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# The Fraternal

May, 1973

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## EDITORIAL

It may seem somewhat strange to talk about Britain 'going into Europe'. For where else is it but in Europe? Yet over the centuries, whilst ties with the mainland of Europe have been evident, there has been a real sense of separation between Britain and the rest.

This has been as true of the Baptists as of any other company. Whilst there have always been links between Baptists in this country and those of the rest of Europe, until fairly recently they have not been as strong as they might (and surely should) have been.

Over the past twenty-five years, the European Baptist Federation has done good work in developing relationships, but one has the feeling that it is still only a minority of Baptists in Britain who feel properly aware of the reality of our fellow Baptists in Europe. Latest statistics reveal that there are Baptists in some twenty-four European countries besides Britain. The numbers vary from about three hundred in Belgium to half a million in the U.S.S.R. Probably no other Free Church has such a widespread presence. Now that, politically, Britain is in Europe, we take the opportunity in this issue of the *Fraternal* to remind British Baptists of the nature of the Baptist Fellowship in Europe and of the responsibility to develop relationships.

As we have said, fellowship is being fostered by the European Baptist Federation, but that means nothing other than ourselves acting together with our brethren. Perhaps we should all do more actively to make ourselves aware of the Baptist needs and opportunities throughout Europe. Other international organisations, for example, Rotary International, have worked out a system of "twinning" a Club in one country with that in another. Since the last war "twinning" of one city in this country with another in Europe has multiplied. Perhaps this is a possibility we as Baptists should do well to consider following further providing as it does opportunities for personal links in a variety of ways. In fellowship the particular encounter is where the general becomes meaningful.

To illustrate the genuine desire to strengthen fellowship amongst Baptists in Europe, we offer here another European number of *The Fraternal*. The articles reflect both the diversity and the unity of true Baptist Fellowship. Our hope is that as the articles are read, all of us will be helped to accept that as European Baptists we belong together in Christ.

## EUROPEAN BAPTIST COMMENTARY

The entry of Britain into E.E.C. has aroused an increased interest among British Baptists concerning their Baptist neighbours. Some have shown 'a first time interest' which expresses surprise that there are Baptists in Europe at all; others have had a vague notion that fellow Baptists might be there, others have long been interested, involved and, where necessary concerned.

In fact, as Dr. Russell reminded the Assembly last year, British Baptists have been involved in work in Europe to a varying degree for a long time. Relationships through the Union have largely been to individual European Baptist Unions and response to specific appeals for help.

Certainly through the European Baptist Federation British Baptists have played their part and have from the beginning taken an active place in all its activities.

The reasons which first brought Baptists together in Europe in the Federation are interesting. It was organised in 1949 and was born out of vision and compassion. For over four years the Christian communities whose fellowship and relationship had been so sorely interrupted by the years of war needed to be reborn. The need to help to rebuild and restore the stricken churches was urgent—even more urgent was the need to rebuild a basis of Christian fellowship beyond the national barriers, beyond the old hostilities and beyond the deep and bitter resentments.

Straightway the newly formed Federation began to bring together the shattered remnants, to restore the divided fellowship and to create a structure for effective help.

It soon became clear that a new and disturbing element from the Christian point of view had come to abide and grow in Europe. For the first time in history there were now people who were living not merely in a 'non-religious' country but under a dominant political atheism. The re-patterning of Europe after the war presented Baptists with the unique problem of having two thirds of their people in the communist countries of Europe.

Now even more urgent than the building of new churches or the organising of united programmes was the basic necessity of establishing communications and in this respect the scene has varied considerably from country to country and from time to time. In the early days it was an unusual thing to receive a visa which granted permission to visit and preach in the churches and often such visits were fraught with anxiety lest the visitor, unwittingly, should leave behind him a legacy of harm. Indeed it is only in more recent years that regular communications with Roumania and the German Democratic Republic have become possible.

In recent years there has been a steady improvement in the communication with all countries. Representatives have been welcomed at the Council meetings of the Federation and the Baptist World Alliance Congress, and at the last

Council meeting of the Federation in Yugoslavia in August 1972 all countries were represented by official delegates. Likewise representatives from various Unions in Europe as well as Officers of the Federation have been received in all countries.

The value of 'united action' becomes of increasing importance as communication becomes easier. From time to time circumstances arise which call for some form of intervention or representation on behalf of one group or another to secure for them justice and recognition of the rights of religious freedom and action. It may be in the closing of a church building or the refusal to grant permission to build. It may be in more personal and painful terms of persecution and imprisonment; it may be in seeking permission to print hymnbooks or import bibles. It should be made clear that not all the problems are caused by hostile Government action but sometimes by the autocratic ecclesiasticism of a national church.

At such a time the voice that speaks and the action that is taken must have substantial backing and for it to be effective it must be known to be a representative action on behalf of a body of people in many countries.

On a happier side and involving Baptists in countries other than under socialist control is the necessity for united action in the cause of relief and help. In all countries in Europe Baptists are a minority group but in some countries their numbers are so small that they could not carry out a meaningful programme of evangelism and church extension but for help received from their Baptist friends in areas of greater strength.

An example of this is seen in the countries which we now join in E.E.C. Germany, Holland and Denmark are, with us in Britain, among the stronger Unions and have already a fine record of help to other countries both in Europe and in a wider field. But what of Ireland, Italy, France and Belgium? There is no Baptist work at this time in Luxembourg.

These four countries are in the area where the Roman Catholic Church is at its strongest. Over 40 per cent of the Catholics of the world are in Europe and a fifth of the world's Catholics are in Italy, France and Belgium. Thus it will be readily recognised that Baptists are a small part of a very small Protestant minority in each country.

One of the first countries where Baptists appeared was Catholic Ireland. Baptist history there goes back to the occupation of the country by Cromwell's English army. Several churches were organised including one in Dublin that had 120 members in 1654. Most of the members were Englishmen however and when they left Ireland the churches died. For Irishmen it was patriotic to be anti-Protestant, since the English were Protestants; and Ireland became a stronghold of Roman Catholicism.

In 1972 the Baptist Union of Ireland included over 7,000 members. Most of them are in Protestant Northern Ireland

and about 300 in Catholic Eire. Over recent years they have registered a steady increase in strength. Strongly conservative and evangelical, they have not found it desirable to join with other Baptists either in the Federation or Baptist World Alliance which is a cause of very real regret.

Although France has no State church, the vast majority who claim any religious allegiance would express it through Roman Catholicism. Some years ago two Catholic priests wrote a book entitled 'France—a Mission field'? of which the English translation is more probably 'France pagan'. If this is true from the Catholic point of view how much more is it true from the Baptist point of view where the whole Protestant population is less than one million and "the great majority of the people are quite ignorant of the Gospel". (Robert Somerville, Director of the French Baptist Pastors' School and Christian Training Centre, Massy, Paris).

Today French Baptists number about 2,500 with 42 churches and 51 pastors. Unfortunately personal and doctrinal differences have led to a division among them. There are, perhaps, 1,500 Baptists other than those within the French Baptist Federation. Both the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society have given considerable support in manpower and money to the work of Baptists in France and are still active there.

It is perhaps significant that Belgium, the home country of E.E.C. and almost our nearest neighbour, has the smallest number of Baptists of any country in Europe. There are just over 300 in the whole country and here again two American Missionary Societies working in close co-operation together are giving support and encouragement to the work. An English Baptist, the Rev. Brian Goodall, trained in Spurgeon's College, is working with the Belgian Baptist Union and has pastoral oversight of two churches.

The work in Italy is stronger than in the other three countries and there is good evidence of slow but steady growth. The national membership is 4,754 with 84 churches and 46 pastors. A seminary and a youth centre are a part of the Union's work. British Baptist missionaries went to Italy in 1864 and soon the Baptist Missionary Society began work that was to continue until they transferred it to Southern Baptists in the early 1920s. Now Southern Baptists are withdrawing from active work in Italy and Italian Baptists are facing a tremendous challenge as they seek to undertake the responsibilities of independence.

From this brief outline of Baptist work in the member countries of E.E.C. it will easily be seen that there will be occasions when our increased interest might be translated into an expression of practical help. Certainly there is much to share with our brethren and sisters in the relatively strong areas of Germany, Holland and Denmark but there could equally be opportunities when we could help to bear the burden among our Baptist people in the other countries with whom we now have political ties.

However, as good as it is to show this increased interest in Baptists, and indeed in the Christian Church generally in the E.E.C countries, a note of serious warning should be sounded.

There could be a danger that both national self interest and a proper Christian concern for the morality of the decisions taken by the E.E.C. will tend to limit our horizons. Writing on the increased interest being shown by British Baptists towards their continental brethren Dr. Glen Garfield Williams, Secretary of the Conference of European Churches, says—"This is all to the good providing it is an objective reflection and one which allows for the fact that there is a 'big Europe' alongside the little Europe represented by the countries adhering to the European communities".

The danger of identifying Europe with the nine is an ever present temptation which should be resisted.

To answer the question 'What is the Baptist contribution to their fellow Christians' is perhaps easier to answer than 'What is our relationship to our Baptist brethren'. There has perhaps never been a better answer to the first question than that given by Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke many years ago. "Baptists best serve their fellow Christians and the cause of the Kingdom of God generally by being themselves and by giving clear expression to their common convictions and outlook. It ought to be needless to add that this involves neither lack of charity nor the 'unchurching of others' nor the refusal of common action in matters of common agreement. The 'beloved community' is not co-terminous with our communion or with any other visible organisation".

The answer to the other question concerning our relationship with our fellow Baptist believers must begin with an assertion that we recognise with them a common heritage in the purposes of God and in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit in the Church resulting in a basic unity of conviction and purpose. From this understanding our attitude towards others will be freed from all superiority and condescension and will find in it a willingness to learn as well as to teach, to receive as well as to give.

The possibilities of meeting with our friends is obviously limited, but equally obviously it is still the surest way of developing meaningful fellowship. The five yearly European Baptist Congresses have provided a useful forum for such meetings and lasting friendships reaching across national borders have resulted. The Congress in Zurich, Switzerland, July 18-22 this year, will provide another opportunity and already a number of Baptists from Britain plan to be there.

Many of our people now travel into Europe for various reasons, apart from holidays, and they should be encouraged to make contact with their fellow Baptists as opportunity arises. A 'Directory of Baptist Churches in Europe' is published by the European Baptist Federation and is readily available.

