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

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A MESSAGE FROM THE B.M.F. CHAIRMAN	4
THE CHURCH AS A HOSPITAL	4
Rev. Frederic Greeves, M.A., LL.D., retired Methodist Minister, formerly Principal, Didsbury College, Bristol.	
BREAKTHROUGH IN THE CITY?	9
Rev. Keith Sobey, Minister, Upper Holloway, London Rev. Irwin Barnes, M.A., Deputy Director, Urban Ministry Project, Ripon Hall, Oxford.	
THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE LAY PREACHER	15
Dr. David F. G. Pusey, District Secretary (South and South West), London Baptist Preachers' Association.	
SOTERIOLOGY OR ETHICS	21
Rev. Stanley J. Voke, B.D., Minister, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.	
MINISTRY IN QUESTION: A REVIEW ARTICLE	32
Rev. Philip W. Withers, B.D., Minister, Mutley, Plymouth.	
LEISURE AND THE MINISTRY	39
Rev. Donald G. Clarke, Minister, Palmers Green, London.	
TOWARDS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE BAPTIST HYMN BOOK	41
Rev. R. W. Thomson, Secretary, Psalms and Hymns Trust.	
SABBATICAL LEAVE FOR MINISTERS	42
Rev. G. W. Rusling, M.A., B.D., Head of the Department of Ministry, Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland.	
TEN DAY COURSE TO FRESHEN UP	44
OF INTEREST TO YOU	44
OVERSEAS NOTES	47
BOOK REVIEWS	48

A MESSAGE FROM THE B.M.F. CHAIRMAN

My thanks to the Editor for giving me the opportunity to send sincere New Year Greetings to all our members, and to wish you God's richest blessing on your Pulpit ministry.

In these days, when dialogue is so popular, we may find the place of monologue difficult, but monologue is the glorious privilege of the Herald and the Prophet. It is a humbling experience to be chosen to say "Thus says the Lord". Yet for this we have been chosen, and there are still many who want to hear. May His blessing rest also upon you in your Pastoral ministry; To-day there are many committee meetings, discussing social problems, many of which will only be solved by a friend who cares. You will have discovered that a caring ministry brings its own rich rewards, enabling one to win through in the most difficult situation.

In this year, let us all pray for closer fellowship amongst us all in the Baptist Ministry. I have been asked more than once, whether I consider our Ministry a Brotherhood. One thing of which I am certain is that the B.M.F. exists to help it so to be, so that the concern of one becomes the concern of us all. There is a loneliness in the Christian ministry that can best be solved by a brother who has received the same calling. He, who some would call the greatest Christian of all time, commenced his ministry by being commissioned by His Lord, and then in loneliness heard another say "Brother Saul, the Lord hath sent me". A willing heart would enable us all to translate the ideal of fellowship embodied in the B.M.F. into personal terms, and our Ministry into a Brotherhood. May our local Fraternal find many so willing.

One final word, please do not hesitate, during the year, to let me know your concerns, for we exist to help. In this connection, what a debt we owe the B.M.F. correspondents who through their pens foster this Brotherhood of our membership.

T. W. SHEPHERD

THE CHURCH AS A HOSPITAL

Paul S. Minear, in *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, draws attention to over forty analogies, metaphors or images each of which emphasises significant aspects of the nature and mission of the Church. Martin Luther added to these the notion of the Church as 'the inn and hospital' of Christ. 'Inn', of course, brings to mind the parable of the Good Samaritan, whilst 'hospital' is founded on Christ as the Good Physician. There are, I believe, several reasons why this analogy may be specially suggestive just now, not least when we think about some recent developments in medical care.

Let us begin, however, by thinking about the obvious fact that a hospital exists to *heal the sick*. I urge that we should

treat our Lord's own attitude towards sinners as sick people with the utmost seriousness. It is not necessary here to refer to the many passages in the Gospels in which that understanding of human need is expressed by Jesus in word and action. In a fuller treatment it would be necessary to explore fully the ways in which he treated physical disease and spiritual disease as a total sickness. It is, however, specially important to recall the contrast between his welcoming, gentle approach to those who were named, and thought themselves to be, 'sinners' and the severity with which he treated pharisees and scribes. He made clear that the one great barrier to his healing ministry was inability to recognise one's own sickness.

More obvious contemporary parallels to the pharisaism of the New Testament are to be seen in those who consider themselves to be thoroughly healthy because they are 'religious', 'moral', or 'orthodox'. Christians must therefore look first at themselves if they are to appreciate the full meaning of our Lord's sayings that he came to the sick. But 'pharisaism' may take different forms, for example the type of humanism (by no means characteristic of all who call themselves 'humanists') which recognises no evil other than ignorance, which refuses to recognise what Luther called 'the bondage of the will', and which takes as its motto: 'Man for himself'. Part of the mission of the Church is to help us all to recognise our need of healing.

What is this sickness? Its more familiar name is *sin*, but this word may in fact conceal from us the true nature of the human predicament. Was it because that was true in his own day that, so far as our records show, Jesus used the word 'sin' on only three occasions? As long as sin is understood to be only the sum-total of moral offences (individual and corporate) which have been deliberately and consciously committed, we are not in sight of our greatest need. Sin is basically, not a particular offence nor even the sum of them, but self-alienation from God, conscious or *unconscious* rebellion against God; it is man trying to be 'as God'; it is, in Aulén's phrase, egocentric unbelief.

If I may here assume this interpretation of sin, certain consequences follow for the hospital analogy applied to the Church. Firstly, this hospital exists to help people to know, love and obey the God and Father of Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit. We shall, surely, agree that all caring for sickness—whether we call that sickness physical, mental or spiritual, or (more aptly) think of it as always involving these three aspects—is the concern of Christians. I think we should also agree that all who are engaged in ministering to the sick, at any point of individual or social need, are, consciously or unconsciously, following the Good Physician. But what makes the Church a unique hospital is that it exists—or rather we Christians exist—to cure human beings of their truly fatal disease—living without God.

There is not space to enlarge on this. But it seems to me that the one grave danger that we face in this period of unrest, change and uncertainty in the thought and practice

of all denominations, is that of abandoning our true mission, even if that is accompanied by a very right and necessary emphasis upon caring for the hungry, the poor, the oppressed and others in need. It may have been true that some Christians in past generations cared about souls and neglected bodies (though such generalisations are dubious); it is indeed true that both Scripture and modern knowledge should prevent us from isolating spiritual needs from physical and mental ones. But the words of Charles Wesley are still true:

Wouldst Thou the body's health restore,
And not regard the sin-sick soul?

Secondly, the only concern of all who serve in the hospital of the Church must be healing. Healing involves diagnosis; it does not involve condemnation. The physician does not need to decide the degree to which his patient is personally responsible for the disease from which he suffers; the surgeon operates whether the accident was due to the patient's own drunkenness or to the action of someone else. This does not mean that the patient's own behaviour (including his psychological behaviour) is irrelevant for himself or his doctors. On the contrary, one of the characteristics of modern medicine is the extent to which a patient's understanding of his condition and co-operation in his treatment are sought. The classic Christian expression of this need is in Paul's word: 'You must work out your own salvation . . . for it is God who works in you' (Phil. 2.12f). Tragically, theological controversy and even Church-divisions have sometimes hindered acceptance of the double-truth in that sentence.

The essential need of patients and of those who care for them is *understanding*. It is this which must replace condemnation in the attitude of all who work in Christ's hospital; and it is self-understanding which must replace guilt-feelings in the minds of those who are being healed. Understanding implies neither moral indifference nor moral approval. I am not suggesting that penitence and a sense of personal responsibility are unnecessary. But judgment of human beings belongs to God. Feelings of guilt are no sure indication of true self-knowledge. All of us, at times, have felt guilty when we were not in fact guilty; guilty for superficial reasons as a way of hiding from ourselves our true guilt; and guilty so that despair and hopelessness have held us in chains. In his forthright way, Luther wrote:

'To teach that repentance is reached by merely meditating upon sin and its consequences, is lying, stinking, seducing hypocrisy. We ought, first of all, to look upon the wounds of Christ, and see in them his love toward us and our ingratitude toward him . . .'
and again,

'A contrite heart is a rare thing and a great grace, and is not obtained by thinking of sin and hell, but only by receiving the inpoured spirit.'

I once heard John Baillie say that the trouble about the Church is that it is better known for its faith than for its

love. To which one might add that it is better known for its condemnation of sin than for its healing ministry.

There is another characteristic of contemporary medicine which helps to fit the analogy of a hospital to the work of Christians in the Church. It is the extent to which patients are encouraged to help each other. The most obvious example of this is group-therapy. As I have talked with people who have experienced this, I have often been reminded of the surprise with which, as a very young minister, I began to notice how often it was young converts—young in experience if not in age—who were often able to help those whom more experienced Christians had not been able to help. In more recent years there have been many opportunities to see what can happen when we ministers are content to stand aside, as the psychiatrist does in a group-session. Too often we—or at least I myself—have assumed that only the professional minister can care for others. In Christ's hospital we are all patients to the end of our days; but from the beginning we are all called to share in the healing task. To use an analogy more familiar to us, every member of Christ's flock is both a sheep and a shepherd.

Because of the ever-widening gap between Church members and others, because modern education is helping young people to be more articulate, and because, in spite of our somewhat foolish insistence that 'the Church' is now separated from 'the world', most lay Christians are in contact with non-believers in a way that most ministers cannot be, the need for Christians to care for others at the level about which we are here thinking is specially acute to-day. However necessary it may be to set ordained ministers in secular environments (what we Methodists now call 'sector ministries'), we need to beware of a falling into the trap of clericalism, of assuming that our ministry is the total ministry, or (more dreadfully) of thinking of it as a more 'important' ministry.

I am suggesting nothing new, only that the main emphasis of all our Church-activities (including the supreme activity of worship), and (in particular) of our own pastoral ministry must be 'to equip God's people for work in his service' (Ephesians 4.12 NEB). That service is, now as always, to heal and to make disciples.

