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The Fraternal

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Editorial

The invitation to assume the editorship of the Fraternal enables me, in small measure, to repay something of the debt I owe to that denomination within which I came to faith, which nurtured me, and which gave me a theological education. In a day when denominational self-criticism is almost an orgy, I wish to say "thank you" to mine; hence your new editor.

As I slip into the editorial chair, left warm by Michael Walker, I am aware of the high standard he has maintained over ten years. A perusal of the journal in those years indicates the range and variety of articles he has commissioned. Alive to issues of the day and with his finger on the pulse of the Church, he has, indeed, served us well. I shall aim to bring to my editorship the same care and commitment which he brought to his.

What of "new broom" changes? Well, in a journal of such modest size as ours, there's a limit to what can be changed. On the other hand, I am well aware that any publication has to compete for the precious time a minister has for reading and study. Therefore I shall aim to be relevant, stimulating and thought-provoking, stretching myself to the outer limits of denominational theology and concerns and, sometimes, beyond them. It is probably true that applied theology of a directly practical nature is appreciated most by Fraternal readers, but the world of creative theological and philosophical thought forms the ground of our convictions and activity, therefore both emphases will continue to find a place within these pages.

One area which I am developing is that of the Review Section. The sheer volume and cost of books, these days, is such that discrimination is very necessary. I hope that the reviews which appear will help you in this.

In the present issue a new series begins entitled, "Christianity and Culture". What is the nature of this relationship? Is it implacable confrontation, or may aspects of our culture, by analogy, witness to God? Ron Ayres begins the series by leading us into the area of the performing arts with "Drama". The number of times I have heard vestry prayers giving thanks for "the freedom we have to worship compared with our brothers and sisters in Communist lands", indicates how conscious we are of the "suffering church". But is the picture we carry about with us, the true one? Brian Cooper has doubts and, in the light of extensive travelling in the Eastern bloc, writes to put the record straight in "Eastern Europe-Image and Reality". Our third article is autobiographical; one of a number I hope to commission from time to time. In it Edwin Robertson invites us to accompany him on "A Personal Pilgrimage" and learn of the ideas, people and situations which have helped to shape and influence him in his many and varied forms of ministry. Last, but by no means least, Bob Thompson contributes an article on the theology of the Atonement: "At Odds with God". The purpose of this is to enrich our preparation for the Easter Festival; the better to feed our people.

As one who rarely reads the editorial of the daily newspaper, thank you for reading mine.

"One Man In His Time Plays Many Parts"

School was the place where my own sense of Drama was exposed and extended. To begin with it was inseparable from the process of growing up. In Junior School I sat as the mysterious visitor in 'The Wind of Heaven' by Emlyn Williams, (a strange choice for such an age group), mute, with an ethereal voice behind the curtain speaking the lines. It was thought there were too many for a small boy to learn. The feeling then of being in a deep, truthful place is still clear. The part itself, presumably selected by observant teachers, was the first of many mystic ones which have come my way, which must indicate something about the impression I make but don't intend.

Enlightened founders of the Grammar School had built music, drama and literature into the ethos and curriculum. Our School Song was by W.H. Auden: 'Time will make its utter changes, circumstance will scatter us. But the memories of our schooldays are a living part of us. So remember then when you are men with important things to do, that once you were young and this song have sung, for you were at school here too'. In this atmosphere and opportunity, Drama and life ran parallel. What was happening in the class-room bore little relevance to my inner life, and I was very bad in most subjects. Only English lit a spark. But involvement in the plays brought friendship, achievement and reality. The inwardness found expression and release, which after-school rehearsal teas encouraged, and post-production asthmatic wheezes did not diminish. If education is drawing out and leading, then my education was on the stage and not in class. Peter Smith tried to teach me science, but I stuck at drawing a bunsen burner. As producer of the School Play, he taught me to live.

School reports from the time say, 'His sudden emergence as a star actor was sensational and should do him a power of good in increasing his confidence ....'. 'His performance in class cannot be accepted as satisfactory when he shows so much vitality elsewhere ....'. I was fourteen. Mysteriously, on the report for Summer 1947, the House Master has one comment only —'Later on he should enter the Church'. As I saw it the stage was not giving me confidence, but life. Here were the realities. In class the realities were inside me, and the up front and exercise book work was interesting but irrelevant. Opening the gates of life for school children must remain a holy responsiblity.

Another report said, 'I cannot believe that a boy who could do so much with Helena has any business with so many D's and E's.' The reference to Helena was the result of an audition for the Junior School Play. Helena in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'; the 'painted maypole', (I was always tall). I can still say the words. I was caught by the beauty of the lines themselves, their structure and subtlety. The fun and pathos in the character, and the discovery that rehearsals were as exciting as the performances. The smell of the 'grassy bank' is still in my nostrils, glue and hessian and paint.

The Grammar School years, punctuated by evacuation gave great opportunity for dramatic exploration. My copy of Shakespeare was a

thirteenth birthday present, as his speech and imagination became part of me. A fourteen year old could hardly embrace Olivia in 'Twelfth Night', though the original player was a boy, and this boy caught something of the coquetishness, the breeding, the light-hearted seriousness of the Countess, in his mind if not in his performance. The language touched the springs where the tears are for beauty and joy, recognition and feeling. 'She never told her love, but let concealment, like a worm i' the bud, feed on her damask cheek. She pin'd in thought, and with a green and yellow melancholy, she sat like Patience on a monument, smiling at grief'. Later, as the voice ordained, I graduated to playing men in House Plays and Senior School Plays. The hysteric Osborne in 'Journey's End', facing the horror of trench warfare, scared back into sanity by his officer. A short-sighted Cornishman seeing visions on the Arctic ice floes in 'The Seventh Man'. This part combined a real religious mysticism with an eerie story of disaster and salvation. The atmosphere in rehearsal grew intense and had to be deliberately broken. I knew the hut in which the action happened, its every invisible cranny and plank, the smell of the oil lamp, the bitter cold, even as you know the details of the house you step into when you leave the drawing room set for the wings. In 'The Dark Tower', a radio play by Louis Macneice, I was by turns a prostitute, a mother and a priest. The allegory of life and death, and the need to fight the impending shadow — 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came' — was, and is, vivid. So the Drama was life-giving in two ways, by taking part in its creation and by the themes and characters explored. Here the real stuff of life was being exposed. The emotional heart. The motives and passions, the relationships. A phrase would open the world, an action express some part of life never understood before. 'Theatre's real concern is what happens between people ... You have discovered something by drama that was unavailable to you by any other means' (Group Theatre by Brian Clark).

I was allowed to die at marvellous length, anguished for the kingdom, as Henry IVth Pt II, before school days ended. After a hiccup the academic part of life caught up and I left with necessary pieces of paper, to enter a part of life when study and theatre were to go hand in hand. Alongside there was the Church. Friendship, mystery. I was caught by these and the gospels. They were all of a piece. I came to Baptism. Afterwards I was told I should abandon the theatrical part of life, but I ignored the advice. It was largely given I think because we sometimes rehearsed on Sundays. Priorities must speak of need as well as loyalties. They may speak of gift too. Worship can be offered in many ways.

In this second stage I would link Drama with call and the sorting out of my own feelings and ideas. For instance, a feeling towards non-violence as a way of life, and deep antagonism to all things military was helped by 'Chips with Everything' by Arnold Wesker, and subsequent plays which have articulated arguments and feelings I find it hard to express. Also, though happily engaged in Library work, the threads of Drama, work and Church nudged me towards the ministry. The concern for the emotional realities led through the covers to the borrowers, and this, with the Gospel, sent my life

towards people rather than books. This was a time of continued acting involvement, but also opportunity to watch.

The acting included more Shakespeare: Gloucester in 'King Lear' and a variety of parts in 'Hamlet'; the great tragedies, especially Lear, exhausting and elating the emotions. Also, two stabs at Death — as M. Henri in Anouilh's update of Orpheus and Eurydice, and as the Buttonmoulder in 'Peer Gynt'; the first containing the bitter philosophy that it is better to die. Orpheus accepts it after losing Eurydice, as the only way to find her again. The old father drunkenly extols the foolishness and emptiness of so much living and embraces death as a release and maybe fulfillment; Anouilh actually arguing passionately for life. Peer Gynt is the epic poem of a man's life. The young man adventuring off, leaving the love of Solveig for disasters and dangers, the Trolls, the Boyng ('Go roundabout Peer Gynt, go roundabout'), the madhouse, luxury, passion, his mother's death, shipwreck and loss. The old Peer comes home peeling an onion which, like himself, is all layers and no heart. Solveig comes and Peer finds himself where he has always been, safe in her love. But the last word is with the Buttonmoulder, who threatens all the journey through to melt him down because he is a failure. Now Solveig's love postpones the end, — but 'At the last Crossroads we shall meet again'. The story is to lay alongside Bunyan and other pilgrimages.