The scheme for 'twinning' churches has aroused considerable interest. Some churches have gone and made their own contacts, others by using the European Baptist Federa-

tion scheme, and for any who might be interested in this scheme details can be had through the Overseas Department of the Baptist Union who will also be happy to supply details of the European Congress in Zurich.

A final word is best illustrated by a remark made to me recently while travelling in a socialist country of Eastern Europe. I had been saddened by what I had heard from a brother pastor of discrimination against his family and restrictions imposed upon his people and I tried to sympathise with him. I felt humbled and rather rebuked when he said quite cheerfully—"Its not sympathy but your prayers we value most".

It is true that those for whom we pray we do not forget.

C. RONALD GOULDING

## EUROPEAN BAPTISTS AND THEIR ECUMENICAL INVOLVEMENT

### I

The picture is very varied. That is only to be expected. For on the European continent, as in the United Kingdom—that is a purely geographical distinction of only relative value—the problem of the ecumenical involvement of Baptists divides as well as unites. Of course, this is true not only of Baptists. That should be made clear. It is a tension which is to be found in all churches—even the most "ecumenical".

Nevertheless, Baptists in the different European countries tend to approach the question of ecumenical involvement from a somewhat different angle from that of British Baptists and, naturally, to distinguish issues which arise from the peculiarities of their situations. To do the job properly one would really have to take each of these situations and expound the historical, social, theological and ecclesiological elements therein—a process of study which somebody should one day do in detail, but which the limits of this present article prohibit. We have to resort to a few generalisations.

First, there is the simple fact that, in a number of instances, in both East and West Europe, it is only in the past five to twenty years that the Baptists have been granted legal recognition as a church, on the part of the state authorities. This means that they have only comparatively recently begun to emerge from a state of legal nonexistence which led easily to severe difficulties, if not to outright persecution. British Baptists have also been through this stage, but it is now so far back in our history as hardly to be significant any more.

Second, for the majority of European Baptists it is only in recent decades that they have achieved emancipation in the ecclesiastical realm. By that I mean that they have only

comparatively recently begun to be accepted by the larger churches, whether originating from the Reformation, or Orthodox or Roman Catholic, as being anything other than simply one amongst many "sects". Indeed, in some parts, the term "sect" will still slip out in a conversation concerning Baptists. However, the standing of Baptists in theological discussion, and especially in inter-ecclesiastical relationships has developed greatly, to the point where they are virtually fully accepted as valuable partners in the ecumenical endeavour.

This point calls for a little further development. This "emancipation" of Baptists is due, in our opinion, to two factors. There is, first of all, the more general one of the evidence one often finds in continental Baptists of a very high degree of personal commitment to Christ, even though, in some places, this is related to forms of piety which would seem outdated in most places in the United Kingdom. Then, secondly, there is the more specific factor of the very high standards of theological scholarship which are being achieved by many Baptist leaders and theologians on the continent. On occasions, of course, one becomes very aware of the difficulties of bridging the gulf between the theological advanced guard and the simple, touching and practical piety of most members of the congregations. However, these two factors have combined to earn for Baptists generally the attention and respect of other Christians and churches and also, in many cases, of the state authorities.

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the experience of several generations of being considered by fellow Christians as not really worthy of attention, plus the knowledge of being relegated to the status of a sect and, further, the negative effects of the paternalistic attitudes sometimes adopted by the older and financially stronger Baptist churches in Britain and North America, have contrived to produce a "minority church complex" which is difficult to overcome. This complex makes itself evident in narrowness of interest, a de facto tendency to develop sect-type thinking, a mistrust of the motives of the large church or churches of other confessions at whose hands, alas, one has all too often suffered in the past. Clearly, this forms an obstacle to ecumenical action which requires a decided effort to overcome—and in some European situations it is proving a most intractable difficulty.

Now, after this excursus, back to the third point. This is simply that, in all European countries, Baptists are, comparatively if not actually, few in number, in the midst of one or two very large churches of other confessions. There are well over half a million Baptist members in the USSR, probably about 120,000 in Rumania, around 100,000 altogether in the two German states and about 50,000 in Sweden. These constitute very considerable groups in themselves, but when one makes comparisons on a confessional basis they are all very much weaker groups in relation to the main Christian confession in their countries than are, say, the

Baptists in England and Wales in comparison with the respective Anglican churches.

Fourth, there is the fact that the oldest Baptist churches on the continent were founded just over a century ago and that most of them trace their existence to various forms of mission activity related to British Baptist influence or sources. This difference in length of history and in the nature of their origin, as compared with British Baptists, means that continental Baptists often approach the question of ecumenical relationships with different presuppositions than those of their British brethren.

Of course, there are also problems which are common between British and continental Baptists as they face the ecumenical problem as, for example, the tension in the different unions between more conservative and more radical theological tendencies, and the relationship of the congregation to the union and the union to other confessions. Different continental unions deal with these problems in very different ways, as is only to be expected when one compares the vast difference in size between the few hundreds which constitute a union in, for example, Austria, Belgium and Bulgaria, with the half million or so of the Soviet Union.

## II

Against this general background we ask the question as to how far Baptists are practically involved in ecumenical work in Europe. It is probably best to attempt this analysis at different levels i.e. the local, national, regional (continental) and world levels. However, it should be clearly understood that this does not imply "linear" thinking on the part of the writer, in ecumenical concerns. That is, it is not to be thought that in ecumenical action one passes from the local, through the national and regional to the world level, as through a series of filters. On occasion this may prove necessary but, generally speaking these constitute loosely-related spheres of specific interests and possibilities. Thus, the analysis at different levels may be placed within the general framework of the national and the international.

### 1. The National Sphere

A. The local level. It is unfortunate that the level at which we begin this examination is the very level about which it is most difficult to say anything very clear. Obviously the situation varies from place to place, depending on the ecumenical proclivities of those involved and the ecclesiological structure of the country. A variety of ecumenical activities involving Baptists take place at the local level in different parts of Europe, although the picture is by no means uniform. These activities range from participation in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, through evangelistic efforts, to peace work or confrontation with specific social needs. It must be remembered, however, that no continental country has an ecclesiological structure so favourable for

ecumenical activity at the local level as has the United Kingdom with its established (or fairly recently dis-established) churches accompanied by a number of smaller but still numerically strong and influential free churches.

B. The national level. It is at this level that one can begin to be more precise, though, here again, there is much variety. The continental countries may be summarily divided into those where national councils of churches, roughly equivalents of the British Council of Churches, exist—although on the continent they are more usually called national ecumenical councils; those where actual federations of (protestant) churches exist; those where national ecumenical working parties exist; and those where there is no national ecumenical structure.

National councils of churches, with Baptist participation, are to be found in Czechoslovakia, Denmark (the last full-time secretary was a Baptist), Finland, Hungary, Poland (where the secretary is a Baptist), Sweden (where the secretary is a Baptist) and Yugoslavia (the only case of a national council of churches in a predominantly Orthodox country). Baptists do not participate in the work of the national councils of churches in Austria, the Netherlands or Portugal.

Four "Latin" countries on the continent have more or less developed forms of protestant federation—Belgium, France, Italy and Spain. Baptists are related to that in Belgium and are closely involved in those in France, Italy and Spain.

A looser form of national ecumenical activity is found in the German Democratic Republic, the German Federal Republic and Switzerland, in the form of national ecumenical working groups, with full Baptist participation.

No national structure exists in Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania and the Soviet Union, all historically Orthodox countries. In Bulgaria the Baptists form a very small group and there is no Baptist union in Greece. On the other hand, strong unions are to be found in Rumania and the Soviet Union, in both of which countries ecumenical relationships with the respective Orthodox churches are slowly developing and maturing.

## 2. The International Sphere

A. The Conference of European Churches (CEC). This body, which began its work in 1959, although it was officially constituted in 1964, has a membership of about 100 churches in 24 European countries. In actual fact it provides a meeting place for about 130 churches in all European countries except Albania. One of its interesting characteristics is that 25% of its member churches are not members of the World Council of Churches, either because of doctrinal or statistical problems. Several churches which were hesitant about ecumenical engagement on the basis of doctrine, began their ecumenical experience in the CEC and then went on to join the World Council of Churches.

The CEC is a completely autonomous body, with good relationships with the World Council of Churches, and it

is charged with the task of providing the means for the discussion of specifically European ecumenical problems—and they are legion—and the co-ordination of subsequent action. This means that it has to provide a platform for the smallest as well as the largest churches of Europe, and, because of this, a number of European Baptist Unions find it their best method of entry into the international ecumenical conversation. Thus it numbers amongst its members (most of them actually being founding members) the Baptist Unions of Denmark, the German Democratic Republic, the German Federal Republic, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland (which is the smallest CEC member) and the Soviet Union. The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland is also a member. Further the Roumanian Baptist Union has a very cordial relationship with CEC. On the other hand, the only church which has withdrawn from CEC, (as also from the World Council of Churches and the Netherlands Ecumenical Council), is the Baptist Union of the Netherlands.

B. The World Council of Churches. Apart from the British Baptist Union, only two European unions are members of the WCC—the Danish and the Hungarian.

In the case of both the CEC and the WCC this formal membership is actually translated into practical co-operation and, especially in the CEC, a number of Baptists are to be found as officers or members of the various committees, commissions and working groups. It might be a cause for reflection that, when the present writer was nominated as the first full-time general secretary of the CEC, the fact that he was a Baptist was found to be in his favour!

Apart from involvement in ecumenical work in the framework of these two international bodies, Baptists are very active in other settings such as the Evangelical Alliance and, especially in Eastern Europe, in the work of the Christian Peace Conference.

Thus the Baptist ecumenical involvement scene changes profoundly from place to place in Europe. It ranges from vanguard positions to complete withdrawal—and there is protest against either position within those unions which assume them. Much to give and much to receive—that is the offer and the possibility for European Baptists on the ecumenical scene at the present time. Bringing personal commitment and clear theological insight, they may be enriched by a broadening of horizons and the meeting with other richly endowed confessions.

GLEN GARFIELD WILLIAMS

## THE BAPTIST MOVEMENT IN GERMANY

### 1. Brief History

In 1823 the German merchant Johann Gerhard Oncken landed on the continent from England and took up his work as a missionary agent of an English Bible Society. The first

Baptist Church in Germany was founded in 1834 in Hamburg. Oncken's motto ran: "Every Baptist a Missionary". Thus it was that the travelling journeymen of the time often became missionaries and founders of Baptist Churches all over the Continent. Hamburg, Berlin, East Prussia and later the Rhineland were strongholds of missionary work.

