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New Directions

Papers on

Neo-Pentecostalism

and on

Urban Evangelism

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Contents

Introduction

The greater part of this issue of the *Journal* consists of papers read at CBRF annual meetings, in 1975 and 1976.

The charismatic movement continues to challenge the 'assemblies'. The reaction has sometimes been a policy of 'masterly inactivity', supported, perhaps, from Acts 5: 38f; sometimes a theological polemic so intense that a thoughtful observer is bound to suspect the existence of subconscious factors fuelling the controversy. Our Lord once caused considerable embarrassment by asking about the baptism of John—'Was it of heaven or of men?' No less embarrassment is caused in some circles today if a similar question is asked concerning the so-called 'baptism of the Spirit'.

Sometimes the questioner is left with the impression that the question was in poor taste. Often he (or she) receives an equivocal answer. And where the answer comes simply and directly it does not always carry conviction.

To hear the way some people talk, one might assume that such difficulties and uncertainties are present only within the Brethren movement. Nothing could be further from the truth. This was made very clear at the 1975 CBRF annual meeting, three papers from which are included in this volume. In his discussion of the biblical basis for the current interest in spiritual gifts, John Balchin refers to the present time as one of 'turmoil' and although he expects 'an advance in understanding' yet he recognises that what we currently experience are 'growing pains' which must, presumably by definition, be uncomfortable. Certainly, no advance can take place apart from serious biblical study such as he offers.

Many people who do not take up a doctrinaire position about the charismatic movement have nevertheless strong reservations about its practical outworkings. The last thing they want to do is to 'quench the Spirit' or to ascribe his work to mere human activity (let alone to demonic manipulation) but they are very dubious about the possibility of having a charismatic element 'keep its place' within the life of a local church that is not completely charismatic. Donald Bridge's experience as a pastor shines through his paper on pastoral problems in the local church and offers hope for all fellowships that want to operate a 'mixed economy'. (Readers of the *Journal* are probably aware of the comprehensive and eirenical survey of biblical teaching in *Spiritual Gifts and the Church* (IVP 1973) by Donald Bridge and David Phypers.)

We have already hinted that deep emotional factors may account in part at least for the intensity of some doctrinaire denunciation of the charismatic movement. But it is no less true that the friends of neopentecostalism have tended to ignore or play down the contribution that psychology can make to understanding the movement. In his paper Dr. Barker considers the evidence but makes it quite clear that while a great deal can be *explained* in psychological terms, this is not at all the same as *explaining away*.

One of the dangers of overmuch concentration on emotion and spiritual experience is that it may turn the Christian's attention *inward* or at best *upward* whereas the New Testament inculcates a strong *outward* concern. (Not that it would be fair to suggest that lack of interest in evangelism or the relief of suffering is a failing of charismatic Christians only: groups who major in doctrine show a similar weakness, whether they sit at the feet of Calvin or of Darby). The annual meeting in 1976 focused on the outreach of the church, especially in the inner city. Margaret Clay's sociological perspective is based not merely on academic study but on her own experience of life in the inner city; she argues powerfully that salvation must have a community dimension and not interact only with 'privatised' man. Brian Mills and Patrick Sookhdeo possess (even separately —and how much more combined?) considerable experience of evangelism and urge the need for an approach that begins with identification with the neighbour, bases itself on a realistic mobilisation of forces and includes an element of adaptation to contemporary needs.

From a slightly different viewpoint, an extract from a paper read by Roger Foster at an earlier annual meeting suggests some ways in which the local church may supply needs that are barely recognised by many church members although contemporary society is full of witnesses to their urgency. If the Holy Spirit is the One who is 'sent' and in whom 'fellowship' is experienced, then here are two tests for his presence. Not spiritual experience alone, but evangelism and a supportive church life are signs that he is at work.

JOHN BALCHIN

Spiritual Gifts: The Biblical Basis

In the current discussion of spiritual gifts[1] it seems reasonable to conclude that a great deal of the division among Christians has to do with the interpretation of the Biblical evidence. Questions which we had, traditionally, assumed had been answered, and issues which we had assumed had been closed have been brought to the fore once again, often in ways which directly challenge the traditional exegesis. If this challenge had been posed by a sect or by a minority group within our fellowships, we might well have been justified in ignoring it. However, the undeniable experience of countless sincerely born-again believers in every denominational grouping worldwide forces us to a reappraisal. In the second half of the 20th Century, spiritual gifts have become a fact of church life, and we can ignore them only by turning back the clock and mentally opting out of the generation in which we live.

In the light of a situation which has been forced on many of us, we must re-examine the biblical evidence if we are to both meet the challenge and reap the opportunities of our time.

One of the weaknesses of the movements associated with the expression of spiritual gifts in the past has been their theological superficiality. This situation is now changing rapidly as numerous scholars contribute their work on the subject with the result that we are faced with a surfeit of literature and a variety of theological constructions. This paper is not intended as an answer to all the questions raised but as something of a re-assessment of the raw material of Scripture evidence.

1. The Ministry of the Spirit before Pentecost

In order to see the subject of spiritual gifts in true biblical perspective we must begin with the activity of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament.[2] Many scholars have been struck by what is, in the light of the New Testament revelation, the curiously impersonal presentation of the Spirit in the Old Testament. In fact one might almost understand the Spirit under the Old Covenant more in terms of Power than Person.[3]

Within the progressive revelation of the Old Testament there appear to be two lines of development:

(a) *In the experience of some, the Spirit meant special ability.* Particular people were equipped for particular tasks; enabled, that is, to acomplish things which were previously beyond their power.

The result varied from prophecy to physical strength; military prowess to royal wisdom;[4] even including manual and artistic skill.[5] A variety of terms is used for the reception or operation of this supernatural power. The Spirit is described as 'coming upon', 'taking possession of', 'filling', 'entering into', 'stirring', 'falling upon' (etc.) the persons concerned,[6] after which they begin to fulfil tasks or exercise ministries which would otherwise have been beyond them. In this sense we may understand this enabling as 'charismatic', although the term *charisma* does not appear until the New Testament.

There are certain aspects of this ministry of the Spirit which might be difficult for us to appreciate in the light of our traditional dogmatic approach to Pneumatology: (i) These experiences did not necessarily make a man holy, nor were they infallible as a result of them.[7] (ii) This gifting was selective and sometimes temporary. It was not the experience of all God's covenant people. It was confined to those called to particular duties, and even they had no guarantee of its permanence.[8] (iii) Not all professedly 'charismatic' ministry in the Old Testament was of the Lord. There were, for example, false prophets as well as true ones.

(b) *In prophetic anticipation there was also the promise of life by the Spirit.* We know from the New Testament that the Old Covenant was both educational and anticipatory. Its very failure as a saving system coupled with the persistent disobedience of the covenant people proved to be the opportunity for further revelation concerning a new arrangement which would ultimately fulfil and replace the old. The prophets were given the vision of a New Covenant, connected with which was the promise of a new work of the Spirit. That new work was to prove a completely new basis for godly living; not by external observance of a written code, but by a new potential imparted to the individual.[9]

Along with this new ministry of the Spirit came the promise of an extension of the Old Covenant charismatic gifting to ordinary people of every status.[10]

Tied in with these future developments was the predicted coming of a Spirit-filled King who would inaugurate the new arrangement.[11] We may understand Jesus' ministry as being in direct line with Old Testament experience and in fulfilment of these prophecies. He himself claimed that it was so,[12] while his recorded ministry is evidence of a similar pattern to those under the old dispensation. It is significant that his public ministry did not commence until his baptism, accompanied as it was by the descent of the Holy Spirit,[13] which we may be sure was no regenerating work. Although in itself an incomplete Christology, by this we may understand that the Son had apparently so limited himself to the conditions of human

life that he was in some way dependent upon the Spirit for power to sustain his work.

Jesus himself underlined and expanded upon the theme of a new work by the Holy Spirit[14] in the context of a New Covenant before he ratified it with his blood. Now, however, the description is fully personal. Someone would come to the disciples in Christ's place, indwelling them, reminding them of his words, teaching them all truth as well as empowering them in their ministry to the world. Someone would, in fact, replace Christ for the disciples, being all that he had been to them and more, for whereas Jesus' earthly ministry had been localised and external, his would be universal and indwelling.

2.   The Fulfilment of the Promise

Both aspects of the Spirit's work, anticipated or foretold in the Old Testament, find their fulfilment in the New Testament after Pentecost.

(a)   His work was seen and understood in terms of regeneration and sanctification, those doctrines which we traditionally call the 'doctrines of grace', and that experience which we describe as 'union with Christ'.[15] This assertion would be challenged by many, particularly those in the Reformed tradition, who maintain that the indwelling, regenerating work of the Spirit was nothing new, but had already been experienced under the Old Covenant.[16] They would generally argue from the dogmatic assertion that faith is impossible without a creative work of the Spirit, and that Old Testament saints certainly exercised faith;[17] from the spirituality of many passages in the Old Testament,[18] and from the impossibility of entering the Kingdom without a regenerating work of the Spirit.[19] The significance of Pentecost becomes for them that of the creation of a universal fellowship of believers over against the individual and national aspect of Old Covenant faith.[20]

Whereas there is strength in these arguments, the prophetic nature of the Old Testament references to a new work by the Spirit, not to say the Gospel reiteration that the Spirit could not come to the disciples prior to Christ's ascension, [21] point to some completely new arrangement from Pentecost onwards.[22] While conscious of their indebtedness to the Old Covenant, New Testament writers describe the new arrangement in sharp contrast with the Old,[23] the contrast of letter and Spirit. If this were not the case, the Christian would be no better off in practical terms than the godly Old Covenant Jew.

(b)   Peter was quick (and inspired!) to point out to the Pentecost crowds that the phenomena they were witnessing were the fulfilment of prophecy.[24] The Spirit's gifts were now available to all

God's people, irrespective of age or status, an offer which we see illustrated for us in the subsequent pages of the book of Acts and in the teaching on spiritual gifts in the Epistles.[25]

While in no way disagreeing with the evidence of Scripture for extraordinary happenings in those early days, it has been traditional to explain that certain of these gifts were only applicable to the apostolic era, while the New Testament was being written and before the canon was closed. With the establishment of a Scriptural source of authority, the supernatural or extraordinary gifts were redundant and therefore withdrawn,[16] as, it was held, the apostles themselves predicted.[26] As a result of this line of argument, any later claim to such gifts has been dismissed by many as being, by definition, not of God.

It is, of course, indisputable that God blessed and used the apostles and their contemporaries in remarkable and often spectacular ways. It is also historical fact that, apart from isolated and scattered incidents, often ambiguous, many of the gifts known in the New Testament era did disappear from the life of the Church, and have not been in evidence even in times of manifest blessing.[28]

However, quite apart from the highly doubtful biblical exegesis which lies behind this view,[29] in positive terms, the New Testament authors do not appear to conceive of a church without all the gifts. In Paul's understanding, for example, they are linked with his description of the church as the body of Christ.[30] To ask if the gifts are for our generation is to ask if the church still answers to that description.[31]

Spiritual gifts are variously described in the Epistles. They can be *charismata* (sing. *charisma*), quite literally, gifts of grace, a word used in various ways, and not always specifically of spiritual gifts in the restricted sense;[32] or *pneumatika*, literally, that which pertains to or is activated by the Spirit;[33] or in more general terms of gift, ministry, power, or manifestation.[34] As under the Old Covenant, they represent special ability to accomplish particular tasks and duties within the fellowship of the Church.[35] In traditional Pentecostal teaching, the supernatural gifts are nine in number,[36] but there are, in fact, several overlapping lists which range much wider.[37]

It is significant that when there is a need for teaching about spiritual gifts, it is their wide variety which is emphasised.[38] Some were exciting (although it would be wrong to describe them as "ecstatic") such as speaking in tongues, which gave a new dimension to personal and corporate devotion;[39] prophecy, which brought a direct word from the Lord to a particular situation and which sometimes included prediction;[40] or healing, which, at times, accompanied the preaching of the Gospel as a demonstration of the power of

Christ.[41] Other gifts are somewhat unexpected,[42] and in places the gifts seem to shade off into what we might call graces.[43]

Whatever the actual gifts, the apostles were clear that they had been given for the extension and edification of the Church.[44] They were tools to use and not toys to play with, a lesson which they had to learn the hard way even in New Testament times, for we have evidence that even then they were liable to abuse, [45] or to be held in contempt,[46] or even neglected.[47] It is also evident that not all ministry which claimed to be charismatic was necessarily of the Holy Spirit,[48] and perhaps more significantly, that spiritual gifts were not regarded by the apostles as the "be all and end all" of Christian experience.[49] It was possible to exercise the gifts of the Spirit without displaying his fruit (just as in this generation it is possible to have the fruit without the gifts).[50]

The charismatic ministry of the Spirit was important but it was not all important; a truth, but not the whole truth. Above all the Spirit as portrayed in the New Testament was self-effacing, for the centre of New Testament faith and life was not the Spirit, but the Son.[51] Those who possessed and exercise the gifts were called upon to display the evidence of spiritual maturity in their behaviour.[52]

3. The Pentecostal Interpretation

Historically, when these spiritual gifts reappeared in the life of the Church at the beginning of the 20th Century, they were interpreted in a particular way, which we have come to know as Pentecostalism,[53] and the more recent resurgence of this emphasis which we know as the Charismatic movement,[54] has largely taken over and adopted this view. In this sense it would be fair to describe the movement as Neo-Pentecostalism, although its leaders dislike that description, and its links with traditional Pentecostalists are often somewhat tenuous.

The general pattern of Pentecostal interpretation connects the gifts with a definite and generally post-conversion experience of the Holy Spirit, for many evidenced by speaking in tongues, and for some being the initiation into a new level of spirituality unknown previously. Technically this experience has been called variously (and ambiguously) "Baptism in the Holy Spirit", "receiving the Spirit," "being filled with the Spirit" or "the fulness of the Spirit," and sometimes, "the second blessing."[55]

Such an interpretation must necessarily be divisive, for by definition it separates those who have come into this experience from those who have not, even though the latter may be mature Christians of many years standing. This has led to a host of pastoral problems within the Churches which many are at a loss to resolve. Some have even pressed the traditional Reformed understanding of

gifts to the point where they have dismissed, not only charismatic claims, but also the evidence of Scripture. Others have become extreme in a Pentecostal position which has written off God's work outside of a charismatic context. We must therefore examine the Pentecostal interpretation of Scripture to see if its foundations are as sure as its claims are confident.

There is no evidence in the New Testament that anyone could be truly regenerate without the indwelling ministry of the Spirit. While not ruling out the possibility of additional or subsequent gifting, the Spirit appears to commence his work at conversion. It is then that the believer "receives the Spirit."[56]

The phrase "baptism in the Spirit" is somewhat ambiguous even in the New Testament. Used in the Gospels and Acts in connection with John the Baptist's prediction,[57] the six references appear to be linked to the historic outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, together with the manifestation of spiritual gifts at that time. Paul uses the phrase in the sense of what must mean regeneration,[58] which Pentecostalists are often at pains to explain away. Many have understood the Gospels/Acts usage in terms of Paul and as meaning regeneration,[59] but it is possible that we have the same phrase used in two different ways.