Watching began necessarily slowly in wartime London. The Blitz was broken by a visit to 'Worms Eye View' at the Whitehall. Ronald Shiner caught in the act of changing a light bulb in the digs, with his foot in a jelly as the landlady appears. That laughter seemed to go on in waves, over and over. I was chided by the family for immoderate involvement, — but it was genuine. Later in life I guffawed at a Joyce Grenfell line which no-one else thought was funny, and choked with coughing and tears at 'Beyond the Fringe', and wished Victor Borge would stop for a moment so that I could breathe. There is therapy in laughter, a purging in farce. I still laugh at the memory of 'Skin Of Our Teeth' by Thornton Wilder, with Vivien Leigh stepping out to address the audience. 'A History Of The World In Comic Strip'; its opening became part of family life — 'Oh, oh, oh. Six o'clock and the masters not home yet. ... It's so cold the dogs are sticking to the sidewalk'. (It was the Ice Age).

Then the world opened up. I joined the Gallery queues at every opportunity. Saw the whole of Shakespeare at the Old Vic, — with the exception of Pericles. Found Covent Garden and the marvellous world of Ballet and Opera. Discovered Stratford and Edinburgh. In the same way that I read everything, so I watched everything too. In between there were the cartoon cinemas in which to spend an hour and the buskers in the West End streets. All mixed up with the crowds, the air, the inside pounding of life, an excited lump in the throat. I had gone to College and was equating this marvel of living with the theological training. The themes of Pain and Redemption, Love and Sacrifice, Holiness and Evil, Living and Dying were all around.

No doubt other people found other parallels to their years of bursting youth and energy and life. For me it was the Theatre. I drank it in and walked and danced across Waterloo Bridge speechless, elated, blessed. It was not

an experience to be laid alongside the 'spiritual' experience of Baptism and Communion and Worship. It was Communion and Worship. The Drama has never been an optional extra or a mere diversion, but part of the substance of life, discovery and expression.

One instance will suffice. I took my mother to see 'Love's Labours Lost' at the Old Vic. I did not know the play. It was delight. Beautifully played, and with decor by Cecil Beaton. The play is of growing up, Spring and Winter. The young coupes flirt and play and pretend. The deep themes decorated with grace notes. They sit in the garden to watch a non-sensical entertainment. Laughter, love, warmth. Enter, in a boat, Marcade, dressed by Beaton in flowing purple. He tells the Princess of France that she must go home. The King is dead. He only has three lines, but so quickly does life change. The stage dulls. We have grown adult in a moment. The couples part. The Players within the play sing their songs of Spring and Winter. 'When daisies pied and violets blue ..', and 'When icicles hang by the wall...'. The songs sum up all we are feeling. The stage empties and we are ready to go home, carrying the blessing. On comes the clown, Armado. The pompous man who has made us laugh is now a silly irritation. He senses it and says, 'The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo. You, that way. We, this way'. That's all. I was stunned. How did — not the character or the actor — but Shakespeare know my feelings so exactly? But here is the essence, as through the drama creator, actor, audience, speak to each other deep down.

As life moved place and responsibilities, so the drama experience moved as well. Two local groups have given opportunity for acting and direction. In the town we set out to entertain. 'The Heiress' by Ruth and Augustus Goetz, from the story by Henry James, set us off. Seen in London years ago with Peggy Ashcroft and Ralph Richardson, our working on it together showed its deep subtleties. Is Morris honest or not? Is he scheming, pretending love, for money? If he begins sincerely, where does he change? Why is father so cruel to his daughter, so unseeing of the hurt he is giving her? And Catherine, why does she think so little of herself, become so clumsy and stumbling? Is it father's grief that blinds him, or is he protecting Catherine? When the love offered to Catherine is proved false, what makes her (and us) so hard. Who is she hurting, and why, as she walks away from Morris to a lonely life? To do a play is to tangle with these questions. The frivolities of 'The Importance of being Earnest' show the delightful, civilised face of life. But behind them you cannot forget the anguished existence of Wilde himself; 'De Profundis' and 'Reading Gaol' can be put alongside Lady Bracknell. Wilde satirises the very society which was to judge him and condemn him. Of all the plays done over twelve years, undoubtedly Anouilh's 'Antigone' was the one to lead to most discussion and continued involvement. In an hour and a half Anouilh, using the old story, creates a play which questions the values of life, the responsibility of the individual to the state, the tension between ideals and realities, the choice of saying 'Yes' to life or opting out of it — and many other themes. Set in the framework of Tragedy, is it fate or release? Does inevitability release you from the passion

of choice? He wrote the play during the German occupation of France.

Is there any other way, or any better way in which these things can be shared except through drama? Even if seeing is difficult, playwrights like Ibsen and O'Neill release their power even on the page.

At College I was handed a leaflet for the Summer School of the Religious Drama Society, (now called RADIUS, at St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden). Fifteen years of learning and friendship led to involvement with Pamela Keily and her work of encouraging drama in the Northern Diocese. The plays came at all levels. Street theatre, on the back of a lorry, with Pantomime tactics and short sharp comment. Touring Christmas plays, including 'How many miles to Bethlehem?' by Philip Turner, which speaks of the Child as 'the still centre around which all else turns', and Herod as one of the dangerous people 'who know they are right'. Contemporary plays such as 'A Scent of Flowers' by James Saunders. Zoë is dead, a young student she took her life. Why? With Zoë present we retrace her life through the events of the funeral and Requiem Mass. She died for the lack of love. The helplessness of father, the hardness of the stepmother, (why, why?), the betrayal of the uncle, all added to her isolation. At the end of the play she steps into her grave and vanishes. 'Fill it in now?' asks Sid the gravedigger. 'Cuppa tea first. Fill it in later' says his friend. That moment each night was a death itself as Zoë vanished. It was a living shock and grief. 'An Inspector Calls' by J.B. Priestley was another chance to be the mysterious stranger, in this powerful parable. Here, too, a girl is dead. Gradually, all the respectable Northern family are implicated — father, mother, son and daughter. All are guilty. Priestley has two final shots, one is to back-project to 1939 and say that unless the world learns that we are all responsible for one another, then ... . The other is to dismiss the idea that girl has died at all, or that such an Inspector exists. But does that alter the guilt and the message of 'be responsible, or else ...'? The play works well. You can hear the audience clicking the evidence into place. Two goes at 'Murder in the Cathedral', as Tempter and Knight on each occasion, have written sentences in my mind. 'Mankind cannot bear very much reality', 'to do the right thing for the wrong reason'. Eliot, in another vein, in 'The Cocktail Party' explores the coming of a stranger into a company, (that role again), 'to aproach the stranger is to invite the unexpected', and in a penetrating second act examines the painful ecstasy of someone who has a vision, a call of life, and must test it and follow it. 'The way is unknown and so requires faith, — the kind of faith that issues from despair. The destination cannot be described; you will know very little until you get there; you will journey blind. But the way leads towards the possession of what you have sought for in the wrong place'. These plays and others were chosen within a Church context to be offered as part of the whole work and worship.

Much contemporary Theatre has ventured into dangerous territories of sexual relationships and political deviousness. It has thrown off the politeness and decorum and come out with forceful language, alarming images and explosive passion. Provoking purposely, reaction rather than response, it is a force to be reckoned with. We are becoming used to

WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

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Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother

Dear Fellow Ministers

In the course of nearly thirty years in the Ministry, I have lost count of the times when I have been called upon to "say a few words" — and then said a great many! It is still difficult for some of us to believe that we shall not be heard for our much speaking!

I really do want to say a few words about the Mission .....

the first word is **THANKS** — for all your help, and that of your people —especially in our recent financial difficulties.

the second word is **PRAY** — that we may keep in touch with the real needs of men and women — and that we may always keep in touch with JESUS CHRIST — the Great Physician.

the third word is **USE** — the skills and expertise that we have gained over the years. If we can be of service to your people or to you personally, you only have to ask.

God bless you in your home and in your Ministry.

Yours in His service,

Trevor W. Davis,
Superintendent Minister.

'Alternative Theatre' in the press notices. Away from the big commercial entertainments, here are committed, often small groups, using theatre to communicate. From some events you emerge battered, argumentative, and most certainly stirred. There is a role for the writer and poet as Prophet.

The very shape of modern Theatres says something of an approach to the art and to people. The close involvement of the open stage is replacing the distanced proscenium. By its methods as well as its content the theatre world reflects a generation, and speaks to the rest of us who struggle to communicate.

It is often said that 'Look Back in Anger' by John Osborne moved us into a new era of theatre. 'Angry young men' and 'Kitchen sink' became useful shorthand for new realism in setting and language and emotion. Pinter and Beckett led us into other worlds of silence and menace and meaning. A useful book of comment from the 1960's is 'Speak What We Feel. A Christian looks at the contemporary theatre' by K.M. Baxter. S.C.M. 1964. 'Today's serious drama is concerned more deeply than for many generations with the human condition in all its aspects'.

