

## INSTRUMENTS, PROCESSES AND THE GOSPEL - *again*

Baptists have set the pace, with other denominations presumably close behind, in running for the Ecumenical Instruments (EIs) set before us as the goal of the Inter Church Process (ICP). A three-quarter majority vote took the Union a vital stage further in ecumenical relations. No doubt there are a good number among the dissenting one-quarter who are unhappy at aspects of this, but I have no sympathy with those who say they have strong convictions against the ICP but who did not bother to turn up at the debate in Leicester. The Union has said 'yes', and we all should come to terms with this without resorting to the extreme measure of secession. The world has hardly ended as a result of this decision. Baptist churches still retain all their freedoms. It is still our duty to work together with all Christians wherever conscience allows.

But I am bound to say that the new 'dawn' that the EIs herald has every possibility of being a false one. I did not hear one argument at the Assembly which showed me how the EIs would actually assist and enhance what has been going on already (without EIs) at the local level. I still do not see how the EIs will connect in a positive way with local ecumenical ventures without introducing an ecclesiastical bureaucracy that will smother the child it is attempting to love. I am still very concerned that the EIs will only succeed in attracting the old ecumenical circus to work under a new management. The contributions of the Romans and the Black-led churches will certainly enliven the proceedings, but the new proposals give every appearance of producing an even larger cumbersome, slow moving, committee bound 'Ecumenysaurus' appreciated only by the cognoscente.

Our representatives will have a very difficult job. It is likely that the Baptist Union will enter the EIs with the largest dissenting vote of all fully participating denominations. This is because the Baptists are basically an evangelical denomination, and ecumenical theology has not so far been seen to be particularly evangelical. A post-Assembly editorial in the Baptist Times said, "in the debate assurances were given that ecumenical theology is

### NEWSLETTER No. 33 - JULY 1989

#### CONTENTS

Instruments, Processes and the Gospel - Again	Terry Griffith
Worship Among English Baptists Today	Barrie White
Pastoral Stress (2)	Keith Roberts
Testimony: A Missionary Call Today	Geoff Bland
Pawson on Initiation	David Slater

#### Forthcoming Conferences

#### REVIEWS:

The Fair Face of Evil	Nigel Wright
C.S. Lewis on Scripture	Michael Christenson
Counselling and the Holy Spirit	Peter Ledger
When the Spirit comes with Power	John White
Who's afraid of the Old Testament God?	Alden Thompson
That's Life!	Derek Tidball
Shalom	Perry Yoder

An Evangelism Cook Book	Derek Cook
AIM 2	Ed. David Coffey
CTP Coursebooks (F3 & F7)	Derek Tidball
	Thornton Elwyn et al.

Editor: Terry Griffith,  
The Baptist Church,  
Frampton Park Road,  
London. E9 7PQ.  
Tel: 01 986 4765

'Mainstream' Newsletter is designed to encourage life and growth within the Baptist Union. On the assumption that contributors are in sympathy with this aim, they have full liberty of expression. Views contained in the newsletter are strictly those of individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Executive.

Enquiries about subscriptions, further copies etc.  
Steven Hembury, 23 Flanchford Rd., London. W12 9ND.  
(until August 1989)  
27 Crabtree Rd., West Green, Crawley,  
Sussex. RH11 7HL.  
(from August 1989)

evangelical. It must be seen to be." I remain to be convinced, and our representatives have the responsibility to see that the agenda and questions dealt with in the EIs do reflect evangelical concerns. I do not envy them their task.

I am not talking about the Unitarian issue. That is clear cut. Rather I am talking about intensely practical matters. For instance, do the Churches in this country believe that Muslims as well as atheists need to be converted to Christ? The Anglican Bishop in my area happens to believe that Muslims should not be evangelised. It is sufficient merely to believe in God, call him Allah or what you will. If 'mission' is supposed to be high on the agenda of the ICP, as something that can be done better together without competition or duplication of effort, such questions must not be avoided if the EIs are to be seen as wearing any clothes.

The track record of the British Council of Churches on this matter does not fill one with confidence, Kenneth Cracknell has written a book called 'Towards a New Relationship' (Epworth 1986). The sub-title reveals all - 'Christians and People of Other Faith'. Note that 'Faith' is in the singular, not the plural. I wonder whether the logic of the ecumenical process is not meant to stop only at the unity of Christians. Certainly there are those who take the Greek word 'oikoumene' (the world in the sense of its inhabitants) literally, i.e. the unity of humankind within a diversity of religious faiths. Where do Baptists draw the line on this one? Are our representatives expected to present their personal convictions in such a discussion? Or should they convey an opinion that is evangelical as we are an evangelical denomination? I take it that we have a viewpoint on this key theological matter just as we have a viewpoint on lesser matters such as the nature of authority in the Church.

It will not do to fudge the matter. Our denominations is promoting 'Action In Mission'. The EIs are intended to promote more effective mission. Indeed, the point of unity is supposed to be "so that the world may believe". Believe what? In theism in general or in Jesus, the Son of God, in particular? Is universalism going to be the unspoken and unwritten assumption of the EIs? Or will they take the Gospel, as it is revealed in Scripture, as its sole authority in matters of belief? Kenneth Cracknell's thesis, so ably put, does not bear the weight that he tries to place on it. Evangelicals cannot accept his interpretation of John 14:6, or his "Christology for Religious Pluralism".

And this is just one of the theological time-bombs ticking away underneath the ecumenical edifice. At the moment this is the day of the 'instrumentalists' (the nuts and bolts brigade). But theology must be central to the well-being and purpose of the EIs if they are to have integrity. Nice sounding phrases about love, patience, tolerance and unity, are not sufficient to justify the enormous effort and resources expended on this venture. If theology is relegated to the sidelines then the ICP will be shown to have been a huge diversion and a false move.

We need to talk and to listen. But I have no doubts about what it was that enabled the first Christians to 'turn the world upside down'. The EIs need to take their cue from the New Testament not the New Theology. Only then will the twentieth century (and the twenty-first, if there be one) take note of the message and authority of Christ which is surely as desperately needed today as ever it was.

Terry Griffith.

# WORSHIP among the ENGLISH BAPTISTS TODAY



In The Sacred Diary of Adrian Plass the entry for Sunday February 2nd records the kind of experience which many of us have had. The entry goes, in part, as follows:

'If I'd known George Farmer was leading the service this morning I wouldn't have gone. He started by shouting things at the congregation in a loud, thirty-six-visions-before-breakfast sort of voice:

G.F. Good morning!  
Congr. (feebly) Morning.....  
G.F. (Not satisfied) I said GOOD MORNING!!  
Congr. (forcing slightly more volume out between tired tonsils) Good morning!  
G.F. Are we joyful?  
Congr. (in a strangled bleat, like a herd of dyspeptic sheep) Ye-e-e-s.  
G.F. Well we don't sound very joyful! I'll ask you again! ARE WE JOYFUL?  
Congr. (Panicked into believing that lack of volume is a sin) YEEES!  
G.F. That's more like it! And are we glad to be in the House of God this morning?  
Congr. (Playing the game well now) YEEES!!  
G.F. (Cupping his hand playfully round his ear) And where do we all hope to go one day?  
Congr. H-E-A-V-E-N!!

