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Editorial

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, we declare you to be ordained to the office and work of the ministry" Ordination. For some readers these words echo across forty-fifty-years of Christian service. For others they freshly reverberate in mind and heart. In us all they focus that moment both of iron resolve and utter dependency, however our ministry has been interpreted since.

In these golden days of autumn, many will be embarking upon their first ministry. The climate is both exhilarating and daunting, with a loosening of structures, radical church audits, and a greater longing for a foretaste of heaven than hitherto.

Increased expectations from within the Church and role uncertainty from outside it, suggests a stronger enabling framework is called for these days. At an informal level this may well mean becoming more accessible to those who, in previous generations, felt distanced from us by our "professionalism". In the mutuality of ministry, many are finding a rich grace resource, enabling them better to fulfil their high calling. May this be so for all those who, this autumn, commence their pastoral work.

One of the things they will certainly face is the phenomenon of "Restorationism". We have wanted for some time to offer an objective and analytical article which will help readers to evaluate it for themselves. Derek Tidball provides this in the first of a two-part presentation.

For years it has been the declared aim of the Baptist Union to make the best provision possible for ministers in retirement. Great strides have been made in this direction. However, from next April, government legislation allows for the opting out of company pension schemes in favour of private arrangements. Philip Cooke, in our second article, strongly advises us to think very carefully before transferring from the B.U. scheme.

Thirdly, David Trafford reflects on the place of music in his own life and in the Church. What can be made of the dichotomy between feeling and intellect, emotion and doctrine, and "good" and "bad" music? "The Two-Horse Chariot" forms the third in our series "Christianity and Culture".

William Temple once declared that piety and theological learning, however great, did not qualify a man to pronounce on economic matters. Undaunted, Paul Allen engages with current economic policy, particularly its understanding of "freedom". His article, "Contemporary Economics: Some Ethical Reflections", is demanding, but a useful attempt at applied theology. Will we receive more such?

Very few now in our ministry were born last century and grew up in Edwardian England. One such is Vellam Pitts who saw Bleriot fly at Brooklands and was wounded in the mud of World War I. Still active with his pen, he contributes "The Cosmic Church: Some Reflections on Ephesians".

Finally, in "Despatch from Sri Lanka", Peter Goodall paints a vivid and firsthand account of that troubled island, beset by communal violence. It draws out prayer from deep within us.

The Challenge of Restorationism: An Introduction

It is estimated that the mis-named House Church Movement is growing presently at a rate of 29% per annum (Reid, p.10). Its size is often claimed to be in the region of 60,000 members (Brierley, p.114) although more cautious, and probably more accurate estimates put its membership at 34,000 (Walker, p.102 and 110). The human face of the movement is well known in our Baptist churches, since many of our members have left to join one of the House Churches, not a few churches have experienced painful division as a result of their activity and some of our churches whilst remaining with us in name have essentially sought their fellowship among one of the strands of the Restoration movement.

The movement cannot be ignored, even if we would wish to do so. But neither can frantic or panic reactions, which have been common among us, be helpful. In the first of a two-part article we put the movement in a wider context, say something of its history, review its key features and in a second offer some critical reflections — remembering that any genuine exercise in criticism leads to positive as well as negative conclusions.

The movement in a wider context

The 1960s and 70s were a time of 'marked spiritual ferment'. Whilst established religions were floundering, many new religions were flowering and flourishing. There had not been such a religiously creative period for a long time. The *World Christian Encyclopaedia* estimated that by the early 80s New Religious Movements had some 96 million adherents world-wide.

The new religions have been many and varied. One helpful classification suggests that they fall into three groups: the neo-orthodox (such as the Children of God, Jews for Jesus or the Jesus People); the neo-oriental which run counter to mainline Western culture (such as Zen Buddhism, Hare Krishna and perhaps the Moonies) and Human Potential Movements (such as Scientology). I would suggest that the House Church Movement fits in many ways into the first group.

Why the past two decades have been so creative religiously is harder to determine. The common explanation (Wilson, among many others) has been to speak of the new religions as a reaction to the barrenness of modernity. Modern secular society is based on the principle of rationality and for all its comfortable advantages it only exists at a cost. Rationalization demands that nature, social relationships and personal feelings are all subordinated to serve its own ends. So, as a simple illustration, holidays are no longer determined by the church calendar or by personal needs but by when and for how long it is possible to close down the machinery. The progress of modernity has meant that we have moved from a community-based set of relationships to a society-based set of relationships.

Such a society, created at the expense of the personal, is bound to experience a kick-back since it is so unsatisfying to the persons who inhabit

it. The reaction is seen in the growth of new religious movements and, in a similar way, in the revival of political protest as well.

New religious movements not only reject mainline society but mainline religions which conform to the dominant culture. Traditional denominational religion reflects much, although certainly not all, of the spirit of the dominant rationalist culture. So it does not provide people with the radical alternative for which many are looking; consequently they are in decline.

Dean Kelly has argued that mainline religion is built on four assumptions, all of which derive from the wider secular culture. They are:

1. that religion should be reasonable, rational and courteous.
2. that its internal relationships should be democratic and gentle.
3. that it should be responsive to people's needs.
4. that no dogmatism or judgmental moralism should stand in the way of cooperation with others.

By contrast, some religions are growing and strong — to the rationalists way of thinking, surprisingly so. These are the religions which offer a radical alternative to the dominant culture. The style of these strong religions may be contrasted with the style of the weak mainline religions as follows:

Strong Religions

- Require commitment
- Preach absolutism
- Exert discipline
- Impose conformity
- Prize missionary zeal
- Exhibit fanaticism

Weak Religions

- Accept lukewarmness
- Preach relativism
- Prize individualism
- Welcome diversity
- Demonstrate reserve
- Believe in dialogue

What the new religious movement claims to do is to provide its members with:

1. direct religious experience,
2. authoritative and dependency-inducing norms,
3. the offer of genuine community, and
4. the offer of an alternative world view.

Although we may be more used to applying this analysis to the cults, so beloved of the media, it is not without its relevance to the rise of Restorationism. Sociologically, it is of a piece with the wider development of new religious movements.

To say that is not to exempt us from thinking theologically about the Restoration movement. It is, perhaps, to take some of the sting out of the movement whilst, at the same time, challenging us to see ourselves as a mainline denomination in relation to our wider culture. Have we swallowed the dominant secular world-view of our time? Are we sufficient of an alternative for people to see anything different in us from other nice worthy charitable institutions? Do we offer a spiritual dimension and spiritual

experience which other 'fellowship' based groups, like the Masons or local choirs, lack? Are we genuinely meeting the needs of men and women starved in their spirits by secularism, or are we part of their problem?

The history of Restorationism

The long fuse of Restorationism has been traced back by Andrew Walker to the Catholic Apostolic Movement of Edward Irving, the Brethren and Classical Pentecostalism. Each of these movements stood for ideals and practices which Restorationism would believe they have brought to fuller fruition.

It is certainly no accident that many of the early leaders of Restorationism, like Arthur Wallis and Gerald Coates, have Brethren backgrounds and some, like Bryn Jones, have a Pentecostal background. Although some of our Baptist ministers are now involved their commitment to the movement is relatively recent, with one or two exceptions.

The recent origin of the movement can be traced to the late 1950s and early 1960s when a number of men came together who had been independently seeking for renewal. They were evangelicals, although their concern for evangelical doctrine lessened as their experience of the Charismatic Movement grew. Their main concern was to discover what it meant to say that the Church was the body of Christ and to seek to renew the Church by basing it on personal relationships.

A number of early independent groups were formed at this time including the 'North Circular' and the Chard Fellowship. The number of independent groups grew until in 1971-2 many of the leaders who were later to become prominent met together. They expressed some concern regarding the Charismatic Movement and began to look into 'discipleship' as a way to overcome their dissatisfaction. Already in trouble with mainline denominations for their evangelistic zeal and charismatic attitudes, this emphasis was to cause further hostility in the years ahead.

The emphasis on discipleship can be traced back to Juan Carlos Ortiz, but it was the influence of America, through the Fort-Lauderdale Five, Baxter, Mumford, Prince, Basham and Simpson, introduced in 1976, which was to bring it to a head. Arising from that significant American input the Dales Bible Week developed and the Bradford Harvestime Church.

Since then the movement has become more fragmented and each of the various groups has become more crystallized. Many divisions and regroupings have taken place and the movement is in a constant state of flux. The largest group is based in Bradford. But there are many other independent groups including Basingstoke, Cobham, a Southern Group based in Sussex, those related to Romford and even Bugbrooke.

Fuller details of their history and development can be found in Andrew Walker's *Restoring the Kingdom*.

The key features of the movement

Each separate group within the Restoration movement has its own emphasis and style. Nonetheless, the movement finds some coherence in their desire to see the Kingdom restored and their belief that the

denominations will never do so. In general terms we may refer to the following areas as features they would hold in common.

