Price 60p.

## CHURCHES IN DECLINE

This article was originally given as a Fraternal 'paper' in respect to village churches. Whilst dealing mainly with such churches, many of the remarks have a more general application. It is recognised that it is not only village churches which find themselves diminished today. The way to help such churches, that is churches in decline in general, is probably the same in the majority of cases. It is important to be aware of at least some of the problems confronting such fellowships. We will therefore first consider some of the difficulties. Then we shall see what can be done to help.

### Some Common Problems

#### 1. The Community

There are many things which have caused churches to decline. One important factor is the drift of population. Villages were the first to suffer from this. As farming became more mechanised less labour was required. People were forced to move into towns and cities to obtain work. Churches which had had congregations of a hundred dwindled to having congregations of a dozen people. The village chapel, once endowed with plenty of able men and women, struggled to find those able to minister God's Word and teach in the Sunday School.

Now, after years of decline, many villages are beginning to grow again. People with their own cars are easily able to live in the country and travel into town to their place of employment. More and more people are buying cottages to visit for week-ends. Hence village evangelism will grow in importance and the temptation to let village causes fade out of existence ought to be avoided.

When the drift of population began, town churches benefited. Of course there were many families who, once they had moved, ceased to attend a place of worship at all. But many did settle in our town chapels. We are also however confronted with movements of population in towns. Folk are moved en masse from one area to a housing estate in another vicinity. Movements in connection with a person's work are becoming more numerous. Our work must be programmed to take these things into consideration.

Another factor which is all too common today is the problem of the closed community. For instance, in a village everyone knows everyone else. This ought to make it easier to evangelise. After all, no point of contact has to be made—it is already there. But usually the reverse is true. You see, no one's business is private. Let something be done by a chapel person which gives the slightest impression of being shady and it will stay in the mind for years. It is the chapel which is blamed and people will not associate themselves with it. Then there are quarrels which often fester from one generation to another, and other similar occurrences. Sometimes attempts are made by members of such a community to evangelise, but more often than not they meet with misunderstanding. For example, one lady sent letters to everyone in the parish. She wrote to the effect that chapel folk were not superior. "We are all learners with a capital L," she wrote. This attempt to improve relationships raised great indignation, because those who received the letters thought that the said lady was canvassing on behalf of the Liberal Party, a late member of her family having been a staunch Liberal.

The problem of the closed community is also confronting us in town churches. Due to movements of population and other factors, churches have grown in upon themselves. They have become closed units. Visitors are not made welcome. Rather than stay and be frozen out, they leave to seek fellowship elsewhere. Nothing much can be done in such churches until this problem is solved.

However there are, as mentioned previously, factors which are both encouraging and challenging. More people are moving into the country. Farms are changing hands more rapidly. Thus a new community is forming, providing a new harvest field. This, at least to some extent, should help to combat existing problems.

## 2. The Churches

It can be argued justifiably that in many groups of churches there are too many church buildings. If the folk concerned would be willing to meet in a central building, they would certainly be able to afford a full-time Pastor. Often the work in a district is hampered because resources are dispersed for the upkeep of several buildings. Admittedly this is a very difficult problem. When families have worshipped in a building for generations, there is a great attachment to it, understandably so. If resources were pooled and the work

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When Duty whispered softly "Breathe!"  
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Hygiene – G. K. Chesterton.

There was a time in my youth when it was possible at old bookstalls to pick up for pence (the old sort) books and pamphlets from which to whet one's appetite for more books and pamphlets from which to . . .

There seemed no limits to the horizons in reading opening up to a teenager – yet one felt all too keenly perhaps, the inhibitions of unplanned reading. One tended to peck here and there in the farmyard without the opportunity of leaping over the inhibiting fence into the big country. Those were the days before the Butler Act of 1944 which opened up the way to the wider fields of university life.

On one old bookstall by Charing Cross Station in London, I found a copy of a few of G. K. Chesterton's poems including "The Nativity", "The Secret People", "Hygiene", "The Earth's Vigil" and so on.

My copy is alas now dog-eared but I keep it by me as an old glove shaped to a nostalgic mood.

Chesterton had a keen sense of wit and I always read this poetic satire on the obvious with enjoyment.

I think the deacons of the churches of many of you will feel the Government is stating the obvious in the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act of 1969 which is effective as from 1st January 1972. Deacons who have Baptist Insurance Employers' Liability cover will have already complied with the Act subject to their exhibiting a certificate of insurance which at the appropriate time we shall issue to them.

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Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN  
General Manager

centralised, then a declining church would become a strong one. Transport is plentiful and makes centralisation a sensible proposition. Limited resources would then be adequate. The Lord called upon His disciples to believe 'for the work's sake'. This problem should be viewed in the same light.

Sunday School work is also quite a problem in most village churches. This is due to a shortage of teachers and an enormous variation in age-range amongst the children concerned. Sometimes there may be one teacher to deal with ten children from four to fourteen years of age. Centralisation would go a long way towards solving such difficulties. Where this is impossible, bringing the older children into the chapel service should be seriously considered. In cases where there are few children the teacher should find that the opportunity of teaching on a more personal basis is an encouragement to him.