Apart from one reference, all the cases of "being filled with the Spirit" are found in Luke's writings, where the phrase is used of both Jesus and the disciples.[60] In these references, it does often seem to have charismatic overtones, although we note that Luke was particularly fond of the metaphor of "filling",[61] and that, in connection with the Spirit, he sees it as a repeatable experience.[62] The exception, when Paul tells the Ephesians to be continually filled with the Spirit,[63] may well fall into another category altogether. Whereas it could be argued that for Luke the recipients of the filling are passive, for Paul the continuous filling of the Spirit in some way lies within their control. It may even be better to understand him as saying something of the nature of "Allow the Spirit to fill you by making room for him in your lives."[64] It is unlikely that this phrase, along with "baptism in the Holy Spirit," was ever intended as the technical expression it has ambiguously become.[65] Even some modern representatives of the charismatic movement recognise the ambiguity of the current terminology and wish to coin more meaningful terms.[66]

The insistence upon tongues-speaking as a sign of charismatic experience rests upon very limited data in the book of Acts, and there it is always accompanied by other phenomena.[67] Paul clearly implies that not everyone had the gift of tongues,[68] and the plea that momentary tongues-speaking occurs at the time of the initial experience and not thereafter has no scriptural warrant at all.

It is impossible to be dogmatic about the order of saving experience from the book of Acts.[69] For some it is evident that there was a delay between believing the Gospel and receiving the Holy Spirit.[70] For others charismatic gifting was synchronous with conversion, even before baptism, while in other cases gifts are simply not mentioned.[71] The case of the Ephesian disciples,[72] long maintained as evidence for such a post-conversion experience, rests on a mistranslation in the Authorised Version, and adds little to the conclusion that it is impossible to find the Pentecostal pattern in the book of Acts. It is fairly obvious, also that whereas some gifts, like tongues, demand a particular and identifiable starting point in time, with others it is hardly likely to be so obvious.[73]

With regard to the holiness teaching sometimes, though not always, attaching to Pentecostal doctrine, we may say that it is axiomatic that any experience of the Holy Spirit *should* lead the believer nearer to Christ. However, on the evidence of the New Testament, gifts did not guarantee spiritual advance.[74] The early reception of spiritual gifts at or soon after conversion, not to say their abuse, tells us that possessing and exercising them is not necessarily evidence of spiritual maturity.

In some respects both Pentecostal doctrine and the traditional Reformed approach suffer from a similar distortion in interpretation. The traditional position is largely a rationalisation of church history. It says, "The gifts have not occurred: therefore, they do not occur," and Scripture is tailored accordingly to this end. The Pentecostalist has done a similar thing with what is a genuine manifestation of the Spirit's ministry in our time. His interpretation is a rationalisation of individual experience, and again Scripture has to be trimmed to size.[75]

The sad result is that the Church has been presented with two defective interpretations of spiritual gifts and called upon to choose between them, becoming charismatic or non-charismatic, Pentecostal or anti-Pentecostal. There is a growing body of opinion that these positions are not the only ones possible, that it is equally open to us to recognise the obvious validity of charismatic experience without necessarily embracing the traditional Pentecostal interpretation.

By analogy from the history of theological development through the last nineteen hundred years, we should expect fresh aspects of God's truth to surface in each generation. We should expect a period of misunderstanding, debate, and particularly, of definition as we learn from one another, and, please God, we should look for an advance in our understanding and appropriation of God's many coloured grace. The present turmoil in this area of theological debate need only be, in the providence of God, the growing pains of the Church.

NOTES

1   For full bibliographies on the debate see *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, F. D. Bruner (London 1971); *The Pentecostals*, W. J. Hollenweger (London 1972); *I believe in the Holy Spirit*, M. Green (London 1975).

2   A survey of biblical references to the Holy Spirit in both Old and New Testaments will be found in *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, G. Smeaton r.p. (London 1958) and in *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, H. B. Swete (London 1931).

3   e.g. Num. 11: 16-17, 24-25. Cp. Green op. cit. p.30.

4   e.g. Deut. 34: 9; Judges 3: 10; 11: 29; 14: 19; 1 Sam. 10: 10; 16: 13; 2 Sam. 23: 2; Micah 3: 8 etc.

5   Ex. 31: 2-3. The relationship between what we call 'natural' ability and spiritual gift is left unexplored in Scripture. Of course, *all* abilities come from God. Cp. Green op. cit. p.156.

6   e.g. Judges 3: 10; 2 Chron. 14: 20; Micah 3: 8; Ez. 2: 2; Judges 13: 25 etc. Green op. cit. p. 19 calls the Spirit in the Old Testament 'the Invading Spirit.'

7   e.g. Samson; Saul (of whom A. Kuyper could say, 'Evidently the work of the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with regeneration'—*The Work of the Holy Spirit*: Grand Rapids 1946: p. 39).

8   e.g. I Sam. 16: 14. David's *cri de coeur* (Ps. 51: 11) is probably to be understood in this context. He had the precedent of Saul.

9   Ez. 11: 19-20; 36: 25-27; 37: 14; Is. 33: 14-17; 44: 3; 295: 19, 21; Zech. 12: 10 Cp. Jer. 31: 31-34. L. Morris (*Spirit of the Living God*: London 1960: p. 28.) 'The Old Testament. . .points us forward to a coming day, a day when the Messiah should appear, a day when the Spirit should be poured out upon all (and not restricted to one class of people like prophets), a day when men should know complete renewal of their inner life by the divine power that should be given to them.'

10 Joel 2: 28-29. Cp. Num. 11: 39.

11 Is. 11: 1-2; 42: 1; 48: 16; 61: 1.

12 Luke 4: 16-21.

13 e.g. Luke 3: 21-22. Cp. 4: 14.

14 See especially John chaps. 14-16.

15 The title '*Holy* Spirit' is rare in the Old Testament. Cp. Swete op. cit. p. 340 'With one or two possible exceptions the Old Testament makes no reference to the ethical action of the Spirit of God on the individual man.'

16 B. B. Warfield, *Biblical and Theological Studies* (Philadelphia 1952) p. 151: 'The Spirit of God in the Old Testament performs all the functions which are ascribed to the Holy Ghost of the New Testament, and bears all the same characteristics.'

17 Kuyper op. cit. p. 119 argues that as believers are saved they must therefore 'have received saving grace'. . .'the inward gift of regeneration.'

18 So Smeaton re. the Psalms op. cit. p. 26.

19 Some cite John 3: 10 in this context

20 Cp. Kuyper op. cit. pp. 119-120: 'The spiritual union of the elect did not exist among Israel.' The Church as the Body of Christ could exist only after Christ's exaltation.

21 John 14: 16-17 (though note var. lect. in Greek text); 15: 26; 16: 7; Cp. John 7: 37-39.

22   Swete op. cit. p. 151 ' "It dwells with you" describes the experience which was just about to end; "It shall be in you" that which was about to begin.' Cp. R. Pache *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago 1960) pp. 31, 55.

23   e.g. 2 Cor. 3. Cp. Matt. 11: 11. Green op. cit. p. 150: 'Great though John the Baptist was, he pointed forward to the Kingdom but was not a member of it, and did not enjoy the distinctive blessing of the Kingdom, the presence of the Spirit of Jesus within him". Cp. Swete op. cit. pp. 21-22.
Smeaton (op. cit. pp. 65-7) while admitting that the New Covenant was 'an essentially different economy'. . .'the former left men without the quickening Spirit for the Spirit of life was not dispensed in that economy', then takes refuge in the Abrahamic Covenant and goes on to say that there were countless numbers of regenerate men under the old economy, not because of Sinai but because of their faith in the promise of Christ.

24   Acts 2. 16ff.

25   Some have argued that the anarthrous use of the term *pneuma* indicates his charismatic activity. See Swete op. cit. p. 395ff for references and discussion.

26   Smeaton op. cit. p. 51: 'The supernatural and extraordinary gifts were temporary and intended to disappear when the Church should be founded and the inspired canon of Scripture closed.' Cp. Kuyper op. cit. 187-189.

27   The Scriptures usually cited are 1 Cor. 13: 8; Heb. 2: 3-4.

28   M. Harper *As at the Beginning* (London 1965) considerably overdraws the picture.

29   i.e. 1 Cor. 13: 8 more naturally refers to Heaven; Heb. 2: 3-4 whilst recognising the remarkable activity of the Spirit at the beginning, in no way denies a continuing manifestation.

30   e.g. 1 Cor. 12; Romans 12: 3-8; Eph. 4: 7-16.

31   Green op. cit. pp. 172, 197 cites the prevalence of spiritual gifts in the sub-Apostolic days.

32   e.g. Rom. 5: 15; 6: 23; 2 Cor. 1: 11. Green op. cit. p. 196: 'To be a Christian is to be a charismatic.'

33   e.g. 1 Cor. 12: 1.

34   Eph. 4: 7; Cor. 12: 4-7.

35   Kuyper op. cit. p. 194: 'the divinely ordained means and powers whereby the King enables the Church to perform its task in the world.'

36   From 1 Cor. 12: 8-11.

37   1 Cor. 12: 28-30; 13: 1-3; Rom. 12: 6-8; Eph. 4: 11. Cp. Green op. cit. pp. 192f.

38   1 Cor. 12: 4-26.

39   e.g. 1 Cor. 14: 1-32.

40   e.g. Acts 11: 27-30.

41   e.g. Acts 3; 14: 8ff (though as the last reference indicates, not always with the desired effect). Cp. Rom. 15: 18-19; Heb. 2: 3-4.

42   1 Cor. 7: 7. (celibacy); 1 Cor. 12: 28 (helpers).

43   e.g. 1 Cor. 13: 1-3; Rom. 12: 6-8; 1 Peter 4: 10-11.

44   e.g. 1 Cor. 14. and the use of Tongues (especially vv. 6-12, 18-19).

45   1 Cor. 12-14.

46   1 Thess. 5: 19-20.

47   1 Tim. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 1: 7.

48   Mt. 7: 15-23; 1 Thess. 5: 21; 1 Jn. 4: 1; 1 Cor. 14: 29, 37-38. (possibly also
      the background of 1 Cor. 12: 2-3) Cp. 2. Thess. 2: 9.

49   e.g. 1 Cor. 13:. 1-3.

50   Smeaton op. cit. p. 85 explains Heb. 6: 4; 10: 29; as 'instances of men receiv-
      ing only the supernatural gifts, not true grace.'

51   e.g. Jn. 16: 14 Cp. 2 Cor 3: 17-18.

52   e.g. Mt. 7: 15-20.

53   For a description of Pentecostalism and its doctrines see Hollenweger op. cit.

54   Harper op. cit. For a description of the Movement: *The Charismatic Move-
      ment* ed. M.P. Hamilton (Grand Rapids 1975).

55   See Bruner op. cit. pp. 56-148; Hollenweger op. cit. pp. 291-512 for Pente-
      costal doctrine.

56   e.g. Rom. 8: 9-11 Cp. Gal. 3: 1-5, 14. Green op. cit. p. 216 (agreeing with
      J. D. Dunn *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*) stresses that Christian initiation
      involves Repentance and Faith, Water Baptism, and the Receipt of the Spirit.

57   Matt. 3: 11; Mark 1: 8; Luke 3: 16; John 1: 33; Acts 1: 5; 11: 15-16.

58   1 Cor 12: 13.

59   Green op. cit. p. 140.

60   e.g. Luke 4: 1; Acts 2: 4; etc.

61   Green op. cit. p. 148 for frequency. He concludes that Luke uses the idea in
      two ways: either of the general character of a man (e.g. Luke 5: 12; 13: 10)
      or of the sudden inspiration of the moment, sometimes charismatic, some-
      times not.

62   e.g. Acts 4: 31 (a group which had previously been 'filled').

63   Eph. 5: 18

64   Cp. Col. 3: 16 (the corresponding reference in the 'parallel' letter).

65   If taken literally the metaphors do not correspond. To baptise someone is
      not to fill them!)

66   See Renewal Magazine April 1975: Renewal Study Section 1 (iii-iv).

67   Acts 2: 4; 10: 46; 19: 6.

68   1 Cor. 12: 30.

69   John 14-16 are silent on the matter of a second experience, as are the Epistles

70   e.g. Acts 8: 14-17

71   e.g. Acts 10: 44-46.

72   Acts 19: 2. AV '*since* ye believed'. (Bruner op. cit. p. 208).

73   e.g. 'helpers, administrators' (1 Cor. 12: 28).

74   See the Corinthian situation.

75   Kuyper op. cit. p. 4f: 'Spiritual experience can furnish no basis for instruc-
      tion.'

DONALD BRIDGE

Pastoral Problems in the Local Church

It would be very unfortunate if the title of this paper were to give a purely negative impression, as if the only contribution made to church life by the Charismatic Movement is the creation of problems. The existence, exercise, and control of spiritual gifts within the local church is not treated in the New Testament as an embarrassing topic reluctantly tackled by the apostles, but as a vital topic fraught with possibilities "for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11-13). Admittedly it did not work out quite that way at Corinth; that fact should neither surprise us nor discourage us. Any human activity will create problems. Any divine activity which co-operates with frail and fallible human beings will create problems too.

A friend of mine whose church is "going charismatic" was warned that the process is a dangerous one. His reply was, "Perhaps so, but at least we have come alive. A dead church is more dangerous than a dangerous one."

Amongst "Open Brethren" we are all familiar with the gauntlet run by a church with the minimum of human control and organisational structure and the maximum of openness to God. The running battle with exclusivism, the nuisance of enthusiasts with some off-beat interpretation of prophecy, the occasional embarrassing scenes at the Breaking of Bread; these are problems which go with the system. But "Brethren" consider it worth the risk. The question posed by the Charismatic Movement is, "Can we accept these *extra* dangers and problems as worth the risk too?"

My own answer is a qualified and cautious "*Yes*". Michael Green has written, "During the last fifteen years I have had the privilege of living in a Christian community where charismatic and non-charismatic Christians have lived together in a high degree of mutual love and trust. It cannot be denied that the Charismatic Movement has in places brought division and suspicion. It is my conviction that this need not be so." (*I believe in the Holy Spirit*—Michael Green— Hodder & Stoughton, 1975) From experience in the pastorate of three successive churches I share that conviction. But you have to work at it.

The Theological Problem

The introduction of hitherto unfamiliar charismata into a church raises three types of problems; the theological, the emotional and the

administrational. *The theological issue* is discussed by John Balchin with whose judgement I thoroughly concur. It poses two basic questions, and they should be dealt with separately. First, can we encourage a "second-blessing" approach? Surely not. A theology which divides Christians into two categories is never faithful to the whole tenor of Scripture, always mutes the fundamental importance of the New Birth, always displaces the centrality of Christ, and always denies the essential unity of the Church. That may not be the intention, but it is the inevitable result.

Secondly, can we encourage a welcome to spiritual gifts in all their rich diversity? This is not the same question in a different form, even though classic Pentecostalism insists that it is. The simple fact of contemporary experience is that the exercise of charismata today is *not* confined to those people who claim a "Baptism of the Spirit" as a distinct second work of grace. The older Pentecostal denominations linked the two inseparably because they sprang from the "Holiness Movement" which in turn was a development of Methodism. In the newer Charismatic Movement there has been at first a natural tendency to adopt the same theology, but the link is not such an exclusive one. Often the term "Baptism of the Spirit" is simply convenient short-hand for "starting to speak in tongues" or "becoming more intensely aware of God" or "coming to expect and experience more in the service of God". The question of the scriptural nature (or otherwise) of the actual gifts exercised, is a separate and distinct one. Certainly there is no scripture which specifically states that the charismata were a temporary gift granted until the canon of scripture was complete. It is a theory with a respectable and indeed honourable history, but it cannot match the facts.   Nowhere in the New Testament are we led to expect that the Body is to have missing limbs after the first few years. On the contrary, we have abiding instructions on the right exercise of those limbs. That is not to say that every phenomenon hailed today as a spiritual gift is really genuine. But it is to say that we cannot start with an *a priori* assumption that the gifts do not and cannot exist.