(a) *Kingdom restoration*

Their view of what is happening today relates to their views regarding the Second Coming of Christ. The Church, it is said, went into sad spiritual decline immediately after the Apostolic period. But since the Reformation, successive movements have brought it nearer and nearer into a state of readiness until it is fully prepared for the return of Christ. Biblical prophecies are held to support the view that God is going to do a new thing of a revival nature prior to the Second Coming. David Matthews' recent book, *Church Adrift* (Harvesttime Services) sets out this view of church history. It is vital, too, to understand that the emphasis is deliberately on the Kingdom and not on the Church. The movement shows a reaction against the institutional structures which are familiar to us and a concern to rediscover the relative simplicity of the gospels. Doctrinally the concern is more with Jesus and the gospels than with Paul and his theology.

(b) *Kingdom life*

Believing that God has broken into our world and established his Kingdom, the House Churches believe that the Kingdom — including prophecy, healing, and exorcism — should be practised among them. These are visible demonstrations that God is King over sickness, suffering and Satan.

Believing that the kingdom is about life, worship is a lively exciting thing. It is believed that worship should not be a performance in which one man leads whilst the rest remain passive, but an event in which God works and in which all participate. Worship is characterized by spontaneity, music, singing in the Spirit, tongues, dancing and ministry for the people's spiritual and physical healing. They reject the dull uniformity of the traditional hymn - prayer sandwich. Worship is full of praise and borders, if not succumbs, to triumphalism.

(c) *Kingdom authority*

There is a new sense of seriousness to be found among Restorationists about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. His Lordship is considered to be comprehensive, covering every area of life, work and relationships. In their desire to see the disciple progress new patterns of teaching have emerged. Close-knit supervisory structures are erected so that each member relates to a house-group leader or an elder who in turn relates to those above him and so on. This can either be done in an open loving and unpressurized way or it can cross the line and become, even unintentionally, authoritarian. It has often been accused of being the latter. And certainly, whilst one longs for the same sense of seriousness about discipleship among our own people, one must question whether the freedom which Christ came to bring (Gal. 5:1) is not sometimes eroded by the concern for growth.

Restorationists believe that the leadership pattern for the church is laid down in Eph. 4:11 and therefore reject our traditional pattern of one man ministry. It means that they have rediscovered the work of the apostle and this has given rise to much suspicion and concern. Apostles are sometimes

viewed as great authority figures who stand at the head of the pyramid. Restorationists would say that although they recognise them as men of spiritual authority their ministry is rather that of bringing wider insight into local groups and giving some overall direction arising out of their wider experience.

(d) Kingdom relationships

Denominationalism is seen as a major stumbling block to the restoration of the Kingdom. Their mixed spiritual life admits carnality and even, in some cases, rank unbelief. The institutions themselves set their own goals, breed their own life-style, erect their own legalisms and short-circuit the work of the Spirit — all of which is a hindrance to the advance of the Kingdom. Restorationism, however, has shaken itself free of such institutional structures and sees itself as a free movement which is not hidebound by institutional rules and traditions and which in its freedom boasts that it embraces all believers and demonstrates unity in Christ rather than denominational division.

Sadly, the reality has been different. Quite apart from the fact that their own organizational structures are growing and denominational tendencies are already evident (Walker pp. 201-215), however much they may choose to ignore them, there have also been divisions and splits within the leadership and movement giving lie to the claim to be an all-embracing unity. Walker has documented these with charitable accuracy.

(e) Kingdom confidence

There is a self-confidence in the movement which means they are convinced that the movement will go on growing and growing. Opposition and hostility only confirms the rightness of their position. Eileen Vincent's words epitomize this spirit:

Restoration is a natural progression for people who are walking in the Spirit ... The teaching of restoration, although delivered by man, comes directly from the Spirit for the whole church, so it is no surprise that many of the denominations in our country are also reaching out for a guarded measure of restoration. Where there is a longing for the Spirit, and for growth, leadership has been prepared to abandon old set forms and institute new Spirit led ways The conviction that we are preparing ourselves for a move of the Spirit in our land has been the impetus in many churches to bring all their activities, personnel and even their interpretation of the scriptures to the searchlight of the Spirit and the Word In these past years a glorious progression has been secretly taking place. Little by little the church has been moving on into God's purpose. He has been building together his army, those who have come with full intent to make Jesus King Preparations are under way; he is calling his army together, teaching them how to keep rank and use their weapons for war, bringing them into battle formation, and leading them into complete submission to the head. This orderly army of God will be the glorious structure through which the power of God can flow.

(Vincent, pp 155-7)

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Derek Tidball

(Part 2 of this article will appear in the January edition — Ed.)

Beware of the Insurance Company “Glossy”!

Insurance companies and other institutions have commenced their campaign to try to tempt members of occupational pension schemes to pullout of those schemes and ‘do their own thing’ in the form of a personal pension plan. The glossy brochures are now appearing thick and fast, and ministers and church officers are among those who are being targeted by these organisations as they try to climb aboard the personal pension bandwagon.

These brochures will paint very rosy pictures of the incredible sums which can be built up in a personal pension fund over the period of one’s working life which can then be used to purchase a pension equal to several times the amount of a minister’s present stipend. It is important that ministers take a very careful and cautious attitude and not be pressurised into making a hasty decision which may later be regretted.

The reason for the appearance of these personal pension plans is because of a change in the law which comes into effect in April 1988, and which will allow individuals to opt out of membership of occupational pension schemes if they so wish, and effect their own personal pension arrangement instead. From that time it will not be possible for the rules of a scheme or a contract of service to require compulsory membership of a pension scheme. The Baptist superannuation scheme does not, of itself, require compulsory membership and we have been advised that ministers are not employed under contracts of service, so that the new provisions do not strictly apply in our case. Ministers seeking accreditation since 1975 have, as a condition of accreditation, been required to become members of our scheme and this was done out of concern for the well-being of ministers and their dependants. Consideration is being given by the Ministerial Recognition Committee to the desirability of varying this rule so that we might be seen to be complying with the spirit of the new legislation but it is likely that, for the protection of ministers and the churches, the accreditation rules will require that a minister who chooses to opt out of our scheme must demonstrate that alternative arrangements have been made which at least meet certain minimum requirements.

However, as mentioned earlier, ministers should be extremely wary of exchanging membership of our excellent scheme for benefits offered by

certain commercial schemes which may well prove to be more illusory than they appear at first sight. It is not an easy matter to make a strict comparison between the benefits and cost of a commercial scheme with the benefits and cost of our scheme but whenever this has been done by our consultant actuaries it has been demonstrated that on a strictly 'like with like' basis our scheme offers superior benefits for the same money.

It is worth underlining that our scheme is a mutual scheme and the whole of the surplus earned by the fund accrues exclusively for the benefit of the members. The recent actuarial valuation (at 31 December 1986) revealed that our fund had earned an average rate of return of 16.4% over the previous four years and that was before the large increase in share values which has taken place in 1987. As a result of this excellent result the Superannuation Fund committee has been able to recommend, upon the advice of the actuaries, several further improvements to the scheme over and above those which were made when the scheme was completely revised in 1985, and those which have been made since then.

When the 'glossies' land on your desk, or when the insurance salesman knocks on your door, there are a number of vital questions which you need to ask in relation to the package you are being invited to buy.

1. Will the pension which is being quoted increase during payment (ie is there a measure of inflation proofing?).
2. Is payment of the pension guaranteed for a minimum period of five years and thereafter for life?
3. Does the arrangement provide for a widow's (or widower's) pension both in the event of your death in service and after retirement?
4. Does it provide your widow (or widower) with a tax-free lump sum equal to four times your minimum pensionable income (£34,000 in 1988 terms) in the event of your death, prior to normal retiring age?)
5. In the event of your early retirement through permanent incapacity, will the pension be paid without reduction because you have retired early?
6. Again, in the event of your death after early retirement through permanent incapacity and before normal retiring age, will it provide a tax-free lump sum for your widow (or widower) equal to twice the minimum pensionable income?
7. Does it allow you to exchange part of your pension entitlement at retirement for a tax-free lump sum?
8. Does it allow you to use your pension arrangement as security for a loan to assist you with the purchase of a house?

As from 1 January 1988 all of the above will be features of our scheme (many of them exist already) and whilst the personal pension package

which you will be offered might include some of them it is most unlikely that it will include them all. If, however, they were all included the amount of pension which could be provided would be drastically reduced and would almost certainly be considerably less than that which is provided by the Baptist scheme.