In a previous number of this journal I wrote about the need for Christians to learn how to talk with non-Christians (as well as with each other) about moral questions. This same need arises in relation to everything that belongs to faith in God, to commitment to Christ and to experience of the means of grace. How many sincere Christians are literally 'lost for words' if opportunity comes to talk about such matters with people to whom Bible and Church language are foreign tongues? It would be unjust to many such Christians to say that this is because (to stretch my analogy) they have picked up medical jargon without understanding it; but sometimes this is the truth of the matter. And who is to blame for this?

For many years, in several countries, I have taken every

chance to enquire how people made the difficult journey from 'outside' into the company of Christ's disciples. I could refer to instances of every conceivable type of evangelistic agency playing a part. But far and away the dominating impression upon my mind has been made by what I have learnt about the influence of individual Christians or, more often, of Christian groups who have met people where they were and shared with them what they had themselves received. Is it naive or too obvious to suggest that all our Church organisations, Bible teaching and groups of varied types can find new vitality as this concern becomes dominant? We need to work out in imaginative ways this out-going work of the Church, just as medical and social services are increasingly concentrating upon reaching people outside the hospital itself.

This leads me to my last point. I do not know how many Baptist ministers and members are being attracted by what is now often called 'non-Church Christianity.' I meet an increasing number of Christians attracted by this concept, though not all would take the extreme view that all Church buildings should be closed and all organisational Church life ended. One cannot think about many facts in the present situation—tiny congregations in large buildings, large congregations almost entirely turned-in on themselves, vast expenditure of time and money upon needless re-duplication of churches and the like—without having some sympathy with this prevalent mood. Nor do I imply that changes, perhaps beyond our imagination, are not required in our buildings and the use made of them, and in the present pattern of organised Church life. But, whatever new architectural plans are called for, a hospital needs a place in which to function and, whatever new structures the hospital may require, healing work needs to be organised.

Much of our present discontent is leading us to abandon our mission rather than to perform it better. It is indeed true, as we are so often reminded, that Christ is in 'the world', but we have deserted the Christian faith if we have lost belief in His presence in the community of believers. Urgent as it is that Christians should fulfil their ministry wherever men and women and children are, there are needs that can be met only in 'the hospital'. Do we not need to think together, humbly and fearlessly, about what those 'things' are? Most of all, we need a deeper conviction that along with all the healing of minds and bodies in which Christians can and should co-operate with all who serve their fellows, there is a healing which—whatever we call it—involves the bringing of God to men and men to God. The only validity in the often meaningless talk about 'the death of God' is that He needs to come alive to all. We cannot discard this mission because it is difficult, nor can we substitute for it some service, however necessary, which will be welcomed by those who do not recognise their deepest need. After all, they crucified the Good Physician himself; but that did not stop His work.

FREDERIC GREEVES

BREAKTHROUGH IN THE CITY?

H. G. Wood, who incidentally was brought up at Upper Holloway, once said that reading John Oman was like eating soup with a fork. The same analogy might be applied nowadays to leading an inner London Church in an effective ministry to the local community. In the first place, there isn't a community, and in the second, there is not an immediately discoverable church. Only once in four years' ministry have I felt that the Church, rather than a group, was present at anything. This is due mainly to a good proportion of the Church membership living outside the geographical area coming in from time to time and a good proportion of the Church membership living in the geographical area trying to get out and away from the asphyxiating environment for a few days at apparent random.

Faced with this apparently insoluble problem, I eagerly waited upon the ministry of the Rt. Rev. David Sheppard, the Bishop of Woolwich, at the London ministers' retreat at

High Leigh two years ago. He spoke in passing of The Urban Ministry Project organised by The Rev. Donald Reeves at Morden, Surrey in conjunction with Ripon Hall, Oxford. Accordingly I made enquiries and found myself the first Free Church Minister on the course at the end of June last year. There were five Anglican clergymen of differing traditions and two ladies, one who had been on the staff of Nairobi Cathedral, the other the wife of a Baptist Minister.

The course is notorious for "the plunge", the 43 hour descent into the life of London with only 75p in the pocket and strict orders not to cheat. This is the beginning of the course and so much of the course is related to this in an emotional as well as analytical manner. Alongside "the plunge" is the situation analysis which is a demanding and penetrating stocktaking of the factors which make up the life in the area in which one's church is set. It becomes quickly apparent that when one is cold-bloodedly analysing one's situation and resources that statistics, population, living space, etc., are less important than how people themselves see the situation. For instance, it was good to be made to pay serious attention to what local leaders thought about the role of the Church within urban society.

The city is a reflection of the distribution of power so if we want to change the city we must ask the question: how much control do we have over our own lives? More than that, we must identify the "social gatekeepers": for instance, who ultimately controls the housing of people and the education of children? What actual say do we have in the making of those decisions which determine the quality of life? In 1920 Louis Worth defined urbanism as disorganised, apathetic and anonymous. In 1960 Harvey Cox defined mobility, profanity, pragmatism and anonymity as the most immediate expressions of urbanism.

The Church's ministry must therefore be prophetic in the sense that it ought to see itself as the agent of change towards the well-being of society and thus think in group

terms as well as continuing a ministry of individual counselling. Without a prophetic ministry the latter is simply a patching-up operation. This was brought out in the "Issue Seminar", the time when we looked at a large number of groups with different values and tried to understand the problems which the groups face, thereby coming face to face with their culture, which was defined as "learned ways of coping with social problems". For instance, if a juvenile delinquent has problems relating to aspirations and opportunities, so do the police have problems of control, promotion, of maintaining integrity, of choosing people to arrest. The confrontation of police, a group of "White Panthers", a representative of Release, the organisation which helps minority groups to know their rights within the Law, and a West Indian Community Worker brought out the main cause of social conflict, the clashing of varying orientated cultures.

The whole question of Christ and culture was gone into pretty thoroughly in three sessions. R. H. Niebuhr's classic treatment of this theme was the basis for identifying issues and strategies. We grappled with examples in history and in contemporary society of the relationship between the nexus of culture and the understanding of the Gospel. Christ could be seen at certain times confronting, belonging to, challenging and transforming the cultural environment and its sources. Examples of conflict could be found in the situation of apartheid in South Africa and the current grappling with moral issues in this country, viz the Festival of Light and the Longford Commission. The identification of Christ with culture could take place, for instance, where there is an indigenous Christianity as distinct from others, for example, that type which is peculiarly African or, thinking of England, Northern and Southern. A highly challenging point made was that in seeking to transform, the Church was prone to set up a private culture. The Bishop of Stepney stressed that this must be a compass rather than an anchor. It was impossible to live in two cultures and thus in order to live in modern culture we must sit loose to the church's own. Coming from an Anglican Bishop this was most impressive!

The way out of this apparent cultural dilemma was indicated by theological consideration of the Biblical term "shalom". A very rich word designating that which is free and fulfilled. All that Jesus did crystallized in the setting up of the Church as a community of Shalom. For example, one can see in Holy Week an attempt by Jesus to establish Shalom in the city. He uses symbolic action entering Jerusalem on an ass; acts directly in the cleansing of the temple; engages in dialogue with the community, moving from defence to attack concerning the status and future of the temple, then suffers upon the cross in order to bring Shalom within reach of all.

The concept of Shalom was earthed by our reflections on "the plunge". Participants were asked to give a word which expressed their reaction to their situation in "the plunge" and their reactions to people as they, the participants, pro-



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ceeded on their way. It was fascinating how opposites were expressed here. Those feeling isolated thought they could see a togetherness about people, those with strongest feelings of pretence and unreality were impressed by the faithfulness and solidarity of the crowd. It was significant that every "plunger" had had some brush with authority. If the course did nothing else it certainly brought home to all concerned the frenetic attitude of society to all deviationists! We were encouraged to do something about these experiences: for example, write a script for broadcasting, present the total experience in a Sunday service; believe it or believe it not, the Baptists had this to do.

Towards the end of the course we were more prepared to get the utmost out of our project visits to such diverse centres of urban community service as the Notting Hill Neighbourhood Council, Bishop Creighton House, The Video Street Theatre, and Release.

A session on urban worship underlined much that appeared in the last issue of *The Fraternal*. True worship is ultimately neither didactic nor hortatory, it is creative and therefore whatever we do in our services must express and must highlight all our points of growth.

In our worship the sense of community must be evoked otherwise whatever is done is gimmicky. These thoughts were sharpened by the moving experience of dancing to and miming the message of "Surely" from "The Messiah". One was able to feel physically some small part of the significance of "laid on Him the iniquity of us all" and all abstract arguments concerning the nature of atonement were suspended as one appropriated personally something of the immensity of the love and power of the divine intervention at Calvary.

The concluding Communion Service in which we all shared highlighted the one-ness in Christ Jesus which is the lot of those who live in Him. Baptist and Anglo-Catholic alike offered the Bread and Wine to each other, held hands around the Table and said the Benediction together at a spontaneous suggestion of one of the High Church brethren.

The great impression that U.M.P. leaves with me can be summed up in the words of C. F. Andrews: "Love is the accurate estimate and supply of someone else's need". When the Church of Jesus Christ practises love in urban society with all its manifold implications the barriers will be down between church and churches, and church and society.

KEITH SOBEY

Keith Sobey has the distinction of being the first Free Church minister to participate in the Urban Ministry Project course. Others are now beginning to follow the trail he has blazed, Baptists among them. One minister has been successful in getting the course recognized as part of his B.U.

Probationary Study. Perhaps this article may inspire some more. At the moment I serve as Deputy Director of U.M.P. and shall be glad to advise any enquirers who may like to write to me at Ripon Hall, Boar's Hill, Oxford.

U.M.P. is a comparatively new body, born out of a conviction that ordinands and ministers of all denominations need special help in serving effectively in the conditions of modern urbanized society. It has been in existence for nearly three years and is steadily making its mark as a progressive and realistic training scheme.

Perhaps the most useful element in the U.M.P. programme is that from start to finish the participant is concerned with the realities of his own particular situation. We have all been to conferences which have inspired and stimulated us, only to return back home faced with the daunting business of trying to relate all we have learnt to our own very ordinary area of work. U.M.P., by contrast, starts off by requiring its participants to carry out a detailed and wide-ranging analysis of their own area, and this forms the basis from which they proceed to the subsequent parts of the course.