In 1852 Karl Brockhaus founded the Christian Assembly (Christliche Versammlung) in Wuppertal-Elberfeld, which later joined with the Open Brethren to form the Union of Free Church Christians (Bund Freikirchlicher Christen). Since these Churches (i.e. the Open Brethren) did not keep rolls of membership, they found themselves in dire straits under the National Socialists. This is one of the reasons why, in 1941, the Baptist Union, the Union of Free Church Christians and Churches of the Elim-Movement joined together to form the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany (Bund Evangelisch-Freikirchlicher Gemeinden in Deutschland K.d.ö.R.).

In 1969 the Churches in the GDR formed an independent Union of Evangelical Free Churches in the GDR, with its headquarters in East Berlin.

## **2. Survey of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany Today**

With its 645 Churches and daughter-Churches and more than 67,000 members in the Federal Republic and West Berlin, the Union of Evangelical Free Churches forms the largest Evangelical Free Church in the Federal Republic of Germany. It is a member of the Baptist World Alliance, of the Alliance of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany (Vereinigung evangelischer Freikirchen in Deutschland) and of the National Council of Churches in Germany (Arbeitsgemeinschaft christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland). The Union is not a member of the World Council of Churches, but belongs to the Conference of European Churches (Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen). The Churches play an active part in the Evangelical Alliance and have ecumenical relations at a local level.

The German Baptists have a Theological College in Hamburg and maintain the Publishing House J. G. Oncken in Kassel. The Union has five deaconess houses with about 850 sisters, a Sunday School of about 50,000 children, a Youth Department with about 19,000 young people, a public welfare service with 27 homes and workshops, and also a tent mission and a Bible School in Wiedenest, Rhineland.

After the second world war there was a strong tide of revival in Germany. The church services were well attended. We had many decisions for Christ and applications for Baptism. With increasing material prosperity the tide ebbed. Since about 1962 our Union—from a missionary point of view—has reached something of a stalemate, and in places there has even been a slight decline in membership. The united efforts in regional mission led, however, in 1970 and

1971 to an increase in Baptisms and accordingly also in membership numbers.

## **3. Focal points of the missionary/social work of our Union of Churches**

The Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany does not maintain its own foreign mission, but is, however, the principal supporter of the European Baptist Missionary Society. The mission fields are Cameroun and Sierra Leone, and the Indian territories in Brazil and Argentina. The work of the Home Mission has two focal points: The tent mission, held every year in all parts of the Federal Republic with five tents and a mission van; and mass evangelism, which is carried on chiefly in large cities.

As we maintain only one Theological College in Hamburg, there is considerable uniformity of outlook among our ministers. Even theological students who have studied at University or attended colleges similar to ours, such as the one at Rüsclikon, are requested on completing their studies, to spend at least one candidate year at our Theological College in Hamburg. In this way there is considerable unity among our ministers. Since our churches are, of course, autonomous, the ministers of our Union are employees of the local church. At the same time they are ministers of our Union, i.e. the Union guarantees them a minimum salary, finds them employment, assures their holidays and provides a supplementary pension.

As yet, our churches have never known a real lack of ministers. Every place in the Theological College in Hamburg is full. In the autumn of 1972 23 new students were admitted. If, despite this, some churches in the Federal Republic and West Berlin are without ministers, this is because they are smallish churches which are unable to raise the minimum salary required by the Union. Here the Union must try to find ways of helping the small and financially weak churches by means of a subsidy from a central fund.

A further important branch of our missionary work is the Youth Department. The union maintains its own College for Youth Leaders in Hamburg, which is related to the Theological College. Besides this, we have 14 full-time workers in the Youth Department, whose main job is to train workers and to organize special training weeks.

## **4. Activities and Programme of our Union**

For many years the 'Bread for the World' project has been of importance in the Federal Republic and West Berlin. German Christians have not forgotten what it is to be hungry. The older people, at least, still remember what it meant when after the second world war relief parcels arrived from the U.S.A., Great Britain or Sweden. Today Christians in Germany are trying to repay a little of what they received then, and the free churches in particular raise large sums for 'Bread for the World'. This aid programme has been extended from year to year. Today Protestant Christians collect about 32 million marks per year for the third world.

A large part of the money collected is channelled back to the Baptist missions and projects for aid to under-developed countries.

In order to improve contacts with our foreign mission, we have tried sending teams of young people to the mission fields of Cameroun and South America. The young people had the task of erecting schools and other buildings and of helping the missionaries build extensions to mission premises. The experiment has proved very successful. We are planning to continue sending similar missionary and construction teams to the mission field for six months or longer.

Our Youth Work has undergone a particular crisis. The young people between the ages of 20 and 25 are so taken up with social and political questions that they can scarcely spare a thought for the missionary work of our Union and Youth Department. Among the teenagers, however, we are pleased to see a strong renewed interest in the Bible. We have youth days, devoted primarily to Bible Study, which draw two or even three thousand young people. We are very thankful for these fresh signs of revived missionary youth work.

Our Union is suffering at present from a difference of opinion as regards possible co-operation in the World Council of Churches. It is the younger ministers who are pressing for greater ecumenical involvement. On the other hand, individual churches are threatening to leave the Union if it should become a member of the World Council of Churches. We are, at present, also faced with a similar crisis within Germany. The National Council of Churches, of which we are a member, is about to undergo a structural re-organization. The issue in question is the admission of the Catholic Church into the Council. Many of our Churches and theologians are naturally very much opposed to this. On the other hand they are urging for greater co-operation with the other free churches. One could summarize the ecumenical problem by saying that our churches fear institutional unity, but at the same time are very open for closer co-operation with believing Christians of all denominations.

The Baptist movement has suffered, from the very beginning, from a strong Lutheran influence. This is particularly true with regard to political involvement. Our ancestors have always been of the opinion that the state and religion have little or nothing to do with one another, and they were never very active in politics. They were, as far as possible, subject to the state and ready to suffer. Now a new political awareness has been awakened among the younger generation, and, in keeping with this, our young ministers are deeply committed politically. At the same time it can truly be said that in recent years the nationalistic spirit has waned remarkably and that a 'European' mentality is becoming more and more widespread among the middle-aged and younger generations.

The German Baptists are especially fervent in their efforts to help their brethren in Eastern Europe. It is our

firm conviction that today we must think not only of our 'distant neighbour' in the third world, but that it is our task to use the 'bridges' and 'open doors' which we still have to Eastern Europe to minister spiritually and financially to our brothers and sisters there in their particular situation.

We are glad that giving within our Union is such that we have no financial worries. What we really long for is a stronger tide of revival, in order to reach the self-satisfied masses in our modern materialistic society more effectively with the gospel.

Finally, I should like to touch on one other particular problem—namely the mission to migrant workers. Some years ago our Union engaged special missionaries from Italy and Spain to reach the migrant workers from these lands living in the Federal Republic. This worked very well, but the result was that the migrant workers formed their own groups which had little contact with our churches. We, however, were concerned that the migrant workers should be better integrated into our churches. They should no longer feel themselves to be aliens and guests in our country, but should feel part of our society and therefore of our whole Baptist community. We saw here both a European and Baptist missionary task. We have therefore called upon our churches to increase their missionary and social work among migrant workers and are thankful that this branch of the work has been greatly extended in the past few years. It is our hope and wish that this very work will be instrumental in spreading the 'European' spirit among us still more.

GERHARD CLAAS

## **BAPTIST WORK IN ITALY: A HISTORICAL SURVEY**

After the fall of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna had re-established in Italy the despotic governments which tried to suppress every concept of freedom. The yearnings for liberty led some to find in the Holy Scriptures the true fountain of these liberties. It was in this period and in this climate that the first glimmers of Evangelical life appeared in Italy.

A factor that favoured the rise of the modern Evangelical movement in Italy was the interest on the part of a member of cultural circles in favour of popular education. In England and Scotland, where these matters received the most attention, the Free Churches were the ones that were the most active in this field. Because of this, relationships of friendship and mutual interest were established along with exchanges of visits.

Another source of Evangelical light during the first half of the 19th Century were the Italian refugees in foreign countries. In London there were some refugees, among whom were Gabriele Rossetti, Salvatore Ferretti (cousin on the mother's side of Pope Pius IX), Camillo Mappi and

others. These refugees opened an orphanage for Italian children, aided by an English Baptist named Noel. The first religious services in Italian took place in 1884. Three years later they organized an Italian Evangelical Church, of a type somewhere between the Baptist and the Plymouth Brethren models. They published a periodical called "Eco di Savonarola" which had a great influence in the evangelization of Italy. Out of this group came the first Italian Evangelical hymn book.

The British and Foreign Bible Society sought to distribute Scriptures wherever it was possible. Before 1860 it had sent 130,000 portions of Scriptures into Italy. The National Bible Society of Scotland began colportage work in 1860.

Baptist beginnings in Italy can be traced to 1863, when two English pastors, James Wall and Edward Clarke, having heard of the spiritual need in Italy, came for a visit, at the expense of a church member, Mr Holroyd. They returned to England with a strong feeling that God was calling them to work in Italy. Mr and Mrs Wall sold their furniture in order to return to Italy, without any official backing, and settled in Bologna. Mr Clarke returned to Italy in 1865 and settled in La Spezia. It became possible there to purchase a building of several floors which was named "Casa Alberto." Clarke, too, received no regular help from any organization, and provided for his support giving English lessons. In 1870 a voluntary committee was formed in the Baptist Union of Great Britain to help these brethren.

The "incorporation" of Rome into the Kingdom of Italy brought much joy, not only to the Italians in general, but to all the world. The Evangelicals had been awaiting eagerly the liberation of the Eternal City from the Papal yoke, and they hastened to carry there the Word of Life and of liberty. It is said that when the "Bersaglieri" troops penetrated the walls of Rome, behind them followed a colporteur with a dog-cart full of Bibles.

Baptists came to Rome in the same period. The exact date when James Wall moved to Rome is unknown but it was in 1870. Meetings were held in various rented halls, and it was necessary to move often, because of the clerical pressure brought to bear on the owners of the building.

The Southern Baptist Convention of the U.S.A. had decided in May 1870 to begin a work in Italy. Dr. Cote was sent in June and he too was in Rome soon after the liberation. There was a close co-operation with the English Baptist Mission. In fact, the first Baptist church in Rome was organized jointly on January 29, 1871. By the end of the year the church already numbered 60 members. Mr Wall had been appointed officially by the Baptist Missionary Society of London, which made Italy one of the principal fields of labour. In a short time churches were organized in Civitavecchia, Bari, Bologna, Modena and Torre Pellice. Among those who were converted in Rome was a Canon of the Santa Maria Maggiore Basilica.

