

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

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

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bmj-06.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bmj-06.php)

# The Fraternal

---

April 1988

ISSN 0950-1703

Vol. 222

---

## CONTENTS

<b>Editorial</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Those Elusive Apostles: Ephesians 4:11 reconsidered</b> .....	<b>4</b>
by Rev. R. Alastair Campbell Research Fellow, Spurgeons College.	
<b>Meet the Irish Baptists</b> .....	<b>7</b>
by Rev. Joshua Thompson.	
<b>Ministry to the Imprisoned</b> .....	<b>11</b>
by William J. Davies Superintendent Chaplain of Prisons, The Methodist Church.	
<b>Christianity and Culture (4) Philosophy: Philosophy and Empty Deceit</b> .....	<b>18</b>
by Peter A. Hicks Minister, Bushey Baptist Church, Oxhey, Watford.	
<b>Book Reviews</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Of Interest to You</b> .....	<b>30</b>

Membership is open to Baptist Ministers, Missionaries  
and Theological Students in Great Britain and Overseas.  
Subscription: £7.00 per annum (or equivalent).  
Due January.

# Editorial

What are legitimate Christian concerns? A bird's eye view of contemporary Christianity would suggest that such a question is unanswerable. This conclusion would be forced upon the observer by the range and variety of those concerns and the vitality of current Christian activity. In some areas we find exclusive concern for personal salvation. In others an emphasis on wholeness and well being. In others a prophetic witness to society and its structures. In others a passion for Christian community. In others an identity with and commitment to those, "on the margin". The phenomenon of Christianity.

Ten years ago Bamber Gascoigne, best known for "University Challenge", presented on T.V. "The Christians". The very concept of dissecting and examining Christianity, is, in itself, an indication that society now feels detached enough to view it objectively. In the present case it was done by an educated, intrigued and uncommitted observer. He concluded after reading the N.T. and examining 2,000 years of Christianity that "I found it impossible to believe that a stranger, coming to the Bible for the first time, would receive from it any clear idea of what Christ or Christianity stood for...and yet I was able to recognise the sources of all the different Christianities which twenty centuries have produced." Sufficient to say that what he took to be a lack of uniformity could, by the same token, be regarded as the unlimited richness of Christianity: a product of the multi-dimensional Christ: "the fulness of him who fills all things." Our contributors this quarter reflect something of this great variety of Christian concern, motivated by Christ.

Currently, "leadership" is a "hot potato" in the Church. Alastair Campbell, in our first article, attempts to understand the nature and purpose of the apostolic ministry in the N.T. Church and today. Is it a trans-local ministry? Contrary to the received view, he argues not.

"In the world but not of the world" is a maddening maxim: easy to mouth, so difficult to apply. And nowhere more so than in Ulster, that troubled province. The heritage of James I and Cromwell has been a bitter one, punctuated by "Bloody Sunday", the Droppin Well and Enniskillen. Joshua Thompson, a former Secretary of the Baptist Union of Ireland, provides us with some historical perspective and the nature of discipleship today in "Meet the Irish Baptists."

The present crisis in our prisons is illustrated by a record population (47,000 in 1986), emergency early release, industrial action by prison officers and not infrequent riots. Where in all this is Christ, embodied in the prison Chaplain? A guest article by Bill Davies is illuminating, especially as traditionally it is the Methodists who represent the Free Churches in prison chaplaincy.

Lastly, the fourth in our series "Christianity and Culture" brings us up to date with current philosophical thinking. Peter Hicks gives us reason for cautious optimism that the concept of "God" may yet be philosophically coherent after all!

# Those Elusive Apostles

## Ephesians 4:11 reconsidered

If there is one text more than any other that has prompted the current debate about ministry and structures in the Church it is Eph 4:11 "It was he who gave some to be Apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service..." This verse might be called the charter of the charismatic movement, both challenging the concentration of ministerial gifts in one man, and leading us to look for the emergence of gifts long thought extinct. After so much has been written about spiritual gifts of all kinds, and these gifts in particular, it might be thought that there was nothing new to say, and yet in fact an agreed answer as to what they are seems as far away as ever. The five gifts tease us like a line of mountain peaks receding into the mist, the nearest fairly clear, the next less so, the next a mere outline and the last so indistinct that there are real doubts whether there is anything there at all. Thus we are fairly clear about teachers and pastors, hazy about evangelists and prophets, while about apostles no agreement of any kind exists. This is true both in theory and in practice, so that even in Churches committed theologically to their existence and importance, there is little agreement about the role of prophet and apostle, and no certainty who qualifies for the title. All of which is to say that it must be worth another look at the text, together with other New Testament texts, with a view to proposing another solution to the enigma.

It has been helpfully said, for example by Michael Harper in "Let My People Grow" that the fivefold ministry is that of Christ Himself: He is Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher. He is "The Apostle and High Priest whom we confess" (Heb 3:1): He is the prophet like Moses (Acts 3:22): He "came and preached to you who were far away and peace to those who were near" (Eph 2:17): He is the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4): and in Him we have "one teacher, the Christ" (Matt 23:10). These are His ministries towards His people, and through His people, His body on earth, these are His ministries to the world. The work of ministry for the preparation of which Christ has given these gifts is his own ministry of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, and therefore we can say that the Church itself corporately is to have an apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic pastoral and teaching ministry. The ministry belongs in its fulness to the whole people of God before it belongs to any individuals within it.

So much by way of foundation. If we ask what form these ministry gifts took in the church to which Ephesians was written, we have to admit that we have very little idea, but oddly enough the very gift we are most uncertain about for today's Church is the one we know most about from the pages

of the New Testament. Whereas those we are clearest about today we know almost nothing about then. Thus, there is no shortage of material about apostles. We actually possess the correspondence of an apostle and the only chronicle of the early Church we possess is entitled significantly "The Acts of the Apostles".

From these a vivid picture emerges, even if we wonder whether it is in the least typical of other apostles at the time. We have no means of knowing. We have glimpses of prophets at work, but of evangelists, pastors and teachers we know nothing in detail at all. So where evidence abounds agreement is least, and where we broadly agree we have nothing of substance to go on.

However, we should resist the temptation to think of these gifts in terms of the orders and offices of later times. There is no evidence that at this early date the gifts were identified with office or title. Equally we should not assume, as is often done, that the gifts were, or are, absolutely distinct, as if two or more might not be combined in one person. For the ministries to be distinguishable is not the same as for them to be distinct. The clearest proof that this is so is that Paul himself seems to have combined elements of all of them! Quite clearly we see him in the pages of Acts operating first as an evangelist, then as a pastor, then as a teacher, and it is hard to believe in the light of the argument in 1 Cor. 14 that he did not on occasion prophecy as well. Perhaps this was not as unusual as we like to think.