Some of these plays help in planning a Drama course as part of the Sixth Form R.E. options at the High School. Taking Death and Resurrection as a theme during the Easter Term we have looked at St. John: the Raising of Lazarus, and put it alongside the end of 'The Royal Hunt of the Sun' by Peter Shaffer, where the Indians chant to the Sun, but Atahualpa does not rise. Beattie in Wesker's 'Rootes' coming alive for the first time, 'This is me, speaking for myself ...'. The young Helen Keller in 'The Miracle Worker' putting her hand under the pump and knowing that 'waar' in its sound is the same as this cold liquid in its feel, finding the key to language and to life. Christopher Fry's Cuthman in 'The Boy with a Cart' building a Church in Steyning. The patient in 'Whose Life Is It Anyway? by Brian Clark, arguing for his own death because through a paralysing accident he feels no longer alive. 'Equus', also by Peter Shaffer, has provoked good talks on parents and children, on adolescence and guilt, on religious experience, and, like Antigone, the ability to be free to live your life fully or to be confined by accepted behaviour and responsibilities.

With a new group we are embarking on a dramatisation of St. John, using the techniques of any production, digging into the sub-text, discovering the people within the book, in the drama of the life of Jesus.

That which leads me to the theatre has made me grateful for much contemporary work which jumps the gap between theology and psychology. The Church must keep the Word Flesh, and not revert to Word again. 'God is man and man is God, are true statements. But like all the truths of theology they are true in the reality of human experience or they are not true at all'. (Richard Syms, a Priest become actor, in 'Working Like The Rest Of Us'). The theatre deals in human experience. When we look at a play we are looking at people commenting on the life of people — of themselves and us. This is uniting. This is the spark of joy which comes when a Truth is touched and all recognise it. At the close of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' at Stratford, (with a marvellous comic performance by Ben Kingsley as Ford), after the

cruel mocking of Falstaff, the cast, singing a final song, clasped hands one by one with every other member. Forgiveness and healing were in it. In another closing moment in a more intimate theatre, the cast shared the greeting with the audience too. Shalom.

The theatre wrestles with great themes. It does so with anger, compassion, beauty, humour, prejudice and scorn. It is by turns comforting and uncomfortable, alienating and involving, entertaining and shocking, superficial and too deep for tears. It is 'To hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure'. (Hamlet Act 3).

In her life of St. Francis, Elizabeth Goudge says, 'He had that unconscious sense of drama which all great men possess, that sixth sense which has been called a sense of theatre'.

Ron Ayres

Eastern Europe — Image and Reality

The aftermath of the Rekjavik East-West Summit is a most appropriate time to re-examine our understanding of Communist Eastern Europe, particularly the position of the Church there. The East-West ideological rivalry is sharply focused in our own continent of Europe: the division originating from the victory over Nazism from East and West has hardened into nuclear-armed confrontation. Years of mutual propaganda and mistrust have undermined so many genuine attempts at détente made in the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act. Yet if, in the words of the Russion Orthodox Church, Christians in this generation are "called to save the sacred gift of life from nuclear catastrophe", and in the words of Russian Baptist leader Rev. Alexei Bychkov there is "an evangelical responsibility for peacemaking", we must take this calling and responsibility for Christian reconciliation in the East-West context extremely seriously. Overcoming mistrust and removing the Cold War 'enemy images' are vitally necessary to transform the prevailing psychic pollution of the international East-West environment into a common recognition of our inter-dependence. Unfortunately, widespread ignorance about the everyday realities of the Church in Eastern Europe, and the equally widespread acceptance of negative images, form major obstacles to Christians and churches in Britain engaging in reconciliation ministry in the East-West context. The image of the Church in Eastern Europe, put across in the secular mass media and sections of the religious press, are predominantly those of 'suffering church', 'persecuted church', 'underground church', Bible-smuggling, church-state conflict, and the like. In fact, such categories have mercifully long since ceased to characterise the Christian context of the vast majority of believers in Communist Eastern Europe. The only total exception is Albania, where all religious practice has been wholly proscribed since 1967. In all the other East European countries the Churches exist, indeed often flourish, within the legal and constitutional

framework; Christians worship openly and freely; the Gospel is regularly and faithfully proclaimed; the churches, particularly in the Soviet Union, are often packed with worshippers; the Christians are actively engaged in their society and not a political opposition to the Communist governments; Church leaders and appointed representatives can usually travel on international denominational and ecumenical business; the Baptists have long since played a full part in the European Baptist Federation and Baptist World Alliance (Bulgarian participation, however, is occasional). The majority of Baptists on the European continent live in Communist societies.

Having travelled extensively in all these countries on several occasions, and having conducted preaching and study visits from Warsaw to Samarkand, and from East Berlin to Bucharest, I am always struck by the contrast between what I see with my own eyes and am told by fellow-Baptists and other Christians in those countries (with no state officials present), and the ever-repeated negatives about persecution put across by the Western media. Most Western Christian visitors to Eastern Europe are struck by the same contrast, and lament how ill-informed we are. Equally, Church leaders in Eastern Europe, and informed people in the pews, are aware of, and deeply resent, the highly distorted picture given of their situation. Some will even joke about it: the late Rev. Dr. Josef Nagy, who for years held many senior posts in the Hungarian Baptist Union, once invited me to preach to 1500 people in the open-air at the Baptist summer camp at Tahi (Where Dr. Billy Graham once preached to many more!). After my sermon, Dr. Nagy pointed to the trees all round the camp, and said: "Here we are, meeting in the woods!" Irony and sadness were in his voice, for the relaxed worship and recreation at Tahi was a reality utterly at variance with the underground church images so often purveyed in the West.

Of course, Communist Eastern Europe is a very different socio-political context for the Churches than capitalist Western Europe. The Marxist ideology of the ruling Communist parties included scientific materialism and atheism, which is promulgated (with varying degrees of intensity and conviction) through the educational systems. In some countries the intellectual climate is inimical to Christianity; in others, especially the GDR and Czechoslovakia, the high degree of secularisation resulting from industrialisation is no less an obstacle than in the West; yet in others, especially Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, both nationalism and peasant society undergird the Catholic and Orthodox Churches with the enduring strength of 'folk religion'. The Churches cannot engage in political opposition to the Communist governments, though this does not obviate criticism ('critical solidarity' with the socialist society is a key theme in the East German Churches). In pre-Communist times, the major Churches (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed, Lutheran) were usually part of the establishment power structure; it was particularly so for corrupt Orthodoxy in late Tsarist Russia. The Marxist transformation in Eastern Europe stripped the churches of privilege and political power, sometimes in traumatic fashion. The conflict between 'White Russia' Orthodoxy and revolutionary Bolshevism in the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s was bitter,

leaving both deep scars and restrictions. Organised Christian youth work, Sunday schools, door-to-door evangelism and religious broadcasting are not yet permitted in the Soviet Union, though some or all of these are found in Czechoslovakia, GDR, Hungary and Poland. The major Churches have had to adjust to a much-reduced role in the Marxist society. Rev. Dr. Lubomir Mirejovsky, for many years Czech Brethren pastor at Tabor and since 1978 general secretary of international Christian Peace Conference in Prague, writing recently on 'Problems of Christianity in Socialist Countries', puts it this way:

"The curtailment of privileges can free the Church to become once again 'apostolic' (pre-Constantinian) and to perform unhindered the mission requested of it by Jesus Christ. It is my personal experience that Christians and religious groups who have accepted the latter attitude and applied it to the religious and public life in a socialist society have gained a considerable scope of action and, what is more important, have established a relationship of trust between Christians and those who had been sceptical about the positive role of religion in a modern society. They have not only gained respect but have developed new forms of religious work adequate to the needs of society".

For Baptists and other (usually) small Protestant bodies, the Communist period has marked an increase in freedom and opportunities, with equality of status for all confessions. I recall one of the Romanian Baptist leaders telling me their situaton was far better than under the old Romanian monarchy, when the Orthodox Church had used its power to suppress the Baptists — a significant comment in view of some reports from Romania.
In the Soviet Union, individual Christians who, in conscience, decide to operate outside the law, whether holding illegal meetings or publishing illegal literature, or such-like, may face legal penalties: such cases are widely reported in the West. It cannot be objectively argued that the incidence of such cases constitutes a generalised pattern of persecution of Christians in the Soviet Union today, whatever was the case under Stalin's regime. With over 40 million regularly worshipping Russian Orthodox, probably three-four million All-Union Baptists (the oft-quoted "half-million" figure needs up-dating!), a half-million Lutherans, and sizeable Adventist, Pentecostal, Old Believers, Armenian and Georgian Orthodox communities, all worshipping legally and having regular Church structures, the equating of religion in the USSR today with 'underground church' or 'suffering church' is factually quite inaccurate. Neither Baptists nor Orthodox claim their situation is one of persecution; both work within the legal framework, constantly negotiating with the state Council for Religious Affairs to broaden that framework. The considerable increase in Bible production and imports in recent years is a fruit of these negotiations, for example.