The Emotional Problem

We move now from the theological to the emotional problem. I use the word advisedly. Nothing is more likely to send the blood-pressure up, the nerves quivering, the adrenalin flowing and the abuse flying, than the introduction of this whole topic into a normal mixed group of Christians. The subject is plagued with examples of excess and eccentricity.

On the whole, English Christianity has denigrated the emotions. The average Englishman at his devotions seems to find strong feeling an embarrassment, and almost equates reverence with

frigidity. Anglican liturgy keeps religion safe within the bounds of sonorous phraseology. Nonconformists, inheriting a misund-ɪe standing of Puritanism, conceive the height and climax of worship to be sitting in rows listening to a monologue. Brethrenism made a dash for feedom and informality but quickly settled to an emphasis on teaching and tradition (witness the remarkable collection of folk-lore as to what is and is not "suitable for the morning meeting"). In all three cases, the *cerebral* is to the fore; the emotional gets little regard.

I believe that the Charismatic Movement has done the Church a great service by bringing release and exercise and acceptance to *emotion*, once chained and suppressed and suspected. Simple things like singing 'Hail thou once-despised Jesus' with hands and faces uplifted; simple acts like singing 'Blest be the tie that binds' and then exchanging hand-clasps and a whispered 'peace be unto you'; these customs and others like them have brought a new depth of worship to many people who have suffered from a formalism which claimed to be saying 'God is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth', but was often really saying 'God is only to be worshipped with the intellect. The whole being cannot enter in'. The rare occasions when I have witnessed (and joined in) a congregation 'singing in the Spirit' have been amongst some of my profoundest spiritual experiences, to be compared with a Communion Service at its very best, the hearing of a powerful exposition, the sharing of personal prayer with someone seeking the Saviour.

However, there is a danger. Emotional release for the unemotional can mean emotional excess for the already emotional. By its very nature, pentecostalism is likely to attract the unbalanced, the disturbed, the exhibitionist, and the inadequate. A religious journal recently listed those characteristics all too often found amongst charismatic enthusiasts. The list included absurd and irrational interpretations of Scripture, an undue emphasis on the unusual and the sensational, and the confusion of sentimentality and immaturity with spirituality. The criticism may sound harsh, but it is not unjust. My own experience—that of someone very sympathetic to many of the aims of the movement—is full of anecdotes illustrating the bigotry, imbalance and sheer eccentricity of so many whose very naivety and innocence tempts me to despair of their ever learning from their mistakes. Most numerous and troublesome are the arrogant and pushing types who *need* to be always right, who *need* to belong to a minority with an extra secret not shared by others, who *need* to have an excuse for drifting around seeking and never finding a 'live church' (because they could never accept the responsibility and realism of an actual church as opposed to a dream church). Add to this emotive phrases like 'only a few in this church are

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Spirit-filled', 'our assembly has no liberty and joy', 'I'm praying that the elders will see the truth'—and you have most of the ingredients necessary for division and bad feeling.

But that is not all. Non-charismatics have their emotional problems too. There is the hysterical reaction against any suggestion of the supernatural and the unusual. 'If anyone prophesies at the prayer-meeting, I'll never come again', says one. 'If someone in my family spoke in tongues, I would run out of the house', says another. Some of us have temperamental inadequacies which make us unable to look at anything new; we are frightened to admit any unfamiliar experience; incapable of accepting that there might have been some truth or insight which we had never noticed. Some of us are terrified of treading outside formal phraseology, and need to take shelter in safe familiar shibboleths. To quote Michael Green again, 'We are in danger of forgetting that it is God we are talking about. He can and does break into human life through the violent, the unexpected, the alien. He pioneered the evangelism of the Early Church often in the most bizarre, unexpected and unorthodox ways' (p. 20).

These emotional problems are a major challenge to the pastoral care of our churches. Elders, pastors and teachers cannot avoid them and should not try to. *What advice, then, can those in pastoral office give* to people troubled, excited, confused or experimenting with charismata?

1.   Help them to set their new-found gifts within the context of *all* the charismata. There are not only nine of them! (I Cor. 12: 4-11, I Cor. 12: 27-31, Eph. 4: 11-13, Romans 12: 4-8) Ask a new enthusiast if he gladly recognises the other gifts already granted to his church, expecially those of the teacher, the pastor, the elder, the exhorter. Show him gently that a fair test of the reality of his new gift is his willingness and ability to integrate its exercise with those of the others. The Holy Spirit is consistent with himself. The advice and counsel of his appointed teachers and pastors are needed and must be welcomed.

2.   Advise Christians to seek the best gifts (1 Cor. 12: 31) which Paul defines clearly as *those most likely to edify the whole church* rather than thrill the individual (I Cor. 14: 1-5 and 18-19).

3.   Underline the supreme importance of *love*. The thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians is put where it is to emphasize the absolute necessity that the exercise of gifts be guided by the question: 'Is this according to love?' That consideration alone, if taken seriously, would solve many of the problems and defuse many of the explosive situations.

4.   Explain carefully that spiritual gifts are *neither self-authenticating nor infallible*. The mere fact that something *happens* is no guarantee

that it is from God! Notice how Paul teaches the necessity of testing the gifts, not unthinkingly accepting them. (I Cor. 14: 29: 'Let two or three prophets speak and let the others weigh what is said. cf. I John 4: 1-3.)

5. Insist that the genuine exercise of a gift will never be compulsive and uncontrollable. (I Cor. 14: 32: 'The spirits of the prophets are subject to prophets'.) If someone performs an action which in a certain context is bound to embarrass and distress fellow-Christians, it is no good saying, 'I was bursting to say it' or 'I felt I just *had* to'. Such an excuse makes nonsense of Paul's whole instruction in this chapter: his readers *could* control themselves, otherwise why instruct them how to? It is the occult power, the psychiatric disturbance or the stubborn will which compels. The Holy Spirit invites co-operation.

6. Finally, warn of the complementary dangers of boasting and of jealousy, so wittily exposed in I Corinthians 12: 14-21. Imagine a foot getting depressed because it can't hold things! Imagine an eye being conceited because it is able to see better than a hand! Learn how *the body* works. So says Paul with an insight and wisdom often sadly lacking today on both sides of the 'charismatic divide'.

Administrative Problems

We come now to the administrational problems raised by charismata. The term may seem out of place in such a discussion, but the New Testament sees no contradiction between freedom and structure, spontaneity and order. If anything, the Pastoral Epistles come down more heavily on the need for structure and order.

The pressing question posed by Pentecostalism is, '*What room can we make for it in our churches?*' A number of different answers are given.

One possibility is to reject the whole thing, root and branch. A statement is made by the elders that this is something false and therefore not permitted within this particular church. Perhaps a series of addresses are given to underline the reasons. An internationally-known American church has recently done this, listing its reasons in its monthly magazine. It must be conceded that if the elders are convinced that they face serious error, then they have a right (perhaps an obligation) to say so, and to their Master they are responsible. 'They keep watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account' (Heb. 13-17).

A second possibility is for the church to acknowledge that some of its members have had a controversial but valid experience, to ask them not to exercise unfamiliar gifts in the main activities of the church where they would cause distress and dissension, and to provide opportunities where they *may* be exercised. To this I will return.

A third possibility is to accept charismatic and non-charismatic on equal terms, and somehow make room for unfamiliar gifts to be incorporated within the structure of the church *without destroying that structure*. When this is done successfully, the church tends to 'hit the headlines'. Honoured and beloved brethren like David Watson and David Pawson would claim that their churches have not ceased to be Anglican and Baptist respectively. Other Anglicans and Baptists might want to put it differently. Certainly there are many well-established churches and fellowships in which such a course would inevitably bring division and tragedy. Then the headlines are rather different.

The fourth possibility is for the church to become totally Pentecostal, or for a group within it to leave and do so. In that case presumably the problems will be of a different nature from those we are considering.

Now it seems to me that if we are to avoid the danger of rejecting sincere Christians with a pentecostal experience on the one hand, and the danger of grieving and bewildering more traditional Christians on the other, we must settle for the second option. Whilst insisting firmly that the familiar services should not be disrupted, we should supply optional extras (if and when needed) at which all of the gifts may be exercised.

'Revolution in worship, abandoning long-accepted forms and replacing them with prophecies, tongues and the like, might only do more harm than good and bring. . .gifts. . .into disrepute. At the present time—the house-meeting would seem to provide a particularly appropriate environment for charismatic worship' (*Spiritual Gifts and the Church* by D. Bridge and D. Phypers: IVP, 1973 p. 154). It may be objected that this establishes a 'holy huddle' of specially-gifted Christians meeting in a sectarian fashion. It need not be so, if the activities are openly annouced and the motives well understood. After all, there are plenty of precedents for organising meetings which have a special purpose, only appeal to some, and would be out of place as part of the Sunday worship. Women's missionary sewing-class—Youth Club—Elders' meeting—do they not all do this? One is tempted to suggest that the church prayer-meeting is a special interest-group, judging by the attendance! It may also be objected that a compromise is being arranged. Compromises are not always bad; they are unjustified only if they compromise between right and wrong. The decision of the Council at Jerusalem was essentially a good compromise (Acts 15)—so presumably was Paul's circumcision of Timothy but refusal to circumcise Titus (Acts 16: 3, Galatians 2: 3-6).

Needless to say, such an optional extra meeting should be supervised by responsible and acknowledged leaders, and the quite clear instructions of I Cor. 14 should be observed. Also, needless to say, this course of action will raise a number of issues and problems which will spill over into the wider circle of the whole church, its witness and worship.

Prominent among these is the whole topic of sickness and healing. I can see no scriptural precedent for the public, advertised, mass-healing meeting, and there are positively unbiblical implications in the attitude which often accompanies such meetings, with their sole emphasis on human faith and credulity, their denial of the sovereignty of God, their rejection of the role of suffering in the divine purpose, and their derision of the prayer 'Thy will be done'. But to say that is not to deny any place for the ministry of healing. The visit of elders to a sick member when requested (James 5: 13-16) to give anointing and prayer in a context of sins confessed and relationships restored, seems to be wholly biblical, and has been known to be effective. The wider implications of the Gospel, expounded and applied in personal counselling, can bring striking demonstrations of physical and emotional healing. Our public prayer for sick friends, often rather formally and dutifully included in public worship, could well afford to be injected with a feeling of expectation that something really will happen: when that is so, some splendid things do tend to happen.

The other area of difficulty is that of spiritual evil, possession, and exorcism. Our missionaries never imagined that the problem had gone away, but it is only the increasing paganism of this country which has brought it back to our doorstep. There has been a great upsurge of interest in spiritualism and the occult. The average Englishman is more likely to consult a medium than a minister, and more likely to read the stars than the scriptures. There are some frightful resulting problems, including obsessive behaviour, irrational fears, repetitive nightmares, frightening experiences, spiritual oppression, and (in a few cases) outright possession. The Charismatic Movement has served a double role in both providing impressive and valuable guidelines, and (at times) encouraging silly, irresponsible and harmfully simplistic behaviour. The principles suggested by the present Archbishop of Canterbury are wise and helpful. Our attempts to help people in these circumstances should be in an atmosphere of quiet trust, not of noise—and in private rather than in public. The context should be the Word and the Sacraments, and the basic approach should be one of confidence in the exalted Christ. Medically qualified help should be sought, and the church fellowship should provide continuing support and strength.

These, then, are some of the considerations to be borne in mind as we find ourselves facing perhaps the biggest pastoral challenge of our time. Perhaps we can let Paul have the last word (I Thess. 5: 19-22): 'Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil.'

MONTAGU G. BARKER

Psychological Aspects of the Charismatic Movement

Discussing the psychological aspects of charismatic developments is a difficult task because it means looking objectively, indeed critically and scientifically, at something which to many is associated with new power, joy and a new dimension in their lives as Christians. How can these people be critical, scientific, and detached when approaching this subject? They are bound to view the attempt with some wariness, if not hostility. On the other hand, there are others for whom the so-called charismatic movement is itself the object of suspicion, if not hostility; for them the new Pentecostalists are wrong theologically, powerful pastorally, and muddled psychologically. Failure to confirm such views would invite an accusation of being unsufficiently critical and detached. Quite clearly, there is a wide variety of experience of the Faith among Christians, even among evangelical Christians, and for that matter even among those who would be considered to be 'in' the charismatic movement.

Experience and Doctrine

In this paper, I do not propose to discuss the reality and the validity of particular experiences, but to comment upon the expectation of experience and the differing status given to it in the lives of Christians. So often, our experience as Christians influences our doctrine; then the doctrine influences our expectation of Christian experience; and then in turn that experience re-inforces our belief—the whole tendency sometimes resulting in exclusiveness and controversy. This is the area which interests the psychologist and the sociologist. Now it is quite right for them to be thus interested; but the fact that they have identified the psychological and sociological processes does not entail that only psychological factors are involved. An analogy may make things clearer. The physician may diagnose pneumonia; he may isolate a virus or germ which causes this infection, but that does not mean that that virus in itself explains the pneumonia. This individual may have been exposed to the virus for weeks before. Other individuals may have been spreading the same virus and feeling marvellous, thank you. Other factors are involved. The general health, the resistance, the immunity, the age, the social conditions, also influence whether the person exposed to the virus remains healthy, has bronchitis or a rip-roaring pneumonia. Over

and above all that, God himself may have something very special to say to that person in his illness.

Likewise, when God the Holy Spirit works in our lives he is working within the individualness (I can think of no better word) of our personalities. These personalities are themselves the results of the complex interaction of our genetics, our family influence, our training and our culture, which puts a very special stamp upon each one of us, which produces the habitual behaviour which we show, which even if we don't recognise it, our spouses and our friends recognise. It is this which so often accounts for the very varying personalities in Christian biography. Compare the rather remote and logical Calvin with the warm and tempestuous Luther. Compare the fastidious, over-organised Wesley, the son of a parsonage, with the coarser Whitfield, the son of a publican, who refused to organise his converts. And God used them all mightily in identical ways; and who would dare to rate them spiritually? Theologically they stood in absolute agreement regarding Christ and pardon for sinners, but their experience of God's dealings with them personally differs enormously, and in particular the doctrinal systems which they originated or subscribed to also differed widely, and their followers frequently came to blows as a result.

Now whatever may be the understanding regarding the biblical passages considered in John Balchin's paper the problem in terms of division, in terms of the perplexity which Christians experience, occurs in this area of personality and experience and the extrapolation of doctrine from that. The following phrases have been used over the past three hundred years, and at some time or another they indicated really burning issues among Christians: Conversion experience. . .Sense of assurance. . .The higher life. . .Entire sanctification. . .The experience of the fulness of the Spirit. . .Calvary experience. . .The experience of brokenness. . .The experience of tongues. . .Sinless perfection. . . Charismatic movement. . .and so on. These phrases all contain biblical words, and to ignore any one of these words would be to ignore Scripture. But it's when extra words, such as 'the experience of'' or 'movement' or 'sinless', 'entire' and 'higher' come alongside the biblical words that there is division among Christians, and opposing ranks have been drawn up. As one looks at the history of these phrases, they all seem to arise out of the deep dissatisfaction of groups of Christians contrasting the apparent poverty of their *experience* as Christians with the content what they *believed* as Christians. Then, in most instances, there followed a new joy and faith and devotion to Christ, a new love for fellow-Christians, a new understanding of the Gospel and Scripture. In each case the sequel was a tendency to systematize and them reproduce the actual circumstances of the experience in others. In some instances, there

followed a third stage where they sought refuge in their common experience and used the experience as a means of identifying each other and as a token of admission to closer fellowship. As a consequence, whatever truth there was became obscured by party strife and by external trappings.