If we turn, as I think we must, to the letters to Timothy and Titus we see the same thing. The gifts are hardly distinct here either. Timothy is urged to exercise at least the gifts of teacher, pastor and evangelist (2 Tim 4:1-5): **"Preach the word..correct, rebuke and encourage... do the work of an evangelist."** It is possible that the gift given to Timothy "through a prophetic message" (1 Tim 4:14), and which he is to "fan into flame" (2 Tim 1:6), was itself the prophetic gift, while if anyone could be said to be exercising an apostolic ministry other than an apostle it is Titus to whom Paul says: "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town" (Tit 1:5) Paul never refers to the members of his team in terms of any gift peculiar to one person, and does not seem to have thought in practice that Timothy, for example, was a teacher but not a pastor, or a pastor and not an evangelist. No doubt each man was much more one sort of gift than another, as Ephesians 4:11 suggests, or perhaps one man exercised different gifts in different situations.

It is time to apply this to the present day, and to be personal. If it be asked what gift I have, I answer that my ministry also combines elements of all five. I am a teacher, but a pastoral teacher. I do not simply give lectures on Christian faith and practice. I am much happier teaching and preaching than doing pastoral work, but there are pastoral

situations I cannot escape. Public preaching must be followed up in personal encounter, and pastoral experience influences the kind of teaching that is given. I am not a full-time evangelist, but I must preach the Gospel in Church and in homes. I do not call myself a prophet, but in my preaching I sometimes bring the mind of God to bear on a situation. Indeed, it might be said that this prophetic element is what distinguishes preaching from plain teaching, and if you think of the difference between taking a membership class and preaching a sermon you will see the difference. Am I then an apostle? I would never claim nor accept the title, but as leader of a local Church I have to do things that could be described by Paul's phrase to Titus: "Straighten out what was left unfinished". There is a gift of leadership over and above the gifts of prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher: what are you going to call it?

Are we then turning Ephesians on its head and making it a defence of one man ministry? Not at all. But when we have stripped away all ideas of office and status, and above all the idea that certain tasks are reserved to certain people (the essence of clericalism and the thing that makes one-man ministry such a cork in the bottle), then I am suggesting that the task of leading a Church requires elements of all the gifts. All Church leaders are no doubt much stronger in some gifts than in others, and we should seek to set people free to do their proper thing, but we should not be surprised if several gifts are seen at different times in one person, still less feel guilty about it, and we should perhaps expect that the person who leads and co-ordinates the ministry of others must have something of each ministry about him. At the same time we need to remember that these gifts are not the specialist functions of an officer class within the Church, but the ministries of the whole body of Christ toward the world, so that while each of us will function more as one gift than another (at any given time), all of us by virtue of belonging to the body are willy-nilly involved in all the ministries.

Does this help us to see the different gifts more clearly today? I think it may do so. We know the need, and therefore we know the function. There are people who need teaching, pastoring, evangelising, and a teacher, pastor, evangelist is one who does what is needed. It is the same with the prophet: a person is a prophet if they prophesy, and if we stop looking for distinct offices and titles, we shall be free to praise God for the variety of His good giving to the Church. All of these are ministries of the Risen Lord Himself: all of them are the functions of His Church in the world, so in the Church we shall find these gifts operating through many different people. But what about apostles? Are they missionaries, Church planters, translocal overseers, or what? What is the essential apostolic function? If we seek to answer that in terms of Jesus Himself, we shall say that in relation to the world He was sent by the Father to set things to rights, and that in relation to the Church He goes

ahead as our supreme leader. If we seek to answer that question in terms of the church, His body, which also has an apostolic function, then it too is sent by Jesus and the Father to apply the salvation perfectly secured on Calvary and to represent God to the world. So what of those called in some way to be apostles? What aspect of Christ's ministry, what part of the Church's total ministry would those people be exercising who were acting as apostles? Shall we not say that their role too is to represent God to the world by leading, going ahead of, the Church in this ministry they share with the whole people of God? And is not this the calling some of us have? If we are to do this work ourselves and foster it in others we shall often need to function in each of the other gifts as well. even if we do not major in them. The conclusion this leads us to is that the ministry of apostle is that performed by the leader of a local Church, however he is called, its essence lies in his overall leadership and it will be found combined with varying amounts of the other ministries.

Alastair Campbell

## Meet The Irish Baptists

One hundred years ago the Rev. Charles Williams, the immediate past President of the Baptist Union and Dr. John Clifford, its new and distinguished Vice-President, visited Ireland and recommended that control of the Irish Mission should be transferred from London to Ireland. This decision may have reflected the Liberal spirit at a time when William Ewart Gladstone was proposing home rule for Ireland. It was certainly in response to the advice of Williams and Clifford that the "business ability, knowledge of affairs and large-heartedness" of the leadership in Ireland was "fully equal to the task". In Ireland it was received with mixed feelings of sadness, pleasure and apprehension, for it marked the end of seventy-five years of 'direct rule' from London which began with the formation of the Baptist Irish Society in 1814 through which English Baptists had initiated a programme of evangelism and education aimed primarily at spreading the gospel among Irish Roman Catholics.

When the BIS started operations there were five "English Baptist" churches in Ireland, survivors from Cromwellian times, and a clutch of ten indigenous churches in Ulster, including the Tobermore church in county Londonderry led by the formidable Dr. Alexander Carson. The Great Famine of 1847 had practically wiped out BIS work in the south and west, while the 'fifty-nine' Revival had enlarged and strengthened the Baptist community in Ulster. By 1888 the rapidly-growing church in Harcourt Street, Dublin, under the energetic leadership of Hugh D. Brown was matched by two Belfast churches led by William Usher and E.T. Mateer. Other

churches had pastors of merit such as Thomas Whiteside, Samuel J. Banks, John Dickson, Archibald M'Caig (who later became principal of Spurgeon's College). The pew matched the pulpit in men of gift and ability, for the denomination in Ireland also counted many people of distinction in industry and commerce among its members.

From 1862 - 1887 the Baptist community in Ireland had more than doubled. This growth accelerated after the control of the Irish Mission passed into Irish hands. Between 1890 and 1899 seven new churches were established in major towns, including three in Belfast, and ten new chapels were built. At the outbreak of World War I the Baptist Union of Ireland had developed a wide range of departments and funds to meet the needs of the churches. As well as the Home Mission these included a Trustee Corporation, an Orphan Society, a Sunday School Union, the Annuity Fund, the Sustentation Fund, the Northern and Southern Associations, the Irish Baptist College.

An enduring characteristic of the Irish churches has been their evangelistic spirit allied to a strong conservative theology. Towards the end of World War II the Irish Baptist Home Mission initiated an aggressive programme of evangelism through the churches, and since then the growth curve has been steadily upward from 3,909 baptised members in 1944 to 8,369 in 1986. Census figures confirm a similar growth in the Baptist community, now in excess of 25,000.

The same spirit of evangelism energises Baptist witness in Ireland today. Currently there are 96 churches in the Union. In 1986 they subscribed over £288,000 to Union organisations, just over half of this going to "Baptist Missions" with a staff of 31 working in Peru, Europe and Ireland. At the same time the churches support often substantially 182 Irish Baptists serving with other societies at home and overseas. This year "Baptist Youth" organised 7 camps, 9 BYE (Baptist Youth Evangelism) teams and 3 Youth-Mission teams (two to France and one to Peru) involving 200 people from 75 different local churches. The Irish Baptist College, transferred from Dublin to Belfast in 1963, and now a recognised College of Queen's University, Belfast, trains men and women for Christian service. The number of students has been in the high thirties for several years, and the ministerial training given by the IBC is acceptable to the English and Scottish Unions.