### 3. The Ministry

Probably the most frustrating problem which arises in ministering to village churches is that of administration. In a number of instances the minister has to act as secretary and treasurer, in addition to being responsible for a group preaching plan. So much time is consumed in administration that the Pastor feels as if his whole life is spent in merely keeping an organisation in existence. When a minister is situated in a district composed to a large extent of groups of village churches, he has also to contend with administrative duties in the form of various committees, which he is called upon to attend. This may often necessitate round journeys of a hundred to a hundred and fifty miles, just to serve on one committee. Time for formulating short and long-term programmes and for organising evangelism just cannot be found. Strong and healthy churches cannot possibly be promoted in a situation like this.

There are also a number of problems connected with visitation. With the advent of hospital centralisation people can be sent forty or more miles away for treatment. In North Devon for instance, patients are sometimes sent as far away as Plymouth. Again, life is much slower in the country. A Pastor cannot call in just for half-an-hour. Country folk take that amount of time just getting around to mentioning their problems. It should be questioned whether the Scottish system of visiting everyone 'willy-nilly' is really workable where there are groups of churches. A more practical system would be for the Pastor to make himself available for consultation, and then only visit where he is most needed. Time could then be devoted to outreach visitation, which normally gets neglected altogether.

In a group of churches the demands upon a Pastor are so diverse that a very adaptable person is called for. One church may have a sizeable congregation to which the Pastor may preach with zest. Another church may have a small fellowship where a more conversational style of speaking is demanded. It is also difficult to give systematic teaching, for

a man may be in some of his pulpits only once a fortnight, or sometimes less frequently. The result is that people may often grow up in a church without ever really grasping the great doctrines of the Faith. A village Pastor must learn to be as happy in the market-place and shippon as he is in the home. He must attempt to keep abreast of farming methods, because with a large section of his membership it will be the predominant interest. Many of these things should be pointed out before a man undertakes a rural or group ministry. Perhaps in College students could be informed as to the demands which different spheres will make upon them.

It is not intended here to belittle probationers, but smaller churches often suffer from a successive ministry of probationers. To some extent this is inevitable, but many small churches would benefit from a more mature ministry. The tendency generally is for probationers to stay for a short time, whereas longer ministries are needed to build up a depleted church. In the country, where it takes longer to become accepted, a man's best work cannot be done until after a three to five year period.

We have stated some of the more pressing problems. How can we help these churches?

#### What can we do?

There are certain things which could be implemented immediately. The trouble with analysing a problem is that often it appears to be so enormous that we are un-nerved and hesitate to tackle it. But major surgery is not required in every case of illness. Things which can be done to alleviate the situation should not be shelved because it is considered that the complete task is too great.

The principal method which was used to establish many country churches could be utilised for their re-establishment today. Men were sent out from established churches to districts where there were no churches at all. People were 'gathered' to their ministry and a church was formed. Now that these churches are in difficulties the same method could be re-introduced. The resources for this work are to hand. Most districts have a strong force of local preachers. The need is that they be used in a more concentrated way. The present system of wandering from church to church is not really helpful in the immediate situation. A concentrated work is needed. How can we go about it?

1. Churches of like mind should be called together to consider the matter.
2. Local preachers willing to take responsibility for particular fellowships should be appointed to the work by such a gathering of churches. Where one local preacher cannot take full responsibility a team may be formed.
3. If possible local preachers from one church should work together. The minister may give oversight and help in the work.
4. The work should have short and long-term policies and systematic teaching should be organised.

5. Mutual agreements would have to be arrived at by the churches. For instance, not every church would be catered for initially. The best method would be to endeavour to get the strongest on their feet first. Then they would be able to help the others and resources would be multiplied.

6. Ministers should endeavour to share in the work as much as is possible.

7. If churches could not get together in this way, then larger churches could organise their own local preachers to do a concentrated work, adopting churches for this purpose.

The advantages of this method are numerous. Churches are brought into co-operation with one another. Small churches are not left isolated. Everyone feels that they are working with a purpose. A sense of togetherness is promoted. Local preachers see fruits for their labours, which under the present system is rarely the case.

There are many other things which could be done too, being implemented with the minimum of cost and organisation. Students, especially when home on vacation, could be used in a variety of ways. As groups they could engage in visitation in village districts, in contacting young people and in taking responsibility in youth clubs; they could help with Sunday School work also. Many small churches would welcome the help not only of students but of other young people too.

Centres for Bible Study Rallies could also be organised on a monthly basis. In country districts these are often highly successful. The ladies of Women's Meetings could arrange to visit other churches and have united meetings. This practice could be the means of mission work too.

The problem which confronts us must be tackled now. If it is left much longer it will be too late to resuscitate many dying churches. The need is to concentrate the resources. Concentrated work alone will rebuild weak churches. Decimated churches require concentrated and consecrated attention.

PETER TURPIN

## REACHING ASIAN IMMIGRANTS

The title of this article was suggested to me rather than my own choice, but I have left it because it provides a useful starting-point for a preliminary question. Many men are concerned that in their areas groups of Asian immigrants have been settling, and they feel that something should be done about them by the Church. There are obvious problems of language, culture and ways of life which mark off the immigrants, apart from the most obvious difference of colour, and the immediate reaction of a live church when faced with a problem is to say "How can we get over it? How can we

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break through?" The basic function of the Church is communication, and like Everest to the mountaineer, a problem of communication provides a challenge. The comparison, however, is imperfect. It is sufficient for a mountaineer to say he climbs Everest because it is there; it is not sufficient for a church to tackle a problem simply because it is a problem, and often it seems there is not enough thought about the purpose of the break-through, and what follows it. Why do we wish to communicate, and what do we wish to communicate?