The experience of conversion here supplies a useful illustration. A study of theological students included Baptists, and evangelical Anglicans, and Anglo-catholics. Of the Baptists 97% had had a conscious conversion experience, generally a sudden one. Of the evangelical Anglicans, 93% had had a conversion experience, but for 50% only was this sudden. What of the Anglo-catholics? 50% of them had a conscious conversion experience but in no case a sudden one. Many Christians with a Brethren or evangelical free church affiliation are unaware of how intense was the battle over experience of conversion between our seventeenth century forebears. Other Christians, including evangelicals, with the same theology of regeneration and new birth may have a very different kind of conversion experience.

We turn now to the charismatic movement, and in particular to the experience of tongues, not that tongues is necessarily the most important component of the movement, but because tongues is the particular experience most commonly shared by Christians within the movement. As one Roman Catholic charismatic commented: 'Since it is the lowest of the charismata it should not be a matter of surprise that it is so common.' Another reason for singling it out is that most psychological studies have focused upon tongues, which is a more readily identified phenomenon than some of the other experiences which we have talked about. It is not unfair to select tongues in this way, in view of the prominence given to this experience in the writings of the leaders (or at least the propagandists) of the movement. Further, although tongues may be taken as the starting point, the deeper and the personal issues will still emerge.

Not exclusively Christian

Speaking in tongues is not exclusively a Christian phenomenon. It is to be found among Sufi Moslems, which is one of the mystical Islamic sects. In fact, one theological student from Saudi Arabia was kept from the Gospel for some time because his mother and his aunt used to speak in tongues and used this as proof of the closeness of Allah and the truth of Islam. Doctor Sargent, in his book, *The Mind Possessed*, shows how an experience of speaking tongues can be inculcated in pagan sects and cults. In *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* Michael Green refers to a man who went to a meeting of the Irvingites (one of the 19th century tongue speaking groups). Himself a sceptic, he went to criticise but found himself quite unexpectedly speaking in

tongues, so he gave up his Hegelian philosophy and became a Zoroastrian instead! Nearer our own times, the Mormons are probably the most striking para-Christian group who have shown this phenomenon. As they trekked through the desert, persecuted, harried, going they knew not where, they had this experience of tongues which they interpreted as God's special sign of his presence and a token of his blessing. Apparently tongues can be induced psychologically by suggestion, by mystical practices; it is valued (although regarded as eccentric) in other religions, and is looked upon as a mark of God's presence in other religious groups.

Tongues in history

Surprisingly little is written about tongues in church history, and again there is considerable controversy as to how much value we can put upon reputed occurrences. However, the following are incontrovertible. Since the Reformation there have been several movements, the first among the seventeenth century Huguenots, the Camisards in battle in the Cevennes where God seemed to have left his very elect who had battled for his cause, persecuted, dwindling, harried he seemed to have abandoned them. Suddenly they burst forth into tongues and they perceived this as a token of God's love and of his continuing presence, despite their adversity. This resembles the experience of the Mormons two hundred years later, but neither the Huguenots, nor the descendants of the Huguenots, nor of the Mormons today, lay any great stress on it now, and it seems to belong to the day of their trials and tribulations.

If we move into the 1830's we see the foundation of the Catholic Apostolic Church or the Irvingites, as they were known. Here we have the first clear occurrence of tongues in this country. It was a time of great intellectual and spiritual ferment following the French Revolution; the old guide lines were lost and challenged, there was a time of deep searching for spiritual identity, and in particular men were looking for the marks of the authentic and primitive church, the Apostolic Church, and the signs of the Lord's return. This was the period of the Powerscourt Conferences on prophecy, and it is interesting to note what happened to three men who attended those conferences. One was E. B. Pusey who became associated with the Oxford movement and the Anglo-Catholic movement and saw the marks of the primitive church in apostolic continuity. J. N. Darby who became one of the initiators of Brethren Movement, saw the marks of the primitive church in apostolic simplicity. Edward Irving, founder of the Irvingites and Catholic Apostolic church, saw the marks of the apostolic church in the apostolic gifts and tongues regarding them as unmistakable evidence of the Spirit of Pentecost. This is not the place to comment on the eventual demise or otherwise of those particular groups, but there may be a lesson here as well.

The holiness movements of the later twentieth century were offshoots of Methodism, where the proof of the full measure of the Holy Spirit was holiness. But how could one be certain that one was truly and entirely sanctified? The doctrine of entire sanctification still left some room for doubt in honest people, and so the 'unmistakable sign' of tongues again appeared in this setting, giving rise to the modern Pentecostal denominations. The so-called neo-Pentecostal movement has rather different origins, though it is in the same stream. One significant factor is the number of clergy and ministers affected in the earlier days of neo-Pentecostalism (and still affected today). This is very different from the Pentecostal movement at the turn of the century, or indeed from the Irvingites, or the Huguenots. It is also remarkable how little impact neo-Pentecostalism has made upon non-clerical (or apparently non-clerical) denominations, such as the Brethren. By contrast its main impact has been within the so-called mainstream denominations, American Episcopacy, Anglicanism, American Lutherism, Roman Catholicism, and to a lesser extent, Presbyterianism and the Church of Scotland. Certainly it is not an exclusively evangelical movement, nor even perhaps a predominantly evangelical movement, as this word has been traditionally used. Once again, I think, there is a situation of stress and perplexity. Men challenged by diminished authority within their own ministries became anxious, frustrated, questioning. As they pleaded before God to know what he was doing, tongues became for many of them a special divine token of approval and of his seal upon their calling. However the neo-charismatic movement has progressed beyond this. I think this is how it began.

Psychological and Sociological Studies

One of the earliest studies of tongues was a Ph.D. thesis by Vivier who came from a Pentecostal background; a further study was made by a Pentecostalist named Woods. They sought to examine whether tongue speakers had special personality difficulties, or whether speaking in tongues was due to a religious dynamism. They tested and examined three groups of people, people who spoke in tongues, Pentecostalists who did not speak in tongues, and non-Pentecostalists. They found that the tongue speakers more often came from disturbed and broken homes. They tended to be more sensitive, problem-orientated people, seeking global solutions to life's problems. Furthermore, the more anxious and tense individuals were the more frequently did they resort to speaking in tongues. These workers concluded that a sense of insecurity and a tendency to seek signs were found to a greater degree among those who spoke in tongues.

A more recent study is that by Kildahl (1973), published as a paperback called *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*. Although

this may fairly be described as somewhat biased, this criticism does not negative the material presented. Kildahl himself was a psychotherapist, part of a team of experts setting out to examine and evaluate the phenomenon of tongues as it occurred in the American Lutheran Church. They concluded, first, that tongues speakers were more submissive, suggestible and dependent than control groups, and on certain psychological rating scales they showed quite different results from the control in that they had higher dependency scores and lower autonomy or independence scores. Secondly, the team found that all tongue speakers had positive feelings towards their group leader and a persisting relationship of trust appeared vital for the practice to continue, and of importance in the life of the individual. Thirdly, tongue speakers tended to be less depressed and discouraged than the control Christians. On follow up a year later this was confirmed. They claimed to be changed, sensitive as people, more loving, with better marital and sexual relationships, with a sense of the presence of God their Creator, with a sense of his love, and of being surrounded by helping fellow believers. Fourthly, the tongues themselves were not found to display the criteria of language. In addition, recordings played back to various leaders who felt they had a gift of interpretation never gave rise to the same divine interpretation.

We may refer also to the World Council of Churches report on the Chilean Pentecostal movement, *Haven of the Masses*, a document much more sympathetic and very exhaustive. The Chilean Pentecostal movement has achieved remarkable growth. It began as a break away from Episcopal Methodism, and had among its members predominantly lower and deprived classes, as compared with the other Protestant groups, which were middle class and foreign influenced. They included rejects, the outcasts, those with no privileges in society. Interestingly, to speak in tongues was not essential for inclusion in the fellowship (not even the pastors had to speak in tongues) but dancing and other spontaneous manifestations of emotion in worship were acceptable. In addition, Chilean charismatics were implacably opposed to the present social order, being strongly determined to change society. The study suggests that this tremendous growth of Chilean Pentecostalism happened because it was meeting the real need of the people in a way which the other denominations were not. It appealed to, and could contain, the rejected, the despised, the inhibited, the under-privileged, in addition to offering certainty of salvation in Christ. It offered the security of a loving fellowship in community, and the sharing in a common task, which enabled them to achieve free and uninhibited expression in their Christian life. It both liberated their feelings and gave them a hope of liberation in society too. It is important to notice that tongue speaking was not the hallmark of the Spirit's presence and

was not a condition of entering into fellowship, although it was accepted within that fellowship rather as John Balchin's paper describes.

There have also been studies on the mechanisms of tongue speaking offering a variety of theories, from hypnotic suggestion, brain-washing and excessive psychological pressure, to hysterical dissociation. It is known that tension and psychological illness can induce speech disturbance: a person in a high state of elation can produce a flow of language and a flight of idea which would be impossible apart from this abnormal mental state. We know that tension can produce, or aggravate, stammering, spoonerisms, slips of the tongue—but how often in a tense situation we say not what we meant to say, but what we really meant! Tension also produces breakdown of speech and frank babbling: not infrequently elderly people under some tension cannot remember the name of some object or person but five minutes later they say 'I remember. . . it was so and so.' The effects of tension are well established.

But Carl Gustav Jung saw tongue speaking in different terms. For him, tongue speaking was the eruption of unconscious conflicts into the conscious associated with an experience of release and a feeling of well-being. It is interesting that writers in the charismatic movement are now speaking of 'release in the Spirit', which is a psychological term, and calls for careful examination. Certainly, there is a psychological phenomenon here, which very able observers have defined, and which leaders of the charismatic movement have themselves taken over. Julius Nefal, one of the most distinguished of psycho-linguistic experts in the States and one who has no axe to grind puts it this way: 'Tongues brings close to consciousness what the individual cannot put into words, the shame, the guilt, the despair that might be present and avoided, while the person feels that he has expressed the ineffable. The idea of divine inspiration furthers the feeling that he is not in the grip of ordinary conflicts and needs which characterize all of us and about which we have the most guilt and anxiety.' In other words, those situations which would cause us great guilt, shame and despair, which we cannot put into words or allow to re-enter the outside of our minds, as it were, can nevertheless be expressed in this other way without feelings of guilt shame and despair; we can bring them before God and seek his help, his forgiveness, and the power of the Spirit in dealing with them at a sub-conscious level. Many denominational Pentecostalists would reject these psychological assessments outright. The neo-Pentecostalists, however, tend to welcome such observations. They welcome the emphasis on the ability to express feelings without ambivalence, and the confirmation that the experience has healing value.

Although tongue speaking attracts and occurs in certain people with certain psychological needs and backgrounds, it is important to recognise that it is not limited to such people. In so far as we understand the psychological mechanism and see its appropriateness, any experience which habitually by-passes mind leads to loss of integration and failure to mature. In this context, tongues may be seen as not dissimilar to the use of drugs, such as cannabis and L.S.D. in order to achieve a sense of well-being. Indeed such use has been recently advocated by a writer who suggests that the Christian Church should use these drugs to by-pass the rigours and the disciplines of mystical techniques, in order to achieve a sense of well being and a sense of the presence of God, which the mystics have sought and claimed to have achieved throughout the centuries.

Some Conclusions

It must be emphasised that all these psychological and socio-logical studies can offer only part of the truth. They can report only on the psychological or sociological aspects, and thus fail to give a full account. I cannot subscribe (for example) to the view that this is nothing but a psychological phenomenon. And while the historical and sociological studies are suggestive and consistent, the psycho-logical studies have tended to be rather biased, though not necessarily to be discounted for that. Summarising, however, there are three points worth making.

The first is that tongue speakers tend to have strong dependency traits in their characters: each psychological study seems to point to this, and some of the earliest writers commented upon the high proportion of people from broken homes and disturbed backgrounds. There are no 'loners' among tongue speakers; they seem to seek authority figures and situations for security and support; they seem to reproduce characteristics of their original leaders and speakers and they tend to speak in the styles of du Plessis or Bennett. When they fall out with their leader there tends to be a cessation of tongues, or a loss of sense of well-being and the experience seems to lose its power. It is possible however that charismatic groups are better able to meet the needs of people who have dependency traits than are other fellowships and church life in general. The members may also be people who both recognise and openly declare their own depend-ence on others and on God, while being more ready to accept others' dependence on them; their very lack of a sense of self-sufficiency making them prepared to accept and commit themselves to others in a supportive way. It is possible that their high dependency rate is linked to their openness and ability to receive the unloved, the weak, the helpless, the widows and orphans, and the modern orphans from broken homes and to demonstrate the love of Christ within the

fellowship. This may explain why tongues speaking is more prevalent in the highly individualistic formal denominations and less prevalent in the tighter, closer and sometimes exclusive denominations, such as the Brethren.

Secondly, tongue speakers experience a time of anxiety and crisis prior to the phenomenon appearing, and studies have shown that 85% of tongue speakers had a clear anxiety crisis beforehand. By comparison, only 30% of Christians who did not speak in tongues had a similar crisis experience in their lives. Historical studies support this, citing the Huguenots, the Mormons, the Irvingites and so on. Psychological studies also show that the more anxious the individual is the more he tends to use tongues as a constant reassurance. The more integrated the personality, the more modest are the claims for the experience. The less integrated the personality, the less open the person is to discuss his experience and the more he tends to be rather rabid and closed in pressing the claims of the experience. It is also noticeable that the more settled a person becomes in life, in marriage, and society, the less do tongues feature in their experience. On the other hand, it may be argued that the experience of speaking in tongues is characteristic of people more actively appraising their lives before God and unwilling to accept a status quo. Perhaps tongues speakers have a higher representation of those who are aware of and are troubled by the discrepancy between what they say they believe and the fruitlessness of their lives, with their lack of victory, purpose and effective outreach and witness; accordingly they not only say but genuinely expect the Holy Spirit to be the Spirit of power to change and renew.

Thirdly, the charismatic group—that is the group who meet together to share the charismatic gifts—does seem to provide a pattern of behaviour and group identity. Once a person speaks in tongues he has an entry into a group and the power of this group identity is shown by charismatic ecumenism. Where conservative evangelicals can happily hobnob with Roman Catholics and neo-Orthodox, the group identity transcends background culture and theology and centuries of hostility; it is amazing to see the children of Babylon and the scarlet woman (the evangelical swear word for R.C.s) having fellowship with vile enthusiasts (which is the Roman Catholic swear word for evangelicals). But such fellowship occurs only in the setting of charismatic conferences, not yet in evangelism and in the sacraments. The importance of group identity is seen also in a considerable pressure to conform and replicate the experience accompanied by instructions in technique. Dennis Bennett's first work is said to tell people to let their lips hang loose and 'la la' and so on. In his second book, *The Holy Spirit in You*, he says, 'You must

begin to speak in other languages, not your own language or languages as the Spirit gives the utterance or the form of words to you and He will' (p. 70). Again, 'Do not back off at this point as some of you do and say I guess God does not want me to have it. It's you who are holding back' (p. 72). 'One thing is sure, if you don't accept the experience as real you won't be aware of its reality' (p. 73). Yet however contrived may be the tokens of entry, there is within such groups a belonging, a warmth, a sharing, a structure for new relationships, there is 'body life,' to use a current paraphrase for the Greek *Koinonia*. In *Cinderella with Amnesia* Michael Griffiths refers to 'that warm fellowship of Christian with Christian which the New Testament calls *Koinonia*'. In the early Church a kind of rhythm of life was evident in which Christians would gather in homes to instruct one another, study and pray together, and share the ministry of spiritual gifts. They then would go out into the world again to let the warmth and glow of their love-filled lives overflow into a spontaneous Christian witness that drew love-starved pagans, like a candy store draws little children.' How many of our fellowships and churches provide that? For many, the charismatic group does so. In a society where structure and continuity are breaking down at all ages, in childhood, in marriage, in old age, how vital that the fellowship within which the Holy Spirit is going to renew and change broken and maimed lives is warm, loving, a place where one can belong. Today in some of the ordinary primary schools of residential areas in Southern England something up to 30% of the children are from broken or disturbed homes. How do our church and our fellowship structures give the new patterns, new support, sense of belonging, loving fellowship, which are going to be essential for this generation to mature as Christians?