Although the main strength of Irish Baptists is in Northern Ireland, the BUI covers the whole of the island, and takes no account of the political partition of the country. Unlike other denominations the churches and ministers adopt no public stance on political issues and on the whole are reluctant even to discuss such topics in a church context. That is not to say that individual Irish Baptists are apolitical. On the contrary many would be convinced unionists, and others would be just as convinced nationalists. If, however, we differ in politics we are nonetheless united in the task of preaching Christ crucified



Now for something completely different

# HOME MISSION

presents

## “HOMING IN”



A 24 minute Musical  
It's challenging; it's exciting;  
it's for all ages  
Available as a video

May be presented as a live performance.  
For details of sheet music and cassettes,  
please ring the Home Mission Office: 01-405 9803.

as the only Saviour of sinners to our fellow citizens whatever their creed, race or political aspirations. Those with unionist sentiments realise that loyalty to Christ and loyalty to the cause of militant Ulster protestantism are not co-terminous, and they reject the ignorant and mischievous confusion in such slogans as "For God and Ulster".

The violence and tragedy of the past 18 years in Northern Ireland has not left Irish Baptists untouched. The writer can remember walking alongside an eleven year old boy at the funeral of his father, superintendent of one of our Sunday Schools, who was gunned down at his workplace because he was a reserve policeman, and on another occasion sitting with a twenty-one year old widow (and her six months old baby) whose husband, a leader in the youth work of his local Baptist church, had been killed in an IRA ambush. Such experiences drain the emotions and demonstrate the futility of violence as a way towards the nationalist goal of the unification of Ireland.

Irish Baptist work and witness have been affected more by reactions to the Anglo-Irish Accord than by the IRA campaign of violence. The AIA deepened the bitterness in an already divided community, enhanced support for Sinn Fein at the expense of the SDLP, gave protestant extremists a "perfect excuse" for resistance, and left both governments with no room for manoeuvre. This has increased pressure on our traditional apolitical stance. As one minister said recently: "Some politically-motivated people **outside** our Church would like Irish Baptists to preach "contemporary protestantism." In resisting this pressure he found that his church has wider acceptance than any other local protestant church. This has been true for many of our churches and pastors. The same pressure from some hardliners **within** our churches has had to be faced since the AIA. On the whole, loyalty to Christ and his gospel has not yielded to these pressures. Consequently Irish Baptists are finding openings for their witness in the nationalist community. Several churches have regular and in some cases extensive contacts at the local level. One outreach team worked in all but one of the 'republican' housing estates in a major city and had mission services in a border village.

Irish Baptists are not as closely-knit a community as might be assumed from this account of them. They have a highly developed sense of independency, and are suspicious of any centralising tendencies. The BUI is seen as " a voluntary association of autonomous churches" with no existence apart from the churches and with the chief function of a service agency to co-ordinate their joint efforts. They rejected, after several experiments, any scheme of ministerial recognition (though they support the College generously and call its graduates to fill vacancies) lest it should foster clericalism or restrict the liberty of the churches in choosing a pastor. There have been few signs of the Charismatic Movement taking hold in the Irish churches on

anything like the scale seen in English churches. While the churches still require believer's baptism as a prerequisite to membership, they are all open communionists. Their opposition to the Ecumenical Movement set out in a statement published in 1964 and amplified in **Ecumenism Examined** (Belfast 1966), remains unchanged, as does their aim to promote fellowship with believers of like faith and spirit outside the Irish Baptist churches and to demonstrate and strengthen the bonds between themselves and others like them who accept the final authority of the Scriptures in all matters of doctrine and behaviour.

Prior to 1895 the Irish Baptist Association, whose origin stretches back at last to the early eighteenth century, was affiliated (from its reconstitution in 1862) like any other Association with the BU. In 1895 the IBA changed its name to "The Baptist Union of Ireland" as the resolution put it: "To express our independent position and freedom from all external control." For many years now relations between the BU and the BUI have been informal and occasional with friendly contacts between the Union secretaries. Some Irish Baptists see the advantages of exchanges with Baptists of other countries, but most prefer to maintain the policy of non-affiliation with any outside body. That is not to say that our churches are averse to fellowship with churches and ministers on the mainland who are of like faith and spirit. Indeed for many years it has been the practice to invite a well-known Baptist minister as guest speaker at the BUI annual assembly in May. In the last twenty years such visitors have included Rev. Derek Prime, Rev. William Freel, Rev. Harry Kilbride, Dr David Milne, Dr. Raymond Brown, Rev Eric Watson and Dr Roy Clements. Currently seven of our churches have Englishmen as pastors and one a Scot, while a number of Irishmen serve in the ministry "across the water". It may be that in the coming years it will be possible to foster closer bonds of fellowship in Christ between local churches and ministers on both sides of the Irish Sea without the awkwardness and embarrassment that any proposal of formal links or official invitations at Union level engenders.

Joshua Thompson

## **Ministry to the Imprisoned**

The inspiration for Christians to exercise a pastoral care for those on the wrong side of the law comes from Jesus. His earthly life ended in betrayal and arrest. He was publicly vilified and condemned. In His ministry he showed compassion for all who were disadvantaged or on the margins of society. his actions in the Gospel narrative speak more eloquently than words. He touches untouchables. He chooses a hated tax

collector to be a friend and follower. By the side of a well he casts himself on the mercy of a woman others rejected. At his death, when all had forsaken him and fled, it is a condemned criminal who befriended him, and to whom he speaks words he spoke to no other: "Today you will be with me in paradise."

His own life and ministry inspired such caring, but we also have his mandate in Matthew 25:36 where those who visit prisoners are particularly commended. So Christians have always felt that ministry to those imprisoned, 'guilty' or 'innocent', is in the spirit of Christ.

The appointment of chaplains has been allowed by law since 1773, when an Act of Parliament empowered justices to appoint Church of England chaplains at a salary not exceeding £50 per annum. They operated on a part-time basis and their duties were to attend condemned criminals and preach two sermons every Sunday! Prior to this date, when jails were privately owned and run for profit, it is not surprising that there was no employment of a clergyman.

It was the powerful advocacy of John Howard, High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, which secured a more significant role for the chaplain. He had obviously been little impressed by some of the clergymen he had encountered who served as chaplains, and offers advice to magistrates when making their appointments:

"When the office (of chaplain) is vacant, it behoves magistrates not to take the first clergyman who offers his services, without regarding his real character. They should choose one who is in principle a CHRISTIAN: who will not content himself with officiating in public; but will converse with prisoners; admonish the profligate; exhort the thoughtless; comfort the sick; and make known to the condemned that mercy which is revealed in the Gospel."