Of course anyone who stops to think realises that such a way of launching worship is demeaning, cheap, tasteless, insensitive and, ultimately, blasphemous. Yet it happens, and happens repeatedly in our churches. It is more the consequence of ignorance and thoughtlessness than deliberate sin but, whatever its cause, it points to the fact that it is high time that we thought about worship more carefully and that those of us who lead worship and wish to encourage others, either individually or corporately, to join in with us have a clear set of certain fundamental conventions:

1) In worship - whether in our private prayer or on Sunday morning and Sunday evening we have to do with the One who is the Creator of the Universe and the God of Calvary and Easter Day. We should in the words of one writer, think magnificently of God in our worship.

2) In leading worship the emphasis should be upon God and not upon the jolly egotistic chat-show compere who seems so often to have taken over as our model. The leader of worship, be it he or she, is unimportant and needs not draw attention to themselves (which is what they do) by saying 'Good morning' or whatever other greeting appears appropriate at the beginning.

3) Public worship should be a dialogue with the Words and Acts of God for our redemption as primary. Those Words and Acts initiate worship. We do not! When we think our initiative is important we are falling into sin and denying the priority of Grace.

4) Public worship should always include certain elements - whatever the feelings of the worship leader - because there are going to be people there with many different needs. It is therefore worth thinking about the reminder given in the Alternative Service Book to the Anglicans before worship:

We have come together as the family of God in our Father's presence to offer him praise and thanksgiving,

to hear and receive his holy words,  
to bring before him the needs of the world,  
to ask his forgiveness of our sins,  
and to seek his grace,  
that through his Son Jesus Christ  
we may give ourselves to his service.

If they need reminding how much more do we!!

If we were to check to make sure that these various elements had their place in worship there would be a number of things which would need to be said.

### 1. Praise

Usually we score well on our responsibility 'to offer him praise and thanksgiving'. The quantity of decibels may vary but, on the whole, this is well taken care of in our churches.

### 2. The Reading of the Word

However, nowadays, we do less well, on hearing and receiving his holy Word. First, there is the neglect of the reading of the Scriptures. Yet this is a ministry in itself. We all say we believe the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God. We all say that we believe that by the ministry of the Holy Spirit the Bible has power to pierce the heart, comfort us in distress and instruct the minds of believers even without a preacher. We say this kind of thing but do we really believe it? Our practice tends to deny it and practice is the test of what in our heart of hearts we really believe.

So let us note the weaknesses in our worship services:

i) There is far too little of the Word read - and often when it is read it is not carefully linked with the prayers and the sermon.

ii) What reading there is tends to be badly done because it is ill-prepared. It is wrong to assume that you can thrust a Bible with a passage to be read into the hands of even a mature Christian who knows their Bible (when such people can be found today!) and assume that, without a moment's pause for thought she or he can read it in public. To read Scripture properly we do not need to import false drama of our own, nor the oily unctuousness of the super-blessed, nor the casualness of last week's shopping list. We need to read it with care for where the emphasis should lie and make sure the emphasis is as carefully judged as we can. It was said of Dame Peggy Ashcroft when playing Shakespearian parts which had been spoken ten thousand times before that she cut right through to the basic meaning because she listened to the author.

Could not we listen to the Author too?

iii) We seldom warn people before the reading and then leave an adequate period of silence after, to allow God's Word to sink into the hearts of the congregation. We clutter it all up with so many words of our own.

iv) Indeed we often accompany the reading of the Bible with cheap and irrelevant comments of our own: 'Well, wasn't that a tremendous word', 'Wasn't it lovely', 'My favourite passage'. We need to be quite clear that the Word of our God does not need our patronage, our praise or our excuses. What Scripture does need is a moment to make its own way into the hearts and then into the lives of those who hear it.

Just reading the Word (with just sometimes a very carefully prepared and brief introduction) can be a ministry in itself.

### 3. The Preaching of the Word

But 'hearing and receiving his holy Word' is also a process in which the preacher plays a part: for it is his task to make a junction between the word written and the congregation gathered today. Our preachers need to be expositors of the Word and for that they need to take on board themselves every insight which they can grasp which the biblical scholars provide. We still hear sermons on the Christian's daily path to power through the book of Joshua or, less often, Leviticus or the Song of Songs. Such sermons mean we are listening to men and women who have not properly understood the Scriptures. But we do need not only to expound and apply the Word properly but to teach congregations, and ourselves, that the Reformers taught that the 'Church' was present when the Word was not only heard but received. We who hear need to receive the Word. That word is, fundamentally, the Word of the Gospel. But the Gospel is not simple - it is never described in that way in Scripture. The Gospel is wonderful, the Gospel is world-transforming, the Gospel is life-revolutionising, the Gospel is mind-blowing and the Gospel is almost too good to be true. But what it is not is simple! That the Creator of all things took flesh and opened his heart to us in Jesus the man from Nazareth is not simple it is, strictly, astounding. Only people for whom the Gospel has lost its power to astonish will ever call it simple! They will be the people for whom grace itself has grown dull and dreary. Anyone who calls the Gospel simple has never really listened to what John 3.16 is saying! To begin to understand afresh all the ramifications of the Gospel you should read Paul Fiddes's new book Past Event and Present Salvation (Darton Longman and Todd, paperback, #10.95). You may not at once agree with all of it but it will introduce you anew to some of the dimensions, the length and breadth and depth and height of the Gospel. He is the preacher's Theologian.

### 4. Intercession

Next, after hearing and receiving the Word of the Gospel, we are told  
'to bring before God the needs of the world'.

Does that happen in your regular Sunday services? I had a bleak, sad letter from one of my friends recently. He said that in the intercession in the Baptist church where he worships they never get beyond their own needs: no prayers outside their own church family, no remembrance of the wider baptist family, no remembrance of the needs of the wider Christian family and no prayers for the wider world - the world for which Christ died.

Why do we not plan our intercessions - over a month or two for both morning and evening services? This need not be a chain but would be a useful guide - if only to stop too much meaningless repetition of the 'God bless Northern Ireland' sort.

The needs of the world are anyway probably better dealt with in short prayers which are real and not just of the 'God bless' sort.

There are the missionary intercessions - what a blessing it is that every Baptist minister has a free copy of the Missionary Herald each month!

There are the Baptist Union ones: the district, association, special problems, the superintendent (not a special problem), the colleges (which can be), the Didcot H.Q.....