Luther speaks of the experience of being freed from experience, and experience is a dangerous mentor and guide. Certainly the experience of tongues is not exclusively Christian. It can be learned. It can cause division, and does cause division. It can be a Christianised 'trip', but the charismatic movement, within which it has a recognised place, does allow expression of the whole being and worship and acceptance of the strange, the weak, and the odd. The charismatic movement does expect the Holy Spirit to be powerful and active today. The charismatic movement provides fellowships with a strong sense of belonging, love, where each member truly complements the other and give themselves to one another in a costly way. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. Where that is happening, there the Holy Spirit is working, whether there are tongues or whether there are not tongues. To deny his presence because of the presence of an experience we do not share is dangerous. To claim his presence because of the presence of an experience, whatever that experience, is likewise dangerous. 'Rabbi' Duncan, who died about a century

ago, was a man whom God used in one of the most remarkable missions among the Jews in Central Europe and Budapest. Alfred Edersheim, Adolph Saphir and various others were converted through his ministry. He was a man who owed much to people like Malan and the experientialists of the day, though he took issue with them very strongly, calling himself a pernickety theologan. He was a meticulous theologian. His words seem remarkably relevant: 'There are innumerable moulds in God's world. Why do we coop up divine grace within narrow man-made channels and say this is the way God has worked it and will work? His greatness is no way displayed more illustriously than in the spreading out of his gifts in a thousand different ways. There is a manifoldness in his operation that surely pertains to the beauty of his holiness'. . . 'Some persons preach only doctrine; that makes people all head, which is a monster. Some people preach only experience; that makes people all heart, which is a monster too. Others preach only practice; that makes people all hands and feet, which is likewise a monster, but if you preach doctrine and experience and practice by the blessing of God, you will have head and hearts and hand and feet, a perfect man in Christ Jesus.'

MARGARET CLAY

Urban Mission:
A Sociological Perspective

This paper is not written from a disinterested, so-called 'objective' sociological viewpoint. Having spent the last four years living in a deprived inner-city area, my analysis is bound to be coloured by my own experience, and by my perception of urban mission in that context. I hope however that the use of the sociological approach will enable us to step back from our day-to-day involvement and to take a look at ourselves, providing a broad framework through which we can all assess our experience and develop a strategy for the future.

I propose to examine first some of the broader problems confronting the church in industrial society before looking in more detail at some specific aspects of urbanism. I shall then consider the response of the churches in this situation and discuss alternatives.

Secularisation

I suppose the word most frequently used with reference to the church of the last two hundred or more years is the word 'secularisation'. It can hardly be refuted that the institutional church, from being the medium of the recognised values in our society, and possessing a creed which was accepted orthodoxy, however little it may have penetrated heart and life, has been pushed to the fringe of our society. It has lost much of its authority; it is one voice among many in the 'marketplace of religion'. Its official announcements, such as the Archbishop's call to the nation, are questioned fiercely within the church and treated as almost irrelevant outside. In the 1976 drout, it was the Sikh rainmakers who got the attention, not Christians praying. Other detailed evidence of the decline of the institutional church can be found in church statistics; the drop in church baptisms and marriages shows clearly that people are no longer seeking the blessing of the church for these most significant events in life.

This view of secularisation tends to base its conclusions on the official institutions of the church and on middle-class Christianity. However, it can well be argued that the mass of working people who moved into our cities with the onset of the Industrial Revolution were never really 'Christianised'. Those who were in fact reached

during the Methodist Revival tended to lose their working class roots. Bennington[1] quotes Charles Booth (1902):

> Those (of the working class) who do join any church become almost indistinguishable from the class with which they mix, the change that has come about is not so much *of* as *out of* the class to which they have belonged.

So one can argue that secularisation is a middle class phenomenon; as the church has lost its respectability for the middle classes and as it has lost its hold on the media, so the cries of secularisation have been heard.

In addition, there is plenty of evidence that people still have an incipient need for some system of belief. They want some system by which they can organize their lives, some beliefs to fall back on in times of crisis. This tendency can be seen in the revival of interest in the supernatural, in the popularity of books such as *Was God an Astronaut?* and in other practices like Transcendental Meditation. In working class people it comes out in an almost stoical belief in fate. So it seems clear that in the late twentieth century in our urban areas, among working class and middle class alike, the wish to believe in a God is still there; it is the institutional church and the traditional forms that are rejected.

The institutional church has responded in a variety of ways to these developments. Many churches have seen a slow decline; they are orthodox, but have no life. Many have older congregations which are slowly dying off. There have been a number of positive responses. *Radical* theologians such as Robinson and Teilhard de Chardin were at least aware of the problems confronting the church, but in attempting to solve them they sold out to the secular world, producing a justification for secular trends rather than a radical critique of them. Others have reasserted the *ritualistic* element in the faith, and in so doing have put faith apart from intellectual questions and doubts. The growth of *ecumenism* in the 60s was another response, which has been described as a 'banding together in weakness'. The *charismatic* movement is also probably partly a reaction to these developments. The final response, which is perhaps most typical of the evangelical church this century has been the *sectarian* response. With its emphasis on individual personal salvation it has been all too easy for Christians to withdraw from the world, to establish close caring groups where one is sure of one's faith, to assert what is true and leave the world around to its own devices. Evangelical theology has little positive to say about the world around. In this way the churches were cushioned against the effects of urbanism. If one lives in a world where one is fully involved with church organization and meetings, and where the bulk of one's friends are Christians it is all too easy to miss what is going on in the world around and to underestimate the changes which have made the church irrelevant to the bulk of the urban population.

We could spend time looking in detail at the causes of secular-isation, tracing its origins in the growth of industrial society and in the history of ideas, but it is probably more useful to pass on to identify certain features of urban life and to assess their importance for the Christian church.

The growth of cities

It is very difficult to differentiate the growth of cities from the development of industrial society itself. The characteristics of urbanism are the characteristics of industrial society at large, intensified and on a huge scale, but not necessarily of a different quality. Therefore the cities we have today must be seen as the result of a complex economic process which has gathered momentum since the Industrial Revolution, is still gaining speed and may, as Marx once said, carry with it the seeds of its own destruction. Profit has become the dominant motive, and the pressure to ensure profits are maximised has had the power to alter men's lives dramatically. Thus we have seen the shift from the country to the towns which have turned into cities, so that people may be grouped into larger and larger work units, close to centres of communication. As other values have receded, material gain has become increasingly dominant, not only for those making enormous profits but for those who work in the factories, whose only satisfaction is the improved standard of living resulting from the weekly wage packet. In this broad economic framework we can identify certain features of city life which are clearly 'urban' although they may be present in a diffuse form elsewhere in industrial society.

The work situation

First one must look at work and the work situation. Industrial man increasingly feels cut off from the work he does. The growth of mass production leads to drudgery and routine. Most important, man never experiences in his work the satisfaction of creativity. He has a hand in only a part of the product, and probably a useless product at that. More and more people are not engaged in production of any sort, but work in the service industries or in administration. Working conditions are often bad in factories, steelworks or mines; those who are lucky enough to work in a clean office may find they are cooped up with a mass of other people. And the only incentive held out to the working man is the carrot of material gain. It is no wonder that a city man, travelling to work each day along dirty streets from his concrete suburb, has his consciousness dimmed to spiritual values; if he was more aware of other dimensions to life his alienation from the current situation would become unbearable. Urban society has a vested interest in obscuring those values.

Bureaucracy

Man in his work situation often feels a cog, just one small part of the process in which he is involved. 'They' determine what he should do, 'they' pay his wages, 'they' make him redundant. And working man is increasingly conscious of other bureaucratic forces at work, controlling other aspects of his life besides work. As he queues for the dole, or to see the housing manager, he is constantly reminded that there are unseen people who have enormous influence over his life. Sometimes fairly traumatic events increase this awareness: if the planners decide to build a motorway near his home and he is suddenly confronted with the problems of noise and finds he is powerless to stop it, or if he suddenly finds his home is included in a clearance area, and again, he is powerless to stop its demolition. Most people are aware of the growth of bureaucracy, even if they are not confronted with extreme situations such as these; local government re-organization is one instance of its development. They feel controlled by forces they cannot identify, which they do not know how to fight, and consequently they feel powerless. Man, created to have dominion, is himself controlled. It should be no surprise that some writers have identified the bureaucratic forces dominating our society today as evil spiritual powers. I do not wish to suggest that the bureaucrats themselves are not well-intentioned. Social Security benefits are designed to ensure that no one goes hungry in this country today, yet the way they are administered makes people feel inadequate and humiliated. Planners are trying to produce a better, more healthy environment, yet they cause endless misery in the process. Ellul[2] sums this up very well.

> It is the engineer's bright eye, the urbanist's broad sweep of mind, the hygenist's idealism, which determine its (the city's) course. Yet, look at the results: more slavery—which recreation can only make more tolerable.

Community and association

When differentiating urban and rural life sociologists distinguish between community and association. They have no definite agreement about the use of these words, and I fear that in the wider world there is even greater discrepancy, particularly over the use of the word 'community'. The *community* represents often a neighbourhood group in which an individual can live most of his life, from which he derives his identity and his values, in which he works, has his family and finds most of his social relationships. The overall characteristic is permanence. By contrast, *association* represents interest groups, usually temporary phenomena that do not embrace the whole of a person's life. It is characterized by secondary relationships; friends are usually known only in a particular context that does not necessarily overlap with any others. Urban life to an increasing extent depends on such secondary relationships. Even the most

tightly knit urban community will not be totally self-sufficient; some inhabitants will go outside to work, television will be a major influence on people's thinking. While such urban communities as remain are steadily demolished, as they usually exist in areas of older housing, the huge anonymous council estates take their place, where secondary relationships are the norm. The destruction of the extended family as found in long established urban areas, to be replaced by the small nuclear family on the suburban estate, is a well-documented phenomenon. Thus when we talk of urban life we are not talking of one experience, but rather of a variety of life-styles which may exist in the same city, even in the same street. For one person it will consist of a community, where most of one's relationships take place within a very small radius of about one half mile. For others life will consist of a series of associative relationships over a wide area, pivoting on one small point where most of one's deep meaningful relationships take place.

The effect on the individual

The various developments clearly have affected the individual who is subjected to them. First we can see that it is far more difficult for a person to maintain an integrated personality in the city. Rather we see the fragmentation of individual identity as man moves through a series of situations all of which are governed by differing values and codes of behaviour. The hard-headed businessman is a different person from the father who cares for his children and puts a great deal of effort into his garden, and different again from the man playing his round of golf on a Sunday morning. One part of man becomes mass man, he learns to be ultra-sensitive to the signals put out by others from the moment he meets them, he can comumnicate (at a certain level), he is trained to be tolerant. He is open to advertising and the media which tell him how he should dress and behave. He learns to move smoothly through a large and often very confusing world. To compensate for this, there are some relationships which he invests with great emotional significance. These usually revolve around the family. In a world in which he is constantly on the move, these are the people who stay with him, who 'know' him. These are the people he cares about; he does not have the energy to care for all the others he meets. This is the phenomenon known as privatization, where a person, to compensate for the variety of superficial relationships confronting him, retreats into his private world which is his and where he may still, to some extent, 'have dominion'. It is in these relationships that he finds his significance and meaning. Yet because of the huge emotional load these relationships have to carry they often crack up; the pressures are too great. Parallel with this, it is often only in these close relationships that the individual feels a sense of guilt. In most of the other relationships in which he takes part, because he feels little sense of commitment,

the feeling of guilt is less. He may feel guilty only if he gets caught. Certainly he feels no guilt about the wider society of which he is a part. The planner does not feel particularly guilty if his plan is going to disrupt many homes, nor does the worker feel guilty if the machine he is turning out is designed to break down within the year. We tend to shut ourselves off from this kind of guilt; it is 'they' who are responsible—not us.

I have tried to demonstrate not only the complexity of relationships within the city, but also how they may vary even within the same street. I turn now to examine some of the more common church reactions.

The response of the churches

The redevelopment of inner-city areas has considerably weakened the church in those areas. The Roman Catholic church was perhaps more community-based than any other denomination, but now, although the faithful come back to worship, the hold on social life has lessened. The Anglican church, with its strong parish emphasis, has also suffered but at least had some basis from which to start dealing with the new estates going up around the churches. The Nonconformists have suffered worst, with a few exceptions. The congregations, having moved out to the suburbs, come back for services but have little contact with the people on the new estates around them. My knowledge of suburban areas is limited, but I suspect there has been little neighbourhood emphasis. People may attend the church from a fairly wide area, but most of the contact with the locality is through youth work. Often there is no choice about this; if a church is on a housing estate, and most of the members are owner-occupiers, not with all the good will in the world are the council going to rehouse them. Finally, one has the city-centre church with a popular preacher, drawing a congregation from miles around. If one analyses this in terms of the community-association distinction we have already made, it seems fairly clear that the church has moved away from the community idea and become more and more of an association, a place where one goes to meet like-minded people (and hopefully ones who have the same doctrinal emphasis) and pursue a particular interest. That is at least how it appears to an outsider. Such a tendency has serious implications for mission, and must also await theological comment.

The theology of the evangelical church in this country has made this development away from community and towards association easier. In its reaction against the 'social gospel' promulgated by theologians at the turn of the century the emphasis on individual personal salvation grew, and alongside there tended to develop a negative doctrine of the world[3]. This links closely with the sectarian

response we have already discussed. This development had huge repercussions for the whole concept of church and mission. Earlier, the church would be at the centre of a web of relationships in the community and society. It ran the risk of being absorbed by the world, but at least it was in a position where it could provide a radical critique of what was going on. But as soon as the emphasis was placed on separation from the world, that web of relationships was broken. Mission was conceived of as a series of forays into the world, not continuous involvement with it. So missionary work became dominant, situated safely across the sea rather than requiring any deep involvement with the community around the church. Mission consisted of 'bringing people in': on *our* terms of course, the kids mustn't wreck the place, no smoking etc. It is strange how 'mission' which so clearly involves 'being sent' totally altered its meaning except in an overseas context. The indications are that as the church was being pushed to the fringe of society, so evangelicals produced a theology which justified the move; we perhaps went more willingly than most.

We are thus confronted with a paradox; in the eyes of the world around we are just another secondary group, which comes together more or less frequently to pursue a particular interest. This is reinforced when we consider the physical distances involved in travelling to church for most people. Yet we ourselves tend to emphasize the community aspects of the church, such as the warm, close fellowship. Furthermore this emphasis on community is being reasserted, developed in certain areas of the church. One of the earliest moves in this direction was developed around the correspondence '*Christians in Industrial Areas*'4 and is spelt out by David Sheppard in *Built as a City*. This emphasises the importance of a physical Christian presence. While these developments are valid, and often exciting, ways of re-establishing a Christian presence in urban areas, they also pose certain problems.

There is a danger that they may turn out to be just another sectarian response to the threat of the world around. One can have one's community in an urban area without having to participate much in the wider community around. Such churches tend to rely on a magnetic approach to draw people in, working on the principle that if we can demonstrate a loving community, others will be attracted to join us. Such an approach is likely to draw the victims of society, those who are aware of need, who have problems which need solving. Such a church community is fulfilling a comfortable function in society, not far removed from Marx's opium of the masses. Surely it is just as much part of the Gospel to provide a challenge, to call the person who has everything to follow Christ. One has to go out from the church to provide that challenge.