It was not until the nineteenth century, however, that the chaplain and the church's mission within the prison system really gained prominence. Evangelism was seen as the answer to crime and so the chaplain was given a unique opportunity; rules and regimes were geared to the regular observance of religious exercises, by which it was believed convicts would be reformed.

Following the nationalisation of prisons in 1877, the Chaplain, together with the Governor and Medical Officer, is numbered as one of the "superior officers", and his duties clearly defined. The most recent Prison Act (1952), still states that, "every prison shall have a Governor, a Chaplain and a Medical Officer."

The Chaplain referred to throughout and within the 1952 Act strictly refers to a "clergyman of the Church of England". Though ministers and clergy of other denominations have always been involved in ministering to the imprisoned, it was not until 1863 that provision was made, when the numbers of prisoners belonging to denominations other than the Church of England warranted it, for the appointment of a

minister of those denominations. Since that time, in every penal establishment in England and Wales there has been appointed, in addition to the Church of England Chaplain, a Roman Catholic Priest and a Methodist Minister. The nomenclature has been changed during the last ten years so that all three now have the title Chaplain.

The Methodist Chaplain has traditionally looked after the interests and pastoral needs of all inmates belonging to the Church of Scotland and the other Free Churches in England and Wales. The numbers of those who register on entering prison as belonging to one of the Free Churches is small. Out of a total prison population of 47,000 in 1987, the figures were: Methodist 517, URC 38, Baptist 105, Church of Scotland 607.

Prisoners are by right entitled to be visited by a minister of their own denomination, and it is part of the duties of those officially appointed as chaplains to arrange this. Of the 400 chaplains, most are employed on a part-time basis. About 80 Anglicans and 14 Roman Catholics are serving full time. Considerable progress has been made ecumenically in the way resources are pooled and a greater common witness to Christ is presented in a situation where the division is not so much between Christian and Christian, as between believers and unbelievers. Chaplaincy teams have grown to include Church Army personnel, religious sisters, Salvation Army Officers and lay workers, of all denominations, who visit, lead worship, share in groups, all with the purpose of enabling those in prison to discover that wholeness which is to be found in Christ.

Institutions vary considerably in size, degree of security, ages of inmates and length of time being spent in custody, but a large proportion of the prison population is still housed in the old cellular buildings of a Victorian era. Recent prison disturbances and staff unrest have thrown the spotlight on the dis-ease there is within the prison service. Overcrowding and understaffing are the two main causes of the problems.

47,000 prisoners are being housed in remand centres and penal establishments designed to cater for 41,000.

20% will be awaiting trial or sentence, and these are usually housed in the worst conditions in the system.

Remand prisoners are often held in custody for undue periods of time, the average remand time being 55 days.

Over 17,000 are contained 2-3 in a cell intended and adequate for one, with no integral sanitation save a plastic chamber pot.

Workshops have been closed on economic grounds resulting in even longer periods being spent behind cell doors.

Inmates who are mentally ill or inadequate and should be cared for elsewhere, are being held in prisons.

Drawing public attention to these conditions, the Rt. Rev Mark Santer, Bishop of Birmingham, in a sermon to Judges, said:

"...because we send so many people to prison, and because

most of our prisons are so old, to sentence a man to prison is in very many cases not only to deprive him of liberty, but also to consign him to a life of stinking, overcrowded squalor, locked up in a small space with one or two other men, for up to 23 hours a day, and often with little purposeful occupation or education except in crime".

And a recent Social Services Select Committee said: "It is true to say that in some prisons inmates are being kept in conditions which would not be tolerated for animals." Add to these conditions and the problems which will be encountered in any human organisation, the difficulties caused by the competing objectives of Security and Treatment and the problems become acute. Some among the prison staff would see their task simply as "lock 'em up and count them", whilst others, chaplains, teachers, the probation service strive to open up the system and establish creative regimes, helping prisoners in the search for a better way of life.

Serious questions are being raised. What are prisons for? Is the present expansionist policy the right one? The government has responded to the growing crime rate and increased demands for tougher sentencing by embarking on the biggest prison building programme for a century - 26 new prisons by the mid 1990's, giving an extra 21,000 new prison places, at a cost in excess of £700M. Is this the right policy, or should greater energy and resources be directed towards providing non-custodial measures and community based alternatives? The hope of rehabilitation, on which the penal system has been based for two centuries is questioned by many today, but a senior Home Office spokesman recently warned that a penal philosophy based purely on removing a person from society contains "the same awful potential for abuse and brutalisation as did transportation."

What is the role of the chaplain in such a maelstrom? Does he see his task in pastoral terms only, outside of the structures, ministering on a one to one basis, conducting worship and celebrating the sacraments? Is there a prophetic ministry? If there is how should it be exercised. especially by one able to spend but a few hours each week in the prison? How can such a role be exercised by those who are full-time and therefore employed by the Home Office? can you have prophets on the payroll?

These are questions to be asked and individuals reach different conclusions. One thing, however, is clear. At a time when there is uncertainty about the underlying philosophy of imprisonment, and when many, in the face of escalating crime, clamour for harsher treatment for the offender and longer prison sentences: where people are already being held in negative and often de-humanising regimes with no higher objective than "humane containment", the chaplain must be among those who at least pose the questions. What happens in our prisons is linked to what we think and believe about Man. What answers we give to such questions as, What is Man? What is he for? What is wrong

with him? How should he be dealt with?

In my view the chaplain must be a prophet, called to speak the word of God to the prison situation. His presence should be a reminder that there is a spiritual dimension in human beings that cannot be ignored. He affirms the dignity and worth of every person within the prison, and challenges the distinction made between prisoner and staff, as having no recognition from the God who is Father of all. The value of a chaplain's presence in the midst of so much that is negative is summed up for me by the inmate who said to a chaplain: "I'm not a religious bloke, but I'm telling you, that if it wasn't for the chaplain this place wouldn't half be in a ...mess"

Of course there are Christians outside who will criticise prison chaplains because they are seen to be part of the system, in that they carry keys, sign the Official Secrets Act, sit on boards and committees. But the answer to such criticism is that we must be where people are, and there would be no entry to prisons without these things. The Incarnation is about involvement in the mess of human existence, not about keeping hands clean. It is about being on the side of the powerless, being the voice of the voiceless, even if it means being mis-understood, and one's motives questioned.

The present crisis and lack of a coherent philosophy about the purpose of imprisonment, when linked to problems of unrest, low staff morale, financial constraints, reduction of work and educational opportunities, create the feeling that nobody cares. Therefore, whatever else the chaplain does, as the official representative of the Church in prison, he must be seen as a **SYMBOL OF CARE**.

Caring is perhaps a generalised concept of the chaplain's pastoral work but an aspect he endeavours to express in his relationships with inmates and staff, and in a prophetic sense he helps staff restore or accept their need to exercise this role. Caring is essential for the healthy growth and survival of human beings and human institutions. To take other's needs seriously and to accept willingly the responsibility to do something about them, recognising the personal inconvenience and sacrifice that may be involved, is what caring means. Failure to care breeds bitterness and despair, and magnifies self interest as the only worthwhile virtue.