When supporting Christians in difficulties it is vital not to add to Cold War propaganda, that syndrome which only brings nuclear war nearer. I believe representations are best made through bodies like the Baptist World Alliance, respected by the Soviet authorities as not pushing a 'political line'. The All-Union Baptist and Russian Orthodox Church leaders make private

representations for those in difficulties, even in the face of utterly un-Christian abuse from leaders of extremist dissident groups. (Genorudy Kruchkov, leader of the underground group within the Reform Baptist movement, last year declared those Baptists registering their churches with the state authorities were 'sinning against the Holy Spirit'!) Unfortunately, the widespread publicity in the West given to this tiny minority of dissident Baptists, has obscured the great significance of the growth and activities of the major Baptist group, the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, the only Baptist denomination in USSR recognised by the Baptist World Alliance.

The major expression of Protestant and evangelical life in the Soviet Union, with a history going back to the 1860s, the All-Union Baptists (who comprise Pentecostals and Mennonites as well as Baptists and the former Evangelical Christians group in the Union) are the only religious body found right across the length and breadth of the USSR, from Moscow to Vladivostok and from Murmansk to Tbilisi. According to Rev. Alexei Bychkov, general secretary, steady church growth with dramatic revival in some areas, advance in Christian literature work and study programmes for peace, renewed efforts to heal the breach with breakaway 'Initiative' Baptists, and hopes for the liberalisation of state regulations on religion in the new Gorbachev era, are highlights of current Baptist work. In 1986 he told me: "In 1985 we baptised 7,600 new converts and organised thirty-one new churches. We had major evangelistic advance in Soviet Central Asia, with three thousand conversions in Kazakhstan and Kirgizia. At a harvest festival in Dzambul a hundred people professed faith in Christ. Baptist churches at Alma-Ata, Tashkent, Pzotisay and elsewhere in Central Asia also saw many conversions. Our evangelistic programmes are now very well organised in the Baltic republics, with twice-yearly evangelism weeks in Estonia, and a hundred baptisms last year. To mark the UN International Year of Peace 1986, our Union is holding a number of major theological seminars on peace and disarmament proposals. Baptists should be to the fore among Christians of East and West in making a major peace witness at the present time".

Soviet Baptists are not alone among the Churches of Eastern Europe in taking the peace and disarmament issue very seriously. The East German Protestant Churches hold a "Peace Week" every November; Romanian and Bulgarian Orthodox have held international peace conferences (Dr. Billy Graham addressed one of them); Bishop Karoly Toth of the Reformed Church in Hungary, president of the Christian Peace Conference, is pioneering all-Europe 'Theology of Peace' events; the Russian Orthodox Church has held global inter-faith peace congresses, the most important being the 1982 'Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe' conference, and is developing a significant critique of nuclear weapons from an understanding of God's purposes in Creation. Its 1986 'War and Peace in a Nuclear Age' statement is extremely important, but virtually ignored in the West. No East European Church finds theological justification for the Soviet nuclear arsenal; all nuclear weapons, East and

THOSE MISSING MEN!

How many men will be missing from your congregation on Sunday, March 22nd?

If they belong to the Baptist Men's Movement they may well be at Swanwick that weekend, attending the Movement's 70th annual conference.

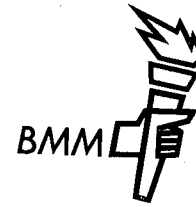
Of course, your church may not be represented at the conference, which will be a pity. This year's theme, **A story to tell**, will challenge men to communicate the gospel to others, and the impact of the weekend is sure to be felt in the churches when they return.

That's a good enough reason to encourage men to book for Swanwick. Even if your church has not had a link with the BMM before, now's the time to put that right. Your mission strategy needs men who have **a story to tell** and who know how to tell it.

For that matter, why not plan to come to Swanwick yourself and learn at first-hand what the Movement has to offer the local church in its support for mission at home and overseas.

Send now for a conference brochure and booking form, or for other introductory literature:

Tom Markie, National Secretary, BMM, 93 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA.



suchlike occasions, using the ministry of music (specially important in Hungary and the Soviet Union) are essential mission activities. The Baptist women's balalaika orchestras in the Ukraine, and the memorable Baptist choirs in Moscow, Leningrad and Volgograd, left me in no doubt as to the evangelistic power of music! The visits of Dr. Billy Graham to Eastern Europe since 1977, including his major Soviet tour in 1984, were deeply significant, enabling high-public-profile Gospel proclamation to be accepted for virtually the first time in those countries. Graham's experience of Eastern Europe changed his outlook: he rejects the 'evil empire' Cold War propagandism of the American fundamentalist Far Right such as Jerry Falwell, and is committed to Christian East-West reconciliation as an evangelical responsibility. Graham's visits also prompted a major renewal of Bible study — especially among Roman Catholics in Eastern Europe. 'Church-planting' is another evangelistic strategy employed in Eastern Europe: I have come across this among Baptists in rural Slovakia and in northern Poland. The church at Gdansk decided to plant a church in neighbouring Gdynia — and thirty families moved house to do so! For the Orthodox Christians, the prime emphasis is participation in the Holy Liturgy, rather than outreach as such. Most Churches in Eastern Europe are experiencing growth at present.

The religious situation in Eastern Europe, like much else there, is neither monolithic nor static. A rich diversity prevails: from the popular, nationalistic and anti-Communist Catholicism of Poland to the equally popular, nationalistic pro-Communist Orthodoxy of Romania, from Christian participation in the GDR government to Christian-Marxist dialogue in Hungary, from ancient churches in Novgorod and Vladimir to ultra-modern church centres in Budapest, Eisenhuttenstadt and Gdansk. State attitudes and restrictions also vary, often in complex fashion: politically tight Czechoslovakia allows women's, youth and Sunday School work; in ideological GDR, both theology faculties and student Christian groups are found in the universities. In Gorbachev's USSR, the anti-corruption and anti-alcohol drives are strongly backed by the Churches.

In Eastern Europe, the Marxist social structures are firmly established, though subject to change; likewise, contrary to original Marxist analysis, the Churches are recognised as a continuing part of the society, partipating in it. Consumer materialism and withdrawal into privatised family life are seen as socially irresponsible by Christians and Marxists alike: such are no less dangers in the West. Across the East-West divide, we can learn much from each other, and can be sign of and force for reconciliation in our divided continent. Already a number of our churches are developing 'twinning' links with churches in Eastern Europe: a network of such links would do much for Christian East-West understanding. Personal and group visits, exchanging cards at Christmas and Easter, common engagement in peace work, practical action such as the London Baptist Association Youth Working Party to Hungary in summer 1986 and the 'Bridge of Books' scheme, and building up contacts denominationally through the EBF and ecumenically through the Conference of European Churches, point the way forward.

Brian G. Cooper

A Personal Pilgrimage

I did not know it at the time, but one of the first decisive moments in my life was at the age of 23, when I sat waiting for a committee to decide whether I could be accepted at Regents Park College, Oxford, while I studied for a medical degree to equip me for missionary work in China: as a medical missionary. I had a good science degree from London University, I had spent three years doing scientific research and I had completed my necessary preliminary training in medicine. In addition, I had applied for and been awarded the Lord Scholarship. I had no resources, but a capacity for work which was considered exceptional at that time. What had led me to that point was the missionary committee of our Christian Endeavour Society at West Ham Central Mission and the kindly ministry of Robert Rowntree Clifford. Mrs. Clifford had encouraged me with her usual exuberant enthusiasm. It seemed that nothing could go wrong. I sat and waited, reasonably confident.

Dr. Wheeler Robinson came out of the committee and talked with me about the problems. I had already met him and we were quickly on the same wave-length. He explained that the committee was worried lest I should be unable to complete the course. He had supported my application because he knew that I had the ability to work in my laboratory when it was necessary to earn money. But the others noticed that I was thin and probably under-nourished, and they wanted to preserve the Lord's Scholarship for a member of an established missionary family who would be glad of it in the following year. Wheeler explained that in compensation they would offer me a theology scholarship to Oxford. He wanted me to study medicine, but thought the committee would not change its mind. My minister advised me to accept.

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Student Patorate

Although I had done a great deal of preaching before going to Oxford and even had charge as lay pastor of Wythes Road Baptist Church, Silvertown, for a year, I had never considered the home ministry. What turned my vocation again was the student pastorate at Eynsham. There I conducted my first baptism — Ken Butler, with whom, later, I went to Germany in 1937 and saw the Nazis at first hand. I enjoyed my student pastorate far more than my theology. The rule was — one year — and Wheeler was known to be adamant. For some reason, he relaxed his iron discipline and gave way to the church's request for a second year. During that year, the joy of serving a church overwhelmed me and I told Wheeler that I had opted for the home ministry. He was understanding. Eynsham must hold responsibility for my choice of a church at home instead of a mission field in Asia. There may well

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have been a little resentment at the BMS committee which preferred an established missionary family to a poor boy from the East End of London!

Stopsley

My first church has a lot to answer for. They had never had a minister before. In fact, they were still a branch church of Park Street, Luton. We looked at each other and the treasurer said, "We've got enough money in the bank to pay you for six months. We reckon that any minister worth his salt will pull 'em in and be able to pay for his own salary after that!' That was what later we would have called, "an offer you can't refuse".