There is the wider church world: the other local Christian churches (the ones you approve of and the ones you do not!), inter-church relationships, the persecuted, Billy Graham and other interdenominational missions, Tear Fund, Christian Aid.....

There is the wider secular world: newspapers, local and national, radio and TV, the Prime Minister (special prayers here!).....

There are our own needs: the sick, the housebound, the leadership, the singles, the marrieds, the young, organisations.....

Our prayers should be prepared - and prepared in the light of Rom. 8.28: 'In everything God works together for good with those who love Him' (RSV and most modern translations).

Individual members of the church should be asked to lead in prayer on specific topics as well as according to personal leadings. Prayers should be thought about - some ought to die on our lips. But they can be thought about without being dead when they are to the point.

### 5. Confession

Finally, to ask his forgiveness for our sins. This does seem to me to be a professional matter. To make careful and real confession of sin and to bring the assurance of forgiveness from Scripture ('If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us.....') seems to me to be a job which requires insight, knowledge of human nature - and not merely my own - which ought to be found in the professional ministry. But I am not saying it should only be done by 'priestly professionals': there may be people in your congregation who have a gift for catching up our corporate sinfulness in their prayers and helping us all to confess and receive the assurance of forgiveness.

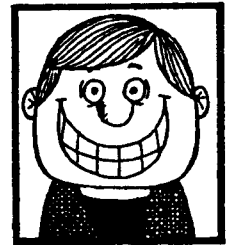
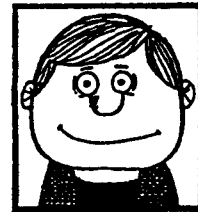
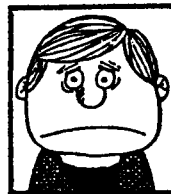
I would like to talk especially about the Lord's Supper but that would require another article. Let me say just these last words.

1) 'I' should never appear in public prayers: you are there (whoever you are in public worship) to lead the corporate worship of the people of God and not to do your private prayers in public.

2) 'You' is the pronoun for addressing God. As soon as 'he' creeps in you are not addressing God but preaching to the congregation.

3. Be wary of a superfluity of words. Some people try so hard to lead worship adequately that they use too many words in reaching after holiness.

Bless you all,  
Barrie White,  
Regents Park College,  
Oxford.



# PASTORAL STRESS

## and some approaches to support (Part 2)

In the first part of this article in the last edition of the Newsletter we explored the fact of pastoral stress, and some of the factors which contribute to it. In this second part we shall look at some approaches that will help us to handle stress more positively, and some approaches to support which can contribute to a healthier ministry with an improved morale. Inevitably in an article of this length we shall merely be able to skim the surface.

There are basically three approaches to the management of stress. The first addresses the symptoms of stress. The second addresses the person who is under stress. The third addresses the causes of stress. Each of these approaches is built in to what follows, So let's look at some of the factors that need to be explored if stress is to be less destructive for those in pastoral ministry.

### **1. Self Awareness**

Dr. Louis McBurney in his 'Counselling Christian Workers' says, "Many ministers, especially men, have well honed denial and intellectualisation defences. They are not only insensitive to other people's emotions, but are unaware of their own. Yet their feelings affect their relationships. They become expressed as perfectionism, as anxiety, as outbursts of anger, as nonverbal hostility, and as depression".

Our feelings and emotions can serve the same purpose as the warning lights on the dashboard of your car. Some of the lights such as the oil warning light, fuel indicator, or battery charge light are ignored at your peril. As well as our 'feeling life' there are also certain physiological and relational indicators that we need to be aware of, in touch with, and responsive to if we are to know ourselves. Self awareness increases personal responsibility for our lives, but if we are to grow in this area it will need to be through an intentional process.

Often being part of a group process can contribute to growth in this area. A recent series of such groups at Spurgeon's College operated with the following brief.

"In these groups we shall begin to explore some of the following areas of our lives:

- Discovering and accepting previously unknown or unacceptable parts of ourselves.
- Learning how to express feelings, especially in terms of what bothers us about ourselves or others.
- Exploring how others experience us within a group context.
- Experiencing affirmation and security within a group, whilst, at the same time, experiencing the adventure of growth and risk taking.

The journey in each of these areas will contribute to our growth as individuals, to our understanding of some of the dynamics that will be at work in the inter personal relationships we will have with others in ministry in the future, and also to getting to know ourselves better through open and truthful relationships with others".

If we do not grow in this area then all support systems will be external to us. To understand ourselves in this way is most helpful in managing stress.

### **2. Reflective Spirituality**

It's very easy for many in positions of pastoral leadership and responsibility to get locked into an endless round of activities which become expressed in a prayer life which becomes increasingly frantic. Prayer becomes less a time for communing with God, and more a time for continuing anxious activity. The words of Richard Foster can well apply to many pastors.

"Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people".

For as Brother Ramon, an Anglican monk has said:

"Christians who have adopted an activist stance in their work and witness are realising their interior emptiness. Evangelism without spiritual roots, not sustained by the life of prayer, becomes verbosity. Dogmatic theology without the enthusiasm, the excitement and the experience of a baptism in the Holy Spirit, becomes an arid and boring scholasticism".

To state the obvious, pastors are firstly Christians. Together with all Christians we are called to live the life of faith. This means we live life with a different perspective from those around us. Within our society the life of faith is quite alien. People around us say that only what can be touched, seen or analysed is real. In this environment if we are to sustain a life of faith we need to be developing a life of prayer and communion with God which brings us into regular exposure with the unseen world. The life of prayer, of listening to God primarily rather than 'Babbling like the pagans' gives us a different perspective on the reality of God, and of human life, and of our ministry. So many rely on the experiences of other believers. We become listeners of the stories of others rather than those who have their own stories to tell.

We need to discover the value of retreat as well as advance, and of the journey inward as well as the journey outward. Many books are being written on this area..... here I am simply saying that such a style of spirituality can be a major resource of peace into the life of the pastor who is stressed.

### **3. Styles of Ministry**

Or if you prefer, models of ministry. We referred to some of these in the first part of this article. Unhelpful models include the Heroic, the Success, the Messiah, the Victim, and the Being From Another Planet. (See if you can identify yourself)!

In terms of style of ministry we need to be developing a style which takes certain factors into consideration.

- The unique person that God has created you to be with your experiences of life, areas of interest and concern, gifts and abilities for ministry. The more that this uniqueness is expressed in your ministry then the more you are co-operating with the person God has made, and is making, you to be.

Clearly with Jesus as our model of ministry we need to see that ministry involves servanthood and sacrifice.... but we also need to see that for Jesus ministry was food and nourishment for His life. (John 4. v 34).