Remember that for each year of pensionable service since 1 January 1985 you will receive a pension of 1% of your final minimum pensionable income plus supplementary benefits earned on your contributions (and some part of the church's contributions) in excess of minimum pensionable income. Furthermore, if you were in service prior to 1985 you will also receive benefits under the 'old' scheme (1/35th of the standard annuity (which will be £1,500 from 1 January 1988) for each year of pensionable service prior to 1 January 1985 up to a maximum of 35/35ths) plus any benefits earned through membership of the 'old' supplementary benefits scheme.

As far as contributions are concerned ministers pay 5% pa of their pensionable income whilst a church pays 10%, in both cases up to a maximum pensionable income figure which in 1988 will be £12,175 (1½ times HMF minimum stipend plus the manse allowance). The whole of the minister's contributions accrue for his or her personal benefit and, so too, does at least one half of the church's contribution up to minimum pensionable income plus one-quarter of the church's contribution on income in excess thereof. The balance of the church's contribution is used to fund general improvements to the scheme, mainly in relation to past service (pre 1985) pension benefits and the pensions being paid to ministers who retired before 1985 (as well as their widows and widowers).

When making comparisons with other schemes, it is important to bear in mind that a significant part of the church's contribution is being used in this way. In the unfortunate event of any minister withdrawing from our scheme we would very much hope that churches would continue to recognise their obligation towards those who have served the denomination loyally in the past by continuing to pay a 5% contribution to our scheme. It would indeed be very sad if any church sought to wash its hands of our collective responsibility for our former ministers.

It is hoped that these few words about our excellent scheme will help to reassure ministers as they are bombarded with literature and figures from other quarters. Under the new ethical rules which apply in the pensions industry anybody who tries to sell a pension has a statutory duty to demonstrate that what he is offering provides better value than you are already getting, so do not hesitate to ask the questions listed above. Remember, too, that you should not make any change before you have sought the best possible independent advice.

Philip J. Cooke

The Two-Horse Chariot

“... as a matter of fact we often find very great expertness in musical composition, as also in execution, subsist along with remarkable barrenness of mind and character.”

G.W.F. Hegel

“... I think the performers are the most enviable of men; privileged while mortals to honour God like angels and, for a few golden moments, to see spirit and flesh, delight and labour, skill and worship, the natural and the supernatural, all fused into that unity they would have had before the Fall.”

C.S. Lewis

It was while studying aesthetics, as a welcome break from practising the piano, at an American college of music, that I discovered Hegel's disparaging comment, which I pinned to my study noticeboard, with my tongue halfway in my cheek, as a suitable warning to myself and any Christian musician. It was no less true to my experience than is C.S. Lewis' unusually positive remark from his essay on church music, which marks, as it were, the other extreme in the uneasy relationship between musical and spiritual endeavour.

The tension between these two viewpoints confirms my belief that there exists, between the firm, if rocky, ground of Christian theology, and the pleasant waters of aesthetic theory, a tricky strip of marshland which it is difficult either to cultivate or to sail on. The ground between Christian faith and music is difficult ground for our thinking, but also, at times, for our way of life, if we seek high standards in every area of our experience.

In this article I will venture some thoughts about this territory, and about my experience of the way that music meets and relates to the practice of our faith today. I will start from the assumption that music is the art which expresses our feelings, and does so most purely, in that it does so with least reference to ideas and images.

Music as Expressive of Feelings

“Music concerns itself only with the undefined movement of the inward spiritual nature, and deals with musical sounds as feeling without thought.”

G.W.F. Hegel

Since first hearing, as a child, Beethoven's “1812” overture, and bursting into tears, (the piece just annoys me now!) music has been a source of purely personal satisfaction, in that it has given me the means to experience every sort of emotion in, as it were, a safe context: that is, not in the difficult and dangerous context of human relationships where they occur first of all, but within my own enjoyment of sound, and my inner world.

So music is for me both subjective and personal, and as a result, very difficult to explain, and very much a matter of personal opinion. Not infrequently people will completely disagree on the effect of a piece of



Baptist Housing Association LTD

1987 sees the 21st anniversary of the founding of the Baptist Housing Association by the Baptist Mens Movement at its Conference at Swanwick in 1966. It is fitting then, that in June this year the 100th property opened its doors for the first time. The Association now has 103 properties and can house over 2,900 people.

This is not the whole picture. The Association is currently building on 9 other sites, from Falmouth to Preston, and many more schemes are being designed. The first Frail Elderly property is even now in the final planning stages in London, and the first leasehold scheme for the elderly for which the Association will provide management, is due to be opened in Southampton early next year.

We are as ever always on the lookout for pieces of land to build more properties. We believe that God's purpose for us is to provide homes with a Christian caring input from the local Church community. If you have surplus land, and your Church has a real mission to support a scheme, please write to:

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

music simply because the effect it has on each of them is quite different. We have dissimilar reactions to music in different contexts: the beautifully peaceful Impromptu Op. 90 No. 3 by Schubert takes on a distinctly menacing tone when used as the background of a horror film.

As a child, the music of hymns had a greater effect on my feelings than did the words on my mind. "Hills of the north, rejoice" impressed me with its soaring optimism, but to this day I cannot recall what the words are about. Many good sets of words still sink like a stone for lack of a tune which adequately reflects for me the feelings that the words engender.

From this springs another judgment about the nature of music, which is that we need to be clear about what we mean when we call it "good" or "bad". To me good music is music which succeeds in its primary function; of expressing feeling. Bad music is music that provokes no feeling, except that of irritation at its lack of meaning for us. Background music in restaurants may be bad because it is meaningless, or bad because it is meaningful, and therefore a distraction from good food or conversation!

We may describe music that is erotically stimulating as bad if we have made the prior judgment that it is wrong to be erotically stimulated, but it is not the music that is bad, but the effect it has on us. Good music, equally, is not that music which produces the feelings that we regard as the most pleasing to God, but the music that best enables us to express our feelings, even those which we fear or dislike.

Thus there are times when bad music may express for us the highest feelings we experience, and others when the best music may make us face some of our worst and most painful feelings. Surely this is what the Psalms also do: as great poetry they are more about feelings than facts. We should not be embarrassed that psalm 137 speaks of dashing children to pieces against rocks: the feelings of most bitter anger and revenge are real, and if we are honest we all experience them, even though we try to avoid acting on them.

So good music, for me, demands a particular kind of honesty; honesty about my feelings. I used to think of that as a licence for amoral living; that the only imperative for the musician was to experience every sort of feeling honestly. Since becoming a Christian it seems to me that it is only when we have the freedom to recognise and accept every kind of feeling within ourselves that we are fully equipped to do the work of Christ, and accept his discipline.

For if music opens us to feeling, it also disciplines us as composers and performers. I know no greater discipline than the self-knowledge and self-expression demanded by music, and these tasks are the very tasks that we take on in worship, as we hear the message of God, take it into ourselves, and then respond from the fullness, and the emptiness, of ourselves to the far greater reality of God.

"If we appealed more often to actual feelings, our judgments would be more diverse, but they would be more legitimate and instructive. Verbal judgments are often useful instruments of thought, but it is not by them that worth can ultimately be determined."

G. Santayana

Music as Expressive of our Culture

Like so many of my generation, I have been brought up with the tension between the type of music that was part of my education, and the music which has been the more immediate self-expression of most of my generation as teenagers — the pop music of the Sixties.

I remember the immense relief I felt when Isobel Baillie, the great operatic soprano, told the audience at a music festival prizegiving, during my teens, that pop music was not going to damage the sensibilities of aspiring classical musicians. Her words were in direct contrast to Mayors who had spoken at previous such occasions.

We have all experienced the main distinction in our society between pop and classical music, the former being the expression of a generation that partly rejected classical music as élitist, as associated with an over-intellectualised education, and as part of a culture of passive listeners rather than active performers.

Today, however, we have to recognise that music represents our culture in its great variety as well as its deep divisions. Teenagers today are identifying with types of music that express their differences from other teenagers, as well as from their elders. New styles are being created by a kind of musical syncretism, with, for instance, Asian rock bands, and Paul Simon writing songs influenced by the style of black South African musicians.

In the Christian context, different styles of music are equally giving expression to a profusion of different types of Christian culture, some of which relate directly to musical styles within society as a whole: so Christian musicals have become a popular form, and the pop concert has emerged as an effective event for mass evangelism.

I find it strange that I am still reluctant to accept some of the expressions of my faith in a popular contemporary musical idiom. The problem, it seems to me, is not the idiom, but the quality of the music being written in that idiom. As the new music being offered for the new Baptist hymn book suggests, Christian musicians of greater ability are still writing predominantly in a traditional style.

We may have to wait for a few years before the Church produces a Lennon or McCartney, or a Paul Simon. We may also have to accept that the form of music is changing, and that congregational singing may give way to more solo and instrumental music, reflecting the pattern of music in our culture in general.

We are, then, going through a period of unprecedented cultural change and diversity which is being reflected in a profusion of musical styles and forms. But there is also, underlying all this diversity, a struggle going on within Western culture as a whole: a struggle which is also taking place within the Church.