I really was very ill-equipped, but we loved each other and grew together. It was the time when I married and my wife threw herself into the work and the building of a home. Our first two children were born there and Stopsley found a place in both our hearts that no other church could ever find.

The excitement of growth, the preparing of young people for baptism. I was reinforced in my belief in the value of believers' baptism. How do they manage in other churches without it?

World events soon provided a backcloth to my local work. My pastorate started in the shadow of Munich; my first anniversary was the declaration of war; my second was the Blitz; my third, the threat of invasion. The need to combine my ordinary church work with other activities was a lesson I learnt. Like many others, I was an honorary chaplain to the forces. The headquarters of Southern Command was quite near at Luton Hoo. My special work on the refining of oils meant that I spent my holidays working again in my laboratory.

All this put my church in the context of world events and brought me nearer to those serving in the forces from my own church. I have never doubted since then that a minister is at his best when he has also to serve away from his church. It keeps his mind alive and his preaching relevant.

St. Albans

In the midst of the war I moved to St. Albans, Dagnall St. Baptist Church. It was totally different. A very early church, from 1644. Schools moved to St. Albans from London and we soon had a thriving youth work. I have always had a biblical faith — I learnt that from Rowntree Clifford — and the Friday evening Bible studies under Campbell Morgan, which the young people of our Christian Endeavour used to attend. I soon realised that just as Campbell Morgan had stirred me, the only way I could stir these young people was by introducing them to a living Bible. I did not know J.B. Phillips at the time, and he had not yet published. But I was trying to do with my young people what he did with his King's Own. He translated; I prodded them into discussion. We were greatly helped by the 51st Highland Division which was, for a time, in St. Albans. But two things happened there that influenced the rest of my life. First, I was appointed Free Church Chaplain (unpaid in those days) to Hill End Hospital, which later became host to an evacuated Barts Hospital.

I realised how much the doctors and nurses needed help to handle their

THE BAPTIST INSURANCE COMPANY P.L.C.
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To the Readers of the Fraternal.

Dear Friends,

"New for Old"

For the last few years Insurers have been offering policies which state no deduction will be made from claims settlements to allow for past wear and tear of the property destroyed or damaged. The traditional indemnity policy provides for a deduction to be made, where appropriate, for wear and tear.

The idea has become prevalent that "new for old" policies will always be preferable to indemnity contracts. One should, however, remember that Aladdin's wife made a bad choice in changing her husband's old lamp for a new one!

When insuring Church buildings, if a "new for old" or "reinstatement as new" basis is adopted the sum insured should represent at least 85% of the cost of rebuilding as new the whole of the buildings. Otherwise, in the event of a partial loss — most claims are for partial losses — average applies and claims settlements are scaled-down proportionately to the degree of under-insurance. In the case of older buildings, many Churches would not be rebuilt in the same style or on the same scale as the existing structures and the sum insured required to reinstate the buildings as new would be very high.

Provided a reasonable sum insured is arranged, we do not apply average to our indemnity policies and this allows a more flexible approach. For modern buildings a "new for old" basis may well be preferable but for older buildings the matter requires careful consideration.

We are happy to advise.

Yours sincerely,

M.E. PURVER
General Manager

problems. We took Reinhold Niebuhr's Gifford Lectures, 'The Nature and Destiny of Man', as our textbook, and worked out a theological undergirding to medical ethics in those difficult days. I have ever since realised that a hospital chaplaincy is a valuable supplement to a local ministry, and that the doctors and nurses need at least as much help as the patients.

The other lesson was provided by the thousands of prisoner of war who came into our area and eventually came into our churches. I became secretary of a local fraternal which invited German pastors to join us, and I soon learnt a great deal about what the war had meant to the churches of Germany. I began to see that one of the most important theological developments this century in Europe has been in the confrontation with a new dimension of evil.

Germany

It was the work with prisoners of war which led to the invitation to join the Control Commission in Germany. At first, it was with Minor Denominations in the British Zone. After a while, wider responsibilities, but always with German churches as an official, rather than the British as a chaplain.

This was my first mission field outside England. It taught the importance of listening and learning about the roots from which culture comes. You were of little use in Germany if you had not read Goethe! The British Control Commission did not have a very good name. I found a new field for witness under unusual conditions. Perhaps the most important was to show that it was possible for British and Germans to make friends after a bitter war. I spent most of my time living with Germans in their church conferences and homes. Naturally, the Baptists had a special concern for me and I was glad to visit their temporary training college at Wiedenest and then to arrange for the rebuilding of the ruined college in Hamburg. Some of those Baptist ministers whom I met showed me the meaning of hope in desperate situations. They were radiant examples of the Gospel. But I also learnt to work with those of quite different theological views — Old Catholics, Anthroposophists, Quakers, Buddhists, Ba'hai Community, Seventh Day Baptists and sects I had never heard of. You can still hold a strong theological position of your own, while listening with sympathy to different confessions. As I arranged for the German delegations to the Baptist World Alliance at Copenhagen, the International Peace Conference in Amsterdam and the World Council of Churches, also in Amsterdam, I learnt much of the value of a World Church, and began to see the real strength of the Ecumenical Movement. As I returned from Amsterdam I had an engagement to preach at the Gutersloh air force base on Battle of Britain Sunday. I was able to preach with the slogan of Amsterdam in my mind — 'We intend to stay together'. I had met so many who turned down the churches because they were always criticizing one another. The Christian witness is so much more effective when united. The real purpose of church union is still that which Christ gave — 'that the world may believe'. I was still working in Germany when Dr. M.E. Aubrey, our B.U. General Secretary, wrote to ask me to apply for the post of Assistant Head of Religious Broadcasting in the

BBC. The work in Germany was coming to an end and I desperately wanted to get back into a local church. But Aubrey was persuasive.

Broadcasting

I had done a little broadcasting with the Forces Network and played my part in re-establishing the **Nord West Deutsche Rundfunk** (NWDR) in Hamburg; but I really knew very little about administering programmes. I soon learnt — but I learnt more than broadcasting. For seven years I was trying to help people communicate and learning the craft myself. I have always been grateful for what it taught me of the need for perfection and how to communicate a message. I believe it greatly improved my preaching. It also brought me into contact with the giants of the day — George MacLeod, Charles Raven, Leslie Weatherhead, Donald Soper, Ronnie Knox, and many others. Their clear witness and real faith helped me to see how narrow the denominational divisions can be. I don't think for a moment I ever ceased to be a Baptist though many older Baptist ministers prophesied that I would become a Roman Catholic every time I spoke favourably of one of these giants who was a Roman. And not only the giants. It was possible to be with a rural priest, helping him to put a service on the air, and forget that you were not of his confession. As my allegiance to the Ecumenical Movement strengthened, I became more than ever sure that I was in the right denomination and I discovered, more and more, its strength as I discussed with others the need for unity.

I had learnt so much that I wanted to be back in a local church. Seven years was long enough in broadcasting. I was beginning to explore. Then a telephone call from the U.S.A. asked me if I would consider becoming study secretary for the United Bible Societies. It would be for a limited period and the task was to discover, on a world basis, the place and use of the Bible in the living situation of the churches. At that time I was working on a Third Programme series on Bultmann and all my interest in German theology was aroused. I could not see how my longing for a local church, my writing on Germany and my deep involvement in the theologies of Barth, Bultmann and Bonhoeffer could possibly fit in with what looked like another administrative job. But I was persuaded, because of my continuing concern for the use of the Bible and left for Geneva.

The Bible Societies

It meant world travel on a much bigger scale than I had known before. First, Brazil, where I met the rapidly growing Baptist churches in Paraná. I used to write up my reports of each day's experience and post them every day to my secretary back in Geneva. That gave us a detailed record of what I had found on my travels. Once — the first long travel in Latin America — we turned those reports into a book called, 'Tomorrow is a Holiday'. As I covered the rest of the world, I did not repeat the experiment, although it was a book well received. Apart from a growing confidence in the Bible as a foundation for my faith, I also learnt how different communities used their Bibles. The key question was how they could hear what God was saying to them in their situation through the Bible. This became the basis of a whole series of Bible

Weeks throughout the world, beginning at Yeovil in 1958.

In Bible Weeks, I was confirmed in my belief that, if you worked at it, God did speak relevantly to you through the Bible. I even undertook to write a page every week in the British Weekly on the comments of the Bible on the topical issue of the week. It rarely failed. It was at this period that my writing began to mushroom. I had already translated 'The Pastor of Buchenwald' and poured my reading for the Third Programme into 'Man's Estimate of Man'. The Bible Society work required writing and I produced the series of booklets on 'The Bible in our Time'. But other writings began to come easily. I had something to say and I wanted to say it by every medium I knew —preaching, lecturing, broadcasting, and writing. But Bible Weeks grew and every time I left a local situation I felt deprived. I was badly in need of a local church, not just to visit or preach, but a community to care for. At last, I could bear it no longer, and told the Bible Societies. They tried to postpone my leaving, but South Street Baptist Church in Yeovil called me and with a year's notice, during which I ministered to Yeovil every month and prepared my first baptismal class, I accepted.