Of course, we want to communicate the Gospel, but why do we want to communicate it, and what do we want to communicate? Do we want to fill our pews with Asians, neatly dressed in collar and tie, singing from the Baptist Hymn Book and respectfully listening to our weekly words of wisdom or exhortation? Many of us have not been notably successful in getting our own kinsmen to fill those pews. Most of us are concerned that our own people find such little relevance in the Gospel, and we probably have a feeling that it will be no easier with the strangers in our midst. We may feel a little hopeful when we remember some of the stories of our missionaries, forgetting what every deputation missionary realises very vividly, that a twenty-minute address picks out a few highlights from five years of hard and often frustrating work. Should I be ashamed to confess that in 28 years of service in India I am not conscious of having converted a single Indian personally, though I believe I have helped in bringing many thousands to Christ? Of course, we know that a missionary no longer stands under a palm-tree, wearing a sola topi and carrying a Bible in his hands, but what does that mean for us?

It certainly does not mean that the purpose is changed. We still believe that there is no other Name given under heaven by which men can be saved. We still believe that He calls all men, and that it is our duty and privilege to present that call. It does mean that we must think carefully about the content of the presentation, and its method. Whether our Asian neighbours are Hindu or Muslim their immediate reaction to a "traditional" presentation of the Gospel is likely to be rejection. The Hindu is proud of his ancient culture, much older than Christianity, and is offended by the intolerance of the demand that One only should be worshipped. The Muslim will point out quite simply that he will accept almost all you say about Jesus, whom he recognises as a great prophet, but after all, Muhammad came 500 years later and superseded the earlier revelation. Some of the Muslim children whom I am now teaching have expressed great surprise that although I know so much about Islam, I am not a Muslim. To them it is completely self-evident, and it is puzzling that an obviously intelligent person cannot see it so. It is an attitude which is often subconsciously accepted by Christians when we eagerly search for the "correct" approach.

We are convinced that the Gospel is the truth—not just a part of the truth, or one truth amongst others, but the ultimate truth about God, and therefore about the universe. It was

this conviction which made many of the pioneer missionaries emphasize education. They believed that the spread of the truth—any truth—would undermine the prevailing "superstition" and so open the way for the reception of the truth of the Gospel. Christian education has made a tremendous contribution to Asia, and has produced many fine men and women, but very few of them have become Christian. The exposure of both Hinduism and Islam to Christian influence has been very important, and has resulted in many reforms, but the most vital outcome has been the production of reform movements which strengthened the old religions to meet the challenge of Christianity. If we are baffled about how to deal with an English teenager who has had ten years of School Assembly and compulsory R.I., we shall be even worse off with a Hindu who has been educated at a mission school and remained a good Hindu.

All these warnings amount to saying what we all know very well, that the only way to preach the Gospel is to bring a man face to face with Christ, and we cannot introduce a person to Christ unless we know that person. Is it too obvious to say that the first step in reaching Asian immigrants is to get to know your immigrants? This means that before even trying to contact individuals, it is vital to find out something about them, and since your immigrants may be different from my immigrants everything that follows should be checked with your local Community Relations Officer or someone else who knows about them. In Bradford the majority of Asian immigrants are from West Pakistan, and most local people lump them all together as "Pakistanis", which immediately causes resentment amongst the smaller group of Indians. Again, the majority are either illiterate or semi-literate, but not all. Recently I saw an English lorry driver causing offence by assuming that a young Pakistani was illiterate, although he was carrying a brief-case and a rolled-up newspaper. The driver's comment to me, "He speaks better English than I do!" did not greatly mitigate the offence. It is probably a safe generalisation to say that most of the Asian immigrants come here for the sake of money. The educated group may come to get further qualifications so that they can get more money when they go back home, or they may come because they can get more money here. Probably most of them do not intend to stay when they come, but the temptations are great for them to remain. The uneducated group come for the money, which they send or take back home, and they bring their sons (not daughters) for the free education which will in its turn help them to get more money. When we consider the countless millions we extracted directly or indirectly from the Indian Empire, and the East India Company before that, it is difficult to feel that they are not justified. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, we should feel very flattered. However, if the general expectation is sooner or later to return to a Hindu or Muslim homeland, and to pick up the threads of life there again, there cannot be any possible thought of changing one's religion. An exception to this generalisation may be



the East African Asians. The older generation may have originally come from India and still have strong ties there, but for many of the younger generation their home is Africa, to which they cannot go back, and therefore they are more likely to think of permanent settlement here. Nevertheless, they will still think of India as their "real home", just as many English families who settled in India for several generations thought of England as "home", even though they had never seen it. In these days of speedy travel it is much easier to keep up such connections, and the idea of making a clean break is even more remote. It is a truism that a man abroad is more patriotic than the same man at home, so that an approach to Asians here is likely to be more difficult than in their own countries, though this does not exempt us from trying.