The chaplain, especially one whose roots are in the Church and community outside can be an **INTERPRETER** or commentator on the health of the institution. Many attempts have been made to slot the chaplain into the management structures but he will always be difficult to categorise: his tasks difficult to quantify. But the ambiguity of the chaplain's role and place in the institution should be a strength rather than a weakness. It means he has freedom across the boundaries prevailing in an institution. He should be able to speak to staff and inmates, interpreting what is happening within the dynamics of the prison. He belongs to a team, yet

experiences a measure of isolation. he has his own personal dimension in representing a world of faith, but maintains his solidarity with other members each of whom should respect the other's skills and contribution.

The chaplain must above all be a **SIGN AND CONVEYER OF HOPE** In a situation where many have lost that vision of what life might be, the chaplain bears witness to the unquenchable hope in the power of God to renew all things. In a community where there is such a sense of loss and rejection he bears witness to a God who accepts and embraces all mankind.

Lack of hope in any part of the penal system will spread quickly and will be reflected in these expressions, often heard, "You're wasting your time here, chaplain", "They're animals", "We should lock 'em up and throw away the key". It is to be found in philosophies which have no higher aspirations than "secure humane custody".

In contrast, the presence of hope has its own wholesome effects, helping to renew an individual's self esteem, helping as Christ helped the rejected Zacchaeus to see that no matter what he had done or what others said, "He is a son of Abraham" - a child of God. Especially is this true of those who will never be socially rehabilitated and who will spend their lives in prison. To such one must speak of the Eternal Hope, not as a sop, but by raising their eyes to a vision of life and its ultimate meaning that finds hope in God.

In this task the whole Church has a part to play. We are our brother's keepers. What is done in our prisons is done in our name, on our behalf. As we have seen, ministry to the imprisoned is an essential part of the mission of the Church. Opportunities for involvement abound. Most prisons have a system for appointing Prison Visitors, suitable people, who on application to the Governor of a prison, may be appointed to visit and befriend on a one to one basis a prisoner. There are Voluntary Associates who, under the direction of the Probation Service will visit an inmate and maintain links with families and friends outside. Victim Support Schemes need sympathetic volunteers.

Each year during the third week in November a "Prisoners Week" is held, in which Christians of all denominations are called to unite in presenting a christian view of prisoners and our duties towards them.

Prison Fellowship is an international fellowship of Christians who are committed to a ministry to prisoners. Members meet together for prayer, visit, correspond and organise after-care for those on release. There are certain statutory provisions set out in licencing conditions when people are released, but for those who serve under one year in prison, and for whom there are no statutory provisions, very little is done, and the work of voluntary organisations in providing support is vital.

Because present prison conditions make a mockery of the prison system's stated aim of preparing prisoners to lead a good and useful life, and fail to meet the most elementary standards of human decency in the Local Prison and Remand



**THE BAPTIST INSURANCE COMPANY P.L.C.  
4 SOUTHAMPTON ROW,  
LONDON, WC1B 4AB  
Telephone No: 01-405 4084**

**To the Readers of the Fraternal.**

Dear Friends,

I see that it is over four years since I wrote my advertising letter on the subject of "L for Liability" as part of an insurance alphabet.

The severe storm of last October brought to mind one aspect of legal liability which bears repetition. Liability insurance policies set out to cover legal liability for injury or damage. To be legally liable for the consequences of an accident it must be established that the accident was caused by negligence — failure to take proper care.

There were a number of instances last October where tiles or slates torn from the Church or Manse roof by the violent winds damaged neighbouring property, including vehicles. If the roof had been well maintained and only the velocity of the wind could be blamed for the damage, the owner of the neighbouring property could not succeed in a claim against the Church because there had been no negligence.

In such a case, as Liability Insurers, we would respond on behalf of the Church denying liability and suggesting the owner of the damaged property should refer to his own Insurers.

I realise, on occasions, embarrassment can be caused and Church members want to be "good neighbours" but acts of generosity or even feelings of moral liability are not insurable.

Yours sincerely,

M.E. PURVER  
General Manager

Centres particularly, greater emphasis should be placed on non-custodial sanctions for less serious and non-violent offences. There are a range of measures already available which could be used to reduce the numbers held in prison, eg. Community Service Orders, Attendance Centres, Reparation Schemes, facilities for problem drinkers and drug users, but the financial resources are at present insufficient.

Christians who take seriously Christ's Gospel cannot be indifferent to these issues or allow their views of penal policy to be formed by the more extreme sections of the media. Whatever criticisms have been levelled against Rule 1 of the Prison Act, which sets out the purposes of imprisonment as: "The treatment and training of convicted prisoners shall be to encourage and assist them to lead a good and useful life", it can never be said that it lacked hope in the belief that people can be renewed. There may be uncertainty about what prisons are for, what should be the underlying philosophy, but chaplains, serving in the name of the Church as a whole, should be in no doubt about their role. In the midst of so much despair and rejection, hatred and loss of purpose, chaplains express in Christ's name the care of Him who counted all men his friends and thereby challenged others to care. They help both inmates and staff to interpret what is happening within the prison community. They bear witness to the Christ who alone is the Hope of the world. Above all, by word and deed, sacrament and worship, they "offer Christ" who "makes all things new".

William J. Davies

Addresses for further information:

Prison Fellowship(England and Wales):POBox 880,London SE11  
4BS National Association of Prison Visitors:Mrs A.G.McKenna,  
46b Hartington Street, Bedford MK41 7RL

NACRO-National Association for the Care and Resettlement Of  
Offenders: 169 Clapham Road, London SW9 0PU

Prison Reform Trust:59 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU

The Howard League: 322 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4PP

## **Christianity and Culture:(4)Philosophy: Philosophy and Empty Deceit**

"See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ" - Paul's advice to the Colossians was doubtless excellent: it has been passed on to me more than once by anxious friends who have heard that I'm spending a fair bit of my ministry lecturing philosophy at degree level. But my experience has been that 25 years of study of philosophy has in fact built up and strengthened my faith and, in particular, my commitment to the foundational doctrines of

orthodox Christianity.

One reason for this is that the second half of the Twentieth Century has clearly demonstrated the inability of contemporary philosophy to provide a relevant basis for thinking and living. Though many contemporary philosophers would now claim that this is not the purpose of philosophy - for them its task is to think about thinking or talk about language - this has been the traditional aim of every philosopher; philosophy has been an attempt to provide a reasoned foundation for our understanding of the universe, ourselves, and our lives in the world. It has traditionally sought to answer major questions on the nature of truth, goodness, meaning and the like.