Yeovil

It was a happy pastorate, although an unusual one. It was difficult to get the World Church out of my hair. We broadcast quite a lot and I still travelled too much, but I felt the full satisfaction of having once again a community of people who allowed me to share their lives and their sorrows. It was, sadly, much too short. The World Association for Christian Broadcasting, with whose predecessor I had been much involved in my BBC days, had held an inaugural meeting in Limuru, Kenya, and called me to become the first Executive Director. This was another world job and introduced me to the broadcasting system of the world. We went through various vicissitudes and I learnt much about handling that curious breed of people called Christian Broadcasters.

I missed Yeovil very much. It had given me freedom to write — I started my work on Bonhoeffer while I was there — to travel and to broadcast. I often regretted leaving it. A Baptist minister really belongs with a local church. But I also learnt that he is the better for not confining all his attention to that church. He is good for it if he keeps a world view and an ecumenical view. I certainly overdid the extra-parochial activities, but I would not have been without some. For that reason, after seven years with the World Association, I agreed to accept what was, at first, a part-time pastorate at Westbourne Park — John Clifford's old church.

Westbourne Park

It was a compulsion. I already had a full time job which made considerable demands on my energy and time. I went to see Geoffrey Haden, then General Secretary of the Metropolitan Area, and said that I needed a church, but had no free time except some weekends and a few evenings. He said, "I suppose you wouldn't consider Westbourne Park". Edgar Bonsall was told that I had some free Sundays and invited me to preach. Only later did he hear

of Geoffrey Haden's conversation with me. I was called and accepted. Within a month, a crisis blew up in Zambia and I had to leave urgently. The church had an early taste of what to expect. They accepted me with all my travel and broadcasting, my many commitments and my heavy writing programme. I was not sure it would work, so we had a release clause after a year to reconsider the whole absurd project. But it worked and we grew together. After four years, it was the WACC that I left because the church needed too much attention. Westbourne Park introduced me to the black communities, too, and I was soon working with them, both in my own church and in five separate black churches.

The need for the church to enter into the sorrows and problems of an ethnic minority in this country came home to me. I had never been a very 'political' minister, but here I had to involve myself in housing, unemployment, discrimination, blatant racism and the workings of the complicated Immigration Act. In Westbourne Park, I served more people who never came to church than people who did. The church was a centre of caring and I discovered how much a ministry depends upon the active support of the deacons and other church members. We caught the spirit of John Clifford — seeking, not growth, but opportunities to serve the community. It is no part of our responsibility to enlarge the church. Faithful witness and service is our lot, only 'God giveth the increase'. That I learnt and tried not to tell God what he ought to do.

Heath Street

I was well beyond retirement age and had done twelve years at Westbourne Park. The church asked me to stay and said they saw no reason for me to leave just when the church was beginning to show signs of real growth. I had to decide — retirement, with a good writing programme and several overseas invitations; remain a little longer at Westbourne Park and see some of the fruits of my work under a new church secretary; perhaps consider serving another, smaller church. I saw Arthur Thompson and he suggested Heath St., Hampstead. And that is where I went three years ago. It is not a retirement ministry by any means. I have kept my other activities, writing, broadcasting, travel, lecturing etc, but the church has offered all that I could wish to satisfy my calling to the ministry. I have never ministered to a church quite like this. There is one thing you can say for certainty about Baptist churches — they are all different, but they are all capable of stretching a minister until he feels he is fulfilling his vocation.

In my heart, I am rather glad that I never went to China.

Edwin Robertson

At Odds With God (Easter Reading on the Atonement)

At odds with Thee,
Ah, that is misery! ...
Then is my life
A tragedy of woe,
And voided of delight
A grim black night,
Where threatening shadows come and go ...

At one with Thee, —
Is my delivery ...
Ah, then in truth no more
Am I alone
As I was heretofore,
To face the stress of life;
But filled with power
That makes me conqueror in the strife ...
At one with Thee.

John Oxenham's 1917 poem is on target when it describes the sinner as "at odds with God", and the believer as "at one with God", but there is no intermediate stanza on the Good Friday "work of Christ" to warrant him moving from the one to the other. This is the subject that must occupy us in this article.

That man is "at odds with God" is the beginning of any doctrine of the Atonement and that is basic to the Biblical material as Ronald Ward shows

statistically in his New Testament study, *The Pattern of our Salvation* (1978). Classifying the evidence of each New Testament author under the headings "Man against God", "God against man", "God for man", "Christ 's work for us" and "Christ's work in us", he comes up with a convincing re-statement of the substitutionary view of Christ's death. Commentators cited in support include Moffatt on Hebrews, Selwyn on 1 Peter, Hunter, Taylor, Black and Cranfield on Romans, and Thrall and Barrett on Corinthians.

The last-named (C.K. Barrett) in a recent chapel address on 2 Corinthians 5:21 remarked that to say "He was made sin for us, He who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" was to use unusual language, to say the least. We can say 'I was made a musician' but not that 'I was made music', but Paul could not say it differently. He could not say Jesus was made a sinner, because He was sinless. He could not say we were made sinners, because we became sinners. He had to say it as he does. Bengel, the commentator, who so influenced John Wesley, said "we would never have dared to say it, if Paul had not said it first", to which Barrett added "Paul would never had dared to say, If One had not gone before, not saying it but doing it" — Jesus bearing the sinner's sin.

Ronald Ward's book is only the first of half-a-dozen recent first-class volumes on the atonement by conservative scholars, after a whole generation when Leon Morris' was almost the solitary voice. From James Tull we have *The Atoning Gospel* (1982), from Leon Morris an up-date and popularization *The Atonement* (1983), from Michael Green, *The Empty Cross* (1984), from H.D. McDonald, *Forgiveness and Atonement* (1984) and in 1985 his major text-book (370 pages) *The Atonement of the Death of Christ*, from George Carey *The Gate of Glory* (1986), and on this day of writing John Stott's *magnum opus The Cross of Christ* (383 pages).

For myself, the Barthian Centennial (he was born in 1886) sent me back last summer to the enormous volumes of the *Church Dogmatics* IV (2300 pages) as suggested by a colleague in a centennial article, even though I was not able to take up his suggestion of residence on a desert island! In several places Barth refers to the various agents at work on Good Friday —the human agencies "the Jew, Caiaphas; the half-Jew Herod; the Gentile, Pilate" (*CD* IV,3,877), all of whom according to **Acts** 2:23 were but agents and executors of "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (*CD* IV,1,239; IV,2,259; IV,3,413).

Following a clue of A.B. Macaulay in his *Death of Christ*, we consider four agencies.

THE CROSS AS AN ACT OF MAN

"All forms of human iniquity have come together to point their arrows at the heart of Jesus", wrote William Manson. "There is Caiaphas, head of the priesthood (but appearing as) cynical head of a political party not risking a breach with the Roman authority; the Pharisees, the holiness party among the Jews... accusing Jesus (falsely) of blasphemy...; the Roman soldiery, set to act as guardians of the peace (but) venting on Jesus their sadistic malevolence against the Jews; Pilate, the man in authority... abandoning the

innocent prisoner to his enemies on an unproved charge" (quoted Tull, p.23).

Douglas Webster points out that Peter's words in Acts 2:23 "you crucified and killed Him" were addressed to the wider Pentecost crowd, which was not exactly identical with the Passover crowd fifty days earlier, as if by extension, they were also guilty.[1] Are any of us then exempt? To the song-writer's question "were you there, when they crucified the Lord?" who of us can say "No". Our sins were certainly there: sins of the mind — pride, envy, sloth and anger; the sins of the tongue — gossip, slander, sarcasm, lying, blasphemy; the sins of the flesh — coarseness, brutality, not to mention strong drink and the gambler's dice! Have we not also given way to greed, and sold moral principle for financial gain? Have we not sacrificed innocence for the sake of ambition? Have we not condemned others by misrepresentation, crucified them in envy, nailed them to a cross in hatred, and rejoiced over their pain? Do we not daily crucify Him afresh?

When we move from the Book of Acts to the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, we find the emphasis now changed to

THE CROSS AS THE ACT OF CHRIST

Heb.9:14 speaks of Christ as "offering Himself" and this is applied to each point of His career. In His coming into the world "He took not hold of the nature of angels but of the seed of Abraham" (2:16) and "since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself partook of the same nature" (2:14); in His temptation, He allowed Himself to be "tempted in all points like as we are" (2:18, 4:15), in His agony, He prayed "with strong crying and tears" (5:7); on Calvary He "endured the cross" (12:2), and in all He was the obedient Son (5:8), who could say "Lo, I have come to do Thy will, O God" (10:7).