In 1875, Mr W. Kemme Landels, an engineer who was working in Sicily, was impressed by the spiritual need that

he saw and asked to be appointed as a worker of the English Baptist Mission. He was sent to Naples. His brother John also became a member of the Mission and was sent to Genova in 1877, but died after two years. Through the generosity of Mr Kemp, an Englishman, an attractive property was acquired in the Piazza in Lucina, Rome. Mrs Wall was doing a great social work among the poor in the Trastevere section. In 1878 Mr H. Shaw arrived in Rome and became pastor of the church in Via Urbana, built with the help of Mr Thomas Cook. In this same year work was begun in Torino and Orbassano. In 1884 the Baptist journal *Il Testimonio* ("The Witness") was founded in Naples and a family leaflet called *Il Buon Genio* ("The Good Spirit"). *Il Testimonio* became the official publication of the Apostolic Christian Baptist Union which was organized in 1884 and united in fraternal fellowship all the Baptists of Italy.

In the meantime, the Baptist Mission supported by the brethren from America was having a difficult beginning. Dr. Cote resigned from the work and it was necessary to find a substitute. The person found was Dr. George Boardman Taylor, who arrived in 1873 to reorganize the Mission. A Baptist Church was organized at Milan in 1875. Signor Bellondi began a work at Venice and Signor Cossu in Cagliari. The periodical *Il Semiatore* ("The Sower") was published for the first time in 1878. In that year the property in Via Teatro Valle of Rome was purchased. The Vatican took notice of the event as "the opening of an infernal hall." Mr and Mrs John H. Eager came from the United States in 1880 and went to Florence in 1890. At the end of the century the American mission had 22 churches and 21 groups, with 20 pastors and 518 members. The English mission worked in 44 places, with 15 pastors and 978 members.

We can look only very briefly at the Evangelical life from 1900 to the time of Fascism. As everyone knows, the political, economic and even religious climate was changing. The golden times of the *Risorgimento* ("Resurgence") and of unification were passed, liberalism had lost its enthusiasm and social ferment was rife; the economy had hardened into monopolies. The Roman Church was changing its attitude of isolation from political life and began to participate more actively in it. At the same time signs were appearing of an ideological reform called Modernism, which seemed to offer hope of a new freedom. Over all these manifestations there was the dark cloud of world conflict, which later broke out with tragic effects.

The English Baptist Mission went ahead on its road, making slow progress. James Wall died in 1901. In 1904 the "temple" in Torino was built. The "Il Risveglio" (Revival) Publishing House, at the side of the church, produced in that year 232,000 copies of tracts. The following year saw the beginning of the work of Pastor Scrajber at S. Antonino (province of Torino), on the invitation of the socialist anticlerical mayor, but without his help. During the war, the work in Italy suffered greatly, but much work was done among the soldiers. After the war there was a period of

revival, preceded by prayer meetings. Especially noteworthy was the revival that took place in Florence. In 1920, during a conference of Baptists, held in London, it was decided that it would be better to have only one Mission at work in Italy. Meanwhile, Dr. Whittinghill had come in 1901 for the task of starting a Baptist theological school. This he did, after being in Italy for a few months. In 1905 Dr. and Mrs Everett Gill arrived from America, taking the direction of the northern part of the work, while Dr. Whittinghill directed the Theological School and the southern field. Dr. Taylor's health was very uncertain, and he died in 1907 after 34 years of work in Italy. In the same year the Gills returned to America for several years, because of malaria in the family, and the Whittinghills remained by themselves to direct the work. He dedicated himself with zeal to the work, especially to that of the Theological School and the publications. In 1912 he founded the cultural magazine *Bilychnis* which met with great favour in the scholarly circles of Italy, and furnished a platform for the discussion of the most advanced ideas of that time. Meanwhile the work of evangelism was making progress and new fields were being opened. Mr J. P. Stuart was sent from America to help in Southern Italy. He distinguished himself particularly in connection with the riot of Bisaccia in 1910, in which the population, incited by the clergy and terrorized by earthquakes that had struck the area, had taken it out on the Protestants. Dr. Stuart himself went to face the situation, and his comportment obliged the authorities to take action so as to remedy the situation. After the war a committee was formed to advise Dr. Whittinghill in carrying out his vast responsibilities. Increased help from the American brethren made it possible to buy two important properties in Rome—one in Piazza Barberini, and another at Monte Mario where the orphanage that was started in 1921 was begun. In this period the Baptist philosopher Giuseppe Gangale began the publication of the journal *Coscienza* ("Conscience") which for a number of years (until 1927) put Baptists in the forefront of thought in Italy.

The Fascist period was a very difficult time for the Evangelical movement. At the beginning it seemed as though the Fascist regime would be favourable to the Evangelicals, and some even hailed the Concordat as a defence against the clerical pressure. Mussolini himself declared in Parliament that the non-Catholic religions would not suffer and had nothing to fear. However, the police laws that were issued showed that the tendency of the government was to control and to limit severely the life of the Evangelical churches. Furthermore, because of their relations with Anglo-Saxon countries, the Evangelicals were suspected of dubious loyalty.

Another big difficulty of this period was the financial crisis which struck fully nearly all the societies that helped the work in Italy, making necessary the curtailment or even the closing of various activities. Baptists also felt the effects of the situation but perhaps with less painful consequences

than some other Evangelical denominations. Through the sale of the Piazza Barberini property and sacrifices on the part of Pastors who accepted a cut in salary, it was possible to get through the financial crisis without dismissing pastors. It became necessary to sell the property on Monte Mario (due to Fascist pressures?), and the orphanage was reduced to minimum size. The Theological School, which had been reopened in 1926, had to be closed again in 1932. Also the journal *Bilychnis* became a victim of the financial crisis.

On the positive side there took place expressions of special vitality in the churches, such as the revival in Torino of 1929, and the 82 persons baptized in 1932. In 1934, during a visit of Dr. Charles Maddry, Executive Secretary of the S. Baptist Foreign Mission Board, the responsibility for the Baptist work in Italy was entrusted to an Italian directive committee. Dr. and Mrs W. Dewey Moore arrived in 1937. A programme of greater autonomy for the local churches was begun, which included the preparation of their budgets, and the assumption of all responsibility insofar as possible.

Unfortunately the outbreak of the war prevented the complete carrying-out of this plan, and brought another period of severe trials for the churches. Dr. and Mrs Whittinghill left Italy in 1939 after 38 years of work, and the following year the Moores had to leave because of the war.

The hard trials of the war demonstrated that the Baptist churches and pastors had a spirit of constancy and of sacrifice, along with the capacity of carrying on the work by themselves when it was necessary.

The post-war period was a time of reorganization and reconstruction after the preceding difficulties. In 1945 an interdenominational committee was formed for the distribution of relief assistance. The following year saw the formation of the Federal Council of Evangelical Churches in Italy, composed of Waldensians, Methodists and Baptists. The main purpose was the struggle for religious liberty in the new legislation of the Italian State.

During this period the Baptists built several new churches and opened several new fields of work. In 1949 the Theological School was opened at Rivoli and a Women's Bible Institute ("Betania"=Bethany) at Rome. The orphanage was moved to the outskirts of Rome, at Centocelle, and was greatly increased and strengthened.

The work among women and young people developed considerably. A "village" for fraternal gatherings was built by the sea at Santa Severa (near Rome) and a camp centre for children at Rocca di Papa. However, the major attention and concern has been given to the formulation of an organization that could unify and use the spiritual forces which characterize the Baptist churches. Thus in 1955 there was constituted the Christian Evangelical Baptist Union, with its subsidiary activities. The Baptists in fellowship with

the Union number 4,754 members, organized in 84 churches and 46 groups.

The La Spezia Baptist Mission for Italy was reorganized in 1953 through the work of pastor Enrico Paschetto. In 1967 it united, except for three churches, with the Baptist Union.

## **BAPTISTS IN HOLLAND**

Holland, and its capital Amsterdam in particular, is in fact the cradle of the Baptist movement in the world. Dutch Baptists are just a little proud of the fact that Baptist witness originated in their own great capital city. The story is well-known. Like many others at the beginning of the 17th century John Smyth emigrated from England to Amsterdam for the sake of freedom of religion and conscience, to find a haven of refuge in these lowlands. He became the minister of the local Mennonite church and his name still shines among those who once served this church as "teachers" mentioned on the memorial plaques in the vestry of the Mennonite "Singelkerk" in Amsterdam. In 1609 John Smyth separated himself from the Mennonites and, with a handful of followers, founded the first Baptist church of the world. Those who joined him in this fellowship of believers were all English and, as soon as circumstances became favourable, they returned to their native country to continue the work they had begun in Holland.

### **Brief Historical Review**

Although Baptist witness originated in Holland, it was almost two and a half centuries (1845) before this distinctive teaching sounded again in this country. This time it was a former Dutch Reformed minister, Dr. Johannes Elias Feisser, who was baptized in a canal at Gasselternijveen (Drente) together with six faithful followers and so formed the first Baptist church of Holland. Feisser and his followers were baptized by Julius Köbner, a co-worker of the founder of the continental Baptist movement, Johann Gerhard Oncken. The mention of these two men may lead some to suppose that the Baptist Movement in Holland was mainly inspired and influenced by the German Baptist Movement which, especially at the beginning, had a strong Calvinistic emphasis. This is only partly true for, particularly during the 70s and 80s of the past century, the few Dutch Baptist churches that were in the country came under the influence of the less rigid theological ideas of British Baptists. The former B.M.S. missionary, H. Z. Kloekers, (his daughter married the Congo pioneer, Holman Bentley) began to play an important part, and also succeeded in uniting most Churches in the Union which had been founded in 1881. The revivalism of the American preachers, Moody and Sankey, also appealed very much to Dutch Baptist preachers. These two influences, that of the original Calvinistic German

Baptist movement and that of the sometimes Arminian English became unified in the rather unusual mixture of the Dutch Baptist Movement. On the one hand, a lively evangelistic out-reach with rather pietist-methodist ideas and manners of speech; on the other hand, a sometimes rather stern and biblically orientated way of life.

### **Extension and Growth**

In a certain sense it can be said of the churches of Holland that they form a kind of family church. Many old names, such as Reiling, Olijslager, Engelsman, Kruit, and so on, return again and again in the church registers all over Holland. There are some churches in the densely populated west of the country, but most Baptists live and work in the north and east. It was in these provinces that the Baptist Movement started and there it grew most. The churches in the other parts of the country have, for the most part, been founded by Baptists who had come from the northern provinces to settle in new areas.