Only when this analysis has been carried out, getting the essential 'feel' of the area, not as it were, from the vestry window but through the eyes of ordinary residents, factory workers, local political leaders, teachers, social workers and many of this kind of person can the participant begin to understand what the real issues in the area are. Generally speaking, these are the things which threaten, deprive or sometimes excite the people in the area of which the local church is a part. Does the ministry of the church in any way relate to these things? Do people feel that the church is a real influence in the life of the place? Or is it largely ignored?

These may be disturbing questions, but they must be faced if we are to be honest about the church in urban areas. Last September, I did 'the plunge' and went off like the other participants on the course, with 75 pence in my pocket and the prospect of 43 hours on the streets of London before me. Perhaps it enabled me to a small degree to see the city through the eyes of a 'down and out' and I have to confess that some of the least attractive and welcoming of all the buildings of inner London were the churches. Most of them were bolted and barred as though the great purpose was to keep people out! And the dreary notice boards and posters they displayed seemed to be completely out of touch with the bustling life of the secular city streaming past their bolted doors. I suspect that this is how we are often seen by many eyes, as entirely irrelevant.

U.M.P. faces this awkward question and then goes on to ask the participant to consider how he might evolve a new project of Christian ministry centred around what he has defined as a major issue in the life of his area. This may be something to do with education, housing, immigration, racial tension, lack of community, or one other of the many features of modern urbanized life. The participant has to

make his own choice about this in the light of the analysis he has done of his area. Some have found themselves getting involved with other bodies in the area in the setting up of a Community Association, some have found that they have to share with others in their area in establishing an advice-centre for immigrants with a view to establishing themselves and their civil rights in a new and strange environment where some people are trying to exploit them and where it often appears as though the police decide to apply the law against them more vigorously than against white people. And at this very moment yet another participant is engaged on a project to help a whole village to think deeply about the quality of its life, especially in relation to the effectiveness of its Parish Council and the quality of the education offered in the local school.

You will see from this that the way forward is not always for the Christian minister to rush in and start up something new. If he is wise, he will take note of existing activities, he will ask himself whether God is not often to be seen at work among people who make no outward profession of faith, and he will ask how far he can identify and act with them. Sometimes he will do this on his own, sometimes he will do it working through his congregation, enabling them to fulfil their part in God's mission in the world.

Theologically—and U.M.P. takes theology very seriously and believes that all activity for community development and social change must be willing to be exposed to the illumination and judgement of the Christian tradition—all this takes us into the exciting quest of God's grace in contemporary history. U.M.P. tries to help people to recognise that grace at work wherever it may be, to identify and work with it and so to lead individuals and society into that liberation and fullness of life which is God's will for all men.

Three things need to be said. Firstly, this is not the kind of approach which will appeal to those who want to see quick returns in terms of pews filled and names added to the church-roll. This may be part of the ultimate result, but our thinking in U.M.P. is that this is something to be left in God's hands; we are concerned with people who want to do the work which is called for here and now for its own sake.

Secondly, the aspect of ministry dealt with by U.M.P. does not pretend to be exhaustive. It is concerned with a way of ministering in urbanized society and has nothing to say directly about preaching, visiting or prayer. But it is my firm belief that once a congregation gets to grips with society through the kind of project our participants tend to develop, there are inevitably new things to preach about, new people to visit and new concerns for prayer.

Thirdly, by its very title U.M.P. suggests that its message is especially for men in urban situations. But to a large extent we are all affected by urbanization even if we live in villages, and if some of the problems like pollution or violence are thrown up in sharper relief in the cities; they really affect us all to a greater or less degree. What U.M.P. does is to equip

a man with a concept of ministry and a way of working which would be equally valuable in Stoke-on-Trent or Stow-on-the-Wold.

Anybody interested?

IRWIN BARNES

THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE LAY PREACHER

"All preachers are equal, but some are more equal than others". The *Ministry Tomorrow* report and related statements have caused many to wonder if the day of the lay preacher is now over. Realistic appraisal of the way the churches operate suggests that this is by no means the case; the question then becomes: 'What kind of lay preacher do we want to encourage?—and can we expect?' The quality of the church tomorrow will depend to no small extent on the way lay preachers, supplementary and full-time ministers work together. In many instances men will fulfil basically the same function, and differ only in the degree to which they have been trained for it and the time they can devote to it. One trusts that demarcation disputes will not arise among Baptists, but rather a spirit of co-operation—each serving to the best of his ability for the common good. The co-operation may mean that ministers will need to change some of their practices (e.g. fraternalism will need to be in the evening), and any genuine increase in sharing the work of the ministry can come only when the ministers take the initiative, and welcome the lay preacher as an equal partner and in no sense *a priori* inferior in calling or ministry.

But who is a lay preacher?

There are at present four kinds of lay preacher who differ essentially in the degree they are committed to their calling. Table I *Classification of lay preachers*

(A) Men who preach in their own or neighbouring churches occasionally, but are not in the local preachers' association (LPA).

(B) Men who are in association with LPA but who, by reason of age, intelligence or ability, are not on the B.U. list.

(C) Men who are on the B.U. list (and of course in LPA) by recognition of their service.

(D) Men who are on the B.U. list by examination (which it is to be hoped will be modified but which at present is the B.U. Diploma).

The easy and haphazard way men go into Baptist pulpits by invitation is to be deplored (LPF working party report 1968), since this encourages the occasional preacher and does little to enhance the status of lay preaching. But the local church does have the liberty to call whom it will to preach, and relatively little can be done about this beyond challenging the occasional preacher to demonstrate that he takes his call to preach seriously. He can be encouraged to

join the LPA and study for the Diploma, but it is recognised that many such men hold onerous office in church or business and may be precluded from doing so. Indeed in some areas the regular pulpit supplies of our churches are from other denominations, and there is no local Baptist preachers' association.

The existence of the above mentioned groups is revealed by the figures in Table II, which show:

(i) The churches claim more (roughly twice as many) lay preachers (LP) than are in the recognised LPA.

(ii) Those preachers in LPA are mostly (2/3) not recognised by the B.U.

(iii) Of those recognised by the B.U. only 1/3 have passed examinations to qualify.

Table II (*The Baptist Handbook, 1970*)

	England	Wales	London	South London*	Notts	Berks	West Wales†
Returns of the churches	3731	379	353	34	63	80	65
Returns of the LPA	1969	133	230§	12	34	27	47
Therefore not in LPA (group A)	1762	246	123	22	29	53	18
LPA but not BU (group B)	1259	87	99	10‡	17	12	34
Recognised BU by service (group C)	438	21	50	0	9	10	10
by exam (group D)	272	25	81	2	8	5	3

* Southern and South Western Groups.

† Figures include 22 from English speaking Pembrokeshire churches, but may be generally confused because of bi-linguality.

§ Includes about 30 living outside the London area.

‡ Includes three training for the ministry.

In planning for the future this plethora of standards must be allowed for. The general reluctance to study suggests that relatively few lay preachers will become supplementary ministers. Even those who have the BU Diploma are likely to find the academic study leading to recognition far too great a load in the light of the demands of a secular occupation and perhaps a pastoral function.

Ministry Tomorrow suggested that churches would produce preaching elders. In fact (Table III) many causes have by their own standards no lay preacher.

Table III *The distribution of lay preachers in congregations (The Baptist Handbook, 1970)*

Number of causes	London	S. London	Notts	Berks	Pembs
Total	368	50	47	34	72
with 1 LP	64	10	7	8	12
with more LP	76	10	18	18	3
with no LP	228	30	22	8	57

The 6,500 members in S. London churches include 34 LP—i.e. among 200 members there is 1 LP; but several churches with about 200 members, and one with 400 members claim no LP. In my experience several preachers acceptable to other churches are out of favour in their own (with whom?—ministers, diaconates or secretaries?) because of differences in theology or over other issues in church life. The emergence of preaching elders seems therefore doubtful. Indeed, in my own LPA the recent low rate of recruitment is a cause for concern. Our membership (Table IV) is ageing and although this year's figures show an improvement the future of this currently strong association is not assured. In 15 years 60% of our present members will be 65 or more.

Table IV London Baptist Preachers' Association Membership in 1968 and 1972.

Age	BU Exam	BU Service	Non BU	Lay Pastors	1968 total	1972 total
under 20	0	0	0	0	0	0
20-30	1	0	14	0	15	22
30-40	10	2	20	2	32	36
40-50	10	1	22	2	33	25
50-60	30	17	24	6	71	60
60-70	26	13	13	5	52	44
over 70	5	16	4	3	25	22
					228	209

The demand for lay preachers will continue basically because the sermon (in spite of much adverse criticism) will remain part of public worship. Churches will generally be unwilling to close until circumstances force them to do so. If they cannot afford a full-time minister, they will call a lay pastor; if they cannot find a lay pastor they will use any pulpit supply they can get. The critical factor is the presence of a leader within the congregation to maintain the mechanics. It is often this lack that forces churches to group or close. Some churches are relying on aged leadership (60 plus).

In many churches the resources maintain the status quo and virtually nothing remains for outreach. A visiting preacher's exhortation can have little positive effect. Elderly members are generally resistant to new ideas, and some churches are largely composed of elderly folk who want a comforting sermon.

It is much to be regretted that many churches needlessly dispense with the oversight of a moderator. In much of the co-ordinating work discussed below he could be a directing influence.

In the operation (Table V) of grouped churches only one pattern leads to a demand for preachers, and unfortunately their role is seldom defined.

Table V *Some modes of operation of grouped churches*

(a) Each church meets every Sunday, often twice; the pastor takes one service whilst the concurrent one(s) are taken by LP—great demand for LP.

- (b) Each church has the pastor and the services on a rota system—a split rota with different locations for a.m. and p.m. (and afternoon) services is frequently encountered—little demand for LP.
Only rarely (e.g. Church Anniversary) do the members of sister churches commute to each other's sites.
- (c) Church transport, owned or hired, is used to bring the people from their own neighbourhood to the church. Any buildings retained in the neighbourhoods are used for Sunday School and Youth work. The commuters often feel lack of identity with the central church—little demand for LP.