Closely related to this is the fact that if our Gospel is presented chiefly in terms of reaching individuals, of solving individual problems, of healing relationships then we are speaking only to 'privatised' man. We speak entirely to the emotional side of man as he is involved with his relationships with home and family where he is probably most conscious of guilt and thus where the idea of 'sin' cuts some ice. But we have seen that man seems to be a series of selves in many different situations, and if we concentrate exclusively on the privatised man we ignore many other opportunities to confront him with the Gospel, or with other aspects of the Gospel. How much are we saying to that man at work, in the pub, or as he fights to get something done about the noise from a nearby factory? If we limit our Gospel to the privatised areas of man's life we leave vast areas untouched, just as we neglect huge areas of society.

The final danger of the emphasis of the community is that by many around it may not even be noticed. A group of Christians meeting in a home every night may not occasion much comment; this is just their particular quirk, just as other people are out rugby training every night. I believe the physical presence of Christians, with or without a church, is bound to make an impact, because any community group that actually works in an urban area is an exception. But this should not mean that we are not involved in the other associative groups within the city as part of mission, as part of demonstrating God's presence here.

Such a development will involve changes in our thinking about the world and about mission. Several books have come out in the past ten years re-emphasizing the importance of the world in Christian doctrine, and there has been a growing recognition that mission involves not just evangelism, but must work in all areas of society as well. Stott summarises this well[5]:

> To see need and to possess the remedy compels love to act, and whether the act will be evangelistic and social, or indeed political, depends on what we 'see' and what we 'have'.

This brings me to my final point. If we 'possess the remedy' for the problems of the city and its people, we have power. If we do not act, or if we use it only for the benefit of the church community, we are holding that power to ourselves. I am not thinking just about the message we have, but of very material things. Often our church buildings on an estate are the only communal buildings; we have a resource which the community around desperately need. If we hang onto that for ourselves, what kind of image of the gospel does that present? Similarly, if we say Christ can heal relationships and give people a new kind of life, what right have we to reserve that for our church community, and not go out, positively, and share the

message with those around? The challenge for us is to give up power, those resources we have, and genuinely to go out and serve the community around. In such service I believe we can reach deep spiritual needs which most churches, because they hang onto their position and to their power, cannot.

I close with a passage taken from Gordon Cosby, writing in *Post American.* I hope it brings together some of the threads in this paper, and may show us a way forward.

> To mature in that process of downward movement, to give up power, to be with the powerless and victimised poor of this earth, we need to become part of an intense Christian community which comforts and supports us. . . Radical obedience means belonging to a deep and intense community which takes seriously both the contemplative relationship with Jesus Christ and the servant posture among the poor and oppressed of the world.

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BRIAN MILLS and PATRICK SOOKHDEO

Evangelism—What should be done?

In the preceding paper we have seen how the 'urban problem' has developed, and noted some of the repercussions for the Church, which largely has failed to make an effective impact in Christ's name in urban areas. We have seen how urban areas so often characterised by despair, depression and deprivation socially, have spawned declining, demoralised congregations in decaying buildings. The danger is in thinking that how we could dare to produce out of our evangelistic hat some magical solution as a panacea for all our ills.

We hardly feel equipped to supply in a few thousand words what Christian leaders have been agonising over for well over a decade—an answer applicable in all situations as a kind of package deal. We shall attempt, however, to make suggestions for consideration and action, rather than give solutions. 'Solutions' presuppose success in some experimental realm; 'suggestions' presume nothing. We shall suggest some strategy that might be adopted, not structures that have to be formed, although these may well develop from an applied strategy.

1 Identification

In the December 1975 issue of *The Witness*, an article contained this comment, 'It is startling to be told that the almost complete deChristianization of the British working-class has been a potent element in the breakdown of industrial discipline, and our relative economic decline'. But were the British working-class ever Christianized? Not according to Bishop Winnington-Ingram who in 1896 wrote, 'It is not that the church has lost the great towns, it has never had them.' When Archbishop Longley remarked, 'The church has lost the towns', Disraeli is reported to have replied, 'Your Grace is mistaken, it never had the towns.'

Under the watchful eye of the village squire rural labourers attended church regularly, but as the migration of the population to the cities began during the Industrial Revolution church-going for these people immediately ceased. Several factors related to this cessation of church attendance, but one factor which must have played a large role in this was the low number of 'free sittings' available in the established churches. For example, in Sheffield in the nineteenth century there were fewer than 300 free sittings for a population of more than 60,000. The church at large became anxious about the situation and important local benefactors, mill and factory owners, built the terraced housing surrounding the mill or mine

that is such a feature of many industrial areas. At the same time they built large chapels and churches to which their employees were expected to go on Sunday with their families. So the serfs worked in the factory, lived in the housing the owner had provided, attended the church he had built—all as part of the contract. However, this did not have the desired effect and the Mann census indicated that only 58 % of the population attended church—what of the other $5\frac{1}{2}$ million, the labourers? The census claimed:

> They (the labourers) dislike the social distinction in the churches, the division into respectable and free seats, and regard religion as a middle-class propriety or luxury, suspect the churches of being indifferent to their poverty, and think that the message of the clergy is vitiated because they are paid to deliver it. They live in such physical squalor they cannot rise to the things of the Spirit. . . .

It was the ruling classes who were associated with church-going, education and establishment and therefore antagonism and suspicion were naturally extended to include the church.

The working-classes have never, in a general sense, gone to church since cities began. They do not belong there in the cultural setting it provides. Although from a historical viewpoint the working classes are largely anti-church they are not anti-God.

The relationship of housing to employment is still there in places, as with the northern mining areas, although elsewhere industrial development has swallowed up older housing, dispersing the community into council estates and high-rise flats. As rehousing has taken place the church, by and large, has failed to move with the population. Sometimes it tenaciously 'maintains the witness' in a decrepit building in a depopulated area, whilst the forcibly moved population find themselves rootless in a new area which is not conductve to identity or community spirit.

The life of the city has dehumanised and demoralised its people making them mere cogs in a machine. Not only is this country pagan, but the cities are proportionately more pagan and spiritually deprived than all the other areas of the country—and 75 % of the population live there. In many of our big cities the individual has about as little chance of receiving an evangelical Christian witness as he would have in some of the best known untouched mission-fields of the world.

Materialism, immorality and racial conflicts are just three of the complex social problems rampant in the city. Violence, crime, drunkenness and other allied social ills constantly rise. Despite all the money and research given to explore the problems no satisfactory plan has been devised to provide adequate social services and housing.

Dr. Roger Greenway of America has said, 'The church must learn to evangelise the city. The growth of cities is the great fact of our era and it provides the church with an opportunity to win great numbers to Christ. No other area in evangelism deserves more urgent attention.' Hippocrates once said, 'Whoever fails to reach the common people and make them listen to him, misses the mark'. It is significant to remember that of Christ it was said, 'The common people heard him gladly.' Alas, today, 'Christianity has become synonymous with a gay, unconcerned and irrelevant selfishness; and communism synonymous with a committed, disciplined and sacrificial way of living', according to Samuel Escobar. That is probably why communist influence in the cities is more and more apparent. We Christians have failed our nation and our Lord.

In order to find ways of expressing God's concern to urban man, we need to show our concern. We need first of all to aquire a concerned understanding of the composition and characteristics of our own city or suburb, and more particularly the immediate area where we live. We need to be aware of the influences that have led people to live where they live, and to think and act the way they do, Are we aware that in suburban middle class Britain the average family move every three to five years, which means they seldom put down roots or stay long enough to develop any community spirit or discover an identity? Are we aware of the motivating force in their life? Or do we realise that the percentage of urbanites living in apartments, high-rise flats and other multi-residence structures is certain to increase, and that people who live in such areas develop a life-style of their own, that increasingly isolates them from their fellow flat-dwellers and others? Do we realise that in some areas broken homes and one-parent families can be as high as 60% of the total family population? Have we then asked, how can the church which I attend, or where I live, express Christ's love in a way that will immediately begin to meet my neighbour's need socially and spiritually?

2 Mobilization

In *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, John Stott says, 'Mission embraces everything which God sends his people into the world to do. It includes evangelism and social responsibility, since both are authentic expressions of love.' Notice, he said 'God sends *his people* to do'. It has been said many times that God's means are men. God works through his church—as a community expressing his love to a loveless world—as a rescue team searching for those who have lost their way—as an organism bringing life to those who are lifeless. We cannot do anything without personnel—personnel who are willing to venture into the church's no man's land of inner city or industrial areas, recognising that it is as much a mission-field

as any foreign country, where a language and a whole new sub-culture will have to be understood. We suggest that more full-time workers are desperately needed in our cities, serving the church that exists there, spearheading evangelism into neglected areas, taking as many church members as are willing to be trained. As evangelists and modern missionaries, they will desperately need the fellowship, financial support and prayers of supporting churches. Updated versions of the work done by various city missionary organizations is required, where the worker will be more people-orientated than building-orientated. Recent work such as that of Robert Scott-Cook and Graham Loader in Bristol is an example of what is in mind. An Anglican research project has deduced that 'to reach and maintain even 10% penetration levels would require one clergyman for the first 1750 people, and one extra worker per 900 for the remainder.' On that basis a city with a quarter of a million population would need about 300 full-time workers. Even with a 5% penetration level, which as we shall see seems far more realistic, we are talking of far more full-time workers than there are in most cities.

Secondly, there may be many larger churches and fellowships in urban areas which should seriously be looking at ways of positively helping the more struggling causes, remembering that we are in a missionary situation. Although it may be pleasant to belong to a large live fellowship, its very size may be self-limiting to its growth either quantitatively or qualitatively, whereas the smaller units are often more effective in terms of growth. 'Divide and conquer' might be a watchword. Such an approach has been successfully applied in other parts of the world, for example Jamaica. A new housing area—church-less and unevangelised—or a redevelopment area would be obvious starting points. Or a declining fellowship in a socially changing environment (such as where racial and religious ghettos congregate) would also be a critical point for expressing missionary concern at home as a positive outreach from the large fellowship.

Thirdly, there may need to be the injection of people into urban and suburban areas, who go not so much because it is pleasant and congenial to live there, as because the love of Christ constrains them. Their residence as families, or as a team in an area may be the first step towards the establishing of a permanent Christian witness. The Morecambe 'Strategy for Evangelism' Conference in 1970 said in its Industrial Area and Immigrant Group report, 'We see the need for Christian homes to be built in these areas, and the call to live with sacrificial love within these areas, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus by living and speaking it. The churches should release people from the bondage of organizations so that they can be Christian husbands, wives, parents and neighbours, and use their homes for Jesus. The

Local Church should be representative of its area. The ideal is a truly indigenous church.'

Above all there is a desperate need for us all to recapture the missionary nature of the Church's task; to reawaken something of the enterprise of early Brethren pioneers who began fellowships in the areas where they lived and among the people with whom they worked. Kenneth Strachan, founder of Evangelism in Depth, said, 'The growth of any church is in direct proportion to its abilities to mobilise its members for evangelism.' Our success or failure can surely be judged by this maxim.

3 Proclamation

Michael Green, speaking at Lausanne, described evangelism in the early church as 'a spontaneous chattering of the Good News. It was engaged in continuously by all types of Christians as a matter of course and privilege. It came from the unquenchable conviction that Jesus was the key to life and death, happiness and purpose, and they could not keep quiet about him. The Spirit of Jesus within them drove them to mission.' Proclamation must take place, but it must ensue as a result of hearts being warmed, motivated and empowered by the Spirit of God. Forced outreach will more often than not prove counter-productive. Given that the message of God's love and purpose in Christ needs to be conveyed, how might it best be done in town and suburb? What methods of approach are appropriate to the need, and relevant to the personnel available?

Perhaps we need to start just there and ask ourselves what resources are available, in terms of manpower, finance and facilities for mission in any given situation. How then can these resources best be redeployed or motivated to be available to meet the need where it exists? Such questions as these should be the prelude to strategy, borne out of a desire genuinely to overhaul ourselves in readiness to attack the missionary situation in our towns and cities, as churches and communities of Christians.

(a) *Community* (in deed). The prime need in this rootless society is to re-capture a real community spirit within the church, instead of the 'association' outlook now apparent. This should find expression in compassionate concern for our neighbours—as a church and as individuals. It is impossible however, to form a 'community' when we live five miles from the focal point—our places of worship. The very fact of our commuting to church forces it to take on the role of an association. If every member of our churches went to his *nearest* fellowship we would have more equally numbered *local* churches from which we could begin to form the community life we seek. In every community there are family and personal needs in which

Christians can show neighbourly love and compassion through acts of kindness and deeds of love. As Michael Cassidy has said, 'We need less of pedestal and microphone and more of towel and washbasin.'

(b) *Communication* (in word). At some stage proclamation in word must take place. One of the best ways is by personal contact with the people we meet day by day—fellow-travellers, shoppers, work-mates and colleagues or people in the cafe where we lunch. The family unit must be won for Christ as well as the individual (and usually the females at that!). We need to look again at the failure of the church to reach and keep its contact with the male populace. Men tend to think that 'religion is for women and kids'. The church has let them believe this, because we don't do anything to correct this misconception and attempt to evangelize men. Therefore the family as a whole is not reached. If men cannot be reached through church-based meetings or home visiting them we have to go where they are— or more important to *be* where they are—in order to identify with them and communicate with them. It may be in the context of work-related stiuations that communication could take place in the first instance.

We need to be in the forefront of mass means of communication through which city man acquires his information—the press, television, cinema, radio etc. 'The cost is too great,' 'we don't have the expertise', 'we haven't the time', or, 'we mustn't get involved in the world' are our oft used excuses. If we had the enterprise of the early Brethren, and the faith to trust the promises of God we could use all the means of communication in order to reach men. The Morecambe Strategy conference report calls for all church leaders to be bold and imaginative in releasing latent creative talent in the service of Christ. We found a biblical basis for the use of modern communication techniques. i.e. visual aids, audience participation, poetry, prose, music, movement and drama. . .' The church needs to structure itself on a co-operative basis across denominations in an attempt, *inter alia*, to influence for Christ the opinion-formers locally. It has been estimated that in any town or city, there would be no more than 300 people in this category. We find that this, strangely, was St. Paul's strategy. 'To the Jew first' involved approaches to the religious leaders with whom he may not have been in agreement or fellowship. Then there were others—devout Greeks and leading women in Thessalonica, the businessmen of Philippi, kings and civic rulers. He preached to small *and* great.

Michael Cassidy, in a paper on mass evangelism, says, 'In heterogenous situations we must discover the homogenous sub-cultural units to make effective any mass approach. Failure to do this

will nullify any mission.' Most of our thinking is normally geared to reinforcing the positive success areas, but perhaps one of the key ways forward in church growth is to identify the points at which blockage occurs, remove these blocks and strengthen the weak points, rather than mobilise extra resources and pressure at the point of strength. In any other concern, not to adopt such a policy would inevitably invite collapse. So what are the points at which we are weakest in proclamation? Which sub-cultural groups have been neglected? In what areas socially is there no witness to Christ? Which personnel need encouragement and support, morally and spiritually?

