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

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CONTENTS

Editorial	3
A New Baptist Hymn Book	4
by Keith Clements Tutor, Bristol Baptist College.	
Aids: The Facts of the Case	11
by Dr John Campling, General Practitioner, Moulton, Northamptonshire.	
Oswald Smith	15
by Rev. Frederick Stainthorpe, Teacher, Willenhall, West Midlands.	
"Not Strangers but Pilgrims"	20
by Rev. Douglas C. Sparkes, Assistant General Secretary, The Baptist Union.	
Book Reviews	27
A Liturgical Note: Communion	30
Of Interest to You	31

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Editorial

By the time this editorial is read our Siberian experience will be but a dim and distant memory — could it really have been so awful? But writing as we do at the end of January, the experience is still sharp, especially for those of us in the (normally) sheltered South East. The poignant symbol which seemed to say it all was the blackbird we spotted in the wintry, white wasteland, forced to peck at the snow for sustenance.

That which helped to redeem what, after all, was winter was the heightened public awareness of the plight of the elderly. Intense media coverage brought not only a fiver a week from government, but also a practical concern on the part of the populace for their octogenarian neighbours. It was heartening to discover this in pastoral visiting. At least for a fortnight there was a sense of what it meant to be “members one of another”.

Our spring edition this year begins with a subject which has met with something less than unanimity and equanimity in the denomination: A New Baptist Hymn Book. How changed is the climate from that which received the BHB, back in 1962! Consequently it is important to provide a rationale for such a hymn book and the criteria which should govern its style and contents in the light of contemporary context. This Keith Clements seeks to do in an article which formed part of an address at the Annual Conference of the BMM, last year.

The second article: “Aids: The Facts of the Case” was commissioned some time before the government launched its campaign, “Don’t Die of Ignorance”. So to some extent the article has been overtaken by events. However, it has meant that Dr. John Campling has been able to take the information from that campaign into account. In a situation of some flux, it gives the facts as they are understood at this moment in time. May it prove helpful in our pastoral and preaching ministry as we address “the biggest threat to public health this century”. We are grateful to Dr. Campling for this guest article, coming as it does from a doctor in general practice.

1986 saw the passing of someone little known in the U.K., but almost a legend in Canada: Oswald Smith of The People’s Church, Toronto. Fred Stainthorpe presents a portrait of a man whose life and ministry were totally mission-orientated. He believes much can be learnt from such a man and such a ministry. Note Smith’s memorable quotes!

Ecumenical work is a tender plant, frequently beset by cynicism, weariness, disappointment and frustration, but the goal is a glorious one. The present “inter-church process” called “Not Strangers but Pilgrims” is different in that the objectives are not defined beforehand, and every effort is being made to elicit grass-roots views. Douglas Sparkes, in our fourth article, summarises where we are on the Unity road.

A New Baptist Hymn Book

Baptists come from a tradition whose worship has a definite pattern, that of God's call and our response. It is a pattern centred on the Word of God, read and proclaimed. 'Thou hast said, seek my face; Thy face Lord do I seek'. Called by God to worship, we present ourselves in worship and praise and confession. He calls again as we hear the Word read and proclaimed. We respond again in thanksgiving, intercession, and the dedication of ourselves to service and witness, the whole being consummated at the communion of the Lord's table. Our forefathers worked out this basic pattern in terms of Word and prayer. All else was peripheral — certainly as far as music and singing were concerned. One *might* sing the psalms in the 17th and early 18th centuries. But to sing the words of other men was dubious to say the least ... thought it did eventually come thanks to Keach, Beddome, Rippon and company.

If we are to preserve worship as a meaningful act, we must not lose sight of this basic underlying pattern to it. (I was recently in a church where it was announced, 'Before our time of chorus-singing, a few words from John's gospel'. What *is* happening to Baptist worship, we may well ask!) But here we encounter a great paradox. On the one hand, our basic understanding of worship pre-dated hymnody, and is quite independent of it. On the other hand, hymns are far more important in our practice of worship — one might say integral to worship — than to many other traditions. The Anglican liturgy for instance, can do without hymns perfectly well, and one might say that with all due respect to our Anglican friends who don't always seem sure what to do with hymns in worship. For us, however, hymns have become an essential part of the 'call and response' pattern of worship. Sometimes we irreverently call our style the 'hymn sandwich', and so it deserves to be called if it is done thoughtlessly. (But remember, for pilgrim people on the march sandwiches are a more appropriate diet than either three-course meals or candy-floss). Hymns now perform many crucial roles, not 'between' the different items of our worship, but in those items. They are the means by which we present ourselves to God, invoke the Holy Spirit, prepare to hear the Word and approach the table, pray for others and ourselves. They become the means by which, through that precious inter-lacing of melody and word in both conscious and subconscious memory, the word preached can become the word lived as we leave for home and work and witness. Above all, hymns are the means whereby in worship we *confess* our faith — it has often been remarked that while we rarely say the historic creeds we *sing* the creed — and whereby the faith is *taught*.

With this in mind, we face the current situation in which a new hymn-book is being planned. Why do we need a new one? Basically, of course, because the present Baptist Hymn Book (BHB, 1962) is no longer satisfactory for our worship. This is far from a criticism of it as such. Indeed it is impossible to underestimate its significance for Baptist worship in this and other countries. It marked a real advance when it was introduced, and a quick way

of underlining its importance for ourselves is to reckon up those hymns which many of us would now deem essential for our worship, which appeared in 1962 (for instance 'We praise, we worship Thee, O God', 'God of grace and God of glory', 'May the mind of Christ my Saviour', 'God is love, let heaven adore him'). It is a fine book and in some quarters its contents are still not fully appreciated and exploited — to people's own spiritual impoverishment. *But* it has dated more quickly than any of its predecessors, due not to any fault of its own, but simply because of rapid developments in the churches and in society at large since its publication. A number of factors may be identified as follows:

1. The modernization of language in worship. Just a year previous to the publication of BHB 1962, the New English Bible (New Testament) appeared, the first of but many contemporary translations of the Scriptures which have displaced the King James Version from regular use in public worship. And once modern *Bible* language was introduced, modern *prayer* language soon followed in the 1960's with 'Thee's' and 'Thou's' disappearing in face of 'You's'. Hardly any hymns in BHB 1962 use the 'You' form in address to God. Hymnody, by the 1970s, was becoming an island of archaic English amid the rising tide of contemporary usage and idiom, and the incongruity was ever more apparent.
2. From the mid-1960s onwards came a rush of 'experimental' worship with the use of dialogue, drama, visual aids etc. Nothing could be taken for granted any more as being useful or relevant, even if (or especially if!) within the pages of an established hymn-book!
3. From about the mid-1960s onwards, came the explosion of new hymn-writing. In one of the introductory chapters to *The Baptist Hymn Book Companion* (1962) the late Dr. Ithel Jones referred to the question which inevitably arises 'as to whether the present revival of interest in Biblical theology will produce a harvest of strong hymns'. Certainly there had been relatively little new hymn-writing in the mid-century. Then came the battalions of Fred Pratt Green, Fred Kaan, Brian Wren and others writing in a 'classical' style, but in contemporary language and with an eye to contemporary concerns, not to mention Sidney Carter getting us all to join in the dance. The latter half of the 20th century was, at last, producing its own harvest.
4. Theological change. 1963 saw the appearance of Bishop John Robinson's *Honest to God*, the most dramatic manifestation, on a popular level, of the 'secular theology' debate. The theological mood of the 1960s affected *all* of us, *including* those who rejected the 'secular gospel' as inadequate. For it forced all of us to take the actual world with unprecedented seriousness, whether we call ourselves liberals, conservative evangelicals or whatever. Concrete human needs now figure highly on all our agendas, and in our worship we demand and expect material with explicit reference to the particular human issues

which make our headlines and disturb our consciences, whether hunger, race, peace, ecology or whatever.