We live in a culture which is based primarily on intellectual, objective and scientific values, where the expression of feelings is still regarded as a second-rate activity. At school it was made clear to me that music was acceptable as a pastime, but not as a serious occupation; it lacked intellectual and social respectability.

We are the heirs of Hegel in regarding feelings with great suspicion, and as of little worth compared with the conceptions of our minds. So we are surprised by the power of music, and upset by it. We do not understand how the church organist can make (or ruin) a service as effectively as the preacher, if not more so!

We are still some way from accepting Paul Tournier's proposition that "Emotion is so bound up with life itself that it cannot be eliminated. The expression of emotion is repressed in our society — or rather it is suppressed entirely into the unconscious, since it is not a question of a deliberate act of the will, but a phenomenon so spontaneous that it is unconscious."

Music deals with the inner life of our emotions, and its growing importance in our culture marks a gradual shifting of our values as we come to recognise that it is in our inner subjective world that our ability to relate to others, and our deepest and most abiding sense of values are formed.

Evangelical Christianity has tended to share our culture's suspicion of feelings, and its concentration on verbal and intellectual forms of expression: we are uncomfortable with displays of emotion that are a normal part of worship in other countries. Our hymns have been valued more for their words than for their music. (The music committee for our new hymn book takes no part in editorial decision-making.)

All this is changing, and two reactions against this tradition are particularly noticeable: the one which has sought to develop the use of silence in worship; many are rediscovering the value of Quaker worship. The other is the Charismatic Movement, one of the chief features of which is a much more open expression of feelings within worship.

The Charismatic Movement is bringing with it a new kind of musical expression, with songs which are essentially mood-creators rather than expressions of theological truths. In what way is the creation of a mood, or an emotional climate, an act of worship? This question brings us to the central question of the relationship between the expression of feeling and what is "spiritual".

The Relation between Music and the Spiritual

"God is a Spirit, and it is only in man that the medium through which the divine element passes has the form of conscious spirit, that actively realises itself. In the products of art God is operative neither more nor less than in the phenomena of nature; but the divine element, as it makes itself known in the work of art, has attained, as being generated out of the mind, an adequate thoroughfare for its existence."

G.W.F. Hegel

Our spiritual nature is our capacity to be in a living relationship with God, and our spiritual life the exercise of that God-given capacity. We have, as Christians, been recognising more and more of late that this dimension of our nature transforms and affects every part of our being, and that part of the work of God's Holy Spirit is in bringing every part of our being into harmony and health under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I would not accept the absolute distinction between our emotional and intellectual life and natures that Hegel implies: it is as difficult to detach thought from feeling as it is to detach feeling from thought. Indeed, we often assume that our thinking is controlling our actions when in fact the direction of our thinking has already been decided by our feelings, without our being aware of it.

It is, I would suggest, through God's loving relationship with us that He transforms our thinking and feeling, just as our strongest friendships and love relationships change us, only more so. So the Word informs our thinking and the Spirit our emotions; Jesus-centred faith tends to be intellectual and objective, Spirit-centred faith tends to be emotional and subjective.

We are like two-horse chariots in this respect; if both horses are harnessed together in our spiritual framework we are able to be in the driving seat of our lives, and in control of ourselves, through the grace of God. If we jump onto one of the horses, of thinking or feeling, it takes over, and we have to follow it wherever it takes us. We need the creative tension of our thinking and feeling acting in concert, and only as we recognise the part that each plays in our nature do we have the means to control our inner selves.

So we cannot lead balanced lives without feeling, and music is the purest form of the expression of feeling, though by no means the only one. However, feelings can only be described as spiritual, if at all, insofar as they are harnessed to, and produced by, our relationship with God. Many of our most pleasant feelings will not, at times, come into this category, and many that we do not like very much will.

Some feelings may be as spiritually inadmissible as some attitudes: sentimentality seems to me to be the emotional equivalent of hypocrisy; it is refusing to recognise that something is wrong, and pretending to oneself, and to others. It is wrong because it is unreal and self-indulgent, and other feelings expressed in music because we want to enjoy them, not because they are real, will be equally wrong.

Good music exerts on us the discipline of honest feeling, and is surely therefore pleasing to God. But I cannot help feeling that C.S. Lewis is right when he suggests that the two situations on which we can be confident that the blessing of God rests are where a musical person is ready to forgo musical excellence to allow others to express their faith in ways that are natural and real for them, and the reverse, where an unmusical person accepts music that means little to him for the sake of others.

As Christians we could dispense with music, and be no worse followers of our Lord, but I do believe we would be poorer followers. For if our Lord did indeed mean us to have life and have it abundantly, then I assume that that abundance was always meant to be an abundance of quality as well as of quantity.

Perhaps, then, it is no wonder that music can cut both ways for the Christian; that like the little girl who had a little curl right in the middle of her forehead,

when it is good it is very good,
and when it is bad, it is horrid.

“What I, like many other laymen, chiefly desire in church are fewer, better, and shorter hymns; especially fewer.”

C.S. Lewis

“The glory of heaven could not be otherwise symbolized than by light and music.”

G. Santayana

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Contemporary economics: Some Ethical Reflections

A Shift in Emphasis

Since the Second World War, economics have been dominated by the work of John Maynard Keynes. There was broad acceptance among politicians and economists that the level of employment and prices could be controlled by the government. This could be done by influencing the level of demand in the economy by public spending and taxation. High spending and low taxation could expand the economy if there was unemployment, and lower spending and higher taxation would deflate the economy if there was inflation through too much demand. In the 1970's this received doctrine was rejected and a new brand of monetarism emerged.

In the early 1970's unemployment was rising and a Conservative government led by Edward Heath pursued growth at all cost: low interest rates, increases in public spending and lower taxation. Heath's dash for growth was itself inflationary, but it was immediately followed by an explosion in oil and primary product prices. Escalating wage claims chased higher and higher prices, in the summer of 1975 inflation reached twenty six per cent, and public spending approached fifty per cent of Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P.). Incomes policy followed incomes policy as successive governments tackled the problem of inflation. Against this background monetarism began to take hold.

The monetarist argument was that inflation is caused by excess growth in the money supply and deficit financing ie. government spending financed by borrowing. It was argued that Keynesian policies had failed. Their answer was to control the money supply growth, reduce public spending and restore the free market and inflation would be brought under control. This appealed to disillusioned Keynesians who felt that demand management had failed. But it also appealed to the new Right Wing who felt personal freedom was being eroded. This erosion was taking place firstly by high taxation and high public spending whereby the government decided how resources are to be spent and not the individual. Secondly, the free market was being interfered with by incomes policies and agreements with organised labour.

The Implementation of Monetarism

In 1979 the new Conservative Government broadly accepted the argument of Milton Friedman of the University of Chicago that:

'Inflation occurs when the quantity of money rises appreciably more rapidly than output'.¹

Its firm commitment was to reduce the growth in the money supply and restore personal and economic freedom. However, it was to experience a number of problems.

The first problem was one of defining the money supply. A measure known as Sterling M3 (£M3) was accepted, that is notes, coins, and bank deposits (not Building Society deposits). This meant however that money

switching in and out of foreign currency switched in and out of the money supply figures. Control was to be achieved by lower public spending and by reducing borrowing through high interest rates. However, the growth of £M3 consistently exceeded government targets. The depth of economic recession made public spending hard to reduce due to rising unemployment and associated benefit payments. But also, many companies were fighting for survival and were prepared to borrow whatever the cost.

Despite the fact that government targets were being exceeded, inflation began to fall. Economic commentators suggest that inflation fell due to loss of demand in the economic recession fuelled by monetarist policies, high interest rates and an over-valued pound. By the mid 1980's monetarism as practised in the first half of the decade was being pronounced "dead". Talk of targets for growth in £M3 became a thing of the past. But in other respects the commitments made by the New Right in 1979 are still firmly held. There is still the fundamental commitment to extending economic freedom and laissez-faire. This is reflected in the continuing programme of privatization and the commitment to maintain lower levels of public spending and borrowing. Although talk of money supply control is less obvious, we still hear about "sound house-keeping" and "sound money". What has, in fact, happened is that we have returned to pre-Keynesian economics to what is termed Classical Economics. And as Sermas Milne observes writing in the *Guardian* :

'Both Monetarists and New Classicists share a fervent belief in the efficiency of markets and a common commitment to Laissez-Faire'.²

What is clear is that in the last eight years we have seen a major achievement in the reduction of price inflation, but this has not been without cost. Cuts in public expenditure, high interest rates and tight monetary controls have added to the problem of unemployment caused by new technology and structural change. The new trends in economics raises ethical issues in terms of employment and welfare that become even more pointed when the relationship between contemporary economics and the political philosophy of the New Right is examined.