It is against this backcloth of the present position and the trends which can be seen, that I outline the possibilities below. I am convinced that the future of the lay preacher proper (Groups B, C and D) is linked with that of the LPA. I believe that the LPA and the local churches should have close links also. Perhaps this is due to my beginning to preach in Nottingham where the LPA included the pulpit secretary of each church, and there was a viable preachers'/deacons'/ministers' fraternal. It goes without saying that the LPA and county associations should exchange representatives preferably at executive level. This increased liaison should not undermine the autonomy and independence of the LPA, although it could be a wing of the county association, and participate as such in the Association meetings.

In view of the strategic importance of the LP work, an area superintendent should be consulted at regular intervals. An L.P.F. working party suggestion of Lay Preachers' Commissioners seems to have been dropped, perhaps because the task was bigger than the men available could cope with, but their function assimilated much of the above.

In what follows LPA is used as an abbreviation for the co-ordinating group not only for convenience but out of a conviction that if others won't the LPA must.

The basic problem for the itinerant preacher is that his contact with a church is just enough for him to be concerned with their problems, but not enough for genuine rapport and mutual confidence to be established. This is frustrating for him as he then operates in isolation in a somewhat fragmentary way. For various reasons many LP do not want to take a pastorate, although those who have often testify to the increased sense of purpose in their preaching which rewards the additional effort required.

The LPA, by recommending to—or even imposing on—the church a pre-arranged scheme, or by co-ordinating the preachers booked by a church, can plan a sequence of teaching to the benefit of congregation and preachers alike. Some churches have welcomed such experiments but have usually lapsed into the old, easier haphazard system; The LPA ought to be vigilant and try to prevent this. (In such a situation a moderator would be useful.) It should be realised that this is a broader concept than a simple preaching team based on



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one church. It is rather a series of peripatetic teams of fluid membership involving many of the LPA members.

In some instances, as happens now, a man might do a series on an individual—church basis. He will no doubt find himself increasingly committed to a local cause even though he may not accept a responsibility within a team ministry. This may involve him in pastoral counselling on an ad hoc basis—again this happens now when there is little or no pastoral oversight. Such a role is analogous to that of a preaching elder, but the latter would be a *member* of the fellowship he so served, rather than a *visitor*, however frequent. The involvement at a level below that of lay pastor in our current understanding of the term often arises because factors of time and geography do not allow the acceptance of a call to that situation.

The outcome of closing buildings is, one hopes, a move to someone's front room where the church probably began. A preaching service in such circumstances whilst not impossible, is likely to be replaced by a talk followed by discussion, or perhaps a discussion group proper. Some LP already lead such groups and some churches are using their buildings for this kind of activity. This is not a typical preaching assignment, but its close affinity is such that the LP is probably as well equipped as anyone to take it on.

To fulfil the roles outlined above will involve a degree of commitment to the LPA somewhat larger than that of the average member at present, but it is hoped that he will rise to meet the challenge. The LPA will have to arrange opportunities for its members to meet and group themselves into teams, perhaps after a conference (weekend or half day) on the theme to be followed. It ought to arrange classes (probably of the tutorial type) to allow men to acquire some pastoral wisdom. The ministers' fraternal could also provide a helpful environment.

Post-membership training of LPs is a virtually untouched sphere. At best the LPAs sponsor lectures and conferences, but these are frequently on an ad hoc basis with little long-term planning. (The LPF conference and annual meeting are again unrelated.) It would be beneficial if regional conferences and local meetings were geared to a common syllabus (cf. BMM), preferably a practical rather than a theoretical one. Many LPAs require members to pass all or part of the BU Diploma, but this could do with a thorough revision to make it more utilitarian; e.g. the single subject Worship and Preaching could be expanded into several, worship, public prayer, sermon construction, illustrations and quotations, etc. The current method of examining candidates is too restricting on syllabus content; the open university, among others, can teach us a lot in the field of educational testing. The BU have a group working on this.

Table VI *The Changing role of the LPA*

- (1) Increasingly co-ordinate the preachers' work preferably in conjunction with churches, moving towards but not adopting a connexional system.

- (2) Increasingly provide opportunities for preachers to meet each other for training, etc.
- (3) Increasingly bring leaders of churches and preachers together to work out strategy at local levels.
- (4) Find itself doing much organisational work, for which in some areas LPA are at present inadequate.

In the short term the LP role will be much as it has been; the LPA will have the new look (Table VI). In the long term, where there are many fewer full-time ministers and local churches depend mainly on supplementary ministers and lay preachers for their continuance, the practices outlined above will be increasingly valid, especially the quasi-pastoral role of the visiting preaching elder. It seems probable however that the overall number of preaching services will have declined, and the local witness via home meetings will have increased.

Even though many village churches may have closed—an assumption I am reluctant to grant in view of the tenacity with which they hold on in spite of the odds—the LP will have a role to play as part of the plan of the continuing church. His role will be preaching as part of the local team or as part of an independent visiting team.

The secular and pastoral demands on the supplementary minister will mean that he will require the kind of support that the visiting preaching elder and the LP team can give. The occasional preacher, not part of a team, will have little contribution to make. This would of course be a spiritual rationalisation of the present situation in many churches with Lay Pastors who generally have one or two Sundays a month free.

Most LP and LPA conceive it their privilege and duty to preach the Gospel wherever they are asked to do so, and do not see it as their prerogative to refuse any cause (although they may make their personal views known to the church meeting). Thus the LP and the LPA will be unwilling to co-operate in any 'running down' of the smaller churches, but rather will be working against such a process. However within the kind of close affiliation of churches and preachers envisaged above, the LP and the LPA will no doubt endeavour to implement rather than undermine the agreed strategy.

DAVID F. G. PUSEY

SOTERIOLOGY OR ETHICS

We must start with definitions. One assumes that Ethics is still what it was when some of us soldiered on through MacKenzie—the study of what is right and good in conduct, and that Soteriology is still that work of God on man's behalf whereby he is freed from his evil through the work of Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit, to be remade in the image of God.

Now of course it is possible to have *neither soteriology nor ethics*. There are many like this today who live in what George Steiner in his recent *Elliot Memorial lecture* called "The Great Ennui", that sorry mess of meaninglessness in which people have been landed by various forms of permissive or pessimistic humanism. It is that culture, or non-culture that starts on the road with Nietzsche in asserting that "God is Dead", then picks up with Camus and Sartre in saying there are no rules of right and wrong in a universe that is absurd anyway, there is no moral reasoning and all that matters is that you 'act' and so substantiate yourself as a 'person' whatever your action may be; and comes to the end of the journey with Bertrand Russell that man is only "a nonentity at the heart of which there is nothingness". God being in the grave it is not surprising that man soon follows Him there, and in consequence life in certain of our art-forms is no longer depicted in romantic or heroic terms, of happy souls in sunlit sylvan glades, but decrepit people crawling through sewers, gazing vacantly into empty space or, as most recently shown, sitting with their heads sticking out of a dustbin.

Then we can have *soteriology without ethics*. There are some, alas, who only seem to see the New Testament in John 3.16 and never realise there is a 1 John 3.16. Theirs is a theology like that of the new minister whom the small boy liked so much that he told his mother "He gives us such lovely children's stories, and doesn't have any morals".

I never forget as a young man, hearing an evangelical brother challenged about a shady business deal which had involved another in loss, brushing it off with the words "That's all right brother—it will all be covered by the Blood". This type of evangelicalism that cries up salvation but falls down on ethics, does more to discredit our faith than anything else. Did not Paul in *Romans* quote Isaiah about "the Name of God being blasphemed among the nations . . . because of you?" This is not Christianity.

There is of course *ethics without soteriology*. The contemporary scene presents a sorry picture. At the start of this century moral philosophy was idealistic. It accepted a standard and a goal under the influence of F. H. Bradley. But it has gradually made its way down through the paths of G. E. Moore's Utilitarianism, the Intuitionism of Ross and Broad, the emotivism of Ayer and Stevenson, and under the general influence of Wittgenstein, into the situation ethics of Joseph Fletcher and now into the jungle of ethical subjectivism which is the result of the existentialist schools of Camus and Sartre. At the same time modern philosophy, enmeshed in Linguistic Analysis has become ethically neutral—indeed it has handed over responsibility in this field to writers of literature who after all can only reflect and then further fashion public opinion in a kind of vicious circle. The caption of the times seems to be that the Commander-in-Chief is dead and so the troops can roam at will. If God is defunct; anything is permissible.

The result of all this is the Permissive Society—against which we are already seeing signs of a backlash on both sides of the Atlantic. The effects meanwhile are tragic especially in the realm of sex. Nirad Chaudhuri wrote some time ago in the *Daily Telegraph*: "Even I, a Hindu, to whom formerly no Englishman attributed any moral consciousness, know that in the matter of sex, moral uncertainty is equivalent to moral depravity". I would be more inclined to say moral uncertainty *leads* to moral depravity, and not only in the area of sex. Chaudhuri draws an interesting parallel between moral trends in contemporary Western society with those of ancient Rome. As with Roman-Greek society we appear to have worked through all the ethical systems of Stoicism to Hedonism and found salvation in none of them. And like that decadent civilisation we too are haunted by a sense of weakness, emptiness and ultimate despair, and as Seneca wrote "need a hand let down from heaven to lift us up . . . for we look towards salvation".

But there is the danger of *equating ethics with soteriology* as though the one were automatically the other. There is the modern view that sees Jesus as a dedicated man in whom God was more active than in most, the "man for others". It sees the Cross as Love absorbing evil, the resurrection as man set free to conquer environment and human ills even by his technology. Man is now come of age and God is at the centre of all life. So evangelism is finding God in the neighbour, participating with a God who is already in the world bringing in "shalom". This I find is "a social happening involving the realisation of the full potentialities of creation". Now in this jungle of words there is an emphasis which, while true in the ultimate, has meanwhile lost the priority of that simple, essential and personal salvation which lies at the heart of the New Testament, and has replaced it by the ethics of the prophets. It has in effect put the New Testament back in the arms of the Old. Consider the following quotation for instance from "The Church for others" . . . "Each time a man is a true neighbour, each time men live for others, the life-giving saving action of God is to be discerned . . . the signs of the Kingdom and the establishing of "shalom". Here salvation is equated with ethics. The horizontal relation of man to man, if beneficent, has become the vertical saving action of God, and this arises from a false and unscriptural identification of God with man, from an undue immanence taking insufficient account of the separation of the Holy One from the sinner and the Creator from the creature. It fails to see that humanitarianism, however effective in alleviating the ills of mankind, in fact does nothing *in itself* to bring them to the knowledge of God. Savages, atheists, criminals, haters of God and Christ can all be good neighbours to one another when it suits them and I have no doubt the demons themselves have some kind of dedication to one another, else is their kingdom divided.