5. The Charismatic Movement. From the early 1970s, our churches have increasingly had to respond to this phenomenon of our time. Among much else, it has introduced (or reintroduced) a new style of doxology into our worship; the simple affirmation that God is here and to be acclaimed as such. It has created a kind of new trans-denominational culture, especially among younger people, with its own language, symbols, gestures, music and words. Many of us who would eschew the label 'charismatic' nevertheless would accept much of this as part of our current style.
6. The ecumenical movement has continued, and at many levels. When BHB was introduced, we were still looking in wonder at the Second Vatican Council assembling in Rome — and now many of us take for granted joint worship with Roman Catholics and sing many of their hymns and songs. On the local level, ecumenical worship whether occasional or in on-going local ecumenical projects has made us almost as much at home in other churches' worship as our own (Not that hymns as such are particularly denominational. How many hymns in BHB 1962 are by Baptists?).

These changes and developments have all been happening at the same time, over the past 15-20 years. Together, they constitute greater changes than in any comparable period since hymnody was first introduced into our churches in the 18th century. Linguistically, culturally, theologically — and socially — 1962 suddenly seems a very long time ago. The task facing our editorial committee is thus of rather a different order than that facing their worthy predecessors, and there are some quite new questions to be faced.

One of the most pressing factors in the present scene is the plethora of recent hymn-books, chorus-books etc already on the market, and being made ready use of in many churches. Many are 'doing their own thing' — and why not? It is the age of the over-head projector and the photo-copier (but also, remember, still the age of the copyright laws). So why bother with a new hymn-book anyway? Why not let people pick and choose whatever appeals to them from an already crowded bookstall? This is the most oft-repeated, critical question levelled against the whole concept of a new hymn-book for Baptists. It deserves an explicit answer, and in fact I think it can receive two.

The first is that while we are indeed in a state of change and flux on the hymn-book scene, with such a flood of new material that any attempt to produce a new volume is like trying to capture the wind and put it in a box, this state of affairs cannot continue indefinitely. No creative religious movement in history has ever managed to stay alive simply by experiment and spontaneity, without sinking into chaos and eventual sterility. Sooner or later churches are going to be seeking something more solid and enduring than the present welter of light-weight material. We have indeed been benefitting from an upsurge in new forms, but some selection process is

going to operate over the next few years whether we like it or not and we must try to see that it is a process which works by design and not by accident.

The second answer sounds a bit arrogant — but any publishing venture necessitates a dose of arrogance. It is, quite simply, that none of the books at present on offer are good enough for worship in our churches — good enough that is, in supplying that edification and enrichment of the people of God in their worship today.

What, then, do we need in a book that will be 'good enough'?

Several features may be identified:

- (i) We need a core of the 'classical greats' which have undisputed claim to a place because of their sustaining value to people over the years and in some cases the centuries. Our survey last year showed that 200 or so such hymns in the present book can be readily so identified. No-one surely pretends that any hymn-book can be taken seriously without 'Now thank we all our God', or 'All people that on earth do dwell' or 'When I survey'.
- (ii) We need hymns written, as far as possible, in language which is contemporary or at least understandable to those only accustomed to ordinary everyday English. As one respondent remarked to us, 'I've had to raise my Ebenezer a bit too often'. This is a highly sensitive and contentious area where no-one, we are quite sure, will be entirely satisfied by our efforts. We want to go as far as we can in meeting the need for contemporary usage and the removal of archaisms — and if we are not dedicated to this, as Alec Gilmore remarked at one of our meetings, we are essentially like those in the Roman Catholic Church who argue for the continued use of Latin.

But contemporization of language needs to bear in mind the poetic content of hymns. There is poetry which will just not modernise without its special qualities being lost. 'Praise the Lord, you heavens adore him' is neither 18th century nor 20th! Moreover, some modernisations can result in such a re-writing of the hymn as to make the original thought within it unrecognizable. Take, for instance, Matheson's 'O love that wilt not let me go' and see what has become of it in 'Hymns for Today's Church':

O love that will not let me go
revive your loveliness in me.

If we find that a hymn cannot be freed from 'archaisms' without wholesale alteration, then we have to be honest and decide whether we should keep it as it is, or, given the incomprehensibility of its phraseology today, to drop it altogether. Put crudely — get rid of Thee's, Thou's and Thy's where possible, but not to make an end of this in itself.

- (iii) We need hymns which accurately reflect Christian experience today and the needs and concerns of the world in which we live. This means a

ban on hymns which suggest that Britain still rules (or should rule) the waves, that black people only live overseas, or that the human race consists only of males. We need to go for inclusive language as far as possible.

- (iv) We need more hymns on areas which are (or claimed to be) central to our faith and spirituality but which are sadly lacking at present — such as Christian community and freedom in Christ. And our present section on 'baptism' in BHB is judged to be woefully inadequate by most ministers, lay people and churches we have surveyed.
- (v) Children's hymns need a complete re-think. Most so-called children's hymns are in fact adults' hymns written to be put on the lips of children — not always a very honest procedure either in intention or effect. Modern emphases on the church as itself a kind of family surely requires some hymns which can be sung with sincerity by all age-groups together.
- (vi) We need singable tunes. Here is where *Praise for Today* (1974), the supplement to BHB, has been criticised most often. And we need music which reflects the wide and growing variety of instrumentation used in our churches.
- (vii) We must take careful heed of material from overseas. The Church of today must reflect its transnational character in the material of its worship, both for its own enrichment and as a regular witness to the nature of the body of Christ.
- (viii) There must be provision for both breadth and depth in worship. There must be scope for what is of simple assurance *and* for what is challenging to the mind and spirit. In fact in my view the strongest argument against the 'pick your own hymn-book' approach is that it ignores the nature of spiritual growth. Left to ourselves, whatever our theological stance we are inclined only to go for what immediately appeals to us and conforms to our present assumptions and tastes. For our own good, we need something better than to be left to our own devices. Our spirituality grows as it is tugged at the edges by what is new, strange and perhaps alien at first. We need a book which will do this for all of us — not to mention the 'experienced believer' and the new Christian.
- (ix) Inevitably, therefore, we meet the question of 'songs' and 'choruses'. I referred earlier to the new culture of 'doxology' or 'sung acclamation' which is now part of our scene. The diversity which will be reflected in a new book will have to comprehend this. Again, it will have to be a discriminatory approach. Some 'choruses' have already become familiar as simple, hauntingly beautiful lines of words and melody, or simple part-songs, which are uplifting, meditative or instructive depending on how they are used. Others have been produced in the mistaken belief that slapping biblical sentences into a catchy tune makes a 'spiritual song' while yet others are unbelievably banal in language, infantile in thought, and meretricious in music. To say that

there is much rubbish around at the present time is not to be unduly critical — it is what happens in any period of rapid output. After all, we call Charles Wesley a great hymn-writer and so he was. But most of the hundreds of hymns he wrote are in the dust-bin of history. What we sing today are the priceless gems that have proved their worth.