Monetarism and Personal Freedom

Monetarism was more than an economic philosophy. It actually matched up with the political philosophy of the New Radical Right and their demand for a restoration of personal and economic freedom. It is important however to examine the understanding of personal freedom that underpins monetarism and the new classical economics. The views of Hayek and Friedman are particularly important.

Both are strong advocates of the free market, both believing that economic freedom is essential if man's freedom and liberty are to be preserved. Hayek's view of society is an evolutionary one seeing society as the undersigned product of an evolutionary development. The market economy is part of the evolutionary framework, it being the result of many millions of individuals pursuing their own interests. His view is, that the government's role is to provide the framework for this to happen, and even

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General Manager

moderate economic planning is an unacceptable infringement of personal freedom.

Friedman defends the free market in more pragmatic terms. He believes that freedom is fundamentally about the freedom to choose how we spend our money. If money is taken from the individual by the government and spent on their behalf, then their freedom to choose is eroded. He argues that it is up to the individual to choose how much to spend or save, how much to allocate to education, health care, retirement etc. What becomes clear is that there is an important link between a philosophy of life and contemporary economics. Both put an emphasis on the free market. Both demand a lower level of public expenditure and taxation in order to maximise economic freedom and freedom of choice.

This maximisation of choice seems to rest upon a philosophy of individualism. R.H. Preston in discussing possessive individualism observes that:

'much of the current talk of Victorian virtues is in fact a more vivid way of referring to this.'³

The main features of such a philosophy are: the individual is free from the dependence on will of others; each person is free from any relationships, except those entered through self-interest; the individual is proprietor of his own person and capacities, for which he owes nothing to society; finally, individual freedom should only be limited to the extent necessary to secure the same freedom for others.⁴

It is important however to draw alongside the thinking of people such as Hayek and Friedman a theological understanding of freedom.

Theological Reflections

The monetarist philosophy interprets human freedom mainly in terms of freedom of choice. Being free to choose and take responsibility for decisions is an important source of human growth. In theological terms however freedom can be interpreted in a much broader or deeper way than freedom of choice. One theologian who does this is John Macquarrie.⁵

In discussing human freedom, Macquarrie observes that:

'..... fundamental freedom is creativity especially the human freedom to shape humanity itself'.⁶ He goes on to develop an understanding of freedom in terms of creativity and self-transcendence. Creativity is part of the essential Nature of God and if man is made in the image of God then he shares in being creative. Macquarrie argues that:

'..... the image of God in man should be understood as the human share in the mystery of creativity'.⁷

What is important for this discussion is the link between human freedom and creativity.

By "self-transcendence" Macquarrie means that man is always seeking to go beyond himself, seeing new horizons and reaching out to them. Man transcends himself not only in physical creativity, but also in human relationships. Thus he says:

'Human beings are called to freedom, summoned to go beyond whatever condition they find themselves in to a fuller mode of personal and social being'.⁸

Thus freedom is not an end in itself but a means by which man realises his social nature in a community of persons.

(i) **Freedom and Sin**

Emphasis is made by Macquarrie (we can also draw upon Reinhold Niebuhr) that man's freedom is not only the source of man's creativity, it can also be the occasion of his sin. Although man shares in the creative spirit, unlike God he is finite and limited. But his finiteness makes him anxious and he is not certain of his limitations. He therefore seeks to break out of this situation. Niebuhr sums this up when he says:

'man is insecure and involved in natural contingency; he seeks to overcome his insecurity by a will-to-power which overreaches the limits of human creatureliness'.⁹ Man in his freedom asserts his will-to-power. But in his freedom he sins and loses his freedom. There is personal sin as a man denies his true relationship with God. And there is social sin, for through the assertion of the will-to-power injustice is inevitable as man seeks to subordinate other life according to his will.

Man's freedom is found in creativity and self-transcendence. But to be truly free man must be free from sin, the root of which is so often self-interest.

Ethical Reflections

Monetarism and the New Classical Economics have provided the policies needed to restore personal and economic freedom. The government's role in the economy has been reduced, through reductions in public spending, an extensive privatisation programme, and a lowering of personal taxation output. Employment levels have been determined by market forces. But how should freedom be interpreted? If we interpret freedom mainly in terms of freedom of choice, is this a freedom experienced mainly by the better-off? What freedom of choice is there for the unemployed and poorer sections of society, for as David Jenkins observes:

'It is urged that talk of freedom is a bad joke at the expense of the increasing number of unemployed and others (such as the aged) who cannot help themselves and who are slipping into increasing poverty and deprivation.'¹⁰

But also, it has been shown that freedom can be understood to mean much more than freedom of choice and has to do with creativity and self-transcendence. When we look at issues such as unemployment and welfare we actually find that many people's freedom is being constrained instead of enhanced.

(i) **Unemployment**

To exercise freedom of choice a person must have a share in the distribution of economic resources, and the main way of acquiring this is by paid work. Some share is given to those without work through state benefits, but for those living on such benefits freedom of choice is very limited. The choice will usually be the cheapest, and the reality is subsistence and a struggle to make ends meet.

But also I have argued that freedom means more than freedom of choice. Freedom is the necessary condition for the pursuit and realisation of values

in terms of becoming fully human. Man, made in the image of God, realises his humanity in creativity. As J.H. Oldham comments:

'Man is commanded in Genesis to subdue the earth and exercise dominion and the question is whether the conception of work as a transforming creative activity is not implicit in the Biblical view of man as co-operator with God in his creative work.'¹¹

Paid work is still today one of the major ways in which people realise their freedom in creativity.

Paid work is also an important way in which people realise their freedom in self-transcendence. It was argued earlier that people are called to freedom, to go beyond themselves to a fuller mode of personal and social being. Paid work provides the framework for this to happen. Work is not only about being creative, it is also about being part of the community. Through paid work we are part of a network of human relationships and able to go beyond ourselves in offering our work as service to the community. To experience long-term unemployment is to be excluded from the network of human relationships that paid work provides. The long-term unemployed are unable to participate in a work-oriented society and sense that their service is being rejected.

Contemporary economic policies aim to restore personal freedom. They are failing however to restore three million people's freedom to do creative work, making their own contribution to the life of the community.

However, unemployment is not just about personal stories of tragedy, it is also a story of social injustice. At the moment the cost of the economic recession experienced in the last few years, and the cost of structural and technical change, are being borne by a minority in society for the comfort of the majority. The free market clearly has an important role to play in the production and distribution of goods and services. If however the free market is treated as some God which cannot be interfered with, then there is little protection for the weak and powerless. The free market does not provide any mechanism for a just sharing of the cost of technical and structural change.

It is, it seems, at this point that monetarism and the new classical economics is most open to ethical criticism. The restoration of personal and economic freedom has rested upon a philosophy of individualism foreign to Christianity. The philosophy puts great emphasis upon personal freedom and self-interest, but it neglects man's responsibility for his neighbours and the relationship between freedom and sin. The failure to place the economic market within strong social control is allowing the costs of the economic recession, structural and technical change to be borne by a few for the benefit of the many. The appeal to self-interest and personal wealth creation is disturbing. David Jenkins is sharply critical of the sort of society that is being shaped saying:

'To return to the ethics of the nineteenth century entrepreneurial individualism is either nostalgic nonsense or else a firm declaration that individual selfishness and organised greed are the only effective motivations for human behaviour.'¹²

Welfare

For the last eight years there has been a sustained effort to reduce public expenditure as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product. This began with the original aim of controlling the growth in the money supply and the public sector borrowing requirement. A second major aim which is still emphasised today is increasing freedom of choice. However a major part of public expenditure is in the area of welfare. Can reductions in such expenditure increase people's freedom? If we all pay less tax, and the government pays less on our behalf, all of us may have greater freedom. But, are some more free than others? It would seem in reality to be the better-off who are free to choose between, for example, private and state education, or private health and the N.H.S. Does therefore lower public spending actually enhance people's freedom?

To answer that question we really have to ask what are the aims of welfare spending? The welfare state was set up to tackle the five great giants of want, disease, squalor, ignorance and unemployment. To do this it had to be accepted that personal freedom was not the supreme social value and that consideration must be given to its counterpart, equality. The aims of the welfare state could only be achieved through a redistribution of wealth and resources from the better-off to the poor. Any measure of equality clearly restricts the freedom of some but can enhance the freedom of others. But, can freedom and equality be held in a creative tension? This was a question tackled by R.H. Tawney.