What then is the right order? It is that, in the framework of a moral universe, soteriology is necessary because man is a fallen being, but *right soteriology embraces and in turn*

produces right ethics. The Bible begins with moral order, with God looking at His creation and pronouncing it "good", because it both reflects, and exists for, that highest good which is the Glory and Will of God. Yet against this the Bible depicts rebellion against the Divine order both in the realm of angels and men. It is therefore concerned with men as fallen beings, separated from God, morally incapable of doing the Divine Will and so needing salvation in order to be restored and made whole.

Consider then the *Old Testament emphasis on salvation and ethic*. The ethic is there, from the beginning. Something more than vegetation made Eden a paradise and something more than nudity made Adam and Eve ashamed. Something fastened on Cain his guilt, marked Noah as righteous and Enoch as one who walked with God. Something made the king of Gerar hand back Abraham his wife, and it wasn't the Ten Commandments. It was, as C. S. Lewis reminds us in his *Christian Reflections*, something that was there from the beginning, found in Egypt, China, Babylon and the book of Job—that original moral law, the elemental 'ought' built-in to man as a part of the image of God, the "Tao" as the Chinese called it—"the Way the Universe goes, the Way things everlastingly emerge" (Abolition of Man) found in the Voluspa as well as the Decalogue. And any new ethic taught by Judaism or Christianity is not new but there from the beginning, the "agape" that was in the Holy Trinity, that original Beam in which the worlds were made, Love, eternally in God and breathed into the being of the first man—filled out later in Jewish law and made workable in the Gospel.

It is against this ethic of a moral universe in which the Glory and Will of God is the ultimate Good, that the Bible sets the Mosaic Law crystalised in perfect love to God and man. "Do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God". There is nothing higher than this. But because man is sinful, the soteriology must be there too, keeping pace, overarching and undergirding the ethic all the while. So Adam stands in naked shame before the Divine glory, but already Abel has brought a perfect offering. Before ever the Law was given at Sinai the Lamb was slain in Egypt, and with all the elaborate details of moral law that exemplify and fasten home the universal ethic, there are equally elaborate provisions of sacrifice for the pardon and renewal of those who consistently fail to keep those laws. You see, Israel learned great things about her God. First that He was a *mighty* God, a God of power, creator of all things, conqueror of Pharaoh and Lord of Hosts. Then that He was a *moral* God, a God of Law who demanded holiness and brooked no transgression. That was more significant. But when Moses in his deepest moment asked God to show him his glory—the inner essence of his being—he was shown a *merciful* God, a God of grace who pardoned sinners because he loved them. Mercy was, as the Puritans used to say, "his darling attribute". He had always been this kind of God. Indeed before there was law he had shown grace. Paul, in Galatians,

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To the Readers of the "Fraternal"

Dear Friends,

"... Come . . . sit by my side and
let the world slip."

The Taming of the Shrew.

Before the Great War a friend of mine achieved a prize of three leather volumes of Shakespeare which I am sure he never opened. For long they lay "to rust unburnished".

Fortunately for me my friend gave them to me just before the World War and I was able later to pass them on to one of my sons but this time showing signs of train journeys and of reading at odd times.

Back they came to me with more signs of wear when my son had passed through medical college and only this week the back of one volume fell off in my business train to Charing Cross. It was as if a worn scabbard had fallen away disclosing the blade with the "shine of use" still on it.

As the train drew through Waterloo into Charing Cross my heading quotation arrested me.

It is easy enough to attempt to maintain a status quo, to attempt to convince oneself that watchful inaction is a desirable *modus operandi*, to attempt to persuade oneself that there is merit in an ability "to stand and stare", to attempt to . . .

Such attempts at self-deception rarely self-deceive.

Of course it is necessary to relax but not to be lax. It may be pleasant to "let the world slip" but such slipping can induce slipping back—far better to try sitting up to tackle what is on the table than to let it lie there.

You and I both know that in business and in churches time cannot stand still. Problems referred to a committee are often decisions deferred.

Insurance decisions deferred can have disastrous consequences. Consider in depth by all means but **first** give us provisional instructions for revisions. Detailed decisions can follow later.

Don't defer—decide to act, then act!

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN
General Manager

says the law came 430 years after. After what? Why, after the covenant of grace made with Abraham and Israel and all men, on the basis of mercy from God's side and faith from man's. And the people to whom the law came in flaming fire were a people saved by the Lord not on grounds of moral fitness but of Divine mercy, compassion and purposes of love.

The passage of time served only to show the fallenness of human nature in the breakdown of the Jewish nation's ability to keep the moral law. This is the lament of the prophets—"which my covenant they brake, though I was a husband to them saith the Lord". The Jewish ethic remained as a powerful framework in which the people lived on a higher level of life than did those of other nations and yet which had, by the time of Christ, shrivelled into the dry and petty prohibitionism of the Pharisees who knew nothing of the love of God. Saul of Tarsus, child of the strictest Jewish ethic, echoes the cry of the honest Pharisee when he says "The good I want to do, I fail to do, and what I do is wrong. Miserable creature that I am, who is there to rescue me?"

This breakdown of the Jewish ethic is pinpointed in the words "*The law could not* in that it was weak in the flesh". There was nothing wrong with the ethic itself. It was perfect. What *was* wrong was that men were incapable, even in the most ideal conditions, to fulfil it, and so the ethic itself was unable to bring men to God, apart from the action of grace. Here we have the Old Testament pointer to where the accent must lie.

The light begins to break on an otherwise hopeless scene in the promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 where the ethical is seen emerging from the Soteriological. "I will cleanse you and I will deliver you. A new heart I will give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will cause you to walk in my statutes. I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts". Notice how God is here taking the initiative in saving action which in turn produces ethical conduct.

When therefore we turn to the *New Testament* it is not surprising to find the ethical coming to meet us in finer garments than before. The eternal ethic, the elemental 'ought' is there, embodied now in Christ and his teaching. Nothing is loftier in any moral system than the Sermon on the Mount in which is emphasised not only the practice but the spirit of God's law, the quintessence of which is in the words "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength and mind and thy neighbour as thyself". The last four words alone epitomise the perfect ethic. The trouble is again how can anyone do it? Man needs not merely an ethical philosopher but a saviour.

Any understanding of the New Testament reveals two things:

First that **CHRISTIAN SALVATION MUST PRECEDE CHRISTIAN ETHIC** if that ethic is to be capable of realisation. The Gospel while given in an ethical situation (and it was, else sin and repentance have nothing against which to

be measured) is given to those needing to be saved in that situation. I mention four things here.

1. *The prime purpose of Christ's coming* was to save sinners who by their moral inability had failed to keep God's law. He could have been given any name, but he was called "Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins". This purpose was stated again and again. "I came to call sinners to repentance, I am come that they might have life". "He came to seek and to save that which was lost, came to give his life as a ransom for many, came into the world to save sinners, was manifested to take away our sins; was sent to proclaim good news . . . and deliverance". And so on and so on. Soteriology first.

2. *The preaching of the apostles* was first, salvation. The early Christians did not go out and confront the Roman world with a new ethic much as it was needed, but with the Gospel of salvation—that simple message of Jesus crucified for sins, risen again to be Lord of all, who now commands repentance, offers forgiveness through faith in his name and gives men the power of new life through the Holy Spirit. *The accent was always on the Gospel*, the power of God to salvation. The implications were, a new ethic.

3. *The message of the New Testament* is primarily salvation. Like a great peal of bells there sound throughout Gospel and epistles, the great Gospel words . . . save, deliver, set free, cleanse, renew, translate, transform, Atonement, redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness, adoption, new birth, offering, sacrifice, blood. Newness of life, fullness of life, the gift of eternal life; and if I might suggest the whole message of the New Testament in one phrase it is this—"By grace are ye saved, through faith, not of works. Created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God before ordained that we should walk in them". Cut the New Testament anywhere and it bleeds with the life-blood of salvation.

4. *The balance of Epistolary teaching* is salvation proceeding to ethic. In Romans for instance there is an initial appeal to universal ethic in order to reduce the world to sinnership, then there is presented salvation through faith in Christ's death alone. This leads to freedom from guilt and so to an entirely new life in the power of the Spirit. All this is pure soteriology. Christian ethic only begins to appear in the latter part of chapter 8 and is only fully taken up from chapter 12 onwards "There by the mercies of God, present your bodies, etc." and so on to the ethical life.

The same of course is true of Ephesians where the most thorough scheme of salvation is set out in the first three chapters which again leads to the word "therefore . . . I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling". It is exactly the same in Galatians and Colossians. In the New Testament salvation emerges against the background of an ethic in which man fails, but gives birth to one in which he is given the ability to succeed.

Thus not only must *Christian salvation PRECEDE Christian ethic BUT IT MUST ALSO PRODUCE CHRISTIAN ETHIC*.

Now we must never lose the *eternal* nature of our salvation. We need to recover the reality of Hell and Heaven in this earth-bound age. We are saved with an eternal salvation. But what in regard to this life? Does the Gospel in any way provide the answer to the moral mess of our present situation? Does it work ethically as well as save eternally? The answer is a thousand times YES! And here I mention seven things:

1. New Testament salvation is *election unto holiness*. It is to eternal salvation and security, but notice how again and again where election is mentioned it has a *moral* end in view. We are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. We are chosen to be holy and without blame before Him. We are chosen and sanctified for obedience. (Rom. 8.30. Eph. 1.4 1 Peter 1.2.) Spurgeon once said that whilst the elect may not find their names written in Scripture they certainly find their characters there. Like the redeemed of the Old Testament, we are called and chosen to show the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

2. New Testament salvation is *salvation from the power of sin*. It is salvation from eternal death and loss, because it is salvation from *guilt*, which is the basic power of sin. When a man is cleansed through Jesus' blood he is freed from guilt. That is justification. But when guilt, the basic power is loosened and the sinner is freed through forgiveness, then he can be liberated from every form of bondage.