Contemporary philosophy has abandoned that aim. Empiricism, for instance, the dominant philosophy in Britain for the last 300 years, now tells us that not only does it not know the answers to man's deepest questions, but for the most part we shouldn't even be asking the questions. Philosophy cannot give answers. Perhaps the best known of Twentieth Century British philosophers is Bertrand Russell: of him Karl Popper wrote:

"The young Russell set out with a fantastically optimistic philosophical hope. He hoped that he would be able to show that we possess absolutely certain knowledge, founded on bedrock. And that we have not only a little, but quite a lot of it; not only in mathematics, but also in physics, and possibly beyond. It is also quite clear that after a terrific effort to show this, and after coming nearer to success than anybody before him, he had to face defeat. He turned into a sceptic. This is the history of Bertrand Russell, and it is a great tragedy. The great life of a great man who set out to find, not only truth, but certainty, and was honest enough to admit to himself that he didn't succeed."<sup>1</sup>

Another great Twentieth Century philosophy, Existentialism, reaches a similar conclusion by a very different route. Philosophy cannot provide the answer to the need of the human heart. The meaninglessness and hopelessness of the world is too deep and real for any philosopher to solve. "There is but one philosophical problem, and that is suicide" said Camus.

The cause of the collapse of modern philosophy into agnosticism and despair is basically theological. Virtually every philosopher up to the start of last century included as a presupposition to his system, the existence of God. This presupposition, consciously or unconsciously, formed an anchor point for all else. For example, in the area of morality, the question "Why ought we to be good rather than bad?" is answered with reference to the fact that God is good. Similarly, since the Enlightenment modern science was able to presuppose the dependability of our observations, and the uniformity of nature, because it was built on the belief that we and the world had been made by God; we are able to discover reliable truth about the world because God has given us that ability: and the world is consistent

because it has been made that way by a dependable God.

But as the Eighteenth Century progressed, God was moved increasingly from the centre of the stage to the edge: by the Nineteenth Century he was out of sight altogether. For some time thinkers assumed that it was possible to dispense with God, and yet still keep knowledge, truth, meaning, goodness and the like unscathed. Nietzsche was one of the first to realise that this was not so.

"Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly, "I seek God! I seek God!"As many of those who do not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter..."Whither is God?"He cried."I shall tell you.We have killed him - you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually?Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night and more night coming on all the while?..God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him."<sup>2</sup>

Sartre makes the same point:

"The existentialist finds it very troublesome that God does not exist, because with him disappears all possibility of finding values in an intelligible world; nor can there be any a priori good, because there is no infinite or perfect consciousness of it; nor is it anywhere written that good exists, that we ought to be honest and not tell lies; for we are precisely on a plane where nothing exists but men. I am very much vexed that this should be so, but if I have suppressed God the Father, there must be somebody to invent values".<sup>3</sup>

The removal of God as a basic presupposition of our world view does not just have profound implications for theology; it takes away the foundation for everything else in philosophy and life - all horizons and fixed points, value, intelligibility, goodness, truth, meaning and even knowledge. Most people today would take refuge from the implications of this by adopting various forms of relativism; we may not have absolute truth etc., but we can have relative truth. But, philosophically speaking, the concept of relative truth is parasitic on that of absolute truth; if there is no absolute, then the relative become meaningless. And when truth, goodness, value and meaning disappear, we are left with Camus.

Faced with this situation, the Christian philosopher is able to do something far better than retreating into anti-intellectual fideism; he is able to offer an alternative and viable philosophy, which alone can restore a foundation for



# WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

York House 409 Barking Road,  
Plaistow. E13 8AL  
Tel. No: 01-475 5065

Dear Fellow Minister,

I never cease to marvel at the generosity of so many people, when they are challenged to meet a real and urgent need. We may live in a materialistic society; writing a cheque for a good cause may be dismissed by some as "an easy option". Nevertheless — millions of pounds have been given to help meet desperate needs at home and abroad; and thousands of people have benefitted.

And yet ... the last financial year has shown a deficit in the Home Mission income — our Missionary Society and our Colleges are all appealing for comparatively small sums of money; and the West Ham Central Mission finds itself in a similar situation. Millions are given to the "Children in Need", appeal, to Band Aid — Sport Aid and all the rest; and, I imagine, a significant part of that has been given by committed Christians.

The question that I want to ask is ... "can it be right that specifically Christian work is begging for funds in the midst of such a welter of charitable giving?" Far be it from me to say that Christians should only give to "Christian" causes. It does seem reasonable, however, to suggest that, first of all, Christians should see that such work is properly and generously supported; for if the believers do not support it, then who will?

Perhaps there is something here that we need to think about, and talk about with our people. If we do not, then I fear that much vital work and witness will fall by the wayside.

Meanwhile, we continue to exercise our ministry of caring, counselling and healing. Will you, please continue your ministry of prayer and encouragement as we serve in the Saviour's Name?

God bless you and use you,

**Trevor W. Davis**  
**Superintendent Minister**

the basic ingredients of human existence. I am not ashamed of the presupposition of a Creator God who is intimately concerned and involved in the universe he has made; for it and it alone enables us to make sense of everything that is.

If your studies in the more specific area of the philosophy of religion did not get beyond Flew and MacIntyre's **New Essays in Philosophical Theology** which was published in the 1950's at a time when it seemed that most orthodox doctrines were in headlong retreat before the onslaught of pagan philosophers, you will be glad to hear that the past few years have seen a modest resurgence of confidence in the philosophical viability of quite a few of the traditional Christian doctrines and ideas.

The old proofs of the existence of God, for example, might have been expected to have vanished without trace by now, as a result of the combined attack of atheist philosophers who demonstrated that they just did not work, and of theologians who quickly started to point out that we did not really want them to work anyway. But in fact all the old arguments (including even the ontological argument) are alive and kicking, together with a handful of new ones.

In this area the most notable figure is Richard Swinburne who between 1977 and 1981 produced a splendid trilogy of careful argument for the philosophical coherence of the key concepts of traditional Christian theism.<sup>4</sup> Swinburne does not claim that he has definitively proved that God exists; what he has done is demonstrated that the existence of the God of orthodox Christian theism, with his attributes, and with the general sum of Christian doctrine, are philosophically coherent; that is to say, they make sense, and provide a philosophically acceptable explanation of the world and all that is in it.

Clearly Swinburne has not said the last word. The debate continues, particularly over issues like the problem of evil. But it is true to say that while Christian philosophers are still confronted with issues that we have not yet resolved satisfactorily, the theologians themselves have in no way established their case.

Not surprisingly, the problem of evil has been increasingly occupying the attention of philosophers of religion, not least in America. Among the many books and articles produced on the topic in the last decade or so, one of the most interesting is a symposium by a team of six theologians and philosophers, including David Griffin and John Hick, in which each outlines his own approach to<sup>5</sup> the problem and assesses those of the other contributors.<sup>5</sup> It makes good reading, and highlights not only the problems, but the range of possible approaches towards finding an acceptable answer.

One of the difficulties which besets discussions of the problem of evil is the very fact that suffering and pain are such emotive subjects; the man who watches his child die of cancer, and shakes his fist at the Almighty and renounces his faith, is hardly likely to listen to a reasoned theodicy. But it is, in fact, a logical problem that the Christian

philosopher is called upon to solve: and that, in itself, is far from impossible. In the last 25 years there has been no shortage of offered solutions, several of which, in my opinion, at least in embryo, provide a satisfactory philosophical answer to the problem.