- The biblical teaching on such matters as our common humanity and its needs and opportunities. The early chapters of Genesis have a lot to say to the pastor about how to function as a human being. The N.T. with its emphasis on the Church as a brotherhood... (who said pastors should not have friends!!) The Epistles with their emphasis on shared leadership and team ministry. Let scripture inform and correct our tradition and practise where necessary.

- The value of an intentional style of ministry in which together church and pastor regularly assess the strengths and weaknesses of the pastor, the needs and opportunities of the church, the gifts and abilities of the members so that the pastor and the members can engage in an approach to ministry which is considered and decided upon, rather than one which simply reflects a style of a bygone generation, or which is constantly reacting to problems in such a way that no strategy is developed.

To sum it up a style of ministry which sees God, pastor, fellow leaders, and congregation together in a partnership of ministry.

### **4. Brotherly Relationships**

All of those who write or speak on this subject of pastoral stress make a lot of the need for pastors to have meaningful support relationships with other pastors. A group in which you can "Cry, laugh, bleed, explode, pray, and be put back together again".



Barbara Gilbert of the Alban Institute says that if such groups are to work there seem to be certain essential ingredients.

- Common interest or relationships carried over from another context.
- Small size of 4 - 6 persons.
- 1 or 2 persons willing to risk openness and vulnerability.
- Commitment to regular attendance.
- Ground rules about confidentiality and group process.
- Regular meetings over a long enough time that trusting relationships are built.

There seem to be an increasing number of pastors who are prepared to look for such relationships in a wide variety of contexts. This has to be a good sign.

### 5. External Support and Supervision

In some research I did last year I approached a number of people involved in the ministry of counselling who regularly see Christian workers in their daily work. Without exception, each one consulted spoke of a major need for external supervision or counsel for pastors. This reflects the fact that most caring professions recognise the value of systems of support and evaluation.

However, often those who are appointed by denominations to do this very work, are unable to do it to the extent that they would want to. This can be for a number of reasons but research done by others shows that the major factors are to do with:

- Clergy will tend not to share personal vulnerability with persons who had anything to do with future placement.
- Clergy will not share unless a prior trusting relationship has been built up with the area minister. (This is often difficult because of the time constraints and other job demands on the area ministers).
- Clergy will not share with those who because of their skills in other areas such as administration or academic ability have been appointed to supervisory roles within denominations. Pastoral supervision requires people with pastoral and supervisory skills. As Sara Horsman says in her 'Living With Stress', "How many supervisors ever get offered a good training in how to supervise"?

So a major need is to develop external support and supervisory systems

There are other ways in which support can be offered, and in which pastors can develop ways of handling their ministry which alleviate stress, some as simple as learning to say 'No' occasionally, others more complex such as Career Development Counselling. Some to do with the physical dimension, such as good diet, rest, and exercise, some to do with the relational dimension such as Marriage Enrichment. But the five mentioned in the article seem to me to be very basic if the ministry is to become increasingly healthy and able to minister to many within our congregations who live in the stress filled society we appear to have created.

Keith Roberts,  
Streatham, London.



# TESTIMONY:

## *A missionary call today*



"The age of overseas missions is over".

"The real missionary task now is on our doorstep".

Have you ever thought along these lines? Until less than 2 years ago, I certainly did. Not that our church at Frimley neglected support for B.M.S. - in fact we worked hard to promote BMS interest, and this was reflected in a substantial budget allocation, along with a good deal of concern for our link missionaries, Martin and Mathie Hewitt in Brazil. But, in general, behind this was more a residual belief that 'a good church ought to be missionary minded' than a real commitment to global mission. My own aim as pastor was to see this infant church built and established through evangelism and discipleship. Missionary support was on my agenda, but as it didn't seem to serve my primary purpose it was inevitably low down on the list.

So, to say the least, it's something of a surprise to find myself about to leave with my wife and family to work with the Church of Christ in Thailand! How that's come about is quite a story.

It begins with a BMS district weekend in July 1987. It was the weekend that Yorkshire won the Benson & Hedges cup in a thrilling last over finish against Northants - I remember that vividly because it made me late for the Saturday night 'Meet the missionaries' meeting!! The next morning one of those missionaries, Mary Hart, a nurse working with her husband, Bob, at Chandraghona Hospital in Bangladesh, was the speaker at Frimley. Her message was full of interest and challenge. "Good," I thought to myself, "that will do nicely." But when at the close I stood to lead the congregation in an appropriate prayer of response, I discovered that God's ambitions for that service were somewhat bigger than my own! As we paused in silence, I had a profound sense of the Holy Spirit coming upon me, and indeed on the whole congregation. It was impossible for me to speak without being reduced to tears. Others also were aware that God was speaking to us in a special way, and the words from Acts 13:2 came to my mind: "While they were worshipping the Lord... the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

We never did close that service properly - any prayer or hymn seemed out of place somehow. When I got home my wife, Christ, and I discussed what this experience might mean. It was as if we were being placed on 'stand-by', though we didn't know what for. That same weekend I read in the Missionary Herald that 6 months previously the BMS had accepted an invitation from the Baptist group in the Church of Christ in Thailand to send church workers, no one yet had responded to this opportunity. At the time I took little notice of this, but the seed was planted.

For the next month the church leadership considered a number of ways to respond to this clear call to put world mission as a priority on our agenda. By doing that, perhaps I might be able to avoid the lingering suspicion that above all these things the church was being asked to give its pastor for such work! And by September, full of fresh enthusiasm and plans for the new 'term', I'd succeeded in pushing the personal aspect of this well to the back of my mind. The local needs and opportunities again preoccupied me.

It took a Mainstream conference on the unlikely theme of 'Baptist Identity' for God to have the chance to speak to me again! As I drove to Gorsley in Herefordshire on a glorious late-September morning, I found myself thinking of what had happened in July and (somewhat to my surprise) asking the Lord if he wanted us to go to Thailand. The conference itself was interesting and

enjoyable - though we quickly discovered that among 40 likeminded Baptist ministers there were at least 40 different views of Baptist identity! As the day drew to a close, one of the participants, George Beasley-Murray, made a comment on the importance of not losing sight of Christ's second coming. For some reason this stirred me deeply, and again I was caught up in a moving of the Holy Spirit identical to that which had happened in July. This was not entirely welcome - its one thing to be moved to tears at the end of a good missionary service; when it happens after a vigorous discussion on Baptist identity in the company of senior ministers, its much more embarrassing!

Such experiences have been occasional rather than common in my walk with the Lord. That night I lay awake savouring the overwhelming sense of God's presence and love, and the equally clear conviction of what he was saying. Next afternoon, back in Frimley, I explained to Chris that I believed God was calling us to respond to the Thailand invitation. This was news to her! "But let's pray about it," she wisely said. Later that week I conferred with one of my co-leaders, asking him to test my guidance. We agreed that the obvious thing to do next was to write to BMS for further information, and I resolved to do that after the weekend.