To be clean is to be free, and this is the great message of *Romans* which speaks of salvation as being "not under law but under grace", and so "sin shall not have dominion over us". Our guilt has been dealt with in Christ's death and once this is removed then sin's power in habit, attitude, character and relationships can be broken. The Gospel is God's power for salvation to deliver us from the power of darkness and translate us into the kingdom of God's Son. Men can be totally free from the reign of sin.

3. New Testament salvation is *continual salvation*. It is once-and-for-all. It is deliverance from past guilt and future judgment, but also from present daily sin. You know how the continuous tense is used again and again . . . "Those being saved" "the blood of Jesus Christ continuously cleanses from all sin" God is one who "delivered and doth deliver". The New Testament shows the Christian life as one of continual repentance and confession of sin and changing from glory to glory as we receive grace upon grace. This involves our being dealt with by God in ever new areas of life and being saved in all kinds of situations. Oswald Chambers once put it very well when he said the Christian life was one of "conscious repentance leading to unconscious holiness". When I was in East Africa, I found those in the revival were called "the saved ones", but when I spoke of myself as being saved they at once asked me what Jesus had been saving me from *lately*. They believed in *daily* salvation.

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4. New Testament salvation *involves the gift of the Holy Spirit*. It is not just an eternal insurance policy against hell, but the coming into us of a mighty person who implements in us the salvation Christ has obtained for us. This gift of the Holy Spirit is an indispensable element in true conversion in the New Testament. "Forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost". It was this they looked for as they did in the case of the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19.2. "Did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed?" And the Spirit's effect is not only charismatic but *karpos . . . fruit*, which as we see in Galatians 5.22 are *ethical* qualities, *character* qualities but also *relationship* qualities, for love must be toward others, and so with all the rest. We can all be saints in a vacuum, but we find ourselves sinners and learn holiness in fellowship with other people. And it is the Spirit alone who can produce these fruits and make possible the ability to fulfil the moral law of God. The flesh cannot do it. Paul found that out and he was an expert in these matters.

I know someone who is an incompetent accident-prone driver. He had a terrible time on the roads, and all the traffic laws which were the blessing of others were a curse for him because he was for ever breaking them and being convicted. His simple remedy was to lose his licence and allow another to do the driving for him. It is rather like this in Christian ethics except that we are not mere passengers who do nothing. The Holy Spirit takes over and fulfils in us what was otherwise impossible. He becomes in us the Divine Power. The external Law that cursed us, now becomes the inward law that brings blessing.

5. New Testament salvation is *the creation and perfection of a new nature*. As Paul says "Christ is formed in us" by the action of the Spirit. This is a great mystery, the language of Gal. 4.19 suggests the forming of an embryo and the birth of a child. There is that which is born and formed in us spiritually. In other places it speaks of renewal of the new man in the image of God, renewal of the mind, renewal of the Holy Spirit. Again it is said "God's seed is in him" which is God's sinless nature. All this is positive soteriology with ethical content and it is significant that where these truths are stated they are followed by practical and moral exhortations.

6. New Testament Salvation *involves the Lordship of Christ*, which in turn means obedience to his commands as we live in his kingdom. When Paul was first converted he called Jesus "Lord" and then at once asked "What do you want me to do?" Salvation for him was life under the Lordship of Christ in his kingdom which is an ethical order . . . "not eating and drinking but righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." So, to be saved is to be baptised into the Body of Christ, grafted into the True Vine received into the koinonia of the church where the standard is holiness to the Lord and love is the perfect Law. I found in East Africa where in the revival conditions akin to the early church largely prevail, the Gospel produced high ethic. In homes one would find the picture of a flag flying at the top of a

pile with the words over it "Highest". All conduct was tested against the one standard of the very highest. The same thing is happening among many of the converted hippies I found in the Jesus Movement in California.

7. New Testament Salvation is *a work of love* and there is no greater ethical power than love. Says John, "We love, because he first loved us". Love causes men to do things when nothing else will, and salvation by Christ, if it means anything at all, means being seized by limitless love. Love that makes us hate evil and desire good, fills us with compassion for others, impels with the purest motives, makes us endure all, suffer all, give away all. God himself is that love and when God saves a man he first rescues him from death by an act of love, and then gives him a life in which that saving love may be embodied. Again if I may refer to the "Jesus People" in America, the outstanding thing that struck me when I met them was the love that filled them and seemed to glow through them.

In conclusion I suggest that in this matter of ethics there are five great essentials. They are: 1 IDEAL, 2 ABILITY, 3 FREEDOM, 4 FULFILMENT, 5 GOAL. On these five rocks all human ethical systems come to grief somewhere. Only in the Gospel of Christ can they all be successfully chartered.

The *Biblical IDEAL* is the *Glory of God*, which is the perfection and honour of his Person and Will. Against this great ultimate all things are measured.

The *Biblical ABILITY* is the *Power of God* made possible and available to us by his saving action within us. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me within."

The *Biblical FREEDOM* is the *Emancipation of God* by his grace toward and in us whereby we act, not now by outward imposition but inward constraint to will and do the good pleasure of God.

The *Biblical FULFILMENT* is not the self-realisation that Bradley and others so vainly sought. It is not man's fulfilment in man, but in God. Here is fulfilment in perfect Love and an all-embracing Will.

The *Biblical GOAL* is the *final Vision of God*. There must be goal, end, ultimate reward. One of C. S. Lewis' most moving works is his *Weight of Glory*. He speaks of heaven as not only our eternal home and destiny but our great Reward. He describes the exquisite joy that can at last be ours when, like shy little children, we stand before our august Parent to receive His commendation, that sheer rapture, of being not only *with* God, merely *noticed* by Him, but *known* of Him, accepted, approved, and so eternally fulfilled. Paul felt this keenly. To see Christ and be like him was the end of soteriology, but to receive from him the divine accolade, the "crown of righteousness" the "unfading victor's wreath" was a goal worthy of all high moral endeavour. And that goal is before us here and now.

STANLEY VOKE

MINISTRY IN QUESTION: A REVIEW ARTICLE

The work of a minister in the Church in the seventies is not clearly defined. The man in the street, the people in the pew, and the minister himself are confused in their ideas about the role of a minister. We all understand the job of a doctor, or social worker; we see clearly the work of a warden to a community centre; and the leader of a youth club. But the work of a minister is not so clearly understood. Many conferences, pamphlets and articles have looked at the work of the ministry and in 1971 four Free Church ministers wrote essays on the crisis in the ministry. These essays have been brought together in a small book edited by Alec Gilmore entitled *Ministry in Question* (Darton, Longman and Todd, £1.25p). The contributors are Caryl Micklem, a Congregational Minister in Kensington; Ernest Marvin, a Presbyterian from Bristol; and two Baptists—Neville Clark and Alec Gilmore. It is one of the weaknesses of the book that all four represent the more liberal theological outlook. The considerable number of conservative ministers in the evangelical tradition are not represented. In the Baptist denomination, at least, this latter group are probably the majority and are either more certain of their role or less aware of the crisis. The thoughts of one such man would have been a useful addition to this slim volume.

I

Caryl Micklem paints a picture of his Church with complete openness. Finance is no problem as they have sufficient money from a generous congregation and a large letting of their hall. It is good to remove the matter of money from the discussion for it is very doubtful if men leave the ministry simply because of financial need. The stipends paid now are better than they were fifteen years ago even when you allow for the decreased purchasing power of the pound. Micklem turns his attention to the function of the Church and the Ministers part in it. When he became minister of the famous Kensington Chapel, the Church saw its function in two directions. One was to be a battery charging station for Christians. Second, it was to be an educational establishment for children through "a fairly numerous, well staffed" Sunday School. The crisis in this situation appears to be in the mind of the minister. He feels it his duty when preparing young people for Church membership "to spend time carefully making hair-line cracks of doubt in the smooth shell of childish belief in which the catechumens reach me from the Sunday School nest" so that in time these young people may hatch into mature believers. If the writer ever felt it necessary to do any such thing he would go to the root of the trouble and change the Sunday School lesson guides or the theology of the teachers. But this attitude indicates the real crisis for Micklem. It is a crisis of belief.

Micklem doubts the dominical authority for the Lord's

supper. He doubts the providential activity of God and the value of ordination and induction services. Perhaps it is not all that important how a man begins his ministry, but to doubt providence is to knock the bottom out of too much Christian doctrine. The crisis for Micklem is not really in the function of the minister, but in the content of faith. Plainly if you doubt so many basic beliefs you are not likely to be very certain as to your work in any age or period.

II

Ernest Marvin, however, sees the crisis in the ministry in more organizational terms. "The overall cause of the present ferment . . . is called secularisation" and this for Marvin is a right attitude. The world he says is the area where God encounters man, frees him and enables him to stand on his own feet. "And so" he says "God leaves man alone". Man has to learn to help his neighbour and to be helped by his neighbour so that there can be encounter between people, for Jesus revealed that in personal encounter is the Kingdom of God. It is thus obvious on this premise that too much time has been spent in getting people to come to Church. We should all be out in the world learning how to be a gracious neighbour. And in order to do this the Church needs re-structuring.

Marvin's aim in restructuring the Church is mission and he roundly declares that "the work of mission is the reason for the Church's existence, and she must be organized solely with that end in view". But the work of mission is said to be that of helping men to open their eyes to the Christ who is already their Saviour and to do this a worshipping fellowship may be necessary. Certainly the present mass of Church buildings are no help. Many of them, he says, should be sold and a few undenominational centres erected to make a base for the Church's mission.

The work of the minister is then seen as preacher and pastor. As a preacher he produces and teaches a sound theology. He is a trainer of the people of God and not a pulpiter. Marvin does not see this as necessitating one minister for each Church, but as a pastor he should be part of a team specialising in non-directive counselling. Marvin's restructuring may have something to commend it but his radical theology leads to an unbiblical view of man and of maturity. Man is mature when he is utterly dependent upon Christ and completely at His disposal.