The traditional way of presenting the problem is to point out that a God who is all-powerful could, and a God who is all loving would, prevent evil from happening in the world; but there is evil in the world; therefore God is either not all-powerful, or he is not all-loving. Most attempts at providing a convincing answer to this start with the premise that an all-powerful and all-loving God could be justified in allowing evil in the world if it is the case that the existence of evil gives rise to some Good that would not otherwise occur and that is so great that it totally outweighs the evil. Candidates for this Good in recent discussions have been human (and angelic) freedom, an environment in which human character is tested and developed, and eschatological recompense that makes it all worthwhile in the manner of 2 Cor. 4:17.

I, personally, am disappointed that the Cross and its implications of God suffering and redeeming evil have not as yet featured in current discussions; but maybe that is asking too much of philosophers! But the fact remains that, though they may do little to bring immediate help to those struggling with the emotive problem of evil, adequate theodicies are being put forward that provide at least the framework for an answer to the philosophical problem.

In a generation when the church has been finding a renewed confidence in the ability of God to heal and to do the miraculous, it is not surprising that Christian philosophers have been having a further look at the philosophical issues involved in the concepts of providence and miracle. Some of the basic work here was done by people like Austin Farrer and C.S. Lewis; more recently Evangelicals and Catholics in particular have offered useful defences of the possibility that God can be directly involved in upholding and directing events in his creation in such a way that we can retain both the dependability (and so predictability) of natural phenomena and the possibility that something unexpected can occur. Such a view entails a very strong concept of God's immanence in the world; but that is something that I would feel is both central to biblical thinking and philosophically viable.

In these and other areas Christian philosophers have demonstrated that belief in the God of orthodox Christian theism does not require philosophical suicide. Not all philosophy is empty deceit; like any discipline it can be used either for or against what we see to be the truth. If we believe that God has given us our minds to be used and that ultimately all truth is God's truth, then Christians more than any others, should be willing to use the tools philosophy provides for the establishment and defence of the faith.

1. Karl Popper, in Bryan Magee: **Modern British Philosophy** pp178-9
2. Nietzsche **The Gay Science** p125
3. Sartre: **Existentialism is a Humanism** p35
4. Richard Swinburne: **The Coherence of Theism, The existence of God, Faith and Reason**
5. S.T. Davis: **Encountering Evil**

Peter A. Hicks

## Book Reviews

**The Cross of Christ** John Stott (IVP, 1986, 384pp, £6.95)

This book was written as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Inter-Varsity Press, and as such it is a fitting tribute to that publishing house and all that it has stood for throughout its existence. Nothing could be more appropriate than that this book should be about the Cross which is not only the heart of biblical faith, but also the central theme of the many books which have been published by IVP throughout its history.

It is also a very necessary book, not only because there have been few major studies of the biblical understanding of the Cross in recent years, but because there is always the danger that the Cross will be removed from the heart of Christian belief and practice, that it will lose its place as the central element of the Christian gospel and be shunted into the sidelines of Christian discipleship. Even those of us who profess and proclaim the centrality of the Cross frequently betray both the superficiality of our understanding (revealed in inept preaching which resorts to the repetition of hackneyed cliches because we are unable to present the truth clearly in our own words) and the shallowness of our experience (which clamours for the power of the resurrection while seeking to avoid at all costs the fellowship of His sufferings.)

As we would expect from John Stott this book is written clearly, well researched, informative, stimulating, lucid in its argument, and penetrating in its analysis and exposition. It is a book which feeds the mind even as it warms the heart. It is undoubtedly educational, and will be of immense value to all who seek to proclaim the Cross, or who want simply to understand more fully the salvation that is theirs in Christ; it is also inspirational - grappling with this book will surely lead to heightened worship, more zealous service, more effective witness and more costly discipleship. Unlike some books (and sermons?) about the Cross this one does not stop once the theology has been explained; its final section goes on to discuss what it means to live under the Cross, and





# **Baptist Housing Association LTD**

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

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

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

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

challenges much of our complacency.

It is not the purpose of this review to enter into debate with the author - every reader will be challenged at some point, and will want to issue a challenge at others; nor is it necessary to outline the contents of the book. It is sufficient to say that such a full treatment of the Cross should be required reading for all those who wish to ponder more deeply the meaning of the Cross, and not least those whose task it is to teach or preach its message. Required or not, it is warmly recommended.

John F. Maile

**SPEAKING THE TRUTH** James H. Cone (Eerdmans/Paternoster: 1986, 176pp, £7.35)

The subtitle, "Ecumenism, Liberation and Black Theology", is a reminder that Dr. Cone is writing from the other side of the Atlantic where our background of European theology is matched by a theology born in slave conditions and New World aspirations, culminating in the rise of Black Theology and Liberation Explosion in the 1960's. The eleven essays were prepared for ministerial and lay conferences on both sides of the Atlantic and offer a clear understanding both of the problems and possibilities inherent in the preaching and pastoral care of brethren serving in Africa, America and Asia.

Professor Cone has served the churches since he was a teenage pastor and he now teaches Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

Each of the essays has a specific theme, but all of them spring from the deep conviction that there can be no comprehension of the Gospel apart from the belief in God's solidarity with the struggle of the world's poor and exploited. "As ambassadors of Jesus Christ" he writes, "Christians have no choice but to join the movement of liberation on the side of the poor, fighting against the structures of injustice..." He admits that his protestantism is "defined more by the faith of the African slaves in Nineteenth Century America than by the theology of the Sixteenth Century Reformation". He traces the growth of Black Theology as it arises, naturally, from Black Worship, as exercised by the early Baptists and Methodists in the Southern States.

The essay on Violence and Vengeance owes more, I think, to Malcolm X than to Martin Luther King, both of whom were his mentors, but he offsets criticism of Black violence in recent years by comparing it with the 400 years of "White violence" which preceded it.

Some books are written to arouse interest, others to stimulate thought or arouse feelings. Just a few are written in order to "stab the spirit broad awake" and Cone's book is able to do this, unless the spirit is already dead by reason of racism or inertia for, as he avers, "In Jesus' Cross and resurrection the reality of death has been encountered and defeated. But the full manifestation of that victory is still

to come, we must bear witness now to God's coming liberation by refusing to obey the agents of death".

I particularly appreciated Professor Cone's essay, entitled "What is the Church?" because he differentiates between the theology and the sociology of the local congregation; a balance not always easy to achieve since those groups most keen on one are often deplorably weak on the other. He quotes a very moving poem called "Listen Christians" which was circulated at a poor people's rally in New Mexico and I quote from it since it sums up all that Cone is trying to get across in his ministry:

I was hungry  
and you formed a humanities club  
and you discussed my hunger.  
Thank you.

I was imprisoned  
and you crept off quietly  
to your chapel in the cellar  
and prayed for my release.

I was homeless  
and you preached to me  
of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.