The place where Christ most often meets a man is the place of his need, so perhaps we can make the introduction there. The most obvious need of a stranger is to be made to feel at home, and so many people are concerned with "integration", though there is some uncertainty about what this means. An obvious starting-point is the fact that so many of the uneducated immigrants live together in bad conditions in slum or near-slum property, and there is a fear of "ghettos" being established. This is deplorable, but there are two points to bear in mind. Because the intention is to save as much money as possible, men are content with conditions which they know are bad, but which are cheap. The conditions in the industrial areas of India are on the same lines, but worse. The jute mill at Serampore provided tenements which were strictly controlled and of a reasonable standard, but workers from Bihar or Orissa were content to rent a 6ft x 3ft sleeping space in a bamboo hut which was used successively for three shifts; the owner of the 12ft square hut therefore provided for 24 people very cheaply, and they had more money to send home to the family. This does not excuse overcrowding, of course, but any attempt to deal with it should consider all the implications. The other point is the concern about the "coloured neighbourhood", and the desire for dispersion of immigrants in order to assist integration. Here again we are not flattered at the imitation, and our immigrant neighbours must be very puzzled. It is probably true that every city and town in the Indian Empire had its "Civil Lines" or "Cantonment" where the whites lived in splendid isolation (very often including the missionaries!) If we did that in India, what is strange about their doing the same here? Perhaps one of our reasons was the self-defence of the rulers, which does not apply here, but it made more easy the amenities of an expatriate society, like golf, bridge, music or just gossip about home. We were marked off by our colour, and so were as conspicuous there as the parallel communities are here, but it was not the colour which was important, but the way of life. Some of our large cities have areas where Jewish people live, where the butchers' shops stock kosher meat, and instead of a church there is a synagogue. We recognise that this is a sensible arrangement for the convenience of those concerned. Is it surprising that

Pakistanis should prefer to live near the mosque, and the shops which provide their kosher meat, and the other foods they prefer? The ghettos of the Middle Ages were places where Jews were forced to live, and that must be avoided at all costs, but there seems to be no reason for forcibly scattering people who want to live close to one another. This also ties in with the fact that many will eventually return home, and wish to keep in touch with their own social and religious life whilst they are here, just as the English did in India.

Nevertheless, in spite of these two provisos, there is an area of need, and there is a possibility of contact. Very often the best approach will be through the Community Relations Officer, or the local Education Authority. There are bound to be children in need of help, particularly the pre-school group, for whom a play-group will provide an initiation into the mysteries of English, and mixing with strange children. There may be wives who will be glad to get out of the house for one afternoon a week and talk over a cup of tea, and perhaps learn a little English. It must be made quite clear that this is purely a gesture of friendship, and they will not be "got at" in any way. It will not be long before they begin to ask why some English people seem to be more friendly than others, and then the way will be open. Basically the way to reach Asian immigrants is the same as the way to reach anyone else, by loving your neighbour, and it is wonderful how well it can be lubricated with a cup of tea. Incidentally, in any language east of Suez it is "cha" so at least you can start off with one word in common.

Many immigrants need a neighbourly hand to help them to understand the conditions of our life. Many of them are "rustic" and "uncultured" in the eyes of their own educated countrymen, and even in their own country would be ill-equipped for polite society. They have a double barrier to surmount when the manners of society are even more strange than those they have seen at home. For us there are two cautions; first to recognise the distinction between bad manners and different manners, to avoid giving offence to those whom we may so easily misunderstand. It is very bad manners for an Asian wife to walk in front of her husband, and even to speak her husband's name; it is considered a dirty practice to soak oneself in a tub of water, instead of sluicing away the dirt with a shower; and there are many other such habits which we should try and understand before we criticize. Secondly we should not assume that our own customs are the only good ones, to which everyone else must conform. The barbarians in the South of England have the custom of eating Yorkshire pudding along with roast beef, when every civilized person knows that it should be eaten first; a friend recently told me he was offered cream with apple-pie in Scotland, instead of the proper accompaniment of cheese, yet we have managed to tolerate these outlandish habits for quite a long time in the same country.

It is not easy to make personal contacts with immigrants, any more than it is easy to make personal contacts with any

## WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

409 Barking Road, Plaistow, London, E13 8AL

My dear Brother Minister,

I spend a fair amount of time each year dealing with staff problems, and in particular with the problem of obtaining new staff for our various Homes. I think anyone who has anything to do with staffing residential homes will agree that the job of finding the right person for a residential job does not get any easier as the years go by. It is therefore a great thing to be able to tell you that we have been extraordinarily blessed throughout my Superintendency here at the Mission with a steady flow of fine Christian people who have served us with devotion far beyond the call of duty.

Ronald Messenger has expressed his mind on this wonderful provision of staff in the June and July matter in our West Ham Calendar, and if you have not yet read it I would like to suggest that you should do so!

I would like to ask you to keep your eyes open for suitable people to help us in our various Homes and I would like to draw your attention to one particular possibility. We are having an increasing number of young men and women who are willing to give us six months and sometimes a year serving as trainee members of staff. They often come to us at the end of their schooling, or perhaps a year or two later prior to going on to further education in the University or Training College. They bring to us a freshness and an enthusiasm of faith and vision which does us all good. We are able to provide opportunities for an experience which is quite unique, and it stands them in very good stead when they leave us to go on to their training.

If you should come across a youngster who you can recommend, who would be willing to come and serve in one or other of our Homes for a period, I should be most grateful if you would drop me a note and put them in touch with me.

**FILMSTRIP:** Our new colour filmstrip is being very well received in the churches and a fair number of people have written to say how much they have been stimulated by it. We have 25 copies available, and if you would like your church or any organisation in your church to know more about the work of the Mission, I suggest that you or the secretary should send me a number of alternative dates to ask for a booking. There is a manuscript to accompany the filmstrip, which also can be had on tape if required, and I have written a special commentary manuscript for use in the Sunday School and similar youth organisations.