We cannot forget that a hymn-book is primarily to be used in worship, and one of today's greatest dangers is shallowness in worship. We are tempted to aim at a uniform level of emotional satisfaction among the worshippers, instead of realising that a whole range of human feelings are to be embraced and brought into the godward movement which is worship — what Evelyn Underhill called 'disinterested delight' in God himself. At present, 'praise' is too often equated with a psyched-up jollity, in which actual feelings of doubt, guilt and fear are repressed or denied, and sometimes the call to worship sounds like being told 'this is how you ought to feel so start feeling this way now'.

The Psalms are instructive here (and incidentally, while few churches now chant the psalms, what BHB 1962 did was to create a psalm-reading habit in our congregational worship). We find in the Hebrews' hymn-book psalms of peace, joy and tranquility. 'The Lord is my shepherd' ... 'Bless the Lord O my soul ...' But there are also psalms of a very different sort. 'Lord, why hast Thou cast us off and rejected us?' 'My God, my God ...' Pain, anguish, questioning are not silenced. Some people today are evidently being attracted to expressions of the gospel which meet the need for a simple certitude — and in today's world that is readily understandable. But there are others for whom such simplicity is unreal, and who find more appeal in a verse like:

When from the darkness comes no light,
When from the weeping comes no laughter;
When in the day we hope for night
Nor any comfort coming after:
Grant us your peace.

(Praise for Today 95)

For many people today, the admission of questions is a real part of their actual religious experience. These people must not be excluded by default, by the style and temper of a new hymn-book. The diversity must be as great as that.

A new hymn-book for our churches, then, is going to be more diverse in language, theology, music and idiom than any one of us left to ourselves would choose it to be. The criterion for inclusion of any item in it, will be whether it can play some role in that pattern of divine call and human response — taking us as we are, to God as he is; taking us renewed as we are by his grace, to the world as it is in its need. 'Every blessing to you in your impossible task!' has been the comment of many a well-wisher over the past few months. When we are set impossible tasks it is often a sign that the Holy Spirit is around.

Keith Clements



WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

York House 409 Barking Road,
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Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother

Dear Fellow Ministers

Wherever we turn these days, we seem to hear about the "stress in the Ministry". Indeed, I myself am going to a Day Conference on that very subject in May. What worries me a little is the tendency to become almost self-pitying as we think of the "slings and arrows" that inevitably come our way as we fulfil our calling. Of course, there *is* stress in the Ministry, and that stress is sometimes reflected in the life of the Manse family. We must never forget, however, that almost every profession and calling involves a significant level of stress. Indeed, this is an inescapable corollary of the exercise of leadership and responsibility.

In recent years, the work of the Mission both at Greenwoods and Bodey House has become more and more orientated towards helping those who are suffering the effects of stress in their personal, family or professional lives. Although people come to us from all walks of life, we have been privileged on many occasions to help those who are engaged in "full time" Christian service. There is a worrying increase in the incidence of difficulties and even breakdown in Christian marriages. Sometimes it seems to be the structures and the demands of the Church itself that exacerbate whatever problems already exist.

What I really want to say is that we have some experience and understanding of the difficulties and burdens that our brothers and sisters in Christian ministry are experiencing. If there is any way that the experience and understanding may be of value to you, then please do not hesitate to contact us.

This is one way in which the Mission is trying to "care for the carers". Please pray for us as we undertake this sensitive but vital task for the Lord's sake. May He grant you His peace and joy as you serve Him.

Yours sincerely,

Trevor W. Davis,
Suoperintendent Minister

AIDS: The Facts of the Case

Since I was asked last summer to contribute an article for the "FRATERNAL" about AIDS a mass of articles, booklets, letters, radio and TV programmes on this subject has appeared. Almost daily more information drops through my letterbox and my file on AIDS grows thicker each week.

Early this year every household received a Government Information leaflet "AIDS — don't die of ignorance", and few can have missed the dramatic TV information slots.

"AIDS and Employment", "Protect Your Health Abroad", "AIDS and the Blood Donor", "Children at School and AIDS", "AIDS, What Everyone Needs to Know", "AIDS — Its Significance for First-Aiders", and many more have been published and distributed. Phone lines and addresses for further information on various aspects of the disease are given almost in profusion.

So the original intention of this article to provide factual information is possibly now out of date. We have all been the target of an unprecedented health education campaign. Alistair Cooke in his "Letter from America" radio programme tells us that the Americans are impressed by our campaign and are planning to follow suit — extraordinary when you consider that the epidemic began in the USA some years before occurring in this country and has reached much larger proportions! If the public (you, me and all the others) are well informed the risk of AIDS spreading *may* be reduced, but information alone is never enough. Attitudes must change — behaviour then may alter and the potential epidemic of this untreatable condition over the next decade may be averted. Yes, AIDS could become epidemic, particularly if the treatment to reverse the immune deficiency remains unknown.

Let's look at the facts, the possible facts and the unknown!

What is the role of a Christian minister in this situation?

The Facts

1. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is caused by a virus infection. The syndrome (a particular pattern of illness) was first reported in 1981. The virus, now known as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) may attack and weaken the body's defence mechanism and lead to other infections, such as pneumonia, overwhelming the person and causing death.
2. Infection with the virus does *NOT* usually lead to AIDS — most people who have the virus in their blood have no symptoms and appear well. Some suffer varying degrees of ill-health before recovering to full health. A few go on to develop AIDS and die. At present it is not possible to predict which people infected with HIV will develop AIDS.
3. A blood test to detect HIV antibody shows if a person has been infected with the virus. It may take 2-3 months for this test to become positive after infection, so a negative test shortly after exposure does not necessarily indicate freedom from infection.

4. The main groups at risk of being HIV infected in the UK at present are male homosexuals, bisexuals and their partners, injecting drug misusers and haemophiliacs who have had repeated blood transfusions. To date 90% of the cases of AIDS in this country have been in the first two groups.
5. High rates of infection are reported from Central and East Africa, where both sexes are affected equally. Blood used for transfusion in these areas may be infected — in the UK all blood donated for transfusion is screened for HIV antibodies. Blood donors in this country cannot get infected when donating.
6. The virus is transmitted through intimate exposure to genital body secretions or via infected blood. For most people the only real danger comes from having sexual intercourse with an infected person.
There is no record of anyone being infected through shaking hands, kissing, sharing cups or cutlery, using public baths or toilets or being bitten by mosquitoes.
7. At present there is NO known way of reversing the immune deficiency; there are some treatments for the individual opportunistic infections (e.g. pneumonia) associated with AIDS.
8. Up to February 1987 686 cases of AIDS had been reported in the UK: almost half had died.
Up to December 1985 275 cases of AIDS had been reported in the UK: 140 had died.
(More than 5,000 people die annually on our roads from traffic accidents.)