The growth, either in membership or in the number of churches, can hardly be called spectacular although many leading Baptists of other countries ask with a little envy why the churches in our country can still speak of growth in spite of the process of secularism and de-christianisation in industrialised Holland. The Roman Catholic church is emancipating herself and the Dutch Roman Catholic is regarded as belonging to the advanced guard of this development. Furthermore, the two largest Protestant denominations (the Dutch Reformed church and the Reformed church) who, on paper, have millions of members have less influence than in former years. The church is now playing a smaller part in the lives of many people; churches stand unused and have to be sold; there is lack of money and a shortage of ministers. When we compare our own situation with that of the other denominations, we are amazed and grateful to God for the continuing growth; the increase percentage is in fact greater than that of the growth of the population.

### **Growth since 1945**

At the end of the Second World War there were 40 Baptist churches in Holland with a membership of about 6,000. A quarter of a century later there were more than 70 churches with about 10,000 members. Moreover, there has been an important extension in the organisation and the work of the Union. Since 1946, the Union has had an office, first in Haarlem, later in Arnhem, where both a General Treasurer (T. Jansma) and a General Secretary (Th. van der Laan), together with their office staff, are engaged in full-time work. One minister (M. G. Boeschoten), also has a full-time job as director of training in the Dutch Baptist Youth Movement. The Women's Movement, although a very sprightly and growing organisation, does not feel the need for a full-time worker yet.

Missionary work also started in the post-war years. Be-

fore the war individual members of some churches left for one or other of the mission fields of the world. In some cases they were sponsored by a Foreign Mission Board of another country, for example, Miss G. Reiling who went in 1921 to Yakusu, Congo, for the B.M.S.: but it was only in the 1950s that the first missionaries could be sent to Congo and later to Cameroun by the Foreign Mission Board of the Dutch Union. This missionary work, which compared with that of other countries is very moderate, nevertheless reached a budget of 60,000 guilders in 1970. It is expected that the work will further extend and develop in the course of the coming years.

The training of ministers has also been a matter of concern over the past few years. The churches have long been grateful for many lay preachers who have served them in preaching and pastoral care, but the desire was felt for theologically trained ministers. In the last century, soon after the founding of the German Baptists' seminary in Hamburg, the facilities of the "Prediger-seminar" were used by Dutch Baptists. In 1910, the first Dutch Baptist, J. W. Weenink, completed his studies at Spurgeon's College in London. Since then many have followed; most went to Hamburg but some preferred to study in England. The outbreak of the Second World War ended these facilities. Those ministers who completed their studies between the years 1939-1950 made use of the theological faculties of some Dutch universities. A period followed in which theological students prepared themselves for ministry in various centres; some studied in Hamburg, others in Ruschlikon, two at Spurgeon's College, one in Tollose (Denmark), one in Stockholm (Sweden) and one in Chicago (U.S.A.).

Dutch Baptists have always wanted a theological college in Holland. At the beginning of the 1950s it was felt that this could be established as two men, Dr. J. Reiling and Dr. J. J. Kiwiet, were qualified to undertake the training of students and funds were also available from America, and so the Union decided to buy "De Vinkenhof" in the vicinity of Utrecht. Dr. J. Reiling became the principal and since then, with the help of his tutorial staff, he has trained several ministers for the work of the churches. In 1961 Dr. J. J. Kiwiet left for the U.S.A. to lecture at one of the Southern Baptist Convention seminaries.

Another post-war extension is the forming of the Union Building Fund. Since 1950, about thirty new churches and church centres have either been built or reconstructed with the help of this fund, and other schemes are still in hand. In connection with building schemes, in the autumn of 1970, a start was made with the building in Amsterdam of a nursing home for geriatric patients with facilities for 170 patients. This new project has considerably extended the work which the Baptist Society "Tabitha" has been doing for some years now in Amsterdam. This Society is also engaged in other areas (Scheveningen, Stadskanaal, Schoonloo in Drente) on work for the care of the aged and for those

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**The Baptist Insurance Company Limited**  
**4 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4AB**

To the Readers of the "Fraternal"

Dear Friends,

His sunburst inspiration  
Made earthly forms so true  
To life, so new to vision,  
That now the actual view  
Seems a mere phantom, through  
Whose blur we glimpse creation.

C. Day Lewis.

I like dipping into anthologies and the other night I was reading in bed a Book of Britain compiled by John Hadfield.

I had returned that evening from one of my business trips to a church, this time in the Midlands, and after supper had gone to bed to relax over Hadfield's anthology.

My imagination was caught by this quotation from C. Day Lewis on Constable.

Now I had always thought of Constable simply as a meticulous draughtsman whose painting of trees and landscapes would bear the closest botanical scrutiny.

Indeed I had felt that Constable was good (what supreme conceit on my part!) but that he failed to bring out the mystery of what he was portraying.

Day Lewis has rebuked me for he suggests that such meticulous care carries inherent in its fidelity the key to the door of the mystery.

I do not need such a rebuke when I see a church building which I have not previously visited.

I am invariably conscious that the building handsome, indifferently handsome, indifferently ugly or ugly as it may be—I have seen buildings within that wide spectrum—is but the bricks and mortar of the cause.

Of course bricks and mortar or rather insuring them is my trade but I can in my mind's eye people the pews and chairs with the vibrancy of the spirit which caused the church to be built.

I fear this is said somewhat badly and possibly it reads as if I was trying to shoot a line but I do wish you to know that this Company endeavours to serve the people of this denomination. We really do try to get behind the bricks and mortar.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN  
General Manager

P.S. In case some think I am slipping in not presenting the "commercial" remember this formula.

If 1939=100 then 100 x 8=1973.

Building costs are now eight times 1939 figures.

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needing periods of rest. Two Baptist ministers are fully occupied with the work of "Tabitha".

### Ecumenical Relations

If Ecumenism starts at home, then first of all it must be said that the Dutch Union has been a member of the Baptist World Alliance since its inception in 1905. On one occasion, the Dutch Baptist churches provided a vice-president for the B.W.A., namely F. E. Huizinga. This same man also served for a term as president of the European Baptist Federation which was founded after the Second World War. J. Broertjes too served for a period as president of the European Baptist Federation.

In 1964, the European Baptist Federation Conference was held in Amsterdam with Dr. Martin Luther King among the speakers. Other conferences of both the B.W.A. and E.B.F. have almost always been attended by Dutch Baptists.

The Union also believes it important to maintain links with Christians who have similar aims and sympathies: Pentecostal groups, Brethren, Free Evangelical Churches and so called Free Baptist Churches which are not members of the Union. Contacts with some of these groups and denominations have been made and these seem to offer promise for the future.

Of course, much can also be said about a wider ecumenism. In 1948, when the World Council of Churches was formed (again in Amsterdam!), the Dutch Baptist Union joined this and also became part of the national branch of the World Council, i.e. the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Holland. From the start there was opposition to this action. Some feared that the World Council would become a Super Church; others feared the supposed liberalism of some of the affiliated churches and some others were afraid of the influence of Rome. It was decided in 1963 to withdraw from membership of these bodies. In 1970 a proposal put by the Union Council to the churches suggesting rejoining at least the National Council of Churches was rejected by the majority. One of the objections put forward was the fact that every local church is autonomous and that the Union as a federation of independent churches could hardly represent them on a body to which several churches held objections on principle. The fact that every church is independent meant that many Baptist churches felt free to join the local ecumenical councils and where possible play an active part in the ecumenical work.

Although not affiliated to the National Council of Churches, the Union takes part in various inter-denominational activities. To mention some examples; the Union is represented on the committee which promotes contact with the Government. Thanks to this participation, two Baptist ministers serve as permanent army chaplains. The Union is also represented on one of the two interdenominational organisations for church programmes on radio and T.V. and because of this some Baptist church services are broadcast every year on the radio and occasionally on T.V.

### Future Perspectives

One burden shared by all the churches is the increasing shortage of ministers. There are some clear reasons for this. First of all, both in the Dutch Baptist churches and throughout Holland, there is what can be called 'the flight out of the ministry'. We cannot go into the causes of this in the scope of this article but can only state the fact. Also in recent years the shortage of ministers has been increased by some who have had to retire because of failing health, and by the sudden death of others. Fortunately up till now young men have constantly offered themselves for training at the seminary but, if the present trend goes on, it is feared that the number of vacancies will not diminish but increase. There is, however, cause for optimism as well. The shortage of ministers may well result eventually in a more efficient use of the ministers available, and a greater involvement by an increased number of lay preachers and other Christian workers in the work of the churches. Another cause for optimism about our denominational role is that in our opinion infant baptism may well lose its appeal. We gladly quote in this connection a statement of the German church leader, Dr. Martin Niemöller: "The church of the year 2,000 will be a church of believers". It looks very much as though Dr. Niemöller may be right. The church of the future will be the church of the New Testament. Surely this is the ambition of Baptist churches all over the world.

JAN VAN DAM

### THE B.M.F. AND EUROPE

At the European Baptist Congress in Vienna, August 1969, a number of the delegates from various countries were confronted by an Englishman brandishing some little cards and asking them whether they could help him find any of the people whose names were on the cards. I was the man concerned, and in fact was successful in finding representatives from eighteen European countries (including six from Eastern Europe). In this way it was possible for me to check that our magazine was being sent to the correct addresses of many of our members in Europe, and to enrol a number of new members. I plan to do the same thing in Zurich this July.

*The Fraternal* goes to twenty-one countries in Europe, eight of which are in the Eastern bloc. Most of the recipients never write to us at all though. Some write to the treasurer or membership secretary, who pass the letter on to me. From time to time an envelope is sent back marked "Unknown at this address" (or the equivalent in the appropriate language). However, in various ways the list is kept reasonably up-to-date, and changes of address are often sent.

Apart from Sidney Morris, my predecessors were Irwin Barnes and Bruce Hardy. We still have subscribers in Europe

who were introduced to B.M.F. by Sidney Morris, but every year new friends are joining us. All the Baptist seminaries where English is understood receive copies of *The Fraternal*, and some of the students express the desire to continue receiving after they leave the seminary.