III

Alec Gilmore entitles his essay "Beyond the Crisis" and points out that there is a crisis in society as a whole and the minister is affected by it. The social services have robbed the minister of his traditionally Victorian role. Pastoral work in the community has now largely become the visitation of the congregation. Educational methods have produced a questioning generation where experts are few and not to be found in the ministry. The whole method of communica-

WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

409 Barking Road, Plaistow, London, E13 8AL

My dear Brother Minister,

Once again I am writing to my brethren in the ministry to ask for their continuing support of the work of the Mission. I do so in the knowledge that our ministers have to cope with a large number of problems of their own, and that on occasions the number of calls made on the finances of the local church are excessive, to say the least.

Nevertheless, it is with deep gratitude that I am able to tell you that our Churches have done us proud once again over this past year. I have no crystal ball at my command, but a little intelligent forecasting leads me to believe that in all probability we shall have a record year once again when the Auditors move in at the end of March, and this happy state of affairs is largely due to the increasing support being given to us by the Churches of our own Faith and Order.

I dare not, however, rest on my laurels, and I am therefore asking you in your capacity as spiritual leader of your Church to bear in mind the needs of the Mission in a number of directions.

1) We need money, of course. The present inflationary spiral means that we need ever increasing amounts of ready cash, and I can only look to God's people to provide this. We acknowledge the kindness of so many Churches and ask for continuing support of the work.

2) We should also be glad if you would make a special point of asking your people to remember us in public and private prayer, and I suggest that you might like on a suitable occasion to devote a prayer meeting to the work of the Mission.

3) We are always on the look-out for young people who will give us six months or a year of their time working on our trainee staff. We provide board and lodging, pocket money, and a wealth of experience which could not be gained in any other way, and they bring to our work, enthusiasm and vitality, which is invaluable. I would stress that we have to be careful about the kind of people we take on for such a task, as the impact of our work on certain types of people can be catastrophic, and we need to ensure that our volunteers are deeply committed Christians with balanced personalities.

If you can help us in these, or any other ways, please do so, and meanwhile let me send you my warmest good wishes for God's richest blessing on all your own work for the Kingdom.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL
Superintendent of the West Ham Central Mission

tion has changed making the sermon a somewhat discredited method. The minister's own doubts are larger and last longer than in the past and there is an absence of any clear answers from the theological experts. The decline in congregations has removed most of the evangelistic opportunities and thus the minister is reduced to a back room boy.

There are however three problems for Gilmore and with characteristic positive thinking he sees them as growing points for his ministry. He refers to the conduct of worship, Church structures and the use of the Minister's time. Concerning the conduct of worship and preaching he urges us to be in realistic touch with the contemporary scene, inviting us to leave the study for the Television and the theatre, coupled with some theological reflection. We are urged to preach in pictures rather than in ideas and to leave issues open-ended allowing the listeners to complete the picture.

Gilmore argues that Church structures cause us trouble because we have to live with the old and the new as it emerges. But by trying to concentrate the Church on a few basic necessities—questioning the need for a full time minister for each Church, examining the use of our buildings, we might begin to inculcate the right attitudes which could alter the structures by the end of the century. The most practical piece of advice offered to ministers is to settle for themselves "what is his essential and effective ministry and first commit himself to these things". If he has time left over he will pick what needs to be done in the community and since the minister is the one man in the area who largely adjusts his own time table and has behind him a fellowship and premises he will be able to help considerably in many directions.

IV

Neville Clark's essay entitled "Servant of the Servants of God" really comes to grip with the essential tasks of the ministry. His analysis of the causes of the crisis is the most penetrating in the book. The minister he says is "deprived of traditional supports"—a church which ministers to him and an atmosphere of belief in society; "deafened by conflicting expectations", ecclesiastical calls to maintain the Church, social calls to relevant action, personal calls to follow the Lord to the places of His present work and, "deeply conscious of inadequacy and failure, the contemporary minister may become frustrated". And you can say that again. Some men relieve the frustration by attacking the Church, others define their ministry in some specialised role either within the Church (e.g. pastoral counselling) or on the frontier between the Church and the world (industry, education, social service). Clark's plea, however, is for the traditional ministry of Word and sacrament.

The Church, Clark contends, is "the visible representative of the new creation" sharing in "the ministry of its Head, proclaiming the Gospel, being the reconciled community, participating in the on-going redemptive mission of God".

And the function of the ministry is to equip the Church to fulfil these functions. The ministry is thus, a servicing agency and the minister the servant of the servants of God. This means the traditional ministry of Word and Sacrament for, whatever form the Church of tomorrow may take, it must conform to Christ's ministry and mission in the world. The Church must therefore stand under the Word of God in order to grow to maturity and it must be re-structured and re-formed in obedience to the Gospel.

It is a great step forward to remove the element of role confusion in the work of the ministry but even then many will feel the whole thing fails to touch reality. Preaching certainly has its difficulties and perhaps more so today than in most ages. The great gulf that separates the Biblical world from the modern world is hard to bridge. Dialogue, participation, etc., seem more attractive to some; but only because they mistake the aim of preaching. A sermon is not primarily to provide truth or knowledge or even guidance. A sermon prepares the way for a confrontation between God and his people. The work of the preacher is to "re-tell the story, in such wise that the depths of the contemporary situation are exposed and the hearers are brought to the startled recognition that they are on the stage". He will seek to translate his language into modern thought forms and thus to illuminate human experience and engage the human will. The work of pastoring is simply an extension of the ministry of the Word. The pastor takes the Word from the pulpit into the home and from the crowd to the individual. The minister visiting is still a Minister of the Word.

V

Plainly then the function of the minister is inextricably bound up with the function of the Church. The minister exists for the benefit of the Church, to aid it in its tasks. And the Church exists to worship—that is its basic work; to witness to its Lord in both word and deed; and to help its members grow in Christlikeness. There may be other purposes but they are all derivative from worship, witness and maturing. In all three the minister has an important part to play. The minister is the person called by God for this work. It is better if he is trained, acceptable to society and to other Christian communities; but these are very subordinate to his calling from God. God through the Spirit of Christ calls and equips a person for the work of ministry.

In worship the minister's responsibilities are clearest. He is responsible for the arranging and, most often, the conduct of worship. His preaching should act as a bridge across which the spirit of Christ may walk into receptive and responsive hearts. Sometimes his preaching will be evangelistic and sometimes didactic; but always it will seek to glorify Christ. Some men will use their dramatic gifts to proclaim the good news and some will always do it verbally. Since the worship of God through His Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit is the highest, noblest, and most satisfying

activity of which the human spirit is capable, the conduct and arrangement of worship have immense importance and significance. The world may not recognize this, may even think it an irrelevance, but the minister will gain his resources from God through the Scriptures, prayer and his congregation.

Witness to the Lord Christ has traditionally been done by word of mouth or in print. And no doubt that is still the basic method. Occasionally the minister will get an opportunity to speak a word for Christ to the pagan. Such opportunities come at School Assemblies, at marriages and at funerals. More often the witness of the Church in word must be carried out by the members in their own spheres of work, living and leisure. The work of the minister is to train his fellow members to witness effectively. The tragedy is that so few ministers know anything about the techniques of polite, personal Christian witnessing.

Witness must also be by deed. Jesus taught and healed; we must do the same. We are presented with two ways of doing this. One is to urge our members to join the Lions Club, the Guild of Social Service, the W.R.V.S. or any other philanthropic agency. Political action, Trade Union or Professional body work comes in here. In this way the specifically Christian contribution is lost; it is buried like the leaven in the loaf. The other method is for the local Church to choose one or two areas of social need—a play group, shoppers' creche, a Day Centre for the mentally ill or for elderly people, a home for senior citizens—and seek to meet those needs. If the first way is adopted the minister, as minister, has very little to do, although as a Christian he may feel it right to play his part. If the second way is adopted then the minister acts as inspirer, encourager, helper. Probably a Church should adopt both methods.

In the work of aiding Christian people to maturity the minister has a unique work. A few members may occasionally help, but mostly his preaching and pastoring seek to present each man perfect before God. The minister is the adjutant to the Holy Spirit whose work it is. Thus in times of illness, death, trouble or anxiety the minister visits and counsels to aid the believer appropriate the riches of Christ's grace. The minister does not operate a general counselling service to all because he is not qualified to do so and because he has other work to do, namely, helping Christians grow more like Christ.

The minister then is called by God to arrange the worship, help in the witness and aid Christian growth. The world may think this pointless; even the Church does not prize it as it should; but God calls us to it and values it highly in the work of his kingdom. These tasks are more prized by God than is the doctor's work of caring for man's body, or the psychiatrist's work of caring for man's mind, or the social workers caring for man's personal environment. It is the noblest work to which a man may be called. "If God has called you to be a minister: do not stoop to be a King".

PHILIP W. WITHERS

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LEISURE AND THE MINISTRY

At a time when the five-day working week is the norm, a consideration of the number of hours worked by the Baptist minister would seem to be worth-while. This article is concerned with the leisure hours spent by the minister, and his or her attitude towards leisure activities. Kenneth Roberts in his book entitled *Leisure* discusses the difficulty of defining leisure, because the concept of leisure has meant different things to different people. He defines it negatively. "Leisure time can be defined as time that is not obligated, and leisure activities can be defined as activities that are non-obligatory".

Leisure for some ministers is almost a dirty word. For them it can have no place in the life of one who has committed himself or herself to what we call "full-time" service in the Christian ministry. Thus, apart from sleep and meals their work goes on round the year. Others do appreciate the need for leisure, but they say that they can never find the time for it. For them a regular day "off" is impossible, and a few hours snatched here and there are the most they ever achieve. Those who do plan a time-table which includes leisure hours make the provision that those hours of relaxation are a luxury, and can become expendable.

I have discovered all these attitudes in my fourteen years as a Baptist minister, partly by speaking with my colleagues and partly by visiting their homes. "Did Jesus take a regular day off?" and "You try to have a free day with my programme and deacons!" have been two of the choicest comments I have heard spoken on the subject. All of which leads me to conclude that we need to consider leisure much more than we have done hitherto. We need to re-think the number of hours we work; the time-tables we set ourselves; and the conditions in which we work. Mental and physical breakdown, early death and general dissatisfaction and weariness can all, to varying degrees, be attributable to the unimportance we ministers give to leisure.