Thank you for your interest and concern for our work, and with all good wishes for God's blessing on you and your loved ones, and on your own ministry.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL

Superintendent of the West Ham Central Mission

strangers, and it demands time and effort. Perhaps one of the most useful things to help in the meantime is by stopping the ill-informed and malicious gossip of our own people (even in our churches!) and making them use a little imagination. Above all we must get to know Aziz, Iqbal, Manik and Suresh, and we shall very soon forget that they are "Asian immigrants", and begin to learn that they are brethren for whom Christ died.

DONALD HUDSON

## DOWN AND OUT IN LONDON AND CALCUTTA

Afternoon on a hot, sunny, lazy day. About an hour to go before the evening service, and time to relax for a while in the church lounge. An inebriate man came in. His breath reeked of alcohol, and his limbs flung themselves about while his mind struggled to control them. His clothes stank, and his unwashed face sported three days worth of unshaven matting. He mumbled something indistinctly. Past experience told me he was asking for money, and, remembering the Simon Community advice, I told him that I did not feel that I could give him any. His face clouded, and he mumbled something else. He had not been asking for money. He said something about tea, so I told him, again following Simon advice, that he could have some tea as long as he was prepared to pay for it. Again his face clouded. This time I heard what he said. He was asking if he could buy *me* a cup of coffee. Now either he was a very clever con man, or he was a sincerely good natured man looking for friendship. But whichever he was, he taught me something about human dignity. For he was determined, despite my tendency to treat him simply as a member of a category, as a down and out, to retain his self respect.

This dignity is an essential part of the biblical idea of peace. That is, peace meaning not just the absence of war, as it so often does to us, but a positive thing, *shalom*; meaning, according to one definition, 'the condition of human community in which there is justice, freedom, social harmony and integrity'. For if *shalom* is a description of a quality of life in community, it implies for the individuals who comprise the community a personal dignity, dignity being that proper self respect (as opposed to pride) which allows a man to face his fellows, and to face them as an equal. For only then can there be justice, freedom, and social harmony. In the Palm Sunday readings on the kingship of Christ, this theme of *shalom* comes across strongly. In Zechariah we read that the coming king will speak *shalom* to every nation. And lamenting over Jerusalem on the day that he fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy, Jesus cries 'if only you had known on this great day the way

that leads to *shalom*.<sup>2</sup> The word of *shalom* is one which is spoken to communities of people about the way in which God would have them live together. But the biblical theme of peace cannot, as John Stott<sup>3</sup> has pointed out, be separated from the biblical theme of sin. Sin in its inward looking selfishness is the very thing which destroys *shalom*. It is the effect of sin which undermines the dignity of man. Jesus was concerned both about sin and effects, both about the root cause of the lack of *shalom*, and about its effects in the loss of dignity for individuals. And in reverse, he was concerned both about the sin of individuals and the effect it had on society of destroying *shalom*. It is interesting to see how he dealt with people. Take, for example, the case of Zaccheus,<sup>4</sup> a man who had lost his self respect because of his collaboration with the occupying power. He would no doubt have been prepared to justify himself, but deep in his heart would be a feeling of worthlessness, reinforced by the rejection suffered from his countrymen. So the first thing Jesus does is to restore his dignity. He does this by speaking to him publicly in front of a crowd and by going to his house. Or with the woman taken in adultery,<sup>5</sup> the first thing he does is to restore her dignity by shaming her accusers. Or, with the paralytic who is lowered through the ceiling by his friends,<sup>6</sup> his dignity is lost because men despise him for the sin he must have committed to suffer such illness. So Jesus restores his dignity by telling him his sins are forgiven and making him able to walk again. The same theme runs through his dealings with the woman at the well<sup>7</sup> and with Mary Magdalene, the prostitute. He restores their dignity and then gives the call to follow him, because, you see, it is only from a position of self respect and dignity that a man can fully make the decision of self sacrifice involved in accepting the call of Christ. So for an evangelical Christian the task of restoring dignity will be a task of pre-evangelism, using 'evangelism' in its usually understood meaning, while retaining some such word as 'mission' for the total activity of God in a world which still fails to acknowledge the kingship of Christ.

What, then, are the factors which are destroying dignity and *shalom* in our world? As in Christ's day we must expect to find political (Zaccheus), social (Mary Magdalene), as well as personal (the woman taken in adultery) factors. We will look at the poor and the rich worlds separately, for the rift between us is so great, that we do in fact live virtually in two separate worlds. For the poor world, without hesitation, I would pick on unemployment first of all, since it affects almost every family. The unemployment rate in the developing countries is currently running at about thirty per cent<sup>8</sup>—when in Britain we regard it as high indeed when it reaches three per cent. And you must add to that the fact that in most countries there is none of the social security which prevents our unemployment from becoming an economic disaster for the victims. We all know something of the effects of unemployment, and every church will have its share of people who can describe it from personal experience. For a man with a family, the worst part is the feeling of utter impotency, of one who cannot provide for his wife and family—especially as for the

poor world there are rarely the unemployment benefits and social security to which we are accustomed. A man who cannot earn his money does without it. Added to this is the feeling of being rejected by society, of not being wanted.

Second, I would place the uselessness of work. Christian tradition has always emphasised the sanctity of work, and more recent sociology has backed up the centuries old Christian insight that man needs to work for his own psychological well-being. Yet, to take one example, in India his work often proves useless. Robert Van de Weyer is one man who has been working in India.<sup>9</sup> In his village every labourer had no job to do for half the year. Aware of this type of situation, Ghandi thirty years before encouraged the development of village industries, making soap out of jungle plants, paper out of village rubbish, and so on. But the people are so poor that they cannot afford to buy the produce. So even when they do work, the fruit of their work is often left unconsumed. The work becomes useless, and the worker loses all pride in it.