Over the eight years that I have been European secretary for the B.M.F., letters have come to me from many sources telling of the appreciation felt by our brethren on the continent. One German minister's wife wrote to say that her husband was not very well and was about to retire, but he would like to continue reading *The Fraternal*. His wife said she also enjoyed reading it. Another German pastor said he always reads *The Fraternal* with joy and interest. After the Second World War he had British soldiers in his congregation fairly often and used to hold his midweek service in two languages, translating every sentence from German to English.

A Swedish speaking pastor from Finland met Sidney Morris in Gothenburg in 1952, and has been reading *The Fraternal* since then. He greatly appreciates the personal contact with Baptist ministers in England which the magazine represents. However, he and probably many other pastors in Europe would welcome personal letters from ministers in the U.K. Perhaps this might lead to twinning of Baptist churches, which could be of mutual help and benefit.

In 1968 three of the leaving students from Rüscliiken said they would like to continue to receive *The Fraternal*. They were of different nationalities and went back to very different situations. The one from Portugal served a church of thirty members in a strongly Catholic part of Portugal. His stipend was forty pounds a month. Subsequently he went to South Africa to work as pastor among 80,000 Portuguese, a pioneering situation with great prospects.

By contrast, the Finnish student became pastor to a church of 200 members. Their church building is considered one of the finest in the country and has been the venue for TV services. Later he became Youth Secretary to the Finnish Baptist Union. He explained that "when the Union is a small one, one person has several jobs." He also commented on the need for prayer: "I believe that prayer would make our church members more active and courageous in personal evangelism . . . I suppose you Baptists in England have more experience in this field."

The third student came from Spain and returned to his home country not as a full-time pastor, but as assistant pastor in a small church on a part-time basis. He writes, "Besides this, I work every day as a teacher in an evangelical school where I have also many opportunities to talk with young people about Christ. I also study the piano as much as I can, because I am a concert pianist and try to give as many concerts as I can every year. This might be new for you, but it is not for the Baptists on the continent, because I have given recitals in many Baptist churches in Holland, Sweden, Germany and Switzerland. However, I have never

## THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

"We decided that God had called us to  
preach the good news to the people there."

(Acts 16:10)

The Baptist Missionary Society is planning to  
locate a missionary couple in the Amazonas Region  
of Brazil.

It is hoped that other missionaries will be prepared  
to follow.

Ministers who wish to know more about this new  
work are invited to

Write now to:—

**Rev. A. S. Clement,  
Baptist Missionary Society,  
93 Gloucester Place,  
London, W1H 4AA**

been in England, though I would be very interested to know it.”

Among others with whom I have been corresponding on behalf of B.M.F. are two brothers, one in East and the other in West Germany. The former was in Vienna in 1969 and I was pleased to be able to meet him. Their situations are quite different, but they both rejoice that they are serving the same Lord; and they both find *The Fraternal* very helpful.

These extracts from some of my correspondence with pastors in Europe will enable you to see that the B.M.F. is far from insular in its outlook. There is everything to gain from increasing contacts with our brethren in Europe, and I am grateful for the privilege and opportunity to serve the wider fellowship of B.M.F. on the continent.

R. RIVERS

## WHAT CAN A RETIRED MINISTER CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHURCH?

When I retired from the full-time ministry in December 1966 an American brother minister wrote and advised me to take a long holiday to “re-tyre” and then get on the road of service again. I followed his advice and came back from sunny Spain refreshed in body, mind and spirit. My first reaction to retirement was a sense of welcome release from day to day responsibilities but very soon I was restless and eager to serve. When I moved to the South Coast I found other opportunities to preach until I was invited to be Moderator but effectively the Minister at Pevensey Bay.

I have often been asked “What contribution can a retired Minister make to the Church?” My first year of retirement was spent at Woodmansterne, an L.B.A. suburban church, under the ministry of Arthur Gray. When I moved to the South Coast I joined Edmund Heddle’s church at Bexhill. In both churches I considered myself an ordinary member and took my place in the fellowship as such, being ready to serve as my Minister should desire.

A retired Minister may well find himself out on a limb unless he is fully occupied. Should this gap occur he must at all costs endeavour to fill it. I began by making a programme of reading, especially of biographies which I had always enjoyed and which I found fruitful in providing material for sermons. I also decided that although I had a good reserve of sermons I would prepare new sermons for my own mental and spiritual health. This I have enjoyed immensely and the more so since I am able to prepare without being under pressure. To live on “travellers” is a sure way to decadence as a preacher and will lead a preacher to become as “sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal”.

What happens to a retired Minister turns a great deal on the place to which he retires. Should he remain in London with its 272 Baptist churches he will not lack preaching opportunities but if he goes to Worthing he will find Ministers everywhere. So the place of retirement location is important. But wherever he goes he should remember that when he joins a Church he becomes an ordinary member like any other member. As such he should endeavour to make his contribution to the life of the Church.

One thing a retired Minister should never do is to usurp in any way the position or authority of the resident Minister. This is specially important should the Minister be a younger man. A retired Minister may well, for a while at least, sit uneasily under the ministry of a young man whose ideas and methods are different to his own but he should remember that when he commenced his ministry he probably expressed himself and brought to the life of his Church ideas and methods to which those of older generations were not accustomed. My experience was that older folk accepted me for what I was and graciously supported me in my ministry. It is a betrayal of the Brotherhood for a retired Minister to impede in any way the ministry of a young brother. It is also a serious responsibility because it could lead to a brother’s disillusionment and even departure from our ranks. A retired Minister’s ministry should be essentially a ministry of encouragement and in particular of younger men.

I received a letter today from a retired Minister, now eighty years of age. He served a London church for thirty-five years and enjoyed a fruitful and much blessed ministry. He has remained in the fellowship and has served as a Deacon for many years, having the happiest relationship with his young Minister. This is as it should be. His one desire is to encourage and strengthen the hand of his young successor.

Throughout the whole of my ministry I have been encouraged by older men. I recall D. J. Hiley who came to retire in North London when I was a young minister. Physically he looked more like a pugilist than a preacher, and had preaching power to match, but privately he was gentle and gracious and always eager to inspire a younger man. His church at Broadmead, Bristol, installed a stained glass window to mark his ministry there and gave it the title “Barnabas” a brother beloved. Another was Sydney G. Morris a near neighbour of mine and to whom I owe much. During twenty years of retirement he gave his whole life to the ministry of encouragement.

I am enjoying my retirement but when the time comes for me to step aside from active service I shall continue to pray for my younger Brethren and encourage them as they carry forward the torch of the truth of Jesus Christ and His Gospel which has been the joy of my life.

W. CHARLES JOHNSON

## LITERATURE FOR MISSIONARIES

### The Missionaries Literature Association of the Baptist Men's Movement

Ours is an old Association. Launched before the end of the last century, it has been of immeasurable value to countless Christian workers overseas. Before 1926 it was an inter-denominational body then, when very close to death, the Baptist Men's Movement took it over and appointed C. T. Byford to become secretary. Reorganising the structure of the work, he re-vitalised the Association and created a new wave of enthusiasm amongst missionary minded people everywhere.

Basically, our task is to provide literature for missionaries and Christian workers overseas. But we are also concerned to foster missionary interest in our churches, to create personal contacts between a missionary and a church—and individuals—and, as a result of this close contact, make the prayers of all more direct, meaningful and effective.

Just what kind of literature is suitable for a missionary? Many people still think a missionary is not a normal person. While he may wish to receive *The Christian Herald*, should we limit his reading to this interesting journal? A woman said to me about a Congo colleague "He is not a proper missionary. He confessed to me that he has a refrigerator"! Naturally, our overseas colleagues enjoy reading the same magazines that we enjoy, but they have no station news stand to catch their eyes, or W. H. Smith's shop through which they can browse. Our reading can perhaps be put into three easy categories. So could theirs.

A. Many of us welcome periodicals to help us in our work as doctors, nurses, teachers, ministers, mechanics, do-it-yourself fans, etc. Incidentally these are the kind of journals we wish to keep for reference, so to get them for a missionary usually involves a separate subscription.

B. We are all interested in news—world, local and religious. Did you know that some missionaries never see an English newspaper? Many have asked me to try and get one for them. Most of them, though not all, because of local conditions have to be satisfied with the B.B.C.'s ten minutes *World News* plus five minutes *Home News*. One missionary told me that to get this she has to get up at six in the morning and is never certain of good reception. Does it surprise you to learn that *The Baptist Times* is by far the periodical most in demand? News! It is like cold water to a thirsty soul.

C. Are there many of us who never relax, never look at a magazine (or your wife at a woman's magazine. We have many women on the mission field), never turn to a hobby, never read a novel or thriller? The missionary who does not relax has a short career on the Field. What a wealth of this kind of literature comes into our homes and so much of it is just thrown away.

We are most anxious to tap all these sources of reading material being convinced that there are many of our people who, if they only knew that the literature they now throw away is indeed wanted, would be quite prepared to put a wrapper round and post it off regularly. An even larger number of people might not be bothered to do that but they would willingly give it to someone else to post. It would be of real help if a church could appoint a literature secretary who would undertake to collect, wrap, address and post such material to addresses that I could give them. There is the problem of the postage. Surely a church, or some organisation within the church, could meet this charge. Most missionaries are very cost conscious and very modest in their requests, often asking for only one item ("I will understand if you cannot get this for me."). What a wonderful thing it would be if we were ever in the position of being able to offer a *selection* from which they could choose.

Although we will always need many people who are willing to send their own papers abroad, there is also a real need for a more modern approach in today's fast moving world. One way is for more gifts by subscriptions direct from the publishers. There are many advantages in this. Lots of people prefer it, for to them a subscription is more efficient and reliable as well as time-saving. From the recipients' point of view, they can have the journal of their choice and not merely something that is available. Literature despatched this way arrives regularly and this is important. Quite a proportion of the home-wrapped magazines never do arrive. Many are never sent! Despite a genuine promise and the best of intentions it is often difficult to post regularly. Illness, holidays, pressure of work and other demands can interfere with sincere intentions. Sometimes the standard of wrapping is sub-standard or there is loss through theft at the post office of the destination. Should a journal from the publisher fail to arrive, it is immediately known and an inquiry can be made to the Post Master. This is usually sufficient. The offer of a subscription is a personal gift, something meaning far more than the sending of a journal no longer needed. It marks affection and appreciation. There are many people in our churches who, if they knew that a missionary of their acquaintance wanted a certain journal, would be only too happy to make sure the journal was sent. They know the missionary; I can tell them what that missionary would like to receive.

