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The Fraternal

February, 1974

No. 169

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I have again been given the opportunity of sending New Year Greetings to the members of the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship, a world wide Fellowship of Baptist members in the Homeland, the Mission Field, in Europe, on both sides of the Iron Curtain, our Commonwealth countries, and in America.

We are indeed grateful to those who help to maintain this world wide fellowship—our Editor, and Editorial Board—not forgetting the valuable work done by our B.M.F. correspondents.

We regret that we will have to make changes in the Officers of the B.M.F. in the coming year. Owing to pressure of work, both Raymond Brown and Victor Sumner have asked to be relieved of their respective offices. This we have to do, but it is with real regret, for both of our brethren have rendered outstanding service to the Fellowship, and we say "thank you" to them. The Officers desire us to maintain a living fellowship within the B.M.F. and to see that membership will always be worthwhile. In this connection, we welcome any letters from members, or Fraternal, regarding issues on which you feel the B.M.F. should be concerned. We are aware that we should, and do, exist to do more than publish a magazine, but we dare not presume problems even if we like to hear about them. Our Librarian (Walter Harris) would like to be used more in 1974 than he has in the past year or so. The B.M.F. Library is generously financed by the Particular Baptist Fund and is tailored to the needs of the ministry. Fraternal and individuals are invited to write to our Librarian who will do his best to help with book requests.

We will not lose sight of the fact that we exist to encourage a spirit of brotherhood throughout our Ministry, and to see to it that whatever structural alterations take place within our Baptist family, our Fraternal relationship is not impaired.

In wishing you, your family, and Church, God's richest blessing in the New Year, I am aware that many face the future with foreboding, yet these are great days in which to preach the Gospel, and the man who will preach it with fervour is the one who believes that he has come into the Kingdom for such a time as this!

TOM SHEPHERD

MINISTERING TO IMMIGRANTS

It is always a good idea to begin by defining one's terms, and I must first of all limit this subject. I can only write with any conviction about Asian immigrants, since my own contact with West Indians is very small, but that gap can be closed very adequately by Donald Monckom in a later article. In a school of over 800 we have about a dozen West Indian pupils, and from those it would be possible to generalize by saying that the boys are extremely backward and idle, whilst the girls are bright and intelligent, but I am afraid no reputable statistician would consider that a fair sample.

In Bradford probably three-quarters of the immigrants are from Pakistan or Bangladesh. These are all Muslim, mostly from the very backward areas of their own countries, and employed in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in textiles, engineering, and transport. Of these, again, about three-quarters are from Pakistan, mainly from the area of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan, and called Azad (Free) Kashmir. The other quarter are Indian, mainly Gujerati, but with a small number of Sikhs or Punjabis. A good proportion of the Gujeratis did not come in fact from India, but from East Africa, mainly Kenya. Only a small number of Ugandans arrived in Bradford last year. They are mainly small traders or clerical workers, and many of them have set up their own businesses, or taken various lower-grade white-collar jobs. As far as the school is concerned, the Indians usually have some English before they come and can therefore be more easily absorbed into the ordinary classes, and many of them go on to "O" and "A" level. The Pakistanis, on the other hand, often have had no education at all, and if they have had any, it has been in Urdu. The majority leave school as soon as possible and look for unskilled jobs; the few who continue are happy if they can get C.S.Es in mathematics or metalwork, or something of that kind. Even then, they usually need one or two extra years compared with the English pupils.

A parallel division can be made on the basis of their reasons for coming to this country. I once asked a group of Pakistanis why they had come, and they said quite unequivocally "For the money", and all of them expected to return to Pakistan. The East African Indians, on the other hand, came because they had been turned out of East Africa, or else because they read the signs of the times and got out before they were actually expelled. They have come because they have nowhere else to go, and therefore they intend to stay here. Clearly the attitude of the two groups to this country will be quite different from the start, since the people who are intending to stay will be more ready to adapt themselves to the situation. On the other hand, those