Third comes the effect of utter grinding poverty, day after day. You may be surprised that I have put this so low, but a man can have dignity in poverty, when poverty is the ordinary fabric of life. There comes a stage, however, when poverty grinds too fine, and its burden becomes too great. In the urban slums of Latin America this has already happened. In her diaries<sup>10</sup> Carolina Maria de Jesus gives us a first hand picture of what it is like to live in that sort of poverty—and of how she was ashamed to face her children when they were starving, and she could give them nothing. Another result of poverty is disease, which can sap the thin source of energy left to a hungry man, and finally deprive him of the ability to live.

Fourth comes greed. The poor world is not peopled by suffering saints. It is peopled by sinful man, and a small minority of its people have managed to manoeuvre themselves into a position where they can amass great wealth, can administer the tax and trade and land laws to their benefit, and can live well at the expense of their own poor. It is Dives and Lazarus all over again.

All these things subtract from a man's dignity. Worst of all is the corrosion of a man's place in his family, so that he loses through shame the ability to look his family in the eye. Next to that is the loss of dignity in the eyes of his neighbours. And then the loss of his own self respect so that his own life becomes despair, and ceases to have any meaning. And even if he is lucky enough to receive charity, that is in itself degrading to many. They want to work for what is justly theirs, not to live on other people's wealth. The effect of all this on the unfortunate ones is the destruction of everything we hold as important to life. Family life breaks down under the tensions and the need to travel in search of work. Lust, oppression, crime, run wild. Apathy sets in, for psychological reasons or through the sheer lack of protein. Feelings for others vanish. When wilt thou save the people, O God of Mercy, when? . . .<sup>11</sup>

Let's look now at the rich world, at ourselves, that is. We have our factors destroying *shalom* and the dignity essential to it as well: materialism, pollution, over indulgence (obesity

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has become one of the most prevalent disorders in our society). There is our over development to match the under-development of the poor world. And probably the most important thing destroying the *shalom* of the world, and permitting the attack on the dignity of man, is our attitude to the poor world itself. It is Dives and Lazarus once more. Most people have a vague feeling of guilt about world poverty, an uneasiness which awakens in their conscience, a need to quell it. The usual way to quell it is through the collecting tin. Much Christian giving is not, of course, of this sort, but is a sacrificial giving of a type aroused by much more than a guilty conscience, but I think there can be little doubt that one of the phenomena of the national psychologies of the developed world is this deep rooted guilt feeling because of our own wealth. Vance Packard, the popular sociologist who has observed the efforts of the advertising industry to overcome it,<sup>12</sup> has attributed it in America to the puritan heritage, and the same might well apply to it here. But too often we are conformed to our rich world, instead of being transformed<sup>13</sup> in our attitudes to life. We are pleased when the general attitude of society allows us to feel that we have 'done our bit' when all we have given is conscience money. And in doing this we are allowing our own human dignity to disappear through the effects of our own sinful disregard of our responsibility for the humiliation of so many of God's created people—many even of our Christian brothers among them. And inasmuch, says Jesus, as we have disregarded our brothers, we have disregarded Him.<sup>14</sup>

What do I mean when I talk about *our* responsibility for the humiliation of the poor people of the world? A few examples—

Let's look at government aid—aid given on our behalf. The aid programme is, of course, a very small one in proportionate terms. Official aid for 1971/72 will still only be 0.4% of the Gross National Product (rising to just under 0.5% in 1975)<sup>15</sup> instead of the 0.7% minimum requested by the United Nations Conference on Aid and Development, to be achieved in 1975 at the latest. But that apart, the aid is given in such a way that a very large proportion has to be spent in Britain (not including the equally large proportion which never leaves Britain, but is used for overseas students grants, British Council salaries, etc.). This means on the whole that it has to be spent on machine tools. That is, it is spent on automation which will increase unemployment even further, rather than on the intermediate technologies (means of making labour intensive methods more productive rather than replacing the labour) which are needed. This might be good for Britain, but it is not good for the receiving country.

Or look at industry. International firms, based on western countries, control a great deal of industry today. Many of our people work for them or hold shares in them. Most of them treat their employees in the poor world well, but their manufacturing policy almost invariably works against the poorer countries. In this they are encouraged by the government, which makes it very much easier to import raw materials than manufactured goods. So the result is that, if country A pro-

duces, say, oil, firm X will build in country A only the plant needed to actually drill for the stuff and pump it to the coast. It will then be transported to firm X's refinery in some developed country (in our case, Southampton or the Isle of Grain), for preparation for the market. If country A needs refined oil they will have to buy it back, and the number of tons they can get back for the same number of tons of crude oil exported is going down year by year (i.e. the price of refined oil rises faster than the price of crude oil). Thus not only do country A's natural resources produce very little employment for her own people but they also add to her balance of payments problem through trading in them, all of which creates a greater dependence on economic aid, with all the bad effects of that already seen.

Or one last example, this time from the field of international agencies. It has always amazed me how people expect international bodies to be more moral than the countries which comprise them. Like all political institutions, they respond to the strongest pressure, which in their case, means the developed countries, including ours (and even more so, the United States). The World Bank (the correct name for which is the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) is one such international body. In 1967 Argentina requested aid from it. As a condition of its support it was insisting on the dismissal of no fewer than 70,000 railway employees,<sup>16</sup> and the scale of human tragedy involved in that is not difficult to imagine. All these things are done by the governments which represent us and the firms which we work for or share in owning. And both governments and companies depend in the last resort on electors and share holders for permission to pursue their policies.