Looking at the long list of the various journals requested—more than 100 different kinds—I notice that many of the unfulfilled requests are the more expensive ones (often, in the case of women missionaries, the better class monthly magazines) as contrasted with the popular kind of magazine. Yet the cost of a subscription to a monthly is considerably cheaper than one to a popular weekly. We need the *National Geographical Magazine*, *Illustrated London News*, *Homes and Gardens*, *Woman*, *Woman's Journal*, and the like. Of 13 copies of *Punch* requested, I have received only four

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409 Barking Road, Plaistow, London, E13 8AL

My dear Brother Minister,

**GREENWOODS EXTENSION APPEAL**

I am writing to ask for your help in the raising of a sum of approximately £10,000 for some very necessary extension work on our premises at Greenwoods Stock, in Essex.

It has been apparent for some time that, with the increasing demand for accommodation at Greenwoods with a growing number of people coming for interviews we should have to do something about increasing our office accommodation and interview rooms. It has also been evident for some time past that we needed more staff accommodation, and we now feel that the time has come when we ought to put in hand an extension programme. Our Architect tells us that we should be able to do the job we have in mind for about £10,000 and this substantial figure would normally make us hesitate.

A devoted friend of Greenwoods has recently intimated to me that she would like to give us now the £5,000 she intended to leave us in her Will, and this means that we are half way to the required figure.

I have therefore decided that we should press ahead in faith as it is quite apparent that if we leave this matter much longer we shall only increase the eventual cost by a substantial amount.

I am therefore appealing to private subscribers, and to churches, for the balance of £5,000 to enable us to make Greenwoods even more efficient in the future than it is at present.

If our friends can be persuaded to send us a special gift for this fund, then I think we can raise the money without too much trouble, and I am appealing to you as a leader to say a good word in the right places, and to go the second mile and commend the project to your Diaconate.

If every church would make some small effort to send a special gift for the Greenwoods Extension Fund we could clear this whole business off in a few months, and I earnestly appeal to you and your people to see what you can do for us.

I am delighted to be able to report that we have many evidences of the blessing of God on our work, both at Greenwoods and Orchard House, and also on our Homes at Barking Road.

Thank you for what you are going to do, and with warmest good wishes for God's blessing on all your own service.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL  
Superintendent of the West Ham Central Mission

offers. One missionary wrote, "Do Baptists no longer get Punch?" I wonder!

In heavy demand is a weekly newspaper. The Guardian Weekly costs £6.50 surface and £8.30 by air mail and a Sunday paper, surface, £4.20. Because of my own experience of living on a "bush" station, where none of us could afford a newspaper, I have stressed this urgent need in all my appeals to our Men's Groups. By the end of last year we had eight subscriptions for the Guardian, two of them by air mail. It was obviously foolish to send the surface edition to Nepal, and no surface mail at all was arriving in Bangladesh. Then I found that the surface edition took three months to India (because it went via the Cape), two months to Brazil and four to six weeks for Congo. This was mentioned in the Annual Report with the suggestion that, if we are to meet this need of our missionary friends for a newspaper, we must go that step further. To be of optimum value, the paper should arrive reasonably quickly. The response has been really wonderful so that, at the time of writing, thirty one places on our missionary map receive the Guardian by air mail. Of these, twenty six are personal gifts by donors to missionaries. This is a fine beginning.

One more point about newspapers. The modern Sunday newspaper, much in demand, is also a magazine and therefore, while a speedy arrival is desirable, it is not as important as for a weekly newspaper. We can send a Sunday paper, surface mail, quite cheaply, e.g. Sunday Telegraph, £4.20.

Every church, blessed by having its own missionary on the Field, should make sure that their representative should not lack for literature and I am very concerned that all our women missionaries should receive a women's magazine of their choice. There is no need for me to spell out the value of these magazines to a married woman, especially the ones with young children. I *am* tempted to make a special plea for the large number of single women who are working and witnessing for Christ in conditions that are often very difficult and *never* easy. My appraisal is not that of a visitor. For many years I have seen at close range the fine work of these wonderful women. They deserve everything that we can give them.

As a retired missionary, my 'pitch' in this work is that we should do more for our missionaries, but your concern may be how you can create more missionary interest in your church. I am convinced that the Missionaries Literature Association can help you do this. It is part of the arrangement that a recipient should write a line of thanks to every donor but usually the contact made goes far deeper than this. Between us I am sure we can make an effective contribution to the missionary cause. Will you give us a few lines in your Church Magazine, please?

Finally, I wonder if I could involve you personally. In all our Mission Fields, it is now the *local* church which has full responsibility for its own work and witness. There are trained ministers, evangelists and pastors who are doing a job just like your own. However, *their* sources of material

to help with preaching and pastoral work are very limited indeed and they would welcome any help that we as fellow workers can give them. I have a few right now asking for this kind of help. This is something we could develop to our mutual advantage. The need is for periodicals such as The Expository Times, pastoral journals, Crusade, and magazines with an evangelical emphasis and, of course, theological books. I am glad to say we do have some members of the Brotherhood who, while not wanting to part with their own copy of The Expository Times, pay for a subscription (£1.90) to a missionary colleague. What a grand thing it would be if some of us could do this for an Indian, Bangladesh, African or Brazilian pastor.

DAVID GRENFELL

## STUDENT WORK

As I approached the impressive modern buildings of Sunderland Polytechnic in my new office of unofficial unpaid Free Church Chaplain I wondered what awaited me. On my arrival in the town a few months earlier, the members of the small Christian Union had adopted me as their "spiritual advisor" and made my church their spiritual home. Then, since the local Free Church Council had no plans for the college, the C.U. had arranged with a very willing Principal and Warden to invent a position for me which would give me access to the residential part of the college. The Warden's suggestion was that I should have dinner at the "top table" in the Dining Hall once a week, say "Grace", and after dinner be available to meet students informally in one of the lounges to chat with them and answer their questions.

It all sounded a bit naive, and I suspected that the top table and grace business put me too squarely on the side of the Establishment but I agreed to give it a try. What would the questions be about, I wondered? Passing the lounge I met a large crowd watching the television and putting themselves in danger of missing dinner. Something about an accident in Wales. A place called Aberfan. The questions later that evening were pointed, and hard to answer.

So began a relationship which lasted six years, and which changed its nature several times. It gave me some of my most exciting adventures and some of my worst headaches. Now that it is over I have a lot of questions unanswered about the relationship of the local church to students in a university or college town. I also have solidly confirmed within me the conviction that basically students are like all other human beings, and that, if given the chance, the Gospel is well able to meet their situation.

A polytechnic or technical college has of course its special problems. Only a small proportion of students "live in". There is little communal life. Lectures are "staggered" in such a way that it is never possible to find a time when even the few committed Christians can be gathered together at

once. The strong materialism common twenty years ago in all types of colleges but losing ground in others today, is still very evident in this type of college—so much of the syllabus is concerned with things that can be weighed, measured, classified. The professional rat-race strongly influences students from the beginning: no leisured discussion of philosophies here; the struggle for managerial positions is on already, and the power-structures of heavy industry and civil engineering are pervasive.

The church and its pastor seem to me to have two distinct ministries in this context. There is a ministry to Christian students. They need pastoral care, some shielding from a culture-shock which is severe, a welcome in the local family of God, help and advice in making a Christian witness. There is a ministry to the majority—the non-Christian students. Many have the most peculiar illusions about Christianity. Some freely admit they have never met a "real Christian". A few have carefully-reasoned objection to the Gospel. Most have never considered it.

What have I learned in helping Christian students? First, denomination means nothing to them. A few might just be Nonconformist as opposed to Anglican, or vice versa. They will eagerly attend any church which offers them warm friendship, systematic Bible-teaching and authoritative evangelistic preaching. If it has these, the parish church or the pentecostal assembly will serve equally well. A few of them have actually been Baptists. The odd fact which I merely record, is that of the few who were committed to me via the Baptist Union's excellent scheme, most never settled either with us or with any other church—whilst the Baptists who did join us with enthusiasm apparently came from churches whose ministers and secretaries never bothered to get in touch with me or the Baptist Union! How many casualties I never heard of is anyone's guess—Sunderland covers twenty-five square miles.

We had our own scheme for identifying in-coming Christians, organised by the Christian Union, three Christian lecturers, and myself. A book-stall almost permanently manned during "freshers' week", posters prominently displayed, a "freshers' squash" and a Student Sunday at the church all helped. Student Sunday became so fruitful that we soon organised it each term instead of just the incoming term. Students conducted it, and I preached on eye-catching topics such as, "The Student Revolution" "Is Christianity Escapism?" "Faith in God in a scientific age" "Why Believe?" etc. Students were invited out to tea by church members and then brought to the service. This particularly pleased the Norwegians, East Africans and Indians, so far from their own homes. After the sermon there was "coffee and talk-back" with a chance to tear up the sermon. These occasions not only drew in the Christians, but gave them a focal point for their evangelism. I have seen one Christian bring as many as a dozen non-Christians. And rarely has the Student Service failed to lead to outright conversions.

The problems of the Christians varied. Some were de-

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<i>History of the English Baptists</i> A. C. Underwood	80p
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lighted to shake off the influence of home and home-church. They tended to celebrate their freedom by switching from one position to another; a Plymouth Brother would turn Anglican, a Methodist would become an ardent Calvinist. Some, brought up in sheltered Christian homes and inward-looking churches, suffered a bad shock when plunged into an unbelieving world. Fairly superficial objections to their faith rattled them badly: the utter irrelevance of God in most people's lives shook them emotionally. Resentment against an over-simplified upbringing easily appeared, and sometimes expressed itself in the temporary adoption of bizarre opinions calculated to frighten parent and pastor. What they needed (and I hope what they got) was sympathy, understanding, a willing listener, and some robust replies to their doubts and fears. Several, forced to re-examine their faith, became in due course adult believers. Reflecting on my memories of them now—the earnest discussions, the worried consultations, the triumphant overcoming of difficulties, and the occasional bad casualty—I believe that nothing helped them so much as being integrated into a friendly and active local church. I believe that students could well benefit from having their membership transferred from their home church to the church they attend whilst studying. Few will ever take employment near home anyway; few even spend their vacations at home. The church on the spot needs to become their own church, ready to transfer them on again when their employment is found. With great respect to those who try it, I don't believe the answer lies in specialized college chaplains working apart from the local church. Such a system heightens the erroneous impression that students are a special class needing a different Gospel—and prevents the local church from having to face the challenge of being the genuinely Christian community in a modern society. Perhaps the ideal would be an assistant minister specialising in student work but firmly rooted in the local church. A surprising number of our visiting students have in fact sought employment in the area when their qualifications were obtained—and have been influenced in so doing by their desire to remain in the local church which has helped them so much.