By Monday morning the inclination to do that had evaporated. The blessing of an exciting Sunday left me thinking, 'it's good here - I'd rather like to stay!' When I woke next day the last thing I felt like doing was writing to BMS "I'm very sorry, Lord", I prayed, "I know I shouldn't need to ask you this, but if you do want me to write that letter please could you give me another nudge."

I went to my office and had been there only 10 minutes before there was a knock at the door. It was a lady church-member, quiet and unassuming but a mature and valued friend and supporter. Something was troubling her greatly, and the evidence of a sleepless night was clear to see, but plucking up courage she explained why she'd come. "Last night in the service God told me to tell you to write to the BMS"! Though she had been present at the service in July and was sensitive to the importance of that, she was unaware of the more recent developments. With a smile heavenwards, I acknowledged that that was a pretty good nudge! "But why did God ask me to come and tell you?" she protested, when I'd explained something of the situation to her. "Why didn't he tell a deacon or somebody important?" The answer to that was not hard to find. "It's because you're Chris's prayer-partner," I explained. "Go and tell her".

So she did, and that was just the first of a whole string of other confirmations that week to us both. Subsequently the call was confirmed further by the good and necessary selection procedures of the BMS. We left the Frimley pastorate last July (1988) and since then have been enjoying two very profitable terms of mission study at St., Andrews Hall, Selly Oak. At the end of April we expect to leave for a year's Thai language study in Bangkok before taking up some kind of training and encouraging role among the churches, probably in the poorer North East region. Thailand is a Buddhist stronghold, and the churches are small and few. The task is truly daunting, and we ask sincerely for your prayers for the Thai church, for ourselves, and for our children (Kristi, age 7, and David, age 5 in June). Yet already we feel immensely privileged to have this opportunity, and if we were ever tempted to think that ministry overseas was a bit of a sidelining from the real action (and we were!) then we have certainly had our eyes opened. As David Coffey emphasised in his address on Evangelism at this year's Mainstream conference, we need to 'act locally and think globally! For, apart from anything else, there are many insights from global mission that we in our mission here need to learn from.

But that's another story,  
Geoff Bland,  
c/o The Baptist Missionary Society.

# PAWSON on Initiation

(Being a review article of The Normal Christian Birth, David Pawson, Hodder & Stoughton, £5.95, 326pp).

Let me say at the start that I believe David has made a significant contribution to the meaning of Christian initiation. This is a very thorough book in most aspects. It makes a good case for the points being made always with direct biblical background. Reading it will certainly challenge helpfully many of the pet theories and widely accepted practices of evangelicals and pentecostalists. If it does nothing else than help local church leaders focus the way they lead people to Christ an enormous amount of good will have been done.

The book has three sections, Theological, explaining what Christian birth is and the four elements comprising it; Biblical, examining the crucial and controversial texts and passages relating to Christian birth; and Practical, looking at how church leaders may help the newly converted to be properly birthed.

The purpose of the book is to "major on the human (in italics, his not mine) aspects of the new birth" (p.12). As such, it examines the "four spiritual doors" through which it is necessary for a person to go in order to enter the kingdom of God. These are, repentance, believing in Jesus, being baptised and receiving the Holy Spirit. In many ways, this first section is the heart of the book, outlining a theology of new birth seeking to be consistent and faithful to the Bible.

The second section contains some helpful and some controversial material about the various key passages and verses dealing with conversion and regeneration. The third section is less than a fifth of the book and is designed to help christian leaders apply the principles in practice. For all the good things, there are several criticisms I would make:

## 1. Tripartite not trinitarian?

As I read the book the overall impression I received was that it's theology was almost tripartite rather than trinitarian. I'm sure that was not the intention. But the emphasis on receiving the Holy Spirit is put over against receiving Christ as if they were two totally different experiences. However difficult it may be to introduce new christians to the trinity, our relationship is with God; God the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit. Jesus did talk about receiving himself and the Father (Matthew 10:40) the gospel writers spoke of receiving Jesus (John 1:12) and Paul spoke of receiving Christ Jesus as Lord (Colossians 2:6). Those references occur almost as often as the term "receive the Holy Spirit". I fear the result might be a kind of spiritual schizophrenia.

## 2. Exegesis

Approaching this aspect of the book with a deal of trepidation both respecting David as a Bible teacher and having benefitted from his tapes and sermons, as a jobbing pastor I have some questions. For one thing I wonder if David hasn't tried too hard to have neat water-tight arguments. For instance, basing the theology of the new birth predominantly on passages from the Acts (see pp. 15-19) seems to me to be somewhat arbitrary despite the explanation.

There are points in the book when I think it owes more to rational logic of western christianity than to the eastern minds of the NT writers. For example, in chapter 21 concerning the explanation of Romans 8:9, having rightly established that Romans 8 does not deal with conversion but with sanctification, it is then assumed that Paul cannot anywhere in Romans 8 be speaking about the new birth. I'm not convinced that is a right deduction. The sentence. "And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ

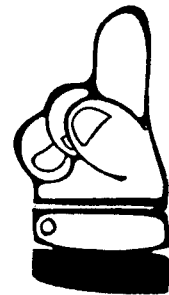
he does not belong to Christ" may simply be an aside along the lines, "Oh, by the way, you realise that being a Christian means the Spirit lives in you." In fact, this section reminds the Romans that they have an obligation to live by the Spirit and not their former sinful nature because the Spirit lives in them. Victory over the sinful nature is a consequence of the new birth through receiving the Holy Spirit. Did the New Testament writers have such logical minds that they never spoke about related topics as do other speakers or writers? Paul demonstrates something of what I mean in Colossians 2:6f "just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him". The reference to becoming a christian leads on to following Jesus daily.

### 3. The Church

More amazing, in the light of the avowed purpose both to explain what is the normal response of human beings during conversion is the lack of reference to the Church. In the final practical section a meagre four pages is given to encouraging the new christian to join the church. If all four elements are "essential to salvation" (p.35 with reference to baptism) the new christian enters the kingdom without a clear idea of what he is entering! What the Acts does tell us, without exception, is that those who repented, believed, were baptised and received the Holy Spirit identified themselves with the "Church". The Greek text does not have a paragraph at Acts 2:41. The inference is that those who believed, were baptised "were added to their number" with all the consequent changes in lifestyle. We cannot so easily separate true conversion from commitment to the church. The christian's relationship with God is expressed in belonging to the church both spiritually and organisationally.

I appreciated the emphasis on helping new christians to be properly initiated knowing an authentic and personal christian experience. Fresh light has been thrown on many passages to my benefit. If controversy helps us to be more biblical then I am happy.

David Slater,  
Kingsbridge.