Barth in his chapter on "the Obedience of the Son of God" (*CD* IV,1, p.59), brilliantly reverses the Parable of the Father and the Son to describe Christ's coming into the world as "the Way of the Son of God into the far country" (later he will talk of the Home-coming of the Son of Man (p.64). He reminds us of the "musts" of John's Gospel, which represents Him as "The One who is sent, who has a commission and (must) execute it..., as the Son who lives to do His Father's will, to speak His words, to accomplish His work and to seek His glory" (*CD* IV,1,194), and writes

"it is one thing to enter and continue on this way, it was another to tread it to the end.... its necessarily bitter end. It was one thing to contradict and withstand the tempter, it was another to see him actually triumphant, as he necessarily would be in this world, in the humanity ruled by him... From this we may gather something at least of the convulsion of that (last) hour"... "that 'great burden of the world' which not even 'the greatest of Christian and other martyrs' saw that would overwhelm and crush Him" (*CD* IV,1,266).

Speaking of the Sayings from the Cross, Barth calls attention to "the notable difference between what He says in relation to men, the Jews and Romans, to whom He is delivered and who bring about His death: 'Father

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forgive them; for they know not what they do', and what He says in relation to God: 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'" and comments "God has never forsaken, and does not and will not forsake any man as He forsook this man. And 'forsook' means that He turned against Him as never before or since against any — against the One who was for Him as none other, just as God for His part was for Him as He never was nor is nor will be for any other... this Elect of God as such must be the Rejected of God" *CD* IV,3,413-4).

To this One, Barth gives the title "The Judge judged in our place" (*CD* IV,1,211). Man was under judgment, but how did God judge the world? "What took place is that the Son of God fulfilled the righteous judgment on us men by Himself taking our place as man and in our place undergoing the judgment under which we had passed" (p.222). The Heidelberg Catechism is quite right when in Q37 it says "During the whole time of His life on earth Jesus... bore the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race" (*CD* IV,1,165). In Gethsemane it was the cup of Divine wrath (Is.51:17) that He grasped (*CD* IV,1,264-5). On the Cross He suffered "death-dealing wrath — eternal death" (p.253). Even though the concept of 'punishment' comes from Is.53, rather than the New Testament, it cannot be altogether rejected or evaded. "He fulfils this judgment by suffering the punishment which we have all brought on ourselves "(*loc.cit*).

The title "Judge", however, already points us beyond Christ to God and Barth does not hesitate to say that it was "*God* in Jesus Christ (who) has taken our place when we become sinners, when we become his enemies, when we stand as such under His accusation and curse, and bring upon ourselves our own destruction" (216). Barth's full view regards the Cross as equally the work of God, as **St Paul** also does.

THE CROSS AS THE ACT OF GOD

Confusing as it may seem, Barth grasps this nettle and writes "God Himself is not a remote and aloof spectator or non-participating director of this event... With the eternal Son, the eternal Father also has to bear what falls on the Son as He gives Himself to identify with the man Jesus of Nazareth, thus lifting it away from us to Himself in order that it should not fall on us... What are all the sufferings in the world... compared with this fellow-suffering of God Himself which is the meaning of the event which is Gethsemane and Golgotha?" (*CD* IV,3,414).

Earlier Barth had identified the Judge this way. "It is God Himself, His embodied grace and help, who is genuinely... present, both as Judge and Judged. He judges as He had created between Himself and man the Justice which is to fall on man, so that he had to suffer what he had deserved — death as a consuming force, eternal torment and utter darkness. But He also judged as knowing neither sin nor guilt, He caused this judgment to fall on Himself in place of the many guilty sinners, so that it availed for them all, and the judgment was fulfilled on them in Him, and their dying no longer has to be this dying, the suffering of the punishment they have deserved, but only its sign" (*CD* III,2,600).

To elucidate this, Douglas Webster asks what Newman meant by the "double agony in Man" in his stanza

> O generous love! that He who smote
> In Man for man the foe,
> The double agony in Man
> For man should undergo

and explains that "for Christ it was indeed a double agony: He felt it both as Man and as God. As man He was identifying with sinners... as God He was feeling the horror and repulsion that the Holy must always feel in the presence of sin; as Man He was feeling the divine wrath and displeasure that the sinful must always feel in the presence of the Holy".[2]

John Stott, who describes this as "the self-substitution of God" (Ch.6), helpfully quotes (p.159) R.W. Dale's words "the mysterious unity of the Father and the Son rendered it possible for God at once to endure and to inflict penal suffering". There are thus not three actors in the story but two only — "Ourselves on the one hand and God on the other. Not God as he is in himself (The Father), but God nevertheless, God-made-man-in-Christ (the Son)" (Stott, p.158). Support for this may be found in the fact that neither in the Parable of the Lost Sheep, nor the Lost Son are there three characters but two. There is no justification for identifying the Good Shepherd with Christ rather than God, or the father with God, rather than Christ. The point of both is the receiving of sinners by Christ (Luke 15:2), who stands in the place of God.

How can we then understand the God-forsakenness of Jesus on the one hand, or the propitiating of the Father by the Son on the other? It is obvious that here we are on the brink of that ocean of mystery, which we call the Trinity. That wrath needs to be propitiated and that enmity needs to be put aside on both sides, and the Father reconciled as well as the sinner, is maintained by most of the new books being surveyed, and finds adequate support in Scripture. Despite this it is still God who takes the initiative in setting forth Christ as the propitiation in Rom. 3:25, as He had earlier provided the ritual for sacrificial atonement in the Old Testament. H.D. McDonald shows that love and propitiation are not contradictory but occur together in the same texts in 1 John 4:10 and Rom. 5:8-9 (*The Atonement*, pp.30-31).

Denny is quoted by A.M. Hunter for the view "God is love, say some, and therefore He dispenses with propitiation. 'God is love', say the Apostles, 'for He provides the propitiation'".[3] Similarly Forsyth: "Do not say 'God is love. Why atone?' The New Testament says, 'God has atoned. What love!'"[4] We are to think, then, not only of a self-substitution, but also of a self-propitiation and reconciliation. "God's demand on man takes the lead over man's demand on God. And both are over-ruled by God's demand on God, God meeting His own demand" (Forsyth). "God is at once the author and the object of reconciliation. God is reconciled in the act of reconciling the world to Himself" (G. Aulén). As a hymn puts it "Thou permittest dread Lord that we, Take refuge from thyself in Thee".

While objections to the substitutionary view of the atonement based on the injustice of the Father punishing His innocent Son in our place may thus be removed, we still have the problem of the alleged impossibility of the transfer of Christ's righteousness to the sinner. If God *in* Christ alleviates the first problem, Man *in* Christ alleviates the second. The Cross must also be the act of the believer, as *St. Peter* brings out in 1 Peter 2:21 "that we might follow in His steps".

THE CROSS AS THE ACT OF THE BELIEVER

In our faith-union with Christ, it is no longer a case of a third party Christ gaining the merit and passing it over to us, but of us coming into Christ and sharing what is in Him. The Reformers spelt this out memorably in all their writings although the particular emphasis varied in each of the main streams.

Most literal were the Anabaptists, who saw the saving process as involving their own suffering and sacrifice as Christ's disciples. Harassed by persecution and given over to the death of martydom by thousands, it is no surprise that one of their number, Hans Hut, translated Mark 16:15 not as "the gospel *to* all creatures", but as "the gospel *of* all creatures" i.e. the sacrificial principle that ran through all nature, that death was the way to life. Many "new evangelicals" today call for similar radical discipleship reminding us we must give our life to save it.

Theologically there is much to be said for this. "If the sacrifice of Christ is to avail for me" writes Brunner, "it must be wrought in me". If we are to die with Christ, the first victim will be the self, and there is no better way of bringing this about than by immersion in the service of others. "Forgiveness is not only because of Christ, but in Christ" writes Carnegie Simpson, "You cannot have forgiveness, without having the forgiver, without admitting Him to an inward union with your mind and heart and life". So the Lord's Prayer warns that if we do not also forgive, we are not forgiven. "Shouldest thou not have shown mercy on your fellow servant, as I showed mercy on you?" is the question asked of the forgiven but unforgiving debtor in Matt. 18:33. This becomes the principle of all ethic that can be called "Christian". If we do not show mercy, it is clear that we have not found mercy — the root of salvation is not in us, and we are back in the prison of egoism, from which we had believed ourself to have been delivered.

In making these emphases we have to be careful that we do not obscure the finished nature of the work of Christ, by beginning to sew old rags of our own righteousness to the seamless robe of His! Forsyth charges that the Anabaptists fell into this error of "losing the Gospel in the gospels" and obscuring justification by stressing discipleship e.g. in making martyrdom ("baptism of blood") virtually a saving rite. Calvin was no less aware of the need of a daily dying with Christ, and includes a chapter on this in the *Institutes*, but it falls among the later chapters on the duties of the Christian life, and is separated by some hundred pages from the "things that make for salvation".

All writers on the Atonement look for a category that will enable us to

distinguish what Christ did for us from what we must do for Him. Marcus Dods in *Christ and Man* believed he had found one in the sin offering and burnt offering of the Old Testament sacrificial system. In the greatest sin offering of all on the Day of Atonement, the scapegoat became the substitute for each individual's sin and "the guilt of the land was removed in a single day" (Zech. 2:10). The believers' only role was that of onlookers and penitents. In the burnt offering, which went wholly up in flames, the victim was the offerer's representative expressing in outward form the whole-hearted dedication of the offerer to God. In fulfulling the first, Christ did for us what we could not do. In the second, He does for us what we can also do in Him. In the first, He did something for us in order that we may be saved from doing it. In the second, He did it to enable us the better to do it. He is thus both our substitute (1 Peter 3:18) and our example (1 Peter 2:21).