4 Adaptation

The church is a *'limited* company', with nominal capital, with little management, and a small mobile work force. It lacks working capital and is therefore nearly bankrupt. We have some fixed assets, but because we have a surfeit of liabilities we are perpetually running at a loss. Does it need restructuring in order to become a partnership, or a workers co-operative? In an article in the *Harvester* (November 1975) Dr. Keir Howard said, '. . .there must be continuing reappraisals of our work and service in the light of changing needs and circumstances. Perhaps especially. . .we must always be willing to pay less heed to the institutional form of local church. Old forms become obsolete and new forms must arise. We must cease to be 'church orientated' in the institutional sense for the form is not permanent. . .Rather it is essential to concentrate on the life of the community, a life derived from Christ himself . . . God has called us into a living community to be the agent of radical change in his world'. Morecambe again said, 'In de-humanised suburbia we have seen the need of a local church becoming a community where individuals can realise their full potential'. We believe and proclaim a gospel of grace available to all, but we operate a structure which takes the form of a club with limited membership.

We have mentioned already our belief in the need for a renewed emphasis on community. Now we wish to look constructively, we hope, at ways in which this might be achieved by a local church, with the aim of providing for growth of the Church by multiplication, rather than addition.

(a) *Small groups*

The explosion of little congregations is the most important single factor in the renewal of the church throughout the world. The key growth areas of the church are those where there exist multi house-group structures, rather than single fellowship centres. At Lausanne, Dr. Greenway of U.S.A., said, 'The house-church will probably be the organizational form in which Christianity grows

the fastest during the remainder of this century, and therefore church leaders should do everything possible to fit it properly into their church structures.' Talking of high-rise flats and other multiple residence structures, James Wong of the Singapore Church Growth Study Centre said, 'If people living in high rise areas are to be discipled a greater number of house churches must be developed.' The existence of neighbourhood groups means that the Christian community is exposed for examination, and the locality is exposed to its influence in a way which is impossible when the Body of Christ only expresses itself within the four walls of a church building. 'It is far more important to multiply witnesses in the local community than to multiply the hearers of a well-known evangelist', comments David Wasdell in a workpaper of the Urban Church Training Project.

The loneliness, insecurity and frustration created by city life are ministered to best through the local assembly of Christians who meet regularly for worship and fellowship and belong to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. The transformed lives of believers have more influence than any other factor in improving the quality of life in an urban community. What better place to give folk a better opportunity of beholding this than in small neighbourhood groups?

Such groups are more easily started in a new area where there is little of an established nature. Indeed many present day assemblies owe their existence to the origin of a housegroup. A family or two in an area could come together for mutual encouragement, then use their homes separately as community focal points in their street, apartment block or other area. This would become the first stage of showing the Church's community concern. In the same way, established churches could adopt a policy whereby area house-groups might initially revive struggling mid-week meetings. But by decentralising them, the community spirit amongst believers would be encouraged, which if not regarded as an end in itself would then become the springboard for evangelistic outreach through the regular day-to-day contacts each member has. Once the group began to grow it would be necessary for it to divide. As in many cases there are few, or even no homes, in an area where the assembly is based, members of one assembly living in the locality of another assembly should open up their homes to aid the witness in that area. A working together with other assemblies must begin. Assemblies in an area must meet together, think together and work together concerning an evangelistic strategy. If no other homes were available, perhaps some of the interested non-Christians could be asked if their homes could become a centre for fellowship.

The cell group structure in every segment of local life should also be supported, encouraged and prayed for by the local church and its members. These would operate among homogenous ethnic or occupational groups, as well as in specific geographical areas. Cell groups would be the counterpart in secular society of the community house groups. Their function would be similar—to provide fellowship for Christians, and to provide a focal point for communicating the Gospel to others in their sub-culture or social unit.

The local pastor or evangelist would be fundamental to the proper functioning of these various groups, and their adequate supervision, discipline, instruction and care. With most inner-city assemblies having only a handful of men, the running of several cell groups would be a demanding if not impossible task. Local assemblies, in working together, should consider the appointment of a full-time assembly-based worker to work alongside, say, three or four local assemblies—stimulating the vision, feeding and directing it, before handing it over to local Christians converted as a result of the ministry. Established churches would then be the place where believers attend for consolidation, instruction, training and further fellowship.

(b) *Pastoral/evangelistic visiting*

Every local church should have contacts in its local neighbourhood, through its existing activities. The visiting of these 'fringe' contacts should be a first priority in local church outreach. When relationships have been established, then it should be possible to communicate verbally something of the Christian gospel. The process of church growth known as 'Evangelism Explosion' is probably the most significant factor in the western world resulting in single church expansion. Where it has been properly applied in Britian it is resulting in a numerical annual growth rate of fifteen percent. An article in the *Christian Record* (2.7.76) reported on the application of these principles in a 'monchrome' working class estate' on the outskirts of Liverpool, where 'spectacular' results were seen. After initial training of a few church members many were converted as a consequence of the visiting. These too have been trained despite problems like culture-shock which in one case meant that it was 18 months before the convert dared to enter inside a church. Now house groups have been set up on the estate to cope with the teaching of the new converts. A church without some form of visitation programme doesn't deserve to grow, nor can it expect to. We have for too long looked for easy short-term answers in our missionary concern. There is no short-term alternative to the value of a consistent visiting programme of an evangelistic and pastoral kind.

(c) *Crossing cultural barriers*

In many areas the life-style of church members, who frequently travel in to worship, is radically different from that of the local residents. We are of a totally different culture, we think differently, our whole outlook on life, for obvious reasons, is different. In the past there have been attempts to build bridges—social bridges—into the community in order to break down the barrier of cultural differences. Today there are very few social bridges left to build across into the lives of the average English family. The church has lost her position as social centre for the community and because of this we can no longer go further down the scale offering more attractive social events than the bingo hall or the community centre. Our spheres of contact today must come through personal relationships and direct evangelistic outreach—we have no more bridges to build. Even in an immigrant situation the bridges of language teaching, sharing of English customs, sewing groups, have been sadly neglected for the church seems not to feel any responsibility or concern in these realms.

Initiative, imagination and innovation are required of the church in order to cross these long erected barriers between the man in the street and the man in the pew.

5 Implementation

In medical science, doctors, practitioners and surgeons may say: 'We are doing O.K., we're treating physical ill-health with drugs, surgery and medical care.' But they don't go on to say, 'therefore we don't need research'. They are only too aware of the need for researchers, specialists, trying to expose the cause of illness and discover effective cures, finding out what social factors as well as viruses, bacteria etc., contribute to certain types of illness. So too, we need people who will determine the causative factors of non-effective penetration with the Gospel, analyse the findings and prescribe cures.

The results of adequate research must inevitably lead to *forward planning* in our strategy for evangelism in all geographical areas, but particularly in large centres of population where we have a failure problem. Forward planning is needed because of the sophistication of modern life. Forward planning is needed because as disciples, we should be disciplined in our use of time. resources, and in the priorities we accept. Forward planning is not unspiritual, but inherent as part of life in an ordered universe and natural support system. It is also biblical.

We need to plan, with others, to enter areas of low spiritual impact, all the time being aware of the timing of God. Where housing development on a local or town-wide scale is imminent, we should

plan with the planners at an early stage. If population movements are involved, we ought to prepare as a church to provide for the Christians that will inevitably be a part of that population movement as well as for the non-identity new populace. For example we should constructively plan for 1.5 % of any population movement to consist *now* of committed Christians. If the Mission to the Nation proposals are accepted and implemented, we should be looking more realistically and in faith for a figure of 5 % in any given area by 1980. This must necessarily involve church planting on a scale not known in this country in decades. We need to set more goals in our evangelism. 'If Christians dare set their goals and sights high, they can expect, with God's help, the possibility of doing something great for him.' The disciples learnt the practical lessons of launching out into the deep at his command. We have the commands—we must launch out. The proposal to multiply churches in all segments of the towns and cities, where there is none already, must be regarded as feasible, and as the will of God. Perhaps a working group of interested people, with specialist knowledge in goal setting in evangelism, church planting, housing planning and development, sociology and training might be formed to examine these and related factors more closely. The way forward into areas of missionary need in our towns and suburbs will obviously require the mobilization of as many Christians as possible. But as so many, it seems, are weighted down by present activities, or overawed by the task, one asks how can they realistically be able to do anything to meet the vast missionary need? We firmly believe that serious training and retraining is an essential pre-requisite.

Training is required at local church level. This again is a sphere in which more full-time workers could be used. What is needed is a scheme relevant to each person in a local church situation. This can only be achieved and administerd by a person who lives, works and is personally involved in that area. *Every* believer is capable of bringing someone else to the Lord, but because 'he doesn't know how' his capabilities are never realised. So many things in life change so quickly, that it is difficult to keep up to date. Training needs to be at two levels—theory and practice. So it may be necessary for residential training conferences to be arranged for specialist needs, coupled with some period of practical training. We have thought about the possibility of Spring or Summer schools, lasting for up to six weeks, with a different course each week at each of the centres chosen, covering the needs of leadership, evangelism, (in its different settings), youth and children's work, pastoral counselling, church planting, to name a few of the subjects that relate to today's theme. James Wong of Singapore points to a strategy for achieving the goal—to disciple the whole of the urban population for Christ.

The key factor lies in the church's ability to train sufficient leaders to become "church planters" so that new centres of witness may be expanded to all areas of opportunities.'

Training is an inbuilt feature of the Evangelism Explosion programme and can be adopted and adapted by any church. Training-schemes are offered by various organizations such as the Urban Evangelical Training Project, The Fishers Fellowship, In Contact, etc. It is time to admit that we can no longer muddle through maintaining the status quo and doing things the way we always have done. We must prepare, restructure, re-appraise ourselves and our churches for mission in these last days. We must encourage and train our personnel. We must see the divine priorities, and proclaim unequivocally the Gospel of redeeming grace.

6 Confrontation

The church, in town and suburb, established or to be established, needs to turn from defensive tactics to attack. The protagonists of secularism, humanism, communism and many other isms have been having a field day, whilst we have left the field, it seems, to them. They are becoming better organised, whilst we are becoming less organised, often divided, un-co-ordinated. We dishonour our Lord, whose impelling final commission was Go. . .Go. . .Go. Two telling quotations present the challenge—one from an Anglican and one from a Baptist.

'Throw off what hampers your service, even though it be venerable with the history of ages, or consecrated by dear familiarity. Use these things as aids to service if you can, but if they are only clogs cut them off and cast them from you. The day is come that burns like fire, for Christ has cast His fire on earth. Come out from your safety and comfort; come out from your habits and convention; listen for the voice of the wind as it sweeps over the world and stand where you may be caught in its onward rush' (William Temple).

'*Go* is the obligation of the saved. Jesus hastened to impose the obligation on those whom he saved during his earthly ministry. On the borders of Samaria he healed ten lepers and said, "Go". As he he entered Jericho he gave a blind man his sight and said, "Go". He healed the woman of an illness that was of twelve years duration and said, "Go". In a graveyard at Gadara Jesus drove devils out of a demented man and said, "Go". "Go" is a choice word which the Lord Jesus used to give instruction to his church. It means just what he meant. Whatever else the church may do will result in barrenness if she fails to be a going church. The world will not be saved by proxy. It is a lazy cold disinterested (*sic*)kind of Christianity that would invite men to come into the Kingdom with stereo-typed letters,

bright flashing signs, and the many allurements commonly used to try to save the church from the obligation imposed by the text, "Go". *Go* is the command of the unerring wisdom' (Billy Graham).

In Christ's name we go. With his wisdom may we know how and where to go. With his love may we share his message of love. With his Spirit we shall have power to go. With his church we have the people to go.

> *'Let us go forth*
> *Unto Him*
> *Outside the camp,*
> *Bearing His reproach.*
> *For here we have no continuing city, but*
> *we seek one to come.'*

Roger Forster

The Alternative Church and the Alternative Society

(In the first part of his address to the annual meeting of 1975, Roger Forster analysed the tendencies that had given rise to the 'alternative' sub-culture, before considering how the church might respond.)

Christians may feel that they have answers to some of the problems taken seriously by the alternative society. Those of us who assert that God has already spoken to these world problems in Christ can give answers to those who are seeking true freedom. But so long as we show ourselves to be simply bulwarks of the established order, unwilling to enter into the experiences of members of the 'alternative society' or even to show sympathy with them, they are unlikely to listen to our Christian answers.

Christians must define freedom as being what we were meant to be, **not** doing as we please. We must give answers concerning structures recognising that forms are necessary if life would be preserved, but they must be the sorts of forms that are always subsidiary and subservient to the life itself and freedom itself. Nevertheless, with such answers as these the church will be seen as credible only if we are prepared to express in practice our own 'alternative life style' and to listen to and learn from what the sub-culture has to say by theirs. After all, we are exhorted as Christians in our particular form of society, not to be conformed to this world, and the sub-culture is certainly an attempt to be not conformed. Perhaps we should more seriously take their challenge to our own system and understand ourselves better for it. As I cite the following fourteen aspects of the Alternative Society it will be understood, of course, that in each case the difference from the Christian counterpart might be very great indeed but the basic concept at least brings the two life styles together for comparison.

(1) *Brotherhood* is an important aspect of the sub-culture society. Nationality, culture, colour, economic distinctions go by the board in the sense of a oneness of humanity, even though this brotherhood has difficulty in finding a meaning for humanity in a naturalistic society. Nonetheless those who drop into the sub-culture generally would see it as held together by social concern and a disgust of war. Such a concept no doubt was implied by the apostle Paul, when he said, "We are all one in Christ Jesus", and by Jesus himself, when he

told the story to the Jews of the Good Samaritan, the hero being a hated enemy (dare we say "Arab" if the story were told in the twentieth century?). The courage of such a pronouncement of true brotherhood is something from which we can learn, first as seen in our Lord Jesus and secondly as expressed today (unfortunately sometimes on a greater and more realistic level) by those who belong to the drop-out society. Perhaps the use of our buildings could be looked into: are they truly resurrection-cum-rescue shops for those who are the victims of life, and places where a oneness can be built which will make the society ask questions again concerning the Christian faith?

(2)   The drop-out society's use of *communes* (or pads) is instructive to us. These emphasise love a great deal, though not always of course is love truly expressed there. I remember a Brazilian girl who belonged to one such communist pad of anarchist culture, who found herself totally excluded when she was unwilling to carry fire-arms in a sortie in which all the other young fellows and girls were shot; the great distress through which she went because of this rejection experience indicates a lack, a deficiency, in the sort of love which is seriously aimed at in these communes. We Christians surely should have an answer there if challenged by the existence of such situations: to accept people as they are, and to love them still when they have become unloveable and acted contrary to the group. Jesus commands (John 13: 34) that we should love one another: this is surely something which could be emphasised a little more than it is in our societies, where doctrinal correctness is considered the criterion rather than the fruit of the Spirit which is love. Our homes, our halls, our informal meetings, our loose associations in work for Christ, all could express more adequately the fact that we are fellow-ships of love; rather than just having a hall, for instance, giving the impression that we are only a fellowship of instruction or lecturing, with rows of chairs facing a platform—we could also install lounges with carpets and easy chairs, which would give an opportunity for face-to-face interest in one another, which surely is the essence of love.

(3)   Can we learn from the *equality* which is claimed in these sub-culture stratas? The priesthood of all believers is a time-honoured concept in most of our churches, and Jesus not only said he is greatest who is servant of all, but himself illustrated it on the Last Supper night when the incarnate God, on hands and knees, washed our feet. Such a respect, such a value for one another, is at least attempted in some sub-culture situations, in which a man's pretensions are unacceptable and the fact that a man is a man is all that generally is required. So too it should be with ourselves, with our

respect for each other's opinions, contributions, and expressions of faith and love and worship.