## PASTORAL CARE: *where next?*

Pastoral Care: Where Next? is a major conference planned for 1990 that will provide an opportunity to explore effective pastoral care within the christian community. The conference aims to reflect the needs and concerns of christians wanting to examine their own contribution to the ministry of pastoral care. It is intended to offer very practical advice and support to people, help them explore the topic from a biblical basis and give a broad overview of some of the creative pastoral care initiatives represented throughout the United Kingdom.

The conference will be of interest to members and leaders of local congregations concerned with the effectiveness of pastoral care as well as christians working in the caring professions, either in secular work or christian organisations.

As well as respected speakers addressing the main theme a variety of workshops and seminars are planned which include; professional skills in a christian context, the place of the bible and prayer, the care of marriages, healing prayer, setting up a counselling service, caring for the carers, pastoral care of the unchurched. Seminars will give a taste of some of the options available within the broad spectrum of pastoral care, e.g. self awareness groups, family therapy, transactional analysis, self help groups.

The conference is being planned by representatives of a variety of denominations and backgrounds including; Care & Counsel, Bristol Network, Christian Caring, Sevenoaks Christian Counselling Service and others.

The conference will be held at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, from 12-16 March 1990. For further details send an SAE to Andy Butler, 'Pastoral Care: Where Next?', Mitcham Lane Baptist Church, 230 Mitcham Lane, Streatham, London. SW16 6NT.

## ***LEADERSHIP 89:***

### Getting Ready for the Next Decade

Mid-day Monday to Mid-day Friday

East : October 9 - 13th, Caister, Norfolk.

West : October 16 - 20th, Brean Sands, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset.

Evangelical Alliance (01-582 0228 for booking forms)

MARC Europe

Costs: £95 + VAT Full Board (Caister)

£60 + VAT Self-Catering (Caister and Brean Sands)

Every Baptist Church ought to be represented at Leadership '89. Why?

1. Many of us have the right vision for our churches but need to know how we can bring that vision to fruition.
2. We can no longer afford to muddle along hoping that we will extend the Kingdom of God by our amateurish, if well-meaning, methods.
3. It will provide us with a vital complement to our own AIM programme and will give some answers, just when AIM has made us ask some hard questions about our methods.

It is rare to have such an opportunity. It is not very often that such a range of experience and skill will be available to equip ministerial and lay leadership in the church. Opportunities are to be seized when they present themselves and it is to be hoped that many will not miss this one.

Dr. Derek J. Tidball.

Plymouth.





**The Fair Face of Evil** : Nigel Wright, Marshall Pickering, £4.99, 198pp.

A book which is strong on biblical exegesis, theological expertise and pastoral experience, on the subject of the nature and manifestation of evil has got to be recommended. Too much of what is said about the devil is either trivial or sensational and therefore unhelpful and wrong. The book's subtitle is the heart of the author's message - 'Putting the power of darkness in its place'. This is not a call to summon up the exercise of authority in a clash of Titans. Rather the author notes that the powers of darkness, since the cross, are defeated and beggarly creatures; but thrive on too much credibility being given to them than is actually warranted. In short, Christians have a tendency to be taken in by the devil's hype. We need above all to "disbelieve the devil". A quote from Luther puts things in perspective - "The best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn."

The fruits of a M.Th. thesis are summarised in a heavy but stimulating chapter 3 - Barth on evil as 'nothingness', and Wink on the 'interiority' of evil. Good points are taken on board in a helpful synthesis, while weaknesses of these approaches are identified and corrected from a fully biblical perspective. Chapter 4 reveals a careful handling of the origin of evil, as involving an angelic fall. Chapter 5 deals with the 'problem of evil'. Chapter 6 provides an excellent introduction to the ministry of the Blumhardts in 19th century Germany, as well as a critique of Jessie Penn-Lewis, the Hammonds and Bill Subritzky. The knotty subject of demonisation of Christians and the ministry of deliverance is also extremely well handled. Chapter 7 looks at the 'powers' and structures within society, with a synthesis of Berkhof and Stott. Evil as experienced by Jesus was both personal and structural and room must be made for both. The last chapters deal with the dedemonising of creation, the nature of the battle and a nine-point manifesto for the kind of church we need to be in order to confront evil authentically and authoritatively. Here the dangers of popular but misinformed charismatic thinking are exposed as playing into the devil's hands, and aiding and abetting him in sowing confusion and causing harm.

This is a very good treatment which yields nothing to liberal thinking and takes the 'looney' out of 'charismatic'. It will enable a thinking church to identify the devil and his works and set people free.

Terry Griffith.

**C.S. Lewis On Scripture**: Michael Christenson, Hodder & Stoughton, £3.95, 126pp.

Lewis is allowed to speak for himself with many quotes from all his works. He was an independent thinker and brilliant communicator. His approach is refreshing and original because his questions do not display a captivity to modernistic modes of theological thinking.

Lewis' basic approach is to regard the medium of Scripture as 'literature', which should be read as such; and the message of Scripture as authoritative and inspired. He also believed that an intuitive grasp of literary images is necessary in order to understand the message of the Bible. Metaphoric language and theological abstraction are mutually corrective.

Lewis' undoubted literary expertise is used to good effect in exposing the one - dimensional nature of source criticism as applied to Scripture. It also leads him into some interesting ideas about the nature of 'myth' as a category of revelation. E.g. the pagan myth of 'resurrection' has become fact

in the case of Christ. On the other hand he says, "Myth can be truer than historical fact. The Adam and Eve tale, for instance, may express poetically the reality of man's fall from perfection better than any strictly historical account possibly could." (p.39). He is at pains to point out the tentative nature of his thoughts on Scripture as he nowhere treats the subject systematically.

There are many questions that evangelicals would like to put to Lewis after reading this book. In some ways his examples of error in the Bible are straw men. And while he is happy to view Jonah as 'inspired fiction', there are others of us who would see it as 'didactic history' (see the Tyndale commentary on Jonah).

This is a good read although there are many loose ends. The book's value lies in its portrayal of the specifically literary aspects of Scripture, rather than in any tentative resolution of the tension between the human and divine intentions within Scripture itself.

Terry Griffith.

**Counselling and the Holy Spirit**: Peter Ledger, Marshall Pickering, £4.99, 144pp.

I was spiritually brought to birth through Peter Ledger's ministry some years ago, and have at various stages since adolescence been under his counsel. This book speaks with a note of authority, not the loud, over-confident and forceful kind, but the real authority of a man thoroughly under God's government, filled with His Spirit, and of one who honestly cares about people. If you are involved in any way in God's counselling ministry, if you have discovered even some of its pains and its joys, its failures and its breakthroughs, the unanswerable questions, the pressing needs, this book is one you cannot pass over. Buy it and be encouraged.