Luther similarly had to put forward a "theology of the Cross" in place of the current Catholic "theology of glory". Medieval Christianity was triumphalist in the extreme and identified the church with the kingdom, and claimed that the powers of the kingdom were at work in their priestly miracles. Luther himself was brought up in this tradition but came to reject it, first by positing revelation instead of the philosophy of natural theology, and then by discovering, in the weakness of the Gospel, its strength. With his own life threatened, and the possibility of martyrdom constantly before him, he abandoned the theology of glory for a theology of the Cross in which strength is made perfect in weakness (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9, 13:4).[5] We need not look far for modern applications in the triumphalism of "prosperity theology", condemned both by Michael Green and John Stott.[6] Doesn't the call for signs and wonders also involve the same blunder — theologically, it may well prove to be "signs and blunders"!

If our argument above about the role of the Father is correct, we have in Him the supreme example of this kind of power in weakness. Barth writes "God does not have to dishonour Himself, when He goes into the far country and conceals His glory. For He is truly honoured in this concealment... The eternity in which He Himself is true time and the Creator of all time is revealed in the fact that, although our time is that of sin and death, He can enter it and be temporal in it, yet without ceasing to be eternal... His omnipotence is that of a divine plenitude of power that... can assume the form of weakness and impotence and do so as omnipotence, triumphing in this form". (Barth, *CD* IV,1,187-188).

With such a God with us in the struggle, we can conclude with John Oxenham.

> At one with Thee! —
> Earth's cares are gone.
> What matters else,
> With Thee at one?

1. D. Webster, *In Debt to Christ* (1956) p.33.
2. D. Webster, *ibid*, p.48.
3. A.M. Hunter, "The Theological Wisdom of James Denney" *ExpT* LX (June 1949) p.240.

4. P.T. Forsyth, *God the Holy Father*, p.4.
5. A.E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (1985).
6. M. Green, *Empty Cross*, pp.215-6; J. Stott, *Cross of Christ*, pp.244 ff.

R.J. Thompson

HOLIDAYS 1987

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Meaning of Baptism

by Raymond Burnish (Alcuin Club/SPCK, 1985, 256 pp, £10.50)

No wonder the average Christian and many a minister prefers to read a paperback with a straightforward and lively description of what faith has come to mean in the experience of the writer, for theological terminology can be so very daunting except to the brave. No doubt the brave will have learned to penetrate the forbidding titles to each of the chapters of this book and being accustomed to swalling faggots crosswise (as F.W. Boreham would have described it), they will have no difficulty with seven doses of the Theology of Baptism, its Catechetical Explanation, The Liturgy of Baptism, and its Mystagogical Explanation. They will be well rewarded for their bravery and so will many others if only they are persuaded to proceed, perceiving that in simple terms it is all about the meaning of Baptism, how the meaning is explained to the candidate and those who share in the service, the form which the service ought best to take, and the experience into which it is intended to lead.

The author has done his homework with care and a chapter is given to each of three representatives of the golden age of Christian instruction in the fourth century viz St. Cyril and the Church at Jerusalem, John Chrysostom and the Church at Antioch, and Theodore and the Church at Mopsuestia. The quotations are in a modern translation, full of interest, and generous enough to convey adequately the points which are being made. Chapter 4 endeavours to make a comparison of these three and their complementary character is made plain. There follows a similar treatment given to the teaching in recent years of the Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Baptist Church and these are compared not only with one another, but with the teaching of the earlier period dealt with in the preceding chapters. Baptists will be particularly interested in the valiant attempt to summarise the views held within the Baptist Church and Raymond Burnish wisely covers himself by referring to the teaching in *certain* of the churches, thus avoiding the inevitable dissent which would otherwise have been forthcoming.

This book reminds us again of the astonishing richness of the baptismal ordinance, so broad in its significance and so varied in the blessing which it brings. To those of us who have the responsibility and privilege of preparing others to be baptised and of nurturing them subsequently, it will demonstrate the shortcomings of what we have often achieved and it will encourage us to work carefully through its pages, noting again and again some aspect of baptism which it would be enriching to emphasise and expound. The benefits of a careful study of what is written here will be much greater than the unhopeful final paragraph of the book might suggest.

Frank S. Fitzsimmonds

Paul: Portrait of a Revolutionary

by Donald Coggan (Hodder and Stoughton, 1986, 255 pp, £2.25)

"A book begins with falling in love. You lose your heart to a place, house or avenue of trees or with a character who walks in and takes sudden and complete possession of you... and there is the seed of your book". These words by Elizabeth Goudge, quoted by Dr. Coggan in the front of his book, seem to sum up exactly how he came to write about Paul. For this is no dull commentary, but rather one man talking about someone for whom he cares deeply. This means that there is a very real warmth and a poetic quality about the book.

Yet Donald Coggan does not fall into the trap of allowing his admiration of Paul to blind him to the Apostle's weaknesses. These seem to stand out in greater relief, making Paul much more of a flesh and blood character than a plaster saint, because the author can be frank while, yet, sympathetic.

In the early chapters, we are shown Paul the young man, growing up in the Tarsus of his day. A recent visit by Dr. Coggan to the places associated with the Apostle makes these descriptions especially colourful. Further chapters deal with Paul as a "New Creation" and his "Fruitful Desert" experience.

Just occasionally, Donald Coggan the preacher comes through, so that the voice from heaven on the Damascus Road is the voice of enquiry, revelation and command. More often, gently and almost pastorally he makes a point.

Following the early chapters on the life of Paul are a number of different aspects of him as a person e.g. as "Writer and Thinker", "Man of Prayer", "Churchman" etc. One traces his "Growth", admitting that we are restricted in this area by the spasmodic nature of the material, compared with modern biographies. Paul's spiritual growth is seen primarily through suffering. An interesting chapter argues for the unity of the teaching of Paul and Jesus, for those who question this.

One of the main strengths of the book is its wealth of quotations, both prose and poetry, which are all carefully documented in the bibliographies at the end of the book. After all, who would expect to see Spurgeon's College motto quoted by a former Anglican Archbishop? Equally, Dr. Coggan uses many non-Christian sources very effectively to make his point. There is much useful material here for preachers.

My one reservation about the book is whether at times, in his desire to show Paul as the man who used his mind and intellect, Dr. Coggan does not overemphasize Paul's own understanding of Christianity to the neglect of the revelation as coming from God. This seems especially true when he is compared with other Christian thinkers. But certainly, later chapters redress the balance.

I would hope that this book is read devotionally as well as for study purposes. The verses at the beginning of each chapter, the quotations and the book itself is not for hurried reading, but to allow Paul and the message he brings to speak in a new way.

Maureen Robbins

Make or Break:
An Introduction to Marriage Counselling

by Jack Dominian (SPCK, 1984, 190 pp, £3.95)

Dr. Dominian's work hardly needs further commendation. Since 1941, when he established the Marriage Research Centre of which he is still Director, he has steadily contributed to our understanding of marriage and of the issues which surround marriage breakdown. With this book he has again put us in his debt. He sets out the elementary principles of counselling in a wise and practical way, which anyone in a caring role will find helpful, though it is written primarily for ministers.

The number of divorces in England and Wales rose from 25,000 in 1961 to 146,000 in 1981. There has been, as a consequence, an increased demand on ministers for help with marriage problems which may present difficulties for a pastor. There is the need to listen carefully and understandingly to a couple and to uphold Christian teaching, yet to do so in order to stimulate 'the *active* co-operation' of the persons concerned 'in a moral quest'. In addition, counselling will touch the pastor's feelings and tensions within his/her own marriage.

Dr. Dominian explores the general and specific social changes and psychological factors which contribute to the rise in divorces and to the changing nature of marriage. He notes the different needs and higher expectations in contemporary marriage and urges that 'If Christianity wants deeper and more fulfilling marriage, then it must give priority to education, training and support for it'.

Part II provides some detailed practical advice for counselling during each of three phases of marriage — the first five years (the crucial phase), the 30 to 50 year period, and from then on. Help is offered in relation to the difficulties associated with each period and recognizing the five dimensions of marriage, the social, intellectual, spiritual, sexual and emotional. The third part (III) of the book examines more specialized marriage problems: indecision, infidelity, jealousy, sexual variations, alcoholism, violence and depression.

The final part is about preventing breakdown. Dominian concludes with these important comments: 'The support of marriage and the family has engaged our attention afresh in relation to the sudden rise in divorce. But divorce is a symptom of a more fundamental change in marriage itself, a change which is likely to spread from Western societies to the rest of the world. Thus in looking at the problems facing Western society in this area, we are witnessing basic issues which affect the man-woman relationship and the nature of being human which is ultimately a concern of everybody. Support for marriage is not only a matter of preventing marital breakdown but also the means of experiencing love.

Bruce Keeble