So where have your prayers gone?  
What have they done?  
What does it profit a man  
to page through his book of prayers  
when the rest of the world  
is crying for his help?

Walter Fancutt

(Unfortunately it was not possible to publish the above poem in its entirety. Ed.)

**THE SHATTERED MIRROR:** Reflection on being human, by John White (IVP 1987, 96pp £1.50)

**EQUIPPING YOUR CHURCH FOR TOMORROW** Workbook 1: Planning your Church's programme, by Fred Bacon (Bristol & District Baptist Association 1987, 120pp £1.75)

These two books are very different in subject matter and yet share a common purpose. Both authors are concerned to call their readers from tempting distractions to a renewed emphasis on proper aims. John White is a psychiatrist from the United States. He believes that through the great appeal which psychology has for the church, humanism has infiltrated Christian thinking and in particular our understanding of what it is to be human. He discusses humanistic and theistic philosophies on man, claims that psychology is handicapped by its failure to recognise the religious character of man, and

that the Church has been emasculated by its infatuation with psychology. He believes that psychology is of value, but that it must recognise its limitations and not attempt to offer a philosophy of man. Meanwhile the Church has to rediscover the centrality of the human encounter with a Holy God. The book is forcefully written, and sometimes relies more heavily on eloquence than argument. He does not mention any of the psychologists who do in fact treat faith as an important element of the person, and may have much to offer in a dialogue with theology (eg. J.W. Fowler). I think that White's concern is an important one, but his book is a personal statement written in a popular style. It may introduce the subject to others, but it will probably not do much to help their own thinking.

Fred Bacon's book is not only a well argued and scripturally supported plea that churches should move forward with purpose rather than being content to spend each year acting out a repeat of the one before; it also offers ample means to enable churches to do this. The book explains in full and clear detail how a church can implement a radical review of itself and its locality, identifying needs, formulating aims, adopting targets and monitoring progress. It also includes extensive appendices of sermon notes, study notes, questionnaires, questions and advice on interpreting and presenting results. Church review or audit projects such as this seem to be becoming fashionable and numerous, but I doubt if many can equal this one in comprehensiveness, flexibility or practicality. The project outlined has been well tested, has no subtle intent to lead churches in a particular direction, but is simply the machinery which a church of almost any character and denomination could use to enable it to grow in the way it believes to be right; and it seems to me to be machinery that could work well. An excellent, attractively written and easily understood book which would be of value even to churches which choose to use a different project. There are two other workbooks in the series, which consider the harnessing of resources and the improvement of organisation.

**Stuart Jenkins**

PAID TO CARE Alastair V. Campbell (SPCK 1985, 128pp £3.95)

This book subtitled "The Limits of professionalism in Pastoral Care" forms part of the New Library of Pastoral Care (General Editor: Derek Blows). It deals with how we translate the command of Jesus to love our neighbour into the instruction to become a trained counsellor with professional pastoral training. In an age where the trend certainly seems to be towards the professional in the caring role, Alastair Campbell points out some inherent dangers in claiming any expertise in caring for other people. For those who are unhappy or indeed unsure about this increased emphasis on "professionalism" and see the dangers of the pastor losing his own pastoral identity

to become "just another" social worker or counsellor, this book will prove a worthwhile read to bring clarity and perspective to the dilemma.

In six chapters the book seeks to understand the relationship between pastoral care and professionalism. It explores the concept of vocation and by separating the clerical role and the pastoral task, allows a reappraisal of professionalism in pastoral care. By skillful introduction of case studies these various strands of care are brought alive to the reader.

Chapter one starts with the comment: "Pastoral care is, in essence, surprisingly simple. It has one fundamental aim: to help people to know love, both as something to be received, and as something to give." Throughout my reading of the book I constantly went back to that comment to remind myself that it is in essence surprisingly simple. Jesus commands us to love our neighbour and that needs to be done within the spontaneity and freedom of a ministry which allows the healing power of love to operate.

I believe the book is well worth reading and certainly one to be added to "the minister's library". It is thought provoking and instructive which gives it a well earned place in the New Library of Pastoral care.

J. Paul Holifield

**A Life of Bishop John A.T. Robinson: Scholar, Pastor, Prophet.**  
by Eric James (Collins, 1987, 365pp £15)

In a well produced, illustrated volume, carefully researched and documented, we are brought into close touch with John Robinson. It is clearly a labour of love by a personal friend, yet objective.

Robinson will forever be in the minds of most people the notorious "Bishop of Woolwich" and enfant terrible of "South Bank Religion" in the 1960's, in spite of the fact that this period constitutes only ten years of his total ministry. From a distinguished Anglican background of clerics and scholars he was profoundly impressed as an undergraduate by Martin Buber's "I and Thou" relationship, and it is clear that this was formative as his theology developed, making it impossible for him to drive a wedge between God and the world, agape and eros. Theological convictions and social issues could never again exist in water-tight compartments.

After a Bristol curacy, a Wells chaplaincy and a time as Dean of Clare, Cambridge, he went to Woolwich, against the advice of Archbishop Fisher, but Mervyn Stockwood, his bishop, was persuasive! Coinciding with a revolutionary period in society at large, Robinson soon acquired the reputation of a theological radical. His appearance as a witness for the defence in the prosecution of Penguin Books over the unexpurgated version of "Lady Chatterley's Lover" brought him notoriety: in defending the sacredness of sex he was accused of condoning adultery.

As is well known, Tillich's "The shaking of the Foundations"

was the catalyst which brought about the fastest selling theological book ever: "Honest to God", which went on to sell over one million copies in seventeen languages. Robinson was trying to express God's transcendence without the mythological notion of "up there", in order to root God at life's centre. Perhaps inevitably his attack on categories expressing Christian truth was read as an attack on Christian truth itself, and many dismissed Robinson as a "death of God" theologian. Yet his biographer asserts that those close to him knew him as a man of devout spirit for whom prayer and worship were food and drink.

The last fourteen years were spent as Dean of Trinity, Cambridge, where, it appears, he got stuck, with no opportunity of advancement within the Anglican Church. He had rocked too many boats already! The "groves of academe" meant dropping out of the public eye, but it produced more noteworthy books and an appreciation in America which probably exceeded that here.

Inoperable cancer, diagnosed in 1983, revealed the heart and faith of the man in the quality of his response to it, reminiscent of David Watson. There is a poignancy in this chapter as when the dying John and his wife Ruth exchange rings in the Swiss church where they were married forty years before. It reveals also the emotions of a man who previously lived wholly in the intellect. The short closing chapter is concerned with what John Robinson might have been, given the opportunity. "Why was John..thus treated by the Church of England?" (Mervyn Stockwood).

One is left with the impression of a ceaselessly questioning theological frontiersman, possessed of a childlike quality. Left also with the paradox of a man who could be insensitive to people, yet sensitive to the world; critical of his Church, yet deeply loyal to it; radical in theology, yet dependent upon the liturgical tradition of his communion. Theological evaluations of Robinson are now appearing, but for an all-round portrait this is not likely to be bettered, and will surely become the standard "Life".

**M.V.J.**