After the Beveridge proposals had been implemented R.H. Tawney re-issued *Equality* and discussed this particular question. His conclusion was that equality and freedom need not be in conflict. In coming to this conclusion he took account of the fact that, for many people the welfare state had brought a new freedom. It had relieved their poverty, improved their education, health care and given them a better standard of housing. Thus he says of a man not born into poverty:

'..... he will enjoy a better prospect of growing to his full stature, and of turning his mature capacities to good account'.¹³

The welfare state has offered to many people a greatly improved quality of life, and opened up to them many fresh opportunities. In reality, the welfare state and its provisions have set people free to live creative lives. It is on this basis that R.H. Tawney says:

'If through greater equality there is a greater range of opportunities for ordinary men and they can choose their preference, then liberty and equality can live as friends.'¹⁴

Clearly freedom is a problematic value and difficult to maximise. Freedom from something such as disease, bad housing or ignorance can be as important as being free to choose to do something. Public expenditure is not inherently bad and we should be cautious about cutting public expenditure in the interests of freedom of choice.

Some Conclusions

William Temple once said that :

'To train citizens in the capacity for freedom and give them scope for free

action is the supreme end of all true politics.¹⁵ It may well be that people of all political and theological persuasions will warm to that comment. It is when we begin to say what we mean by freedom that there is less unanimity.

What I have said about freedom in relation to unemployment and welfare suggests that to give people freedom means more than giving them freedom of choice, though of course it also means this. Making people free involves creating a social framework in which people can exercise their freedom. But that would seem to mean more than creating a framework for the free market to flourish. Some social control would seem to be necessary if the weak and those whose skills no longer match the demands of industry are to be protected. That social framework must also take account of the fact that it is as important to set people free from deprivation, illness and unemployment as to give them freedom of choice.

The mission of the Church must include pointing out where any economic system and its values fails to approximate to the ideal of the Kingdom of God. We should be critical of an overemphasis on market forces and a narrow individualistic interpretation of freedom; just as we should be critical of a command economy and its denial of many of the basic freedoms that we take for granted. The Kingdom of God transcends and challenges our social orders. We are all challenged to realise something of the Kingdom on earth, a Kingdom in which all men and women are valued and given opportunity to develop to their full potential.

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Paul R. Allen

The Cosmic Church: Some Reflections on Ephesians

Dorothy Sayers wrote "The Mind of the Maker" in 1941. In the preface she says, "I am not writing as a Christian, but as a professional writer. The writer has an idea for a book. Then the 'Idea' is put into words. This is the only way for the 'Idea' to have a form by which the reader can be part of what is in the author's mind. From the 'Idea' to the book is a creative activity in which the 'Idea' ceases to be a static image in the mind of the writer, but comes alive in the book, and one hopes will stir the reader."

John wrote, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Then comes the creative activity: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." In John's first letter he adds, "Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched." John gives this movement of the "Word" another aspect when he says, "The Word was the Life and that Life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it." The light which shines in the darkness is not just illumination, but rather a penetrating laser beam which breaks up the resistance of the dark. That is 'Conflict'. Our Lord likens it to taking up a cross. He said, "The time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good News." Turn round and look God in the face and let the creative activity of the "Word" take over. This was God's alternative to man's self-centredness which exploited others for his own ends. Paul describes the end product of man's inability to run the world God had given as "a crooked and depraved generation," and then he adds, "in which you shine like stars in the universe, as you hold out the word of life." That is the world in which the Christian lives and works and plays. This is summed up in a letter from the Assistant General Secretary of the Baptist Union, the Rev. Douglas C. Sparkes, "The people in our churches are at the working face where the Kingdom of God pushes back the frontiers of the kingdom of darkness, and we need to bring them all the support and encouragement they need."

At the turn of the first century none of the writings which we know as the New Testament were in general circulation. The letters of Paul were local to the church concerned. The only means of duplication was by hand copying. Owing to the persecutions the precious documents could not be given to the professional copyists. The Church was a semi-underground movement and met wherever it was convenient. So the creative activity of the "Word" depended on each Christian. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church "You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the Living God." So the "Word" takes form in the lives of the Christians. What others 'read' is the creative life of God. Paul commended the church at Thessalonica that they had already spread out in all Macedonia and even across the isthmus which joined the peninsula of Achaia to the mainland. This was the ferment of the "Word". Our Lord saw it as an encounter in which the odds seem all against the Christians: "Go! I am

sending you out like lambs among wolves.” They didn’t have much equipment or expertise but they were part of that creative activity whereby the “Word” becomes alive in a person and somehow communicates that ‘Life’ as he goes out into the crooked world.

Is this the Church today? It is always difficult to be objective, for our attitudes are conditioned by our background. Having been in the Baptist Church all my life, it would be presumptuous to give a view. We can learn a lot from one of the churches in about A.D. 100. Ephesus was a city of strategic importance. A centre of trade, a sea port and home of the famed Temple of Diana. There were other cities such as the sea port at Smyrna, the industry of purple dyeing at Thyatira, Philadelphia the gateway to the east, Laodicea the banking centre of the Asian world. When Paul finally got to Ephesus, it became a catalyst both for him and the new Christian movement. His background seemed to haunt him as the jibe came out during the Galatian journey: “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”

He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews but on the Damascus road, that was turned on its head. He, a Jew, was called to proclaim Jesus, whom he had been persecuting, to the Gentiles. When he finally got his break, he went all over Galatia, into Macedonia and Achaia always in the synagogue. They beat him up and threw him out, but he started up little groups partly of Jews and Gentiles. At Corinth he spent 18 months with Aquila and Priscilla. Then came Ephesus, almost as an after-thought. On his way to Caesarea he dropped off his two friends. Then came Apollos and he was put fully into the picture about Jesus by Aquila and Priscilla, the couple with whom Paul had lived for a year and a half. Apollos moved on, having baptized 12 men. Paul returned, asked a very pertinent question, and got a staggering reply. The question: “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And the reply: “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” So what had Paul been doing with Aquila and Priscilla those 18 months? Had he been trying to answer that Galatia jibe? Something suddenly tore the scales from his eyes. So Ephesus had a Pentecostal beginning. Then at Ephesus Paul finally abandoned the synagogue as the starting point. He realised that he had to meet the people where they were. He hired a hall from Tyrannus during the hot siesta and got it packed. This dialogue with the people lasted for upwards of two years. Ephesus was a self-propagating church for from those 12 men sprang up six other churches in these key cities of Asia. Later, John the apostle nurtured them until a new persecution imprisoned him in the off-shore island of Patmos. From his prison he wrote to his seven churches. Concerning Ephesus he commended their well run church with its almost frenzied endeavour, but they had lost their first love. One wonders why? The first beginning was not left to be a flash in the pan, for Paul, from his Roman prison, wrote a letter to them. Now a letter is the creative activity of the “Word” in a form which makes it alive for the reader. The verses and chapters were a later development. The letter was intended to be read as a whole. Consider what is in that letter. He uses superlatives which defy the mere limits of earth. Here is God’s dimension within which the “Word” is

asserting its power against the cosmic forces of evil in a world of which we are only dimly aware. He enlarges the horizon of that church in Ephesus to see that it was part of a creative movement, which embraces the whole universe. In some way that church was part of a creative activity for unknown beings of this heavenly realm. He uses the armoury of the soldier chained to him night and day to bring home to them their need of the resources of God to match the sinister dark power. All that, and yet they had lost their first love!

John wrote three letters. The third was addressed personally to Gaius. In it he names Diotrephes who controlled the church for his own ends. Now let us not go looking for some 'Diotrophes', but rather to ask whether the Church is an end in itself. Those who are part of the Church look for assurance and re-assurance. We give thanks that our Lord has dealt with the sinister fact of sin in our lives and that being 'saved' means being secure for the unknown future. But the distance between the front door of the Church and the front doors of where people live gets ever wider. Paul at Ephesus studied his 'market' the hard way. Perhaps we should be more concerned for those at "the working face where the Kingdom of God pushes back the frontiers of the kingdom of darkness." They who are sent out like lambs among wolves every Monday morning and return with the heart-ache of their encounter. Maybe we need to think again as to the relationship of preacher and congregation, and rather listen to the encounters of the week and learn from one another. Paul's Ephesian letter, if read aloud as a whole letter, would take less time than an average sermon, but in doing so the "Word" might come alive in those who hear, as the creative activity. Paul wrote from a distant prison, but it is another matter when your own pastor is imprisoned and the pastor of neighbouring Antioch is taken to the lions, as it was with Ignatius. Perhaps, then, the church needs to see itself as part of a cosmic whole. Whether coded or not is not important, the letter to the seven churches spells out the message. The way of the 'crooked and perverse generation' has its inevitable consequence but it is the Church, the "Word", which repeatedly mediates the 'Eternal Gospel', led by him who sits on a white horse, whose name is "The Word of God".

Each church must judge for itself. But God sets the Church in the context of a cosmic vision. From that creative activity of the "Word" in both worlds we must be swept along in the movement of God. Those who are within the limits of this three dimensional world and those who are released from it, are both part of this action of God, until the whole universe is brought to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord.