Possible Facts

1. The prevalence of infection in heterosexual people in the UK is currently very low. The potential for spread among heterosexuals is real. Prevention of this happening may depend on immediate reduction in the number of sexual partners, particularly casual ones, and the use of a condom if there is any doubt about a partner being infected.
2. Injecting drug users need advice not only about their drug misuse, but also about the grave danger of sharing needles and syringes and thereby becoming infected. 80% of this group in Edinburgh recently were HIV antibody positive.
3. Women who are infected should not become pregnant. They are more likely to develop AIDS if they become pregnant and there is a high risk of the baby being infected and dying of AIDS.
4. HIV infection is *not* just confined to our large cities. The virus is spreading and there are possibly 40,000 people now in the UK infected (December 1985 estimate 20,000).
5. There is hope that spread to the heterosexual community can be contained. Outside the at-risk groups — who are asked not to donate blood — the only monitor is the testing of blood donations. This has

been done since October 1985; of 3 million donations only 3 were found to be HIV antibody positive in the UK.

6. The politics of AIDS is concerned with morals, ethics, individual freedom and communications. In these areas governments are often hesitant — they prefer to deal with law and finance.

The Unknown

1. We do not know where the virus was before 1981.
2. We do not know how many HIV antibody positive people will eventually die of AIDS.
3. We do not know if all HIV antibody positive people are equally infectious.
4. We do not know if some HIV antibody positive people will become negative spontaneously.
5. We do not know how rapidly the infection may spread in this country.
6. We do not know how long it will be before an effective vaccine or treatment is discovered.

Christian AID for AIDS

1. Youth Groups, Christian groups especially, will benefit from discussion about their developing sexual attitudes and behaviour. This needs to include talking about casual sex and drugs, including those like alcohol which may diminish their feelings of responsibility towards others. In the last 25 years the risks of pregnancy or acquiring sexually transmitted diseases have been much reduced by efficient contraception and medical therapy. This has led to changes in sexual behaviour among young people. This freedom may have been beneficial to a few but bewildering to many. The new threat of AIDS is already changing behaviour again — this may be exactly the appropriate time for re-examining Christian attitudes, particularly those concerned with responsibility towards others.
2. Medical counselling of those who are HIV antibody positive and asymptomatic is a specialist field requiring up-to-date, accurate information and frank advice about the risks of spreading the infection to others. Ministerial help for these people is complementary and important as their prime need is confidentiality. Who can provide a truly confidential ear apart from minister or doctor?

An opportunity to express their fears and guilt without judgment, along with an atmosphere of understanding and support, is essential. The attitude of Jesus to those with disease and guilt was basically that of hope for the future and forgiveness. Possibly the main work of the minister is to help them face the future with faith that whatever happens the love and support of God is always available. This type of ministerial help will need to be very personal as the minister will rarely be in a situation to enlist the help of others without betraying confidentiality.

3. The ministerial support and counselling of people with AIDS and the prospect of death in the near future will be similar to that given at present to those with other terminal illnesses. The London Lighthouse organisation "guides people home", encouraging them to arrange their priorities when time is limited and emphasising the quality of life — past, present and future — rather than quantity. The fear of pain, isolation and the problem of surviving relations are all ones in which many ministers have considerable experience. Additionally, the AIDS victim may have the problem of his or her condition being a punishment for past lapses of behaviour. The acceptance of a universal divine saving grace and the peace of mind this can bring may be the main task of the Christian minister attending the AIDS sufferer. This could be a difficult area to introduce to the previously agnostic, but it is the core of the Christian gospel which you have chosen to study and teach.

"Let him or her who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone".

JOHN 8 v.7

John Campling

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Oswald Smith: A Man for Missions

Oswald Smith was a Canadian Presbyterian who had been baptised by immersion. This should make him fairly acceptable to Baptists. What ought to make him more welcome is the fact that he was an enthusiast for world mission. Wheeler Robinson once said it was in the missionary meeting that one could hear the heartbeat of the Baptist denomination. Smith's death in March 1986 has robbed the Church of an eminent missionary-evangelist and we can learn a lot from his life.

He was born in Ontario in 1889 and became a Christian at the age of sixteen. His early days in ministry were varied and somewhat undistinguished, which is an encouragement to most of us. He sold Bibles to lumberjacks in British Columbia and preached to Indians before studying at the Toronto Bible College. He travelled for the Pocket Testament League and suffered a broken love affair. Out of these experiences came his poetry. He wrote all through his life and though, like Charles Wesley, much of his work may be forgotten some, such as "When Jesus Came", have become common currency across the Atlantic.

He soon developed an interest in foreign missions, but his slight frame and ill-health prevented him from going abroad as a missionary. However, he compensated for this in later years by going on long preaching tours to Europe, the Far East, Australasia and South America. Each time he returned more conscious of the world's need for Christ and determined to stir up churches to a wider vision. He felt called to a world work. This may seem to us like spiritual megalomania but people like Paul, Francis Xavier, Carey and C.T. Studd were given similar vision. Where would the Church be today without them?

Like some of us, he made mistakes. He had to move from one Bible College to another. He accepted a call to a church in Los Angeles, but felt on arrival that this was not the place for him. Nevertheless, the church grew despite his unhappiness. Strange are the ways of Providence.

After moving to Chicago he did summer vacation ministry in Kentucky and eventually returned to Toronto which was to be "his stepping stone to the world". Life at Dale Presbyterian was not easy, though work flourished. His senior colleague J.D. Morrow joined up as an army chaplain, but Smith's vigorous evangelising shook the rather staid church and he resigned. Various bits of activity followed with no clear vision. He went back to the loggers in British Columbia, became secretary of the Shantymen's Christian Association, helped to publish Christian literature but was appalled when his boss objected to selling his love poems. Back in Kentucky, a chance discovery of the Christian and Missionary Alliance magazine ushered him into fresh service for God as minister of their Park Dale Church, Toronto. Through their influence he was baptised as a believer.

The church outgrew its premises and was rebuilt. His ministry spread to much of North America. It was at this time that Smith began the first of his long tours, this time to Eastern Europe. His church was not over-pleased.

Too much money was going abroad, not always to "Christian and Missionary Alliance" projects. So he resigned to become their Superintendent for Central and Eastern Canada. For over a year he did his best, but felt that "he was no good at bossing his fellow-ministers"(!). Eventually, he went back to Toronto, to rent Massey Hall, and the People's Church was born in 1928. For fifty-six years it was to be the base for his world-wide work.

From there his second journey to Eastern Europe saw him in the midst of revival scenes and led to the formation of the Russian Border Mission. Back in the homeland he set off on "deputation", stirring people's hearts and raising money. Not for him the "ask God only" approach. He believed in telling the people and in no uncertain terms.

When asked to pastor the church in Gerrard Street he found that it was plagued with debt. He made no mention of this in his first sermon, but preached on "missions". This he did again in the evening. He asked the people to come back again every night of the week and each time they got a dose of missions. The next Sunday he announced that at each of the three services offerings for missions would be taken. One can imagine the treasurer's reaction!

But the people began to give as they had never given before, and the church started to grow. Soon it was free from debt, never to know it again. From this experience Smith coined his phrase "The church which puts 'missions' first will always prosper". The People's Church flourished. Over the years it sent out hundreds of missionaries and raised 23 million dollars for their support.