We seem to have come a long way. We started off by talking about restoring dignity to one man in order that he might be truly free to follow Christ, in order that the *shalom* bringing work of Christ might be furthered. But when we started to talk about why a man—any man—might be without dignity, we found ourselves caught up in politics and economics. And so the tasks of pre-evangelism involve us in changing political and economic structures. But we should not be surprised. The kingdom of this world has a wide domain. Does not Paul say that we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against cosmic powers and the authorities and potentates of this dark world?<sup>17</sup> Yet this means that if we are to carry on the fight and to set about restoring dignity, we must be prepared ourselves to enter into the field of 'politics'. It means we must line up beside those who, for whatever motive, are pressing for a change in our trade and aid relations with the poor world. There is no conflict here between we who are Christians and others who are pressing for this aim, for they are unwittingly helping us in our work for Christ, and for as long as they are doing this, they must have our support, both financial and personal.

In practical terms, this is most likely to mean that we will give our support to the World Development Movement, the

only explicitly 'political' of all the groups involved in world development, the others being either relief agencies or 'educational' agencies (because of the operation of the Charities Commission). Probably a majority of its members are Christians, since Christian compassion has been at the fore in concern over world poverty. It operates from a small office at 69 Victoria Street, London, SW1. The size of the problem may daunt us, and few but Christians can have the hope, in the fullest meaning of that word, that dignity will be restored, and that the time will come when at the name of Jesus every knee will bow. We must therefore do what we can, however small that may be, and however little may be the scratch it makes on the surface. It is not for us to be disheartened if we go only a little way along the line, if in most cases our pre-evangelism does not develop into evangelism, for it is God's mission we are involved in and not our own.

DAVID GOODBOURN

- 1 Zech 9:10
- 2 Luke 19:41 & 42
- 3 *Christ the Controversialist*, IVP
- 4 Luke 19:1-10
- 5 John 8:1-11
- 6 Luke 5:18
- 7 John 4:7ff
- 8 *Unemployment*, an Oxfam special report
- 9 See my article in the *Baptist Times*, November 4, 1971
- 10 *Beyond All Pity*, Panther Modern Society
- 11 BHB 654
- 12 *The Hidden Persuaders*, Pelican
- 13 Romans 12:2
- 14 Matthew 25:45
- 15 Select Committee Report on Overseas Aid
- 16 *Leverage: The World Bank, etc.*, Teresa Hayter, now published as *Aid as Imperialism* by Pelican
- 17 Ephesians 6:12

## "GROW AND GO":

### AN ASSOCIATION VENTURE IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Kent and Sussex Association has embarked on a four year programme of Christian Education culminating in a year of united evangelistic outreach in 1975/6, with considerable enthusiasm and determination. The plan entitled "Grow and Go", which was conceived in the Discipleship Committee of the Association, was accepted at the Annual Assembly in May 1971 and already many churches have geared their Autumn and winter programme to this.

The programme ranges over the cardinal points of Christian Doctrine—ten lessons on God the Father in the first year, (God the Creator, the Sustainer, Miracles, Providence, the Father Almighty, Purpose in History. The Father, God's Holiness, God the Judge and God's love); in the second year ten lessons on God the Son, (His Deity, His Incarnation and Life, His Redemption—nature of, need for and effects of—His Resurrection, Exaltation, Continuing work, Parousia, and abiding

presence); of the Holy Spirit and the Church in the third year and on the nature of man and eschatology in the fourth and final year.

Side by side with the lessons on belief are ten lessons each year on behaviour. In the first year the general heading of "The Christian and others" appear lessons on Parents and Children, Boy and Girl, Husband and Wife, Employer and Employee, Old and Young, The Church and Children, Ourselves and other Christians, Social Tensions, The Christian and the Non-Christian, The Body of Christ. The second year, under the general heading of "The Christian and the World" sees the subjects of Money and Stewardship, Gambling, Holidays and Leisure, Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs, Literature and Communication, The Environment, Entertainment and the Arts, Luxuries and Sport dealt with. In the third year—"The Christian in Stress", when such subjects as depression, loneliness, doubt and temptation will be considered, while in the fourth year "The Christian Winning his World" will be tackled.

The lessons are written simply by non-specialists—ministers who weekly have to grapple with these subjects and with the problem of communication. Each lesson contains questions for discussion, and a short bibliography of modestly priced books and booklets appears at the end of each section.

Methods of use vary of course from church to church. Many ministers are using the notes as the basis of their pulpit ministry with after-church discussions, young people's squashes or home study groups in the following week, following the subject through and grappling with it themselves. I learn that the course is proving popular with young people.

The course can be used by our members privately. One retired brother rang me to say he is using this every day instead of his usual Bible Reading Notes. The course in fact is capable of considerable adaptation to suit local needs. It can go hand in hand with local evangelistic outreach during this period. It is certainly not the aim or intention of the Association to freeze all evangelistic enterprise until 1975/6, but that by a deepening experience we prepare for evangelistic outreach on a united scale. We believe we must go as we grow—as well as go as a result of growing.