W. Vellam Pitts

Despatch from Sri Lanka

It seems sad that a tragic time such as we have had here should be what pushes us into letter writing, but when there is a curfew as there has been for two days, it gives us long undisturbed hours in which to write.

I gather from what my mother said on the 'phone, that you have seen on T.V. all the gruesome results of the car bomb which was exploded in the Colombo bus station at rush hour on Tuesday. We heard the bomb-blast which was about three miles away, and then for the next two hours there was a constant stream of ambulances with sirens and loudspeakers blaring, delivering the dead and wounded to the hospital just across the road from us. To make matters worse there was a huge rainstorm, so that rescuers and helpers were having to work in inches of water and soaked to the skin.

The BBC World Service was reporting it within an hour, which is amazing, but we do wish that they wouldn't say things such as "so called terrorists"; anyone who murders people indiscriminately like this is a terrorist. The other thing they said was "the Sinhalese blood is up", again, very misleading. Most people we saw or met were shocked, shattered or despairing. Any incidents that took place were local thugs taking the opportunity of looting one or two of the jewellery shops, and it was soon in hand. The curfews have helped, and the only curfew breakers have been the hundreds coming to donate blood. It has really been heartwarming to see how people have rallied round donating blood, bedding, clothing etc. Of course there are some Sinhalese now, even some good Christian folk, who say they will find it hard to trust any Tamil again. Perhaps that is understandable at the moment, but it is good to remember that only two or three weeks ago the Anglican Church elected a Tamil as the next Bishop of Colombo, a majority Sinhalese area, and everyone was delighted.

For us, the sadness of all this comes in sharp contrast to the celebrations and thanksgiving among the Baptists commemorating the arrival of the first Baptist missionary here 175 years ago. During Easter Week we were all at a Convention being held in Kandy. We had decided not to have great dramatic and expensive celebrations, but to concentrate on Revival, Reconciliation and Renewal within our denomination. We had some very good meetings, culminating in a lovely "footwashing" and Communion Service which was broadcast from the beautiful open-air chapel at Trinity College.

Easter, too, was a glad time as we met at 5.30 a.m. for a dawn Service around the empty tomb, followed by breakfast together, our 8.30 Tamil/Sinhala Service and our main 10 a.m. English Service. For us, the only sadness of the day was in realising that this was the last time we shall be celebrating Easter with our dear friends here. As some of you already know, we shall be leaving Sri Lanka at the end of December.

Peter Goodall



WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

York House 409 Barking Road,
Plaistow. E13 8AL

Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother

Dear Fellow Ministers

I have just been working on the preliminary stages of the preparation of next year's "Mission Calendar". I hope that, when you receive your copy later in the year, you will find it interesting and encouraging.

Each year, we have a theme for the Annual Report of the Mission. Next year's will be "Not Stars but Servants". I noticed the phrase in one of the newsletters of the Moorlands Bible College — and it rang all kinds of bells for me.

There is no doubt that the concept of the believer and indeed the Church as 'Servant' is true both to the teaching of Scripture and the clear example of the Lord Jesus Christ. The question is, are we prepared to accept that teaching, and follow that example, or are we all too eager to "climb up some other way"?

There is an increasing tendency to measure the progress or the strength of a Church by what seems to me to be 'worldly' criteria. How many on the roll — how many baptisms — how large an offering. It seems that we are in grave danger of losing sight of what really matters — following and manifesting the love of Jesus, the Servant-Messiah.

So what has this got to do with the West Ham Central Mission? Simply this; that however well-known we are — however many thousands of supporters we have — there is only one thing that really matters. We are here *to serve* those whom God gives into our care. We exist to be available to those who need care or comfort or healing, and we exist for that alone. When we forget that — we cease to be truly Christian, and cease thereby to have any claim on your prayers and support.

Until then, and may the day never come, keep on praying and supporting and commending our work.

Yours in His Service,

Trevor W. Davis,
Superintendent Minister

BOOK REVIEWS

Spirituality and Pastoral Care

by Kenneth Leech (Sheldon Press, 1986, 160 pp, £4.95).

Kenneth Leech needs no introduction to those who benefitted from his earlier, "Soul Friend" and "True Prayer". He has established himself in a short time as a perceptive and incisive writer on spirituality. The present volume does not disappoint. It touches evangelical spirituality at an angle and thereby stimulates and provokes.

Courageously, he has brought together two themes often dealt with in isolation. In the process he articulates what one has long suspected, namely that Christian pastors are always in danger of losing touch with themselves, resulting in disharmony: lack of integration between what they are and the work they do. The book's three-fold division is Foundations of Spirituality, Spiritual Direction and Spirituality in Practice in which the lives of four men, major influences on the author, are examined.

Baptists will sail through the opening chapter, concerned as it is with the imperative for spirituality of the Word of God. This involves wrestling with the text and being prepared for movement, change and pilgrimage. Quickly, Baptists will come to a grinding halt in the following chapter which strongly advocates contemplation. For Leech that tradition emanating from the fourth century Desert Fathers is eminently worth pursuing in our urban deserts of today. The reason being it brings diakrisis (discernment), and self-knowledge. Pastors are needed "who have entered deeply into their own hearts". The third main plank of spirituality is "struggle": facing up to the tensions within oneself and others. The goal of peace and inner tranquility in pastoral work is merely "analgesic" spirituality.

Spiritual Direction, the book's middle section, is for him non-directive, exemplary and careful not to produce over-dependency in others. Swimming against the stream, he does not equate spiritual direction with pastoral counselling for the former is much wider and not confined to problem solving. It also has a prophetic element. The goal is to enhance Christian vision and nourish people in their conflicts. All this stands over against the prevailing model for ministry which is "managerial", squeezing out a concern for sanctity and care of the individual.

These convictions Leech attributes to the formative influence of four priests: Brother Neville (simplicity, purity of heart), Canon Stanley Evans (passion for the Kingdom, commitment to humanity), Father Hugh Maycock (humility, humour, awe) and Bishop Colin Winter (evangelical radicalism, zeal for social justice). These brief portraits bear eloquent testimony to what Christ can make of human nature in its infinite variety.

Renewal of Priesthood is the concluding chapter and urgent, he believes, in view of the current crisis of confidence in ministry. Such renewal can come about only if the symbolic and sacrificial character of priesthood is rediscovered, whereby stress is on "inwardness" and solidarity with Christ, rather than on skills and function and frenetic activity.

This is a book which tells the truth until it hurts, and its relevance to pastoral ministry is not at all affected by the author's particular churchmanship. He would strip us of all our pretensions and rationalizations, and challenge us to allow a renewed spirituality to be at one with our pastoral practice.

It is a reactionary book, pleading that pastors go back to their earliest, historical, spiritual roots and in the old model of personal holiness and social justice, find again their authentic and abiding role.

M.V.J.

The Atonement of the Death of Christ

by H.D. McDonald (Baker Book House, 1985, 352 pp, £12.75).

Our colleague, Dermott McDonald, has enriched us with a wide variety of doctrinal books, both small and large, since his definitive histories of the Idea of Revelation thirty years ago. Most of them have been ideal for Seminary textbooks, and this is again true of this, his largest work. Following out the sub-title of "The Atonement in faith, revelation and history", Part I of forty-three pages and Part II of fifty-five pages deal succinctly (but perhaps too cursorily) with "the faith of the Church" (atonement and gospel, doctrine, resurrection, experience) and "the revelation of Scripture" (Synoptic, Johannine, Pauline, Hebrews and the "rest" — not Old Testament!) While this is very much of a summary, it is a useful over-view with plenty of insights and quotes for preaching. It locates its author firmly in the conservative evangelical spectrum with the stress on a substitutionary and propitiatory atonement.

There follow two hundred and forty pages of historical and thematic survey, which no doubt reflect a lecture course, and will be more directly of interest to students or to pastors continuing their studies. The design of sixteen of these chapters, which has the alleged purpose of avoiding "pigeon-holing" (pp.9-10), is surprisingly neat in that although the chapters bear thematic titles such as "The Conquest of Death", "The Payment of Ransom", "The Requirement of Reconciliation", "The Act of Satisfaction", "The Demonstration of Love", etc., the historical order is followed as third, fourth and fifth centuries, Anselm, Abelard, and others are dealt with. Later chapters distinguish Denney and Brunner (Ch.25), from Forsyth (Ch. 27), Dale (Ch. 21), so that in all there are not just the usual four or six views of the Atonement but sixteen!

While all the above, expressing fifty-three writers, are admirably surveyed with a good balance in the allotted space, this cannot be said for the thirty-seven further writers who make up the last two chapters. At first the order is chronological (Ch.26) and includes as "also rans" a number like Aquinas and Bushnell, who deserve more space than they receive. Then in Chapter 27 where there are almost thirty names, a real "pot-pourri" is presented which at first reading appeared to follow no system, until a clue was discovered back on p.305. but not represented in Chapter headings or sub-headings, that the first ten were Systematic Theologians and the

remainder authors who had written detached volumes. Within these categories the order appears to be not alphabetical but approximately chronological. This is the least satisfactory section as Barth, who follows old Baptist friends Strong, Clarke, and Mullins, gets only a single page to summarize his 2,300 pages of Church Dogmatics IV.