The remaining fifty years of Smith's life were spent in ever-widening circles of ministry both in the New World and elsewhere. His church lived simply so that it could give generously to missions. "A live church", he said, "Will give more for missions than it raises for its own work". In 1962 his church raised 53,000 dollars for domestic use, and gave 318,000 dollars for overseas work.

His attitude to missionary giving stemmed from his first experience at a Christian and Missionary Alliance convention. He watched the ushers handing out pledge envelopes, one of which read, "In dependence on God, I will endeavour to give ——— dollars during the coming year". He felt that this left him out. His financial situation was precarious, but as he began to scrunch up the form he heard God saying to him:

"I'm not asking you to give out what you have.
Will you trust me to put extra money into your
hand so that you may give it to foreign missions?"
"All right, Lord. I'll trust You. How much?"
"Fifty dollars", came the immediate response.

This was more than half a month's salary. Nevertheless, the strong impression remained and he signed the form with a shaking hand. This began a new experience of faith as he believed God, and as he sent in the extra four dollars a month. He taught and applied this principle in all the

THE BAPTIST INSURANCE COMPANY P.L.C.
4 SOUTHAMPTON ROW,
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Telephone No: 01-405 4084

To the Readers of the Fraternal.

Dear Friends,

I am preparing this advertising letter in January, two or three weeks after severe weather which produced claims for storm and burst pipes damage from all over the country. By the time this letter is read the resultant heavy workload will be behind us and most of the claims settled, although we will still be receiving the occasional first notification beginning "During the recent severe weather"!

I thought it might be helpful to try to clear up one aspect of these claims which is frequently misunderstood. It concerns damage by frost. This is excluded from **storm** cover because the action of frost will not harm the fabric of buildings in good order. For example, the breaking up of stonework following frost and freezing conditions will only occur if the stone has become porous over the years. Cladding and facings to buildings will not come away because of frost unless there is already a gap which allows water to penetrate and then freeze. These are maintenance matters and not subjects for insurance claims.

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Yours sincerely,

M.E. PURVER
General Manager

missionary conventions he arranged throughout the U.S.A. and Canada. The success of his methods caused the Roman Catholic press in Canada to investigate "this one Protestant church in Toronto which gives more than all the Catholic churches in Ontario and Western Canada". It concluded that "We must catch some of our Protestant neighbours' enthusiasm for foreign missions".

We may feel a little uneasy about some parts of his methods, but if our churches were to catch a similar flame the H.M.F., the B.M.S., and other missions could forget about annual deficits and begin planning the forward moves we all wish to see.

Basic to Smith's philosophy was the question, "Why should anyone hear the Gospel twice before everybody has heard it once?" this question condemns us all, even the best. There is no reason why they should, yet some countries are over-supplied with churches, preachers, books etc., while millions of people elsewhere have not yet heard the name of Jesus. To reach these should be a priority for the Church but it often remains the concern of the few. To take Smith's words seriously (or those of Jesus for that matter) would revolutionise our attitude to service, giving and the distribution of Christian resources. It is to his credit that he maintained for over 60 years that the supreme task of the Church is world evangelisation. "The Church's ministry is missions. It is too important to be left to a department of the church. It is the chief work of the whole church".

He was an innovator, always looking for new ways to spread the Gospel. At a time when church organisations would have nothing to do with radio, that "tool of the devil", he jumped at the chance to reach thousands. His broadcasts became known as the best variety show on radio. Although he never darkened the door of a cinema he shot many reels of movie film on his travels for missionary propaganda, and later found useful ministry among Hollywood converts from the Billy Graham crusades. Although he had not, at first, enthused over Graham, Smith soon realised what God was doing through him and later spent time at many of his crusades encouraging him. He was an enthusiast for literature distribution and had a distinct philosophy of missionary activity. Missionaries, he said, should not become pastors of congregations. They should found Bible schools and teach in them, so increasing the range of their influence.

For all his travelling he did not neglect his own vineyard. Over the years the People's Chapel prospered. At times the congregation was so large that people had to be asked to stay away from worship. He shared ministry with others. "Don't let your people get bored", he told his son Paul, "A pastor should never over-expose himself. Your people should hear other voices, better voices than your own. And remember, it takes all kinds of bait to catch all kinds of fish".

To read his biography, "Fire in His Bones" by Lois Neely (Tyndale), is to be deeply stirred. This is also true of his other books, "The Challenge of Missions" and "The Passion for Souls". One need not underline every word of his theology to catch something of the flame which burned within his heart and which ought to be in ours. We need books which will inform the mind. We also need those which will stir the heart.

His evangelistic campaigns always closed with the challenge of missions. "The supreme task of the Church today is to obey the simple command of our Lord and 'Go and tell all men'. If you cannot go, you must send a substitute". To the end of his life he was the supreme advocate of missions. So too should we be. If the minister does not lead how will the people follow? One day the Lord is going to ask us why we acquiesced so willingly to the discrepancy between our comfortable Christian lot with its plethora of books, equipment and churches and that of the millions of modern Lazaruses without Scriptures, or knowledge of God. Perhaps the life of Oswald Smith might spur us to answer that question with a little more confidence.

Fred Stainthorpe

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Not Strangers But Pilgrims

These all confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth Hebrews 11:13

It is one thing to make such a confession. It is quite another for Christians engaged in the same pilgrimage to have to confess that they are strangers to each other. Worse — we have often been content to be strangers to each other. Much worse — we have sometimes denied that others who also acclaimed Jesus as Lord were, in truth, pilgrims with us on our journey.

But the times, they are a-changing. A few decades ago any denomination would have been willing — eager, perhaps — to caricature another and then thunder its condemnation. The Spirit of God has been teaching us a little humility. Assuredly we have a great deal more to learn, but when we are tempted to be most strident in our assertions or our denials, we are more often now led to think it possible that we may be mistaken.

Fear still rules in some quarters, however. There are those who are quite persuaded that any conversations with others must inevitably lead to some unholy compromise. No amount of argument to the contrary is likely to be persuasive. It is experience that will produce a change of understanding here — and there are some who will not risk the experience. How much they miss!

In this — as in some other areas — the “ordinary” members of the church are sometimes ahead of their ministers. The member in his or her office, common room or golf club will so often find they have so much more in common with that Christian who has some strange emphases than with the devotees of mammon who are so numerous.

Confidences begin to grow, and ever after the true face of another denomination will not be its official pronouncements, but that fellow staff — or club — member.

In the beginning

The British Council of Churches was formed in the Council Chamber of Baptist Church House on 23 September 1942. It has tried, often unsuccessfully, to be the mouthpiece of its member churches. Yet with all its very evident short-comings, it would be difficult to imagine the scene in these islands today without the kind of ecumenical forum that the BCC has provided for the past forty-five years.

It was in 1982 that the delegates at the spring assembly of the BCC called on the member churches and other Christian bodies

“... to share in a process of prayer, reflection and debate together centred on the nature and purpose of the Church in the light of its calling in and for the world”.

That call in its own way echoed the plea expressed by Pope John Paul II, who, speaking at Glasgow in 1980, and having in mind the wider community of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, said

“We are only pilgrims on this earth, making our way towards

that heavenly Kingdom promised to us as God's children. Beloved brethren in Christ, for the future can we not make that pilgrimage together, hand-in-hand, bearing with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience ...?"