The title of the programme comes from two important texts in the New Testament, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" 2 Peter 3:18 and "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" Matthew 28:20. The emphases go together. If we are to witness effectively we believe we must be able to give a reason for the hope that is in us. A person's experience of Christ of course is fundamental here, but his witness will surely be all the more effective if he has grappled with the great Christian truths and has searched the scriptures.

This brings me to another vital point about this plan. It is based on the teaching of scripture with an abundance of scripture references in each lesson, and as a result will only yield its true usefulness as the scripture references are consulted and their message considered. There is in fact a short

lesson on the scriptures at the beginning of the booklet together with ones on prayer, the Holy Spirit and the Promises of God.

The lessons are contained in an attractively produced 64 page booklet with semi-stiff covers—by the offset photo-litho method, which is offered to Kent and Sussex churches at the subsidised price of 10p. Many friends outside the association have expressed interest as a result of copies having been sent to Association secretaries (The Association felt we should acquaint our sister Associations with what we are attempting to do). The booklets are being offered to them at cost price (15p) plus postage. As a result of Jack Brown's reference to this in the Baptist Bulletin, I have even had an enquiry from overseas.

This programme was born as a result of a special meeting of the Discipleship Committee (whose four-fold brief is Evangelism, Stewardship, Citizenship and Youth). They were far from certain about the way ahead and what kind of a lead to give the Association. As they waited on God so this plan came to birth. The enthusiastic response accorded this by so many and the blessing it is proving are confirmatory signs, we feel, of the clear way the Lord led us.

Ministers, as I know from experience and observation, are often very chary of grandiose schemes and of anything from outside which in the slightest way threatens to curb their liberty. May I say though, that I have been amazed and gratified at the enthusiastic response so many Kent and Sussex ministers have given this. They are finding that this programme is just what they are looking for.

The Foreword of the booklet states "The course is offered to the 108 churches of Kent and Sussex and to the many friends in these churches with the prayer that God will use "Grow and Go", which He has led us to conceive, to extend His Kingdom among us, strengthen His Church and bring many to the Lord Jesus Christ for His glory". If any brethren outside Kent and Sussex are interested, I shall be only too pleased to send them a copy of the first book we have produced (18p) if they contact me at 14 Brangwyn Avenue, Brighton, Sussex.

DAVID BOONE

## WRITE AND TELL US WHAT YOU THINK . . .

Would you be willing to pay a £1 annual subscription to the Baptist Ministers Fellowship? During 1972 we will have to reduce the number of issues of "The Fraternal" to three per annum. This has been forced upon us by soaring costs of printing, postage and fares. In 1970 with a subscription of 37½p we finished the year with a deficit of £107. During 1971 with a subscription of 50p we struggled through the whole year on borrowed money which was a deep disappointment for me as I had hoped that the increase would enable us to wipe out

the deficit from 1970 and be able to pay our way. Not only has that been somewhat difficult but in 1972 we are faced with the increase in postage which will be in all probability from 2½p to 4p. The cost of posting one issue will rise by 60% from £57.50 to £92. This compares with the cost of posting all four issues in the past for £230 with a future three issue year's postage of £276. The all pervading increase in the cost of printing is known to you all through the great increase that we all have found in our local church's use of printing. The details of this increase will be found in our Annual Accounts. Which brings us to my first question again; would you be willing to pay a subscription which is nearer to the true cost of producing a good magazine, one which will serve the brethren in all the various needs and concerns of the Fellowship? The matter is due to be discussed in detail at our Committee Meetings in early March. Would local Fraternal and/or individual members give some thought to this and let our Secretary, W. H. Wragg, have a note of your suggestions not later than March 1st.

VIC SUMNER

## DR. WILLIAMS'S TRUST

### BURSARIES TENABLE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

We have received the following notice which may be of interest to some of our members:

One Bursary will be offered by Dr. Williams's Trustees to a man or woman from South Britain (i.e. from England or Wales) who is an accredited *Minister among Protestant Dissenters*, and who, for the better discharge of his or her ministry, wishes to pursue a serious and systematic 'refresher' course of study for a period of at least one year, 1) as a general course, or 2) as special study, or 3) in the case of a *graduate in theology*, as a course of special study or research leading to the degree of M.Th. Failing a suitable candidate of this kind, the Trustees would consider an applicant of mature years who wishes to pursue a general course of theological study for a similar period either preliminary to or following a course at a college for training for the *Ministry among Protestant Dissenters*.

The normal value of the Bursary is £700 a year. In applying, candidates will be required to inform the Trustees of their financial resources and responsibilities, and after appointment will be required to inform the Trustees of any material change in their financial circumstances.

The award will be made after an interview, the production of evidence of serious intent supported by testimonials from at least three persons of standing, and any other test the Trustees may deem necessary.

Travelling expenses to the interview will be paid.

In addition, every candidate must obtain admission to the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Glasgow (enquiries and applications to the Dean of the Faculty of Divinity, the University, Glasgow: reference should be made to the Dr.

Williams Bursary. The regulations for the degree of M.Th. can also be obtained from the University.)

Bursars can normally reside, and are expected to do so when possible, in one of the University hostels, and will be under the general oversight of a Supervisor in the University, appointed by the Trustees. The University cannot undertake to find married accommodation. Bursars are required to submit their course of study to the Trustees for approval.

Applications must be sent in by March 1st to the Secretary, from whom forms of application and further information may be had.

Rev. Kenneth Twinn, M.A.,  
Secretary, Dr. Williams's Trust,  
14, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1H 0AG.