Let us re-think our hours of work. We tend to equate our commitment to Jesus Christ with an eighteen hour day and a seven day week. The result is we ruin much of what we are trying to attempt. Ernest Hemingway, the American author, once said to Marlene Dietrich, "Not all movement is action". Perpetual busyness is not the same thing as effective work, although we try to convince ourselves it is. Well meaning leaders of meetings say to audiences and congregations "It's very good of the minister to come along when we all know how busy he is", and it is comforting, perhaps, to us. However, such sentiments merely re-inforce this erroneous idea we have, and which some advertise on posters and in magazines, that we are available for, and capable of, work twenty-four hours in the day. All Christians, whether ministers or laymen, should be willing to help and work in a real emergency, but the bulk of our work can be fitted into a sensible time-table.

A balanced time-table is essential. In the two churches

where I have served, I have always insisted on, and happily so have the churches, a regular free day in the week. For the family man Saturday would seem to be the ideal day. The children are home, and one can relax with the family. The question immediately rises in our minds about weddings, anniversaries, inductions and garden parties that occur on Saturdays. Of course one attends, but I have no conscience about taking some other time in lieu of that worked on a Saturday. A free Saturday entails getting the preparation for Sunday finished by Friday, which is a good discipline in itself! Many ministers use Monday as their free day, but I have never found this satisfactory. One discovers needs on Sunday which must be dealt with fairly quickly, and Fraternal are often held on Mondays. There are some who regard Fraternal as part of their leisure activities. However, whilst I love my fellow ministers I have always considered such gatherings as "work"!

During the week we try, as a family, to keep tea-time, and the hours either side of tea-time, free. This ensures that for some part of the day we are together in the house as a family. I also try to keep to another "unofficial" rule. I never plan a week in which I am out of the house every evening from Monday to Friday. Early on in my ministry I gave up telephoning ministers at home in the evening, because they were out regularly till ten or even eleven o'clock. I pity the wives married to such ministers!

The time-table I have outlined enables me to work more effectively and to be fair to my family. One day someone must write a thesis on ministers' families, because then we might discover how we neglect them. We often forget that our personal disregard for leisure is nothing short of cruel to our families. We must never interpret the willingness of our families to release us for evening work as justification for exploiting that willingness. We ministers often preach about the unwanted and uncared for children of neglectful and greedy parents, but how often do we neglect the family that lives at the Manse? When a son or daughter of the Manse wishes to enter some form of Christian service, one usually discovers a happy and loving home. Yet how often do we discover that the children of the minister have rejected all that their minister father believes in and holds dear?

The conditions in which we work will vary a great deal according to circumstances. For four years I had a study at home, then circumstances made this impossible, and for the next four years I worked at the church. In my present pastorate I chose to work at the church. I vastly prefer such an arrangement, and I believe it helps one to organise the week in a better way. With a study at home leisure and work merge into a common life, and I found this to be fatal to discipline and time-table alike! It is sometimes annoying to have all one's books and equipment at the church. However, to consider the Manse as a home for the family, and not an extension of the church premises does wonders for a right attitude to leisure.

Summer holidays are an essential part of our leisure

activities. Ministers lead church parties to the Holy Land and other places of beauty and interest. They also take part in conventions and conferences in lovely country and seaside settings. These are valuable services that the minister can perform, but if such activities are the only kind of holiday he or she undertakes, I query whether they can be the real "break" the minister needs. Here again we seem to be happy to merge our work and our leisure into one, and I do not see this as a good thing. My summer holidays have always been to places where no-one knows I am the minister, and where I can forget church routine.

Perhaps leisure has been squeezed out of our life because we have become mesmerised by the word "vocation". We are called to our work as ministers we say, whereas others apply for jobs. This is the conception people have, and I do not think it is a helpful one. I have always considered it strange that God calls ministers, missionaries and nurses, but clerks, salesmen and engineers apply for their jobs. Of course, I feel called to the work I do, but then I have discovered the calling of God in all the work I have undertaken, which has included National Service and the world of furnishing. To believe anything else makes the ministry into a separate, God-favoured life, which is an idea that Baptists surely repudiate. If only we could think of the ministry as a job it would help us enormously. A job involves disciplines, times to commence and finish, a time scale into which one has to fit the responsibilities one has, and a time for leisure. We tend to think of a vocation as being perpetually on call, where meals and sleep have to be slotted in where they can without even a consideration of leisure.

In considering the ministry of Jesus one cannot fail to be impressed by His balanced life. He was effective because He was healthy in body and mind. The home of Mary and Martha, the friendship of the disciples, His awareness of the natural world, all these contributed to those hours when He relaxed and was recreated. We attempt to follow Him in our work, our worship and our witness—have we forgotten, perhaps, to follow Him in our leisure?

DONALD G. CLARKE

TOWARDS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE BAPTIST HYMN BOOK

Early in 1972 the Psalms and Hymns Trustees, the body responsible for Baptist hymnals (and whose profits are shared between support of widows and orphans of Baptist ministers and missionaries, and the H.M.F.) set up a small committee to consider whether in view of rapid changes in worship since the *Baptist Hymn Book* was published in 1962 a supplement should now be prepared. As a result, on November 7th last, the Trustees authorised the preparation of a supplement of about 100 hymns, intended largely for

the young, and for all who feel the need to make worship more lively and realistic. It is envisaged that the contents might comprise, say, (a) new hymns on modern themes; (b) hymns which fall between the standard type and the modern "folk" type of religious song (i.e. hymns like "Go tell . . ."); and (c) the best of the modern religious folk songs. It is hoped to publish three editions: with full music score, with melody only, and a very cheap words edition. A selection committee is being set up and will be widely representative of our constituency, including youth representatives and music teachers, etc.

THE COMMITTEE WILL WELCOME SUGGESTIONS FOR INCLUSION—BY 1st MARCH 1973. It would be helpful if the first line is quoted in full, the book in which it at present appears indicated, and a note made of whether it is thought it falls within a, b or c above. Lists (in alphabetical order please) should be sent to the Secretary of the Trust, the Rev. R. W. Thomson, 76 Sandalwood Road, Loughborough, Leics LE11 3PS.

Original work may be sent, but it is likely that only words and tunes of *outstanding* quality could be included in a supplement of 100 hymns. It is hoped to launch the Supplement at the Annual Assembly in 1974.

R. W. THOMSON

SABBATICAL LEAVE FOR MINISTERS

A minor revolution was enacted at the November meeting of the Baptist Union Council. It raised neither cheer nor protest at the time, not even a question! Perhaps it happened in one of those moments when after some hours of sustained work the members were getting their second wind. Be this as it may, it happened, and we can all be glad. In a word, the Council adopted a recommendation that in every fifth year of her pastoral career every deaconess should have three months leave of absence for a course of study or further training. The necessary financial arrangements were also agreed. "Sabbatical leave" will thus be a normal regular feature of the deaconess's life in future. The deaconess herself will benefit—the very planning and prospect of it will be a tonic in itself; her church will benefit, for the profits of a sabbatical are inevitably ploughed back into the work.

It is my hope that in 1973 some such arrangement can be initiated for ministers also, and begin to take effect in 1974. This is something which will be much more difficult to organise than the sabbaticals for deaconesses. Apart from anything else it will be on a totally different scale for there are so many more ministers than deaconesses. Nevertheless I believe this is a vital necessity amid the demands and pressures of life today. It may take us some time to get it established, and it will have to be phased-in by stages, but

it needs to become a regular, normal feature of a minister's life.

"Ministerial Training" is a phrase which we have tended to use in connection with a man's college course. That use still applies but we increasingly recognise that "ministerial training" has to be continuous. It *begins* with college where the foundations are laid but, however well devised, no college course can anticipate and cater for all the developments which take place in a rapidly changing world.

Every man who has tried to guard his "morning-in-the-study" has thereby been recognising that just as he needs physical and spiritual exercise so also he needs to keep himself mentally on the stretch. The men (relatively few as yet) who have undertaken some special course of in-service training have sensed the need to sharpen their understanding and to reinforce their ability in some department of their work. Such courses offer gains which would be difficult and often impossible of attainment by the solitary individual in his study. They may fill a gap in a man's earlier training but sometimes they are of such a nature that he could only make the best use of them after having had some years experience in the ministry.

The idea of the sabbatical is not to provide a substitute for the minister's own regular study discipline. It is to provide an opportunity to take that extra training, to do that intensive piece of special study long wished for but never managed; it is to help a man catch up with new developments, academic or practical. In other words its aim is to support him in the business of keeping himself abreast of his job. But it also means that courses of further training, instead of being a rare and occasional thing, can become a regular experience; instead of something for the few they will be opportunities enjoyed by all. This is not a luxury which we now seek but a necessity in the kind of job we have to do.

A moment's reflection will suffice to indicate that such a development, if we can carry it into effect, will be a major innovation in our denominational and ministerial life. It will not be possible to introduce it, much less to sustain it, on a haphazard basis. It will require a bit of organisation and will call for a good deal of mutual help and co-operation. I believe it is going to need considerable financial support from the Union as such. Nevertheless I believe that it can be done and that it is well worth doing. A good deal of preliminary consultation will be required and we shall make this as complete and comprehensive as possible. The Ministry Department will seek comments and advice from the Committee of the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship as well as other interested parties before placing any recommendations before the Ministry Main Committee and then through that to the Council. Meanwhile I am grateful to the Editor for space to share this hope with fellow readers of the *Fraternal*. I see it as one of the Department's most important objectives in 1973.

G. W. RUSLING

TEN DAY COURSE TO FRESHEN UP

The Department of Ministry is organising a period of In-Service training from the evening of Wednesday June 27th to the morning of Friday July 6th at Bristol Baptist College. The course is open to all Ministers in pastoral charge. There will be places for about 35.

Content: The course will be planned (a) to allow participants to 'catch-up' on some aspects of the present theological scene (b) to provide time for reading both individually and in groups (c) to study 'practical' aspects of the ministry notably that of group and team ministries.

Cost: The cost of the course will be £25 and it is hoped that those participating will find most of this themselves. In cases of difficulty, however, the Department can give some assistance. It is hoped that no Minister who would otherwise like to share in the course will not be put off for financial reasons. Application forms from the Department of Ministry, Baptist Church House.