The response to these calls came slowly but constructively. In Lent 1984 some fifty representatives of many denominations in Britain accepted the invitation of Dr. Runcie to meet at Canterbury for a weekend of recollection and prayer, and already it was plain that many were prepared to give favourable consideration to the call of the BCC.

Soon the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales began to respond affirmatively, and this was significant since that church is not a full member of the BCC.

On 18 September 1984 forty representatives of twenty-three denominations met in London under the chairmanship of Dr. John Habgood, the Archbishop of York. They agreed to ask a Working Party to prepare a more precise outline for the process. The following factors would have to be borne in mind:

the need for prayer and penitence.

the outcome of various dialogues, notably *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* and the *Final Report of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission*.

the statements on the nature and purpose of the Church as understood by the participating churches.

the experience of the five hundred Local Ecumenical Projects in England.

the identification of potential growth points for unity.

the overriding importance of the churches being able to present the gospel more effectively to a needy world.

the need for mutual respect between all the participating churches.

So the Working Party began its work. It quickly realised that Faith and Order issues could not be avoided, but it saw, too, that the process must never be one that involved a select few in each denomination. On the contrary, the churches at all levels of their life must be involved.

On the afternoon of 4 February 1985, thirty-eight representatives from twenty-seven denominations met at Lambeth Palace. The proposals of the Working Party were outlined and the meeting agreed that these should be sent to the various denominations, with an invitation to reply by 30 April. The Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland decided at its March meeting that Baptists should take a full part in the process and encouraged local churches to do the same. The Baptist Union of Wales took a similar decision. The Baptist Union of Scotland decided to take "observer" status. It would have wished the process to have adopted a doctrinal basis at the beginning, rather than at the close of the process as was the thinking of most others.

A week after the date by which denominations were asked to respond to the invitation, a further meeting was held, when it was reported that twenty-two churches in England, Scotland and Wales had agreed to share in the process which, it was agreed, should be known as "Not Strangers but Pilgrims". It was judged that this was a clear indication, and it was decided to initiate the process.

There are now thirty-two churches fully participating and four with observer status. Such a brief sentence carries considerable significance which deserves to be unpacked a little. This process now becomes the most representative dialogue ever undertaken by the churches in this country. Although it owes a great deal to an initiative taken by the BCC, it embraces quite deliberately, churches that are not in membership with that body. The range is comprehensive — Christian Brethren and Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox and Salvation Army rub shoulders with black-led churches, such as the African Methodist Episcopal and the Shiloh United Church of Christ. And those of us most involved can testify to the "mutual respect" for each other that was, from the first, a factor to be borne in mind.

So the programme of "Not Strangers but Pilgrims" was launched. But what was that programme, and how is it developing? There are many strands, and all of them are important.

In June 1985 the following question was addressed to all the participating churches:

"In your tradition and experience, how do you understand the nature and purpose of your Church (or Churches when the national body is a federation of local Churches) in relation to other Christian denominations as we share in God's mission to the world?"

The question was carefully phrased. Written responses were invited, but the denominations were asked to understand that formal statements of the kind that are approved by assemblies or synods were not needed. Instead the response from each denomination should be truly representative of its views, but not couched in some quasi-legal terminology that seems to rob the statement of life and freshness. Twenty-six such responses were received. They have been published, unabridged, in *Reflections* (vi + 157 pp, published by the British Council of Churches and the Catholic Truth Society, £2.95). It is a highly important — probably unique — collection. All of us have books where the authors tell us what others believe — and how wrong they so often are! Here are responses written by the representatives of the denominations themselves. They clarify the areas of common belief and where our convictions differ. My hope is that most if not all our ministers will sport so modest a sum on a book that will open windows in many minds.

What happened in 1986

At local level there was the unprecedented success of the studies held in Lent '86. You cannot, surely, have been unaware of this part of the exercise. Canon Martin Reardon was asked to write the study book for the Lenten

series. In record time he produced the script for "What on Earth is the Church for?". I asked him "How did you do it so quickly? How long exactly *did* it take you to write it?" He smiled and replied "All my life!" The first printing was soon sold and eventually 120,000 copies were produced and purchased. Accompanying the book was a colourful twelve page folder. A quarter of a million were printed. They were used by individuals in the study groups or following the course from the seclusion of their own homes. Half of that folder consisted of a questionnaire which individuals were invited to complete and return. Well over 100,000 did so! Over 3,000 copies of a cassette for home use were produced and sold. An astounding fifty-seven local radio stations agreed to carry the Lenten studies. It is reckoned that there were 60-70,000 study groups meeting during Lent '86, and about one million people took part either in groups or as individuals. It takes only a little imagination to appreciate the importance of this part of the programme and how much it owes to a few people who invested a great deal of time and energy into it.

A professional firm — Trumedia Study (Oxford) Ltd — were engaged to analyse the completed questionnaires. Their Senior Research Officer, Judy Turner-Smith, was released from normal duties by her Methodist circuit to complete quickly a most exacting task. The results have been published in *Views from the Pews* (viii + 88 pp, BCC and CTS, £2.00). It makes salutary reading. It shows that often the members of the churches are prepared to be more radical than their ministers. Members display an urgent desire for progress towards a greater measure of unity. Ministers are often seen as guardians rather than as enablers. It's an uncomfortable two pounds' worth!

There are about five hundred Local Ecumenical Projects in England, and Baptists are involved in over eighty of them. These projects, naturally, have gained experiences of peculiar significance for such a process as this. In addition there are six hundred and eighty councils of churches and forty-four sponsoring bodies in England. All these were circulated with relevant questions. Their responses have been analysed and the results published in *What you said* (35 pp, BCC) which is not for general sale, but is available to help forward the process.

Another publication, *Observations* (BCC, CTS, £2.95) will have appeared before these lines are read. The book will contain responses from a number of bodies and agencies — mostly Christian — on their views on the nature and purpose of the Church.

Whatever decisions are made in our churches today, our young people will have to live with them tomorrow. A Youth Conference was held in Liverpool, 15-19 September 1986. An immediate benefit was that two young ladies were appointed to serve on the Steering Group. Longer term benefits will emerge as the Conference findings become part of the contributions to the process.

Materials from all these meetings and writings were presented to a meeting of representatives of all the denominations held at London Colney 5-7 November 1986. That meeting itself prepared a working document for the 1987 spring conferences. Those who attend these conferences will be

expected to be thoroughly familiar with all the materials that have been issued, and to use the London Colney document to focus their thinking upon the nature, purpose and unity of the Church and upon the formulated questions that call for answers.

About a month after that November meeting, another was held at London Colney. This was arranged by the Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in England. It called together theologians, practitioners from Local Ecumenical Projects and church leaders to examine the various ways in which *episcopate* is exercised in the various Christian traditions. It, too, produced a document for the 1987 spring conferences.

The conferences

These conferences will be held at Nottingham, 27-29 March, at Bangor, 31 March - 2 April and at St. Andrews, 3-5 April. Baptists will have twenty-five representatives at Nottingham. They have been carefully chosen. We have not only had to try for a proper mix of such issues as ministerial/lay, male/female, youth/age, etc., but we have also made sure that some who represent us are the ecumenically committed and others are more hesitant.