Being just one of the countless ordinary pastors who is committed to a counselling ministry, what I need is someone to draw alongside and help me practically to tackle the many issues and challenges of what is such a demanding ministry. I do not want another paperback 'glory-story' that leaves me feeling more guilty than encouraged, nor do I want a book of secular psychotherapy disguised within a Christian cover. What I am seeking is something with scholarship but that is honest and practical, that leaves me with the Lord, encouraged and determined to remain in the fray and with His help and resources maybe fight a better fight. This is not a book of theory, but supremely practical, (even down to the arrangement of a counselling room), coming from a practitioner with over twenty five years experience. It is balanced, biblical, believable but never dull or negative, rather pointing us to what God by His Spirit can do in His ministry of setting the prisoners free.

Peter knows what goes on in the hearts of the carers and he will certainly find you out at some point - his insights are many and he confronts many of the difficult issues encountered in counselling ministry. Particularly good is his consideration of the issue of success and failure we all encounter. He meets the 'WHY?' of it frankly yet helps us to live with the mystery. "Why? We shall never know this side of eternity, and perhaps even the other side all we shall know is that it no longer matters to know." (p.101).

Under the broad title "Key Questions", Peter asks us to consider - in the local church setting - what priority counselling care should have; what theology underlies our ministry; where our own reliance lies. He then goes on to consider "Key Resources" - our local church community, our counselling toolkit, and our spiritual renewal (which incidentally stands well alone as a very perceptive stare into the renewal situation - this all brought to life with endearing vignettes of his own personal journey).

The final section "Key Practicalities" is a nuts and bolts approach to setting up ministries of caring within the local church. Again, another stand



alone gem (within a section on preventative care counselling) is a helpful set of guidelines for use pre-baptism.

The book ends with "Recommended Reading", a mere ten books, graded in order of difficulty, concluding with another touch of the kind of humour that punctuates this book - "P.S. If you find that you are in imminent danger of taking yourself too seriously, then read what, on occasions, I find to be the most therapeutic tome of all! Being.... The Sacred Diary of Adrian Plass....".

This is a book worth reading, studying and implementing.  
Stephen Peake,  
Leyton, London.

**When the Spirit Comes with Power:** Dr. John White. (Hodder & Stoughton 1989. £4.95p.

This is a book which has been waiting to be written. We should be grateful that it is John White who made the time and took the effort to do it. It is a book which would have been impossible to write prior to the visits of John Wimber but which has been asking to be written ever since. It is primarily an attempt to observe and interpret the nature of the unusual phenomena which have characterised John Wimber's ministry and its aftermath. It succeeds admirably.

It is difficult to imagine who better could have attempted this task than John White. An experienced psychiatrist with a mass of clinical experience of unusual behaviour; a biblically and theologically astute Christian of long and wide experience; a student of Revival versed in the Journal of John Wesley, the writings of Jonathan Edwards and those of Martyn Lloyd-Jones; a well-established author who combines spirituality with a refreshing common sense; he is well qualified for the job.

The book comes out of a close acquaintance with the Vineyard movement and a one year period of full-time observation and involvement with them. its judgements are therefore honest, informed and accurate. He sets the movement within that of Revivals generally and shows with little difficulty that current reactions to it are directly paralleled in previous centuries in movements that are now widely acknowledged as genuine works of the Spirit. His main theme "...has to do with the church's panicky flight at the approach of revival, and the failure to recognize it when God sends it. Revival has dangers. But our fear may lead us to reject what God sends. We must not neglect power because it has dangers" (p.137). White has no doubts as to what those dangers may be. He sees the presence of excess but does not believe that it should be allowed to invalidate a genuine work of God. "... (I)n the early stages, the sight of powerful manifestations proves seductive, and so a sort of lunatic fringe develops along with the mainstream. My own feeling is that the proportion of false manifestations increases progressively the more time elapses". Yet: "The mainstream of a revival movement corrects its errors as it goes along" (p.129). The genuineness of the current work is amply illustrated by White in documented testimonies and personal experiences.

This is a book which will genuinely add to our understanding of the work of the Spirit. It will assist in delivering the naive and gullible from a fixation upon the spectacular. Even more, it will stand as a rebuke to those who cynically detract from the work of God associated with the name of Wimber. perhaps most of all, it will contribute to the maturing process of a movement which has unlocked great spiritual vitality in the church and yet which needs to view itself with the same kind of cool headed faith in search of understanding that is modelled for us by John White.

Nigel Wright.  
Spurgeon's College.

**Who's afraid of the Old Testament God?:**, Alden Thompson, Paternoster, Exeter, 1988, 173 pp., pbk., £6.50.

One of the current ironies of British Christianity is that at the same time as evangelical faith is experiencing a much needed resurgence, familiarity with the contents and real nature of the Bible continues to decline. In other words, evangelicals are becoming increasingly detached from the foundations of their faith, a state of affairs that does not augur particularly well for the future. While some leaders within evangelicalism are aware of this ignorance of God's written word, for many of their people, large tracts of the Bible remain a trackless wilderness. Nowhere is this weakness more evident than in the case of the Old Testament.

If this problem troubles you for any reason, Alden Thompson's book is definitely for you. He writes as a "conservative Christian", (he is an American who has studied in Edinburgh), who once shared the common Christian prejudice against the Old Testament in favour of the New. Now, however, he takes a quite different view, because, as he says, "It was actually the Old Testament that brought my Christian experience to life".

As Thompson shares with us the discoveries that have brought about this change, he does not avoid the difficult issues. He deals in a fresh and contemporary manner with the real questions ordinary Christians frequently ask about the Old Testament. Chapter headings to whet your appetite include, "Whatever happened to Satan in the Old Testament?", "Could you invite a Canaanite home to lunch?", or "What kind of prayers would you publish if you were God?" You may not agree with all this answers (this reviewer felt too much was sometimes conceded to Israel's 'childhood' and immaturity), but for the most part he gives wise and sensible advice. Anyone willing to accompany him on his pilgrimage will certainly be grateful for much unexpected light shed upon their Old Testament path.

Martin J.Selman.  
Spurgeon's College.

**That Life! Realism and Hope for Today from Ecclesiastes** : Derek Tidball, IVP, £3.95, 191pp.

While Church's Secretary at the Evangelical Alliance, Ian Barclay said "We have got to get back to biblical understanding and teaching so that we can hear the voice of God in Britain. You can entertain people with fabulous sermons but unless you are expounding Scripture, God is not speaking".

For this reason we must welcome another in I.V.P.'s Living Word Series. This one is on the book of Ecclesiastes; a book I've long felt is one of the Bible books for our generation but never dared preach all the way through least the congregation get too depressed. Most of us have probably given or heard sermons on the opening and closing chapters, but here we are taken right through this magnificent example of negative thinking, exposing all the pointlessness and stupidity of life without God. Ecclesiastes is a superb pre-evangelistic tract making its listeners ask "What is life all about?" refusing any glib superficial answers, making us face reality. Yet those expositions are not depressing for we are always allowed to see the shaft of light from above, piercing through the dark clouds of despair.