What of the evangelism? I soon found that the "Dinner and Grace" idea was of little use, and quietly dropped it. The only thing it accomplished was to give a few seconds of mild pleasure to 400 diners who speculated how long I could go on quoting or composing different prayers. The Student Services already mentioned were valuable. Better still was the monthly "Friday Forum" when a general invitation was given to the home of one of the Christian lecturers. Here, squatting on scatter-cushions and consuming coffee and squash, atheists, Hindus, Jews, agnostics, and Christians waded into one another after a 30 minute talk by some knowledgeable Christian on such topics as Communism, abortion, Black Magic, permissiveness, the faults of the Church, the authority of the Bible, the meaning of conversion, life after death, etc. We even had the occasional non-

Christian or anti-Christian speakers, and it was generally acknowledged that they stood up to cross-questioning with much less aplomb than Christian speakers. Basically, what we tried to do was to hammer home the point that individual Christian students sharing their faith with others made the best evangelists—backed by the resources, experience, and wider fellowship of the church. As a result a quiet trickle of youngsters became Christians. In turn they took the Gospel with them into professional life at home and abroad. I can think of one now chief of his tribe in West Africa, another close to the president of his East African country, another helping to further Christian education in Nigeria. It could be argued that students, so mobile today, are the twentieth century equivalent of the merchants and soldiers who informally spread the Gospel in the First and Second Centuries.

This article obviously consists only of personal reminiscences. It records what was in fact a very hand-to-mouth affair, responding to an immediate situation in the midst of a too-busy ministry. But it may highlight the need to think through some important issues. Can the average local church cope with students? Are our youngsters prepared for the shocks and pressures of student life? Do students have distinctive needs which set them apart from others? How does divided Christendom appear to the student world? How best can a small denomination like ours meet the need? Does the relationship of the Christian student to church membership need to be re-examined? How drastically does the rapid growth of a student-population affect our conception of the ministry and what is required of it? There are no easy answers, and I would not like to be thought to have suggested that there are. But answers, at least tentative, we must find.

DONALD BRIDGE

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Bishop Stephen Neill, writing on the Ministry, makes reference to the 'Holy man of God' mentioned in 2 Kings 4. 9. and says this means 'A disciplined life'. It is indeed a hard climb from the instinctive life of nature and the natural man, to the transformed life of Grace. But ministers, more than any others, must face it. We cannot help others higher up the mountain of God than we have climbed ourselves. Moreover, our own staying power and fruitfulness in the ministry depend on it.

There are, of course, difficulties and trials in every lot; as well as a special Cross we shoulder, when at God's Call we voluntarily undertake a hard job, by which we are inescapably disciplined if we stick it. But these are small compared with that inner discipline between us and God, to which our vocation calls us—namely the need to conquer within ourselves, if we are ever to become men of God.

This means setting ourselves to conquer those desires and repulsions, which side-track the will and conflict with the total tending of our being to God and our growing union with Him. We have to watch jealously the tendency of any of our desires to fix themselves on any lesser object than God (See 1 John 5. 21) lest we love any other more than Him and so break up the unity of the soul's inner life and lay waste its powers. How searching is the first and great commandment—to love God with our impulses, intellect, imagination, and will. Jesus speaks of the necessity of 'Denying self'. St. Paul speaks of it as 'Self-crucifixion'. It is the same hard, painful thing they both mean—the inevitable discipline the soul must impose on itself, in order to effect the transfer of its dominant desires from the ego to God. A three-fold purging is needed, if the will is not to be impeded in its surrender to the Will of God.

### 1. The purging of the senses, by which our bodily instinctive life is stimulated.

We have to beware of idols—things that have a disproportionate power to absorb us; things that evoke crude, egotistic, or sensual impulses of a strength and character that draw us from God; things that evoke greed, or provoke resentment, or stimulate any other natural instinct to rebellion against Him. It is not enough to combat these strong impulses, when they have been generated; we need by a life of disciplined communion with God to tackle the beginnings of insubordination, as they crop up in our hearts; so that we are looking for God, and the Goodness of God, and the Purposes of God in the things we see and hear and handle—all those stimulating quickening influences that reach us through our senses. We need to keep 'our eye on the ball' all the time.

Let us be clear, however, that the evil to be eradicated is not the natural human impulse or instinct, but sin—"The sin that dwelleth in me". The trouble is, that sin has so deeply infected our natural impulses, that just as the removal of cancer means cutting away good flesh too, so the purging of sin may mean the pruning also of that natural impulse, into whose fibre it has insinuated itself—e.g. if we are prone to malice, we cannot purge our tongues of it without doing some violence to our innocent love of talking. Similarly, we cannot conquer the lusts of the flesh without some pruning of our natural curiosity, and so on. See 'Concerning the Way' page 84.

### 2. The Cleansing of the Intellect.

Our great sin here is pride. We have our points of view, our opinions, our clearly defined landscape of knowledge, what we have always been taught, our certitudes and our intellectual satisfactions. We have positions we have taken up and are prepared to defend. We have definite principles. We have a Faith clearly defined in doctrine and denomination. This all serves well enough, may be, for the little bit of life that is the orbit, in which we move round. And we are, many of us, self-satisfied in our comprehension of

religious matters, and confident of our capacity to cope. We like to think ourselves 'authorities' on what is right.

But how small a circle this is, and how dim our best light, in comparison with the 'cloud of unknowing' with which we are enveloped. It is an unfathomable universe that engulfs us, and which lives its own majestic uncomprehended life. No intellectual cleverness or competence helps very much here. Our precise maps, and our clearcut definitions have little relation to its august and immeasurable reality. Not till we have begun to feel the humbling, awe-inspiring impact of this upon our naked spirits, has the cleansing of the intellect really begun, or are we freed from the danger of spiritual pride. How we sometimes give ourselves away, without realizing it, in our committees! We trust in our own wisdom, our stock ideas, our traditional viewpoints, our well meaning good intentions. There comes over us a strong feeling that we know the way, and if only people would listen to us, the thing would sort itself out, and the right thing would be done. To bring Jesus seriously into such situations can sometimes be most disconcerting—He has such a way of making you feel you ought to be a different person yourself, that you've got to get much deeper down and take more account of God, and be more aware of His Presence and Power, more sensitive to the leading of His Spirit, and more ready for costing action. Is this, perhaps, what the outsider is missing, when he comes to some of our Services and doesn't appear again? Doubtless the worshipper and the leader of worship went home tolerably satisfied and pleased with themselves. They had attended Divine Worship and had done their duty, there was a decent congregation and quite a good collection. Though there was "No joy in Heaven" that day over one sinner repenting—they were not to know that. And though the singing might have been better, doubtless the Minister enjoyed his dinner. How slow we are to learn that what is adequate to us, may not be adequate to God. And what seems sensible and far-sighted to us, may seem petty and parochial to Him. How hard it is to bring ourselves to where God is, to see things as He sees them, and to get the eyes of our understanding enlightened and our intellects purged of their pride. The fact is—what is adequate to us can never be adequate to the supreme reality with which we have to deal, namely to God; for we can never completely define truth or compass the ways of an infinite God with our finite minds. This is no disparagement of the mind, much less a plea for a holy stupidity. It is not an attempt to exalt irrationality over rationality, nor ignorance over learning. Nor is it a retreat from what is homely and human and concrete and commonsensible into some misty mysticism. We need the best concepts of reality our minds can achieve. But if we are not to be deluded by our self-conceit, we need a constant humbling remembrance of the limited, proximate, symbolic nature of our concepts and ideas, and an awe-struck recognition of the majesty and mystery that envelops us—the majesty and mystery of God.

### 3. The feeding of the Memory and Imagination—our Psychic Storehouse.

These are the ante-rooms, through which our ideas and emotions pass into the secret chamber of the unconscious, where all unknowing they exercise such great power over us. We are learning to-day what an insanitary rubbish dump can accumulate in this secret chamber of the unconscious. Its penetrating odours, percolating through the house of the soul, betray its presence,—'Smouldering resentments, hidden griefs, unsatisfied cravings, tight hard balls of poisonous prejudice, unresolved obsessions, and devitalising regrets'. We find within ourselves a strong temptation to self-preoccupation and an ingrained tendency to turn back and rummage in the past; till we become the dupes of our own mental processes, identifying knowledge of God with our thoughts and feelings about Him, and mistaking the throw-ups from our unconscious for leadings of the Spirit.

Now our Lord Himself warned us that these rooms in the soul must not be left empty. We must do our best to furnish them with memories and images of God's dealings with us, and God's Goodness to us, and God's Word for us, and God's Glory shining upon us in the face of Jesus Christ. For, if not, our Lord Himself warns us that some evil spirit will not be inactive "When he cometh and findeth it empty"—then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of the man is worse than the first". Some of us have reason to know, only too well, how that kind of thing happens, and how difficult it is to evict tenants like that, once we have let them in. The great safeguard, as our Lord points out, is not to leave the rooms empty, but to furnish them with such memories and pictures that God's own Holy Spirit may come and dwell there, keeping the place clean, and filling the whole house with fragrance. There is all the difference in the world between trying to get the Holy Spirit to use the furniture we've got and humbly striving after our Lord's own pattern, to empty ourselves of ourselves and let Him refurnish us with the things of Christ, the things St. Paul commended to the Philippian Church—"Whatsoever things are true—honest—just—pure—lovely—and of good report, think on these things". Yes and talk of these things—for that is the way they penetrate into oneself and lodge there; talk of them as the Jews were instructed to do—"When thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkedst by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up". So shall we get them into the hall of memory, into the inner sanctum of the imagination, and above all into that secret room to which they lead—the chamber of the unconscious. Each of us will have our own way of doing this kind of thing. I should like to bear testimony myself to the power of the seven 'I AM's' of the fourth Gospel.

You remember them—

1. Bread of Life.
2. Light of the World.

3. Door of the Sheep.
4. Good Shepherd.
5. Resurrection and Life.
6. True Vine.
7. The Way, the Truth, and the Life.

F. C. BRYAN

This Address of the Rev. F. C. Bryan, M.A. was given at several Ministers Retreats between the years 1953 and 1960. We are grateful to his brother, Rev. A. Keith Bryan for his kindness in making it available to us. Those who knew Frank Bryan will be particularly interested to read one of his typically enriching Retreat addresses. He gave many years of faithful service to the B.M.F., especially as Editor of this journal. We thank God on every remembrance of him.