Why three conferences consecutively? The ecumenical scene is so different in the three nations of England, Wales and Scotland and justice needs to be done to all three. The Steering Committee needs to be present at all three and to act as the linking agency and therefore it was decided that the three conferences should be held consecutively.

The three conferences will need to be concerned with theology. Just as the Working Party could not avoid Faith and Order issues, so too the conferences will have to take seriously ecclesiology. But it is hoped and expected that there will also be very practical consequences arising affecting our lives as the people of God. How do we hold together unity and diversity? How can there be greater co-operation in worship and prayer, evangelism, meeting human need and helping to shape culture and society? How can we avoid duplication of effort? And so on.

At Swanwick from 31 August to 4 September 1987 there will be a final conference with representatives from all the churches including fifteen Baptists, some of whom will have been at one of the national conferences and others who will be new to the exercise. It is hoped that from Swanwick will come a number of proposals that will be sent for response to the participating denominations — rather as happened in 1964 at the BCC Nottingham Conference.

Where next?

So what is the object of the exercise? What do we expect to emerge? To what purpose is all this activity?

If we knew the answer we would not need to engage in the process, so necessarily the responses to the above questions will be of a fairly general nature. Even so, there are certain things that should be stated.

First, the process itself is not another attempt at ecclesiastical joinery, such as has been rejected more than once already. Frankly, some of us were apprehensive that it might be so used, and the lessons of the recent past need to be learned. It is a process designed to help the churches see

where further progress can be made in ecumenical relationships, but the process itself will offer no such new scheme.

There is, however, an obvious need to prepare new and more relevant ecumenical instruments for the latter part of the twentieth century and beyond. To put that in another way, the British Council of Churches needs to be replaced with something else. This is recognised by the BCC itself and to try to facilitate any change all its staff appointments have been timed to end in 1990. This is not intended as a shotgun to force an artificial decision before that date. An extension could be given, though staff cannot be expected to accept one or two brief extensions of contracts without such a method having its effect upon morale.

Why does the BCC need to be replaced? One very obvious reason is that the Roman Catholic church is not a full member of the BCC. Clearly some attempt needs to be made to create a forum in which all traditions of the Christian church may participate. The differences that continue to divide the various traditions should not be so great as to prevent our making pilgrimage together in every way possible.

But do we need a revised British Council of Churches or an English Council to work alongside the Irish, Welsh and Scottish Councils in some federation? Arguments on both sides of that issue are being heard.

Should any new Council undertake work on behalf of its member churches — as the present BCC does? Or should the member churches agree among themselves that each should specialise in one or more areas — evangelism, race relations, education, youth work — sharing their expertise through a Council that is smaller, fulfilling a coordinating function?

How can the churches make more effective ecumenism at grass roots level? In particular, where there are Local Projects, how can the decision-making processes be improved so that denominations can assist rather than hinder the work?

These are only a sample of the immediate questions that press in upon the process of "Not Strangers but Pilgrims". Undoubtedly the process will bring others into focus.

Baptists must take their part in the work of the coming days. We must do so, holding to our convictions in fidelity and charity, learning from others in humility and trusting the Spirit of God to lead us all in the ways of Christ. Then may we offer in sincerity the prayer of the entire process —

Lord God, we thank You
For calling us into the company
Of those who trust in Christ
And seek to obey His will.
May Your Spirit guide and strengthen us
In mission and service to Your world;
And may we be strangers no longer
But pilgrims together on the way
to Your Kingdom.

Amen.

Douglas C. Sparkes



Baptist Housing Association LTD

1986 was an excellent year for the Baptist Housing Association. During the year ten new schemes were completed, and a property was acquired from a small Baptist Housing Association which was taken over. By the end of the year, the Association had 90 properties. Since then, six more properties have been opened, and the Association can now house some 2,730 people.

Completed properties are only part of the picture. The Association is currently building on 17 other sites, and there are more in the pipeline. We're also now looking very closely at the possibility of extending north into the Tyne-Tees area. We are also now diversifying into frail elderly schemes, and managing leasehold properties for sale to the elderly.

As many of you will know, we are always on the lookout for parcels of land on which we can build further properties. We believe, as those who went before us always believed, that God's purpose for us is to provide homes with a Christian caring input in the local church community. If you have surplus land, and your church has a real mission to support a scheme, please write to the headquarters of the Baptist Housing Association whose address is shown below:

**The Director
Baptist Housing Association Limited
Baptist Church House
4 Southampton Row
London WC1B 4AB**

BOOK REVIEWS

Power Healing

by John Wimber with Kevin Springer (Hodder and Stoughton, 1986, 303 pp, £4.95)

In spite of its rather American sounding title "Power Healing" is a book written in a low key and objective fashion, quite acceptable to the British reader. John Wimber comes across as an ordinary, if very gifted and able pastor with a growing knowledge of, and faith in, an extra-ordinary God.

In the introductory chapters (Section 1) John Wimber deals with the earlier years of his ministry, his gradual awakening to the reality of Christian healing in the contemporary world, and the necessity for Christians to engage in it. He seems to be wanting the reader to travel with him on a pilgrimage from scepticism to faith concerning the actuality of divine healing today. N.B. The writer prefers to use the term 'divine healing' as against any alternative, for reasons clearly stated in his book.

In these early chapters, and indeed elsewhere, Mr. Wimber is very honest about his own seeming failures regarding healing. Among these was the death of David Watson after the author had flown with colleagues from the USA specifically to pray for his healing.

Sections 2 and 3 of the book (i.e. the major portion of the volume) are written, as John Wimber says, "To inform you about how God heals and how you can pray for the sick". He deals with four areas of sickness and healing: healing of the Spirit, healing of the effect of past hurts, healing of the 'demonized' and mental illness (he prefers the word 'demonized' to 'demon possessed' believing that nobody can, in this life, be completely possessed and therefore be without free will), and healing of the dying and the dead. This last section on the dead is tantalizingly short, but shows clearly that he believes that the raising of the dead is possible today in 'exceptional circumstances'.

The author also gives 'guiding principles' to be followed when engaging in divine healing. Throughout these last two sections he constantly draws from the New Testament and occasionally from the Old, most often using instances in the healing ministry of Jesus as his guide and model.

In a concluding epilogue John Wimber admits that there remain many unanswered or unanswerable questions regarding divine healing, and that in this world we must be content with knowing in part. However, he is unequivocal in asserting that "Jesus never saw benefits in illness for sick people. He healed people wherever He went". He also states that "Healings are signs of the presence and power of God's Kingdom".

With a foreword by Michael Harper (in addition to 5 appendices and 18 pages of notes), this is a book written from a conservative evangelical perspective where the fall of Lucifer, the reality of demons, and the sinfulness of homosexuality per se are taken for granted.

It is a very honest book that is bound to give much food for thought whatever our theological position. It will disturb some who have hitherto ignored (for whatever reason) divine healing in their ministry. It will stir others to enter into this faith risk business more wholeheartedly, and should give new insights and encouragement to many already engaged in divine healing.