I hope all preachers, at least, will buy this book for it seems to me we need good models of how to teach God's Word. Too many popular paperback expositions give us little more than a glance at the biblical text and then leap to the preacher's own thoughts on whatever theme has been suggested. But Derek Tidball has clearly done the necessary hard work beforehand of listening to the text so that his expositions really are expositions of the Word of God, and his congregation will have heard God speaking to our society today (for these are sermons first preached to his own church).

Here is a fine example of how ontemporary and powerful the Bible's message is, if its teachers will take the trouble to listen to it and think its thoughts.

I hope this will encourage many back to Bible teaching, that we may hear God's voice in our churches.

Alan Black,  
Rickmansworth.

**Shalom**: the Bible's word for salvation, justice and peace; by Perry Yoder, Spire (Hodder & Stoughton), 1989. £3.95.

After Colin Marchant's year as union president, we probably thought we'd learned all there is to know about this Hebrew word. Not so. Yoder unpacks the meaning in scripture of shalom and its greek equivalent (eirene) throwing shafts of new light on it from all directions.

Shalom has three shades of meaning, he argues. Most frequently, it means material well-being (he even suggests 'okay' as a possible translation). Secondly, it means justice, okay relationships between people. And thirdly, it can mean moral rectitude, honesty as apposed to deceit. It will be noticed that 'peace' does not figure, except by implication, in Yoder's understanding of the word. Furthermore he argues that eirene in the NT takes it meaning from Shalom with one addition: that it became a theological term describing God and his activity (e.g. 'God of peace', 'Gospel of peace'). Shalom is clearly not a static quality - the absence of war, tranquillity etc. such as suggested by our word 'peace'. Rather "Shalom is a vision of what ought to be and a call to transform society". (p5).

With that kind of definition it is not hard to guess how the rest of the argument of the book will unfold. Yoder looks at the concepts of justice and salvation in the Old and New Testaments, the Old Testament understanding of the role of the King, the ministry of the prophets and of Jesus. Not only does he stimulate thought at every turn with his exegesis - for instance that 'salvation' in both testaments is rarely used with sin as it direct object - but he also asks unsettling questions about of lifestyle and involvement in shalom-making in the modern world.

But there are problems with the book. Yoder's style is neither even or easy. At times it is clear what he is saying and where he is taking the reader. At other times he seems to flit from one thought to another with little sense of direction (as, for instance, in the second half of the chapter on the prophets, p.107ff).

Nowhere is this more frustrating than in what is possibly the key theological chapter on the atonement (p53ff). It isn't clear whether Yoder rejects the traditional understandings of the atonement he outlines before proposing his own 'messianic view'. But if he does, then he rejects propitiation and lays very little stress on the atonement dealing with our sin and hence sealing our eternal destiny.

Indeed Yoder's gospel seems almost entirely this-wordly (except for a fleeting reference to the kingdom not being fully realised in this world on p131). While traditional evangelicals have often been guilty of a grossly under-realised eschatology, seeing the gospel as offering nothing but forgiveness and promises of heaven, Yoder's eschatology seems wildly over-realised, speaking of God's Shalom coming "perhaps in the lifetime of our children or grandchildren". (p69).

Along with this goes his description of the gospel almost exclusively in terms of political liberation and social transformation. But this is not the language of Paul or John or the synoptists. While there is much in the NT that has profound political and social implications, it does a grave disservice to the authors to reduce their message solely to that level.

al. Baptist Union Christian Training Programme (Courses F3 and F7).

These CTP manuals represent a vast improvement in production and style of presentation. They are A4 size and about 50 pages long with plenty of cartoons and diagrams. They are designed for individual and group study.

Derek Tidball's contribution displays his masterly grip on sociological matters and relates them biblically and relevantly to our church scene. A challenging introduction to the forces which shape society.

Wealth, Work and Leisure brings together a wide range of current issues. It will certainly help people to understand what's going on in their local community and to see how it fits into the economic whole of nation and world. I was surprised to find a reference to process theology and to find that John Stott's 'Issues Facing Christians Today' is omitted from the bibliography.

These are welcome additions to the CTP's study book series. Although the format is friendly, the contents require demanding application.

Terry Griffith.

## **BOOKS RECEIVED**



**NIV Bible Guide:** an introductory handbook; Heike & Toon, Hodder, £2.50, 193pp. Pages 75-193 are an index of people, places, theological terms etc. prefaced by maps, history of the Bible, chronology, summary of contents and message of each book, background etc. I'm not sure who would refer to this - certainly not the theological student as suggested on the back cover. If your church library can't afford an Illustrated Bible Dictionary, this is certainly cheap and concise.

**Celebration of Discipline:** Richard Foster, Hodder, £2.95, 276pp. Additional material on meditation, simplicity and celebration, plus the study guide, should make this a worthwhile re-read or first read for the discerning reader. On its way to being a classic in the author's lifetime.

**The Revolution of Love:** George Verwer, STL, £1.95, 128pp. I would follow George to the ends of the earth. A modern day apostle who lives and speaks simply and practically on the things that really matter in the christian life. Introduce your young disciples to this book as soon as possible

**Men Who Met God:** A.W. Tozer, STL/Kingsway, £2.25, 118pp. A look at seven OT saints who had life-changing encounters with God. Tozer is always a perceptive and penetrating writer. These messages have a timeless air about them. He, being dead, yet speaketh.

**Understanding Adolescence:** Roger Hurding, Hodder, £2.95, 245pp. Author's roles as father, counsellor and doctor ensure a competent handling of this topic together with helpful case histories. Portrays adolescence as an exciting time in the development of a young adult, rather than something to be endured or ignored by teenager and parent alike. (DJG).

**The Power of the Powerless:** Christopher De Vinck, Hodder, £2.50, 151pp. "He was the weakest, most helpless human being I ever met, and yet he was the one of the most powerful human beings I ever met. I guess you could call him a vegetable. I called him Oliver my brother. You would have liked him." With an introduction by Henri Nouwen, Profoundly challenges the prevailing values-system held by many today, Christians included, (DJG).

**Broken Windows, Broken Lives:** Adrian Plass, Hodder, £2.50, 172pp. David Harper, an unemployed actor, applies for a job of House Father in a residential school for maladjusted boys. His journey from innocence to experience is told with amusing skill, producing a compelling and thought - provoking novel. 'The James Herriot of Social Work' - New Society. (DJG).

**Storming The Golden Kingdom:** John Waters, STL/IVP, £2.50, 191pp. Story of Adoniram Hudson, American Baptist 'Apostle to Burma' who was baptised by William Carey in India. Popular presentation and easy read. Have we the stomach to read of such sacrifice in the cause of Christ?