(4) Sub-culture has seen a move towards *unisex*. This is not surprising, since, if there is no god, there is no devil; if there is no light, there is no darkness; if there is no male there is no female; if there is no norm there is no change from the norm. So all forms of sexual practice are acceptable, and male and female dress merge into one. But doesn't this challenge us again as to what place women have in the church of Jesus Christ? Truly we don't assert unisex, but we do assert that in Christ there is neither male nor female, in the sense of intrinsic differing value of the irrespective souls. That between these two unlike entities neither can be inferior to the other has implications for position, service, and respect, and the employment of the female side of our congregations and these tendencies should be much more in evidence if we are going to learn from the challenge of the sub-culture (Galatians 3: 28). Perhaps we should be serving womanhood, as did the early church, by a Christian restatement of her value and role in the twentieth century world.

(5) *Individualism* is a fifth characteristic of these societies: individualism of expression and opinions. In our own worship, evangelism, work and ideas, is there not plenty enough room for many and varied ways of doing things? Ezekiel was a man on his own. He used pavement artistry, visual aids, drama, cooking and even hair-dressing, to get his message over. Such an individualism needs to be reasserted and reallowed if we are going to depart from a colourless, insipid Christianity, in favour of one in which individuals are respected in themselves and for their particular contribution to the overall community of God.

(6) A *protest* is found amongst those of the sub-culture, against the establishment, and against their parents; there is a rebellion because of the sort of world they seem to have been given and inherited from their forbears. They are 'angry young men,' their anger no doubt heightened by their own guilt, though not a guilt they necessarily know how to solve, as they live in a world which they did not necessarily ask to be given. It is significant that in a book like Nahum, two things which are singled out by the Old Testament prophet as he delivers his tirade against a foreign nation (not, we note, the people of Israel), were the two crimes of economic oppression, and political and military oppression. Economics and politics—the two issues that so often raise issues of protest to-day: these were the themes of the Old Testament prophet Nahum as he pours his tirade against the old empire of Assyria with its world-dominating force. 'This is what I have against you, says the Lord, . . .' (Nahum 2: 13 and 3: 5). Perhaps as we look round our churches and see older men

with no love for people, no love for prayer, no love for an enjoyment
of the things of Christ, may we not ask again: is this because of the
lack of concern we have had over the issues of our day? over the
society in which we live? whereby we have been put to shame by the
rising younger sub-culture generation. Is this not the time when the
Spirit of God would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children (not
the hearts of the children to the fathers, but of the older generation to
the children (Luke 1: 17), to make ready a people prepared for the
Lord, as we seek to understand why the children's hearts protest?

(7)   A strong *anti-capitalistic* bent would be found within the sub-
culture. It is largely to do with money and property, often born out
of envy, the have-nots set against the haves. Nevertheless, Jesus
taught us that the abundance of our life does not consist of what we
possess. Surely sacrifice 'for my sake and for the gospel's' as Jesus
challenged, should be the hall-mark of the churches of Christ, not
contented, capitalistic affluence. Evangelism works at a faster pace
when we pour all of our lives, thoughts, money and property into the
project.

(8)   *Obscenity*—of course, we know the dirty language phase of the
late 60's. It was a reaction against delicate and fine speech; a reaction
perhaps against the etiquette of the day as it reflects petty shibboleths
when there is no real social concern. Consequently war is said to be
'obscene', changing the meaning of the word 'obscenity' in our sub-
culture. Nevertheless, if we are unconcerned to witness to our Lord
Jesus but prefer to write articles discussing whether we should have
unleavened bread at the Lord's Table or not, surely we should be
called to account for such trivialities, such inconsequential points of
order and etiquette? Perhaps even called to account in the danger-
ously invective language that the New Testament writers themselves
sometimes approximate towards. In Matthew 23 the Lord Jesus does
not mince his words as he speaks to those who are the advocates of
meticulous detail and etiquette, denouncing (v. 27) scribes and
hypocrites 'like whitewashed tombs who outwardly appear beautiful
but are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness'—in other words,
they stink! Again, in Matthew 23:23: 'Hypocrites! You tithe mint
and dill and cummin and you neglect the weightier matters of law
and justice, mercy and faith'. All our Christian etiquette, gentleman-
liness and courtesy, right as it is, should be called to account if it
goes hand-in-hand with total unconcern about (and merely covers
up our lack of interest in) the weightier matters.

(9)   There is an *unconventionalism* in the sub-culture of our day, of
the 'alternative society'. Manners go by the board. Why? Because
we will not flatter others; flattery is eschewed. Rich and poor are
treated alike, just as James recommends. 'If men come in who are

rich, don't say, "You sit here," and to the poor, "You sit at my feet." '
In the same spirit, Jesus was prepared to talk to a Samaritan woman.
The labourer himself is worthy of his hire, he is not to be treated as
though he were nothing, whatever his work or occupation in life
may be. So the flattery which the unconventionalism of the movement
eschews is something that God hates. We might well learn from this
as we make a show of the professionals and the monied people who
come to our meetings.

(10) The whole sub-culture is bound together by a *musical experience*
and expression. This is one of the most unifying influences throughout
the whole of this alternative society, from the Americas through the
whole of Europe to the Far East: the young men and women are
held together by the unifying music which has arisen from the sub-
culture. Have we lost the place of Philippians 2 with the beautiful
song of the Lord's condescension and exaltation? or the joy of that
young, if not teenage, Mother of our Lord Jesus, singing in her
patriotic spirit about the God whom she sought to magnify (Luke 1)?
Music should be an expression which binds us together, as it did in
the days of Wesley, when doctrine was taught through the hymns
that were produced.

(11) *Drug experience* has been a common feature of the alternative
society. Because we have presented a religion of the letter, of the
mind, and of the intellect (as it indeed is, but it is more than that),
so the reaction has been a closedness to Christianity. We have shut
the door on the kingdom of heaven. Lacking true spiritual satisfaction
and true spirituality, the experience of 'at one-ness', atonement,
becomes more a statement of doctrine than a spiritual life force. In
the sub-culture, drugs are the alternative for spiritual experiences.
(12) Or perhaps, from a spirit-arid church, *mysticism* is spawned off,
our 12th feature of the sub-culture, with Hare Krishna and transcen-
dental meditations among the ways of seeking after the supernatural
and its gifts, perhaps because of the lack of it found amongst our
companies.

(13) *Casual dress* is a manifestation from which we may learn. Did
the Scriptures not say for centuries that 'God looks on the heart
and not on the outward dress'? Perhaps dress, hair-style, and the
like, should always have been considered as a very minor aspect
since God is concerned primarily with the heart's love.

(14) Finally, we can mention the casual attitude to *sex* which exists
within this community of the alternative society. Can we not learn
from the Lord's attitude of forgiveness to harlots, and his concern
over those who are divorced? Then we might think again as to what

the meaning of these relationships, in a pragmatic sense, really is, and why they are safeguarded by the laws of God, instead of issuing dictatorial statements to our communities. Often we present a pharisaism which does not recognize that the heart act is in itself no less culpable than the physical: indeed they are the same in our Lord's definition (Matthew 5: 28).

In conclusion we can thank our sub-culture community of the twentieth century for its reminder to the church of the church's true calling and nature, as an alternative life-style from the dying world. We must also carefully consider its challenge and consequently be able to offer it the realities for which it seeks and which we know are to be found in Christ.

P. Cousins

Gospel and Spirit:
The Anglican Joint Statement

One of the most remarkable features of the 1977 Nottingham Evangelical Anglican Congress was the number of participants who were charismatic, if one could judge by the raising of arms in worship. Using this rough and ready test, it appeared that up to one third of the 2,000 at Nottingham were charismatic. In view of this substantial charismatic presence within the evangelical wing of the Church of England and since the movement extends to churches which have not been regarded as evangelical, including the Roman Catholic church, it is not surprising that a number of Anglicans have met to produce a joint statement sponsored both by the (charismatic) Fountain Trust and the Church of England Evangelical Council (*Gospel and Spirit* price 20p from Fountain Trust, 3a, High Street, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9RT).

Before considering this statement, we may pause to ask ourselves why it is that the charismatic movement has had so little effect on 'Brethren' local churches. One possible reason is the dispensational theology that has for so many years dominated Brethrenism. At this point, the far right of the Reformed Churches unite with dispensationalists whose doctrines they normally detest to affirm that charismatic manifestations were for the Church in the first century and that where they occur today they are signs of either human emotionalism or the work of evil spirits. It is not surprising that charismatically influenced Christians should leave the 'assembly' or the 'Wee Free' kirk where they are told that they are either up an emotional blind alley or dominated by Satan! This is a short way with dissent and well calculated to keep a local church free of both the blessing and the curses that have been associated with the charismatic movement.

A second possible reason may be the traditional emphasis in Brethrenism (again resembling that of the Reformed Churches) on the once-for-allness of salvation. 'Keswick' doctrines have made little appeal within the Brethren movement, Methodist views on total sanctification have been opposed, and there has been a strong tendency to say that "we received it all when we trusted Christ". (It is not unfair to ask as Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones does in one of his commentaries: 'If you received it all then, what has happened to it since?')

A third reason may be that within the 'assemblies' there was already a strong emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and in Christian service. As one reads the testimonies of some neo-Pentecostalists, including clergymen, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the experiences they describe are very often 'simple' conversion experiences for which they were totally unprepared because they did not believe in that sort of thing! In the same way, the discovery that all believers receive gifts from the Spirit, to be exercised within the local church, is, in theory at least, a commonplace to Christians in the 'assemblies' although the extent to which this belief has been acted upon has varied widely from place to place.

All the same, the relative freedom from neo-Pentecostal tensions which characterises 'assemblies' today, may be a sign of weakness rather than strength. Absence of conflict is characteristic not only of the healthily functioning human body but also of a corpse and it is greatly to be feared that the 'peace' that characterises many 'assemblies' is a sign of death not life. It is not necessarily a matter for self-congratulation that the most remarkable spiritual phenomenon (for better and worse) of the latter part of the twentieth century appears to have by-passed the Brethren.

Gospel and Spirit, although brief (twelve pages), will be of great help to Christian everywhere who genuinely wish to co-exist and to enjoy Christian fellowship with fellow-believers from whom they differ on the charismatic issue. In other words, it will be of no use at all to those who are one-sided in one way or another about this question. Thus, it will be quite irrelevant to the senior *Echoes* missionary who evicted a fellow worker, also on the *Echoes* list, because the latter would not undertake never to speak in tongues in his personal devotions. Nor will it be welcomed by people who disregard the authority of official leaders in the local church unless they too have undergone the experience of being 'baptised in the Spirit'. But it will be of tremendous value to everybody who is genuinely seeking a *modus vivendi* in the belief that a local church should have room for a diversity of views and attitudes.

The statement affirms that since every spiritual blessing is given in Christ, therefore every Christian is in principle complete so that the ministry of the Spirit can give nothing more wonderful than the Saviour or anything apart from him. While recognising that incorporation into Christ is a unitary work of God, the statement sees it as having many facets and agrees on the need to avoid stereotyping Christian experience into a one, two or three-stage pattern. In other words, neither the 'you receive it all at conversion' school nor the 'wait for a second blessing' school is allowed to claim its own pattern as normative. In this context, there is a salutary warning

against the dangers of either presenting the work of the Spirit in separation from the work of the Son or of preaching an incomplete gospel which does not do justice to the blessing offered to all who believe in Christ.

A substantial portion of the report deals with the term 'baptism in the Spirit'. It appears to recognise that the normal charismatic use of the term is unbiblical but confesses 'that it may be hard to change a usage which has become very widespread although we all agree in recognising its dangers.' However, 'it must not be employed in a way in which would question the reality of the work of the Spirit in regeneration and the real difference that this brings in experience from the outset. On that we are unanimous.' There is no attempt however, to disguise the fact that the meaning of 'baptism in the Spirit' is a source of disagreement even to those who see it as a post-conversion experience.

Since this is basically an eirenic statement it is not surprising that the importance of intellect and emotions are both stressed and the dangers pointed out both of 'a dead, rigid and barren orthodoxy' and of 'an uncontrolled, unstable and fanatical emotionalism.' But it is interesting to see the value of a charismatic style of worship being recognised even within the liturgically orientated Church of England. Christians in the 'assemblies 'may think that the warnings against one-man ministry and rigid patterns of worship do not apply to them but it would be hard to deny that Brethren as well as Anglican might benefit from more spontaneity, a greater readiness to listen to God in silent meditation and 'the gentle, loving wonder and praise of some renewal songs'. There is also a salutary warning (by implication) about the danger of splitting churches. The only way to maintain unity is "the old one of shared truth and mutual love, humility, tolerance and respect'.

References to Roman Catholic neo-Pentecostalism are positive but cautious—as they surely should be! Acknowledgement of the forces within the Roman Catholic church working for renewal and reformation goes along with recognition that time is needed to see whether such forces effect changes in official formulations and interpretations of doctrine where these are necessary.

The section on spiritual gifts contains an excellent definition: 'A spiritual gift is a God-given capacity to serve others by His grace in a manner that edifies them in some way by the showing forth of Christ and His love". As we have already seen, the statement as a whole seems to recognise the validity of the charismatic movement but at this point it seems so conditional that it might be subscribed to by thoroughgoing opponents of neo-Pentecostalism if full weight

be given to the words italicised in the following (although not in the original): 'We declare our openness to receiving any spiritual gifts *that are consonant with the New Testament* and see no reason why such gifts should not be given and exercised today.'

There are some wise remarks about the use, regulation and oversight of gifts in the church and helpful notes on some gifts which have given rise to controversy. Apostleship today can do no more than 'in certain respects parallel apostolic functions' since the ministry of the original apostles was unique. Similarly, although the gift of prophecy may not be identified with that of teaching, yet prophecy today must be tested by Scripture and cannot add materially to the basic biblical revelation. Nor do prophecies in the first person singular have greater authority than others! With respect to miracles, the statement seems to offer substantial agreement but closer reading suggests that there may have been a good deal of diversity. Although 'we all believe miracles can occur today' and there is agreement that "we are never in a position to demand a miracle" and that 'over-concentration upon the miraculous can blind people to the manifold and wonderful every day working of God in the world'—the section ends with the significant statement 'On the precise degree of expectation of miracles which is appropriate today we are not, however, completely agreed.' Yet this is, after all, largely what divides Christians on this subject since it makes all the difference in the world whether or not one lives in daily expectation of miracles or regards them as very rare but in principle not at all impossible! Healing, on the other hand, seems to have aroused little disagreement although it would be interesting to know how much discussion preceded final agreement about the statement here. While the validity of Christian ministries and gifts of healing is recognised, so too is medical practice and there is a warning against the distorted teaching about 'divine healing' that has gained so much currency in charismatic circles. Similarly, the remarks about exorcism are judicious and biblical and recognise the value, not only of exorcism as such but also of the 'regular ministry of word and sacrament' as liberating people from satanic bondage.

It is clear that there was substantial disagreement about speaking in tongues. How far does modern glossolalia correspond with the New Testament phenomenon? Most, but not all, of the group recognise that some modern glossolalia is divinely given and has spiritual and psychological value, but it is agreed that occult or demonic influence may give rise to similar manifestations. There is also disagreement about the value of the gift to the individual and to the church. Happily the group managed agreement about a general attitude in conformity to 1 Corinthians 14, neither exalting nor

despising the gift but always testing it by its edifying effects and regulating its use scripturally.

It is sad to see how many leaders in local churches are apparently petrified with fear at the thought that any charismatic manifestation might occur within their fellowship. Although the consequences of such manifestation has too often been devastating and destructive, yet it is hard to believe that the only reason for such fear is concern lest the flock be scattered. Fear of the unknown, reluctance to examine presuppositions, fear of disagreement among elders and possibly reluctance to admit the need for renewal, are all factors which may be important. In the background there is often the thought, sometimes unspoken but occasionally even put into words: 'Let's hope it doesn't happen here!' It would be a very good thing if elders who feel like this were to work through *Gospel and Spirit* together so that they might prayerfully face the issues it raises.