Ian C. Handscomb

Sermon on the Mount

by D.A. Carson (Baker Book House/Paternoster, 1986, 157 pp, £4.40)

The current edition of Carson's 'Sermon on the Mount' is in fact, a reprint of the 1978 edition. That was itself the substance of lectures delivered in 1974 at the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union. This lengthy preamble simply makes the point that here is a book which is now some 9 years old. It is also written from an avowedly Evangelical standpoint. More critical understandings of Matthew chapters 5 to 7 hardly merit a mention. If, then, you are looking for an analysis of the current state of critical debate on the Gospel of Matthew as a whole and the Sermon on the Mount in particular, this is not the place to start!

What then, if any, is the value of this book? I would suggest that it can be recommended on two grounds. Firstly, as a devotional commentary it should prove helpful, practical and not too demanding. Carson does not side-step the implications of the Sermon for our spiritual and social viewpoints. His style of application reflects that of some of the more comprehensible Puritans — he applies only what he feels derives from the text, but he applies it spiritedly.

Secondly, and more importantly, Carson's approach to the Sermon on the Mount puts the preaching of the Sermon within reach of all of us. Surely one of the most persistent difficulties faced by preachers wanting to expound this marvellous passage is precisely its most glorious attribute, viz it is at first reading exquisitely obvious what Jesus is saying in the Sermon, but the longer one takes to think over his words the more one realises how much there is to say about them. The Sermon is the classic example of a deceptively simple passage of Scripture.

Without oversimplifying Jesus' profound teaching, Carson proves able to explore the whole of Matthew 5 to 7 in one steady and refreshing series of studies. In fact, his outline breaks the three chapters into 47 manageable units under six main headings, The Kingdom of Heaven: Its Norms and Witness (5 vv 3 to 16), The Kingdom of Heaven: Its Demands in Relation to the Old Testament (5 vv 17 to 48), Religious Hypocrisy: Its Description and Overthrow (6 vv 1 to 18), Kingdom Perspectives (6 vv 19 to 34), Balance and Perfection (7 vv 1 to 12), and Conclusion: Two Ways (7 vv 13 to 27).

The book concludes with two helpful appendices, reflecting at a basic level on critical and theological approaches to the Sermon on the Mount.

Michael Goodman

Servants of God

Papers on the use of full-time workers in Brethren churches. ed. Harold H. Rowdon (Christian Brethren Research Fellowship/Paternoster, 1986, 144 pp, £4.95 inc. post).

During the last ten years, it has become increasingly common for Brethren churches in Great Britain to appoint full-time workers to act as pastors or ministers. This move towards, or flirtation with, a pattern of life familiar to Baptists but new to the Brethren has provoked research, argument and reflection. 'Servants of God' is a collection of specially chosen or commissioned papers on the subject.

Because it is addressed to a Brethren readership, a Baptist reader will find much of this book hard to identify with, but may find illumination in the unfamiliar approach to many very familiar concerns. There are discussions of the perils and benefits of professionalism, of levels of pay, of the value of job descriptions, of the Biblical basis (if any) for one-person paid church leadership, of procedures for settlement, and of many other related issues. These discussions are obviously at an elementary level — but the freshness of the discussion is at times revealing. Three papers by Neil Summerton dealing with the expectations and preparations appropriate to a church considering the appointment of a full-time worker are particularly interesting. Those with a special concern for the theory or practice of church leadership may find value in this book.

Minding God's Business

by Ray S. Anderson (Eerdmans/Paternoster 1986, 164 pp, £8.85)

Aid agencies, missionary societies and the many smaller Christian organizations are the concern of this book, and its aim is to set out the theological perspective which should inform those who manage them.

Anderson describes these organizations as "paraparochial" forms of the church. This means that though they are not local or linked to a congregation, since they share the same missionary objectives as the "parochial" church, much which is theologically true of the church is also true of them. Anderson sets out a theological plan of the activity of God in creation and redemption and places the church in all its forms within this framework. From here he can draw conclusions about the management style which is appropriate to the church, and the attitudes which managers and leaders should have towards secular management insights (welcoming). He offers some helpful insights on leadership (drawn in part from Bonhoeffer) and usefully tackles the relationship of management to providence and prayer (using Moltmann and Ellul). There is a sensitive discussion of the temptation to exploit Christian employees.

The book's main defects are a didactic approach which leaves little room for the reader to find his own theological perspective (should he not happen to accept Anderson's), and a rather difficult writing style which is not much helped by Anderson's occasional chattiness, nor, for me, by his fondness for illustrations from American Football.

Stuart Jenkins

A Liturgical Note: Communion

In the October edition of the Fraternal we published an experimental order of service for Communion.

By way of response to this David Butler of Southsea has submitted a form of the Invitation which, though based upon the one found in our service books, expresses, he believes, the note of Christian assurance. He composed it several years ago and found it to be appreciated in the churches.

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ,
Come to this table because you must—
Because it is Christ's command.
Come to testify that you are righteous—
By faith in his atoning sacrifice.
Come to show that you sincerely trust
In our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
And are his true disciples.
Come because you wish to be strong,
Because you do have claims on heaven's rewards,
And because you have received the Lord's renewing grace.

If, like David, you have composed any worship material, we would be glad to consider publication.

A personal invitation

to join a dynamic organisation of men seeking to apply and extend Christian principles in many spheres of service.

- The Baptist Men's Movement has since 1917 been leading men to faith in Jesus Christ.
- Men are encouraged to take an active part in all aspects of the work of the Church.
- Fellowship and understanding are cultivated among all Christian men.

ASK FOR A COPY OF THE BMM HANDBOOK
The Secretary, The Baptist Men's Movement,
93 Gloucester Place, London, W1H 4AA.
Tel: 01-935 1482



Book Discount Offer

We are informed that the book "Jesus and the Kingdom of God" by George Beasley-Murray may be obtained with a twenty per cent discount for ministers direct from the publisher. An application form may be requested from Jeremy Mudditt of Paternoster Press, 3 Mount Radford Crescent, Exeter, Devon EX2 4JW.

The Editor

Of Interest to You

We extend our prayerful good wishes to the following members who have recently accepted God's call to a new sphere of service, remembering especially any for whom it is their first Church:

Simon Chevill to Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield
Donald Dixon to Beacon, Arnold
Russell Doddington to Cavendish, Ramsgate
Ralph Drake to South Street, Exeter (Associate)
R Anderson Duncan to Bourton on the Water
David Foster to Mutley, Plymouth (Associate)
Norman Green to Springhill, Birmingham
Douglas Harbour to Wallingford
Barrie Hibbert to Bloomsbury
Basil Hill to South Wales Area Small Churches Minister
Steven Latham to The Downs, Clapton
Stuart McNarry to Holland Road, Hove
George Neal to Abbey, Reading
Norman Plumb to Tameside Fellowship
John Roberts to Sidley
John Sanderson to Winner Street, Paignton
Frank Vaughan to Woodberry Down, Tottenham
Peter Webb to Harrow
George Wieland to Rothwell, Leeds

Some of our members have reached the stage at which their full time paid ministry has come to an end, and they are looking forward to a long and happy retirement. Our prayers go with:

Arthur Mitson
Reg Sherman who is working part time at Eastleigh as Associate Minister with responsibility for their counselling ministry.
Howard Williams