With such a mass of material covered it is unlikely that even all those who share the author's central convictions will agree with all of his interpretations. I was, for example, startled to hear Thielicke's view described as "a moral influence view stated in depth and with strong spiritual intensity" (p. 320), which may be a deduction from the *Evangelical Faith* volume, but hardly describes his numerous references to a deeper view in his sermons, (the author partly concedes this in p. 321). He also departs from the usual interpretation of the Fathers (for example by Torrance in his *Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers*) by reverting to Shedd's analysis which finds propitiatory views in early as well as later Fathers and among the Greeks as much as among the Latins. Nor is the volume fully up-to-date in that Liberation Theology comes in very much as an after-thought and deals only with Gutierrez, with Moltmann only represented by a sentence or so in connection with him, and for his *Theology of Hope* rather than his *Crucified God*. Nowhere is mention made of his Tübingen colleagues — Hengel, Stühlmacher, Jüngel and Kasper who mainly support a conservative position.

However, I would not want to end on an ungrateful note, but would say that if you have this one book, at least for the earlier writers, you may well be able to dispense with all the rest.

R.J. Thompson

Streams of Renewal

by Peter Hocken (*Paternoster Press, 1986, 288 pp, £7.95*).

This book, subtitled "The Origins and Early Development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain", deals sympathetically with this movement up to 1965. Though having special interest for the church historian, the general reader may find it interesting. But for a non-historian the cut off at 1965 is again and again most frustrating. The style is readable, but coming to terms with the host of people involved leaves one feeling a little bewildered at times. There is a guide to the main personalities, and they alone number between sixty and seventy. There are four sections to the book which deal with sources and a concluding section dealing with the distinguishing features of the origins and of the early development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain. This final section also contains a comparison with the movement in North America. Footnotes are placed together at the end of the book, together with a full bibliography, details of sources and an index.

The research into origins shows clearly that there is no one source of the Charismatic Movement, but that it finds its stimulus coming from many directions and has sprung up indigenously. It has been a "grass roots"

movement. Some strands are shown to have a clear ecumenical understanding and some charismatics have seen the earlier Pentecostal experience, inasmuch as organised denominationally, as being a failure to understand God's purpose, and that the Charismatic Movement is intended for the whole Church.

In the third section there is a chapter on "Further Expansion in Free Church and Independent Circles." Hocken states that by 1965 "it was evident that the Baptists were being more affected by this move of the Spirit than any other Free Church in the land." He goes on to look particularly at the influence of the Baptist Revival Fellowship and here some of the personalities mentioned are more familiar.

Hocken's final conclusion is that the central reality of the movement consists of the spiritual transformation known as "baptism in the Spirit" which brings a changed relationship to Jesus Christ. This, together with the "rediscovery of long-forgotten spiritual gifts and of unprecedented ecumenical dissemination, all point to the Charismatic Movement being a movement of God the Holy Spirit offering the Christian people an unprecedented opportunity for the renewal of the life of the whole body of Christ."

As a non-historian and a non-charismatic (in Hocken's sense), I should not go out of my way to buy this book, but I enjoyed reading it and it helped my understanding of the Charismatic Movement, as well as provoking my thought.

Maurice Dennison

Rites of Life

by Dr Caroline Berry (Hodder and Stoughton, 1987, 208 pp, £7.95).

This book, subtitled "Christians and Bio-Medical Decision Making", is written by a practising medical geneticist at Guy's Hospital. It is clearly and simply written, and covers a wide range of ethical questions, including contraception, abortion, non-natural methods of conception, artificially-delayed death and the problems of choice in health care when resources are limited.

The book is written from an Evangelical standpoint — the author believes in the Fall of Adam and Eve as a single event in past history — but avoids the "knee-jerk" response to ethical problems so often, sadly, encountered from Christians. For instance, Dr Berry clearly has deep respect for human life, and great compassion, but does not try to argue that every fertilised ovum is a human being, complete with "soul", and deserving of absolute protection by the law. Rather, she suggests that humanity is a quality which develops, and relates to relationships as well as biology.

She also warns us against emotional reactions; in reality caused by fear of the unknown, but often attributed to religious sanction. For comparison, when Philip II of Spain wanted to make the Tagus river navigable, a commission rejected his proposals with the words "It would be a rash trespass upon the rights of God if human hands were to dare to improve a

work left unfinished by God for reasons beyond our ken". Many people, Christians and non-Christians alike, are afraid that new techniques of in vitro fertilisation, or genetic manipulation could be used for harmful, evil ends and feel, therefore, that the area should be made taboo. Dr Berry responds (p.123) "The fact that we have an inherent tendency to go wrong does not absolve us from acting rationally and responsibly". We need to maintain humility, a sense of the awesome responsibility upon doctors and scientists, and work for the right legislation to prevent abuse or exploitation.

During my ministry, I have been involved in abortion counselling; ministering to parents of a still-born child; to parents whose new-born child was so severely genetically handicapped that it only remained breathing on a life-support machine; to parents whose teenage daughter was brain dead, but kept alive on artificial ventilation; to a family who insisted that doctors did not intervene surgically to lengthen the life (prolong the dying?) of a very elderly parent; to Christian nurse who asks me, "What do you do with doctors who play God — insisting on applying costly, sometimes painful and distressing treatment to patients with no prospect of real improvement or quality of life, simply delaying physical death?"

I wish I had possessed this book before. I have no doubt I shall refer to it again.

On page 171, the author writes:-

"It could be argued that doctors have too much power in regard to these life and death decisions. Are they still the most appropriate people to guide parents? In view of the complexity of medical aspects of the problem, they probably are. But if so then dialogue with those outside the profession is essential. Public discussion of the problems and principles involved (though not of individual families) should provide the constraints that ensure that power is not misused". I believe her book will help stimulate such an informed debate and welcome it.

Michael Ball

Jesus Said ... I Am

by Gwenda Bond (Bible Society, 1987, 23 pp, 60p).

This is a study booklet on six of the 'I am' sayings of Jesus in John's Gospel ('I am the Door' is incorporated into the 'Good Shepherd'). The booklet follows the usual pattern of the Bible Society Study Booklets. It is spiritual, yet very practical, starting with a leader's guide which goes right down to basics — "ensure people are seated comfortably and so that they can see each other".

Then comes the Introduction which puts all the 'I am's' into the context of God saying to Moses 'I am who I am' — showing who Jesus was, His purpose in coming, and the authority with which He spoke.

In each of the six sections, the Bible passage is presented first, then follows some enlightening comments, digging quite deeply at times, into the meaning behind the picture. Questions for discussion follow bringing the Bible passage right into the 1980's.

Following the questions in each study there are prayer suggestions — “Thank God for ...”, “Confess ...”, “Pray for ...” and “Pray that ...” — all helpful. Finally there are other passages for those wishing to go into the subject more deeply.

This booklet has a good layout and is enhanced by helpful pictures (except where people are drawn). It will prove a useful study for house groups in finding out more about Jesus and His purpose in coming into the world.

God’s Answer for Fear

by Eric Hayden (Bridge Publishing, 1985, 148 pp, £2.10)

Everyone feels fear from time to time and it is a good God-given emotion for without it we would be burnt, run over in the road, fall down stairs — fear keeps us from innumerable hazards. But when fears take over and become obsessional, then we need to find an answer. In his book Eric Hayden looks at 31 common fears and shows how God has a remedy for each.

He starts each chapter with a helpful text, defines the problem, and then shows, through teaching and illustration, how these fears can be met. Each chapter ends with a prayer.

The illustrations are apt. For instance we read of a Japanese evangelist who had a large red cross painted on the back of his artist’s smock. He feared bodily attack, yet wanted to be true to his Saviour. Should he wear the smock? The illustrations show ordinary people in ordinary circumstances, but weighed down by fears. The writer tells how each fear was conquered.

The teaching given is not only scriptural, it is also practical. There is teaching on God’s love, there are the counsellor’s own insights, there are down-to-earth tips (“take a walk, take a warm bath, go to bed with a hot drink” — for insomnia), but above all there is the strong teaching on trusting in God’s providence.

In his introduction, Eric Hayden gives his reason for writing: “I am writing for those who find modern living highly stressful, with fear-arousing situations becoming more and more prevalent.” I am sure such people will find the book a blessing, but it will also help pastors and counsellors, youth leaders and visitors to give more ably the counsel that is needed these days when ‘men’s hearts are failing them for fear’.

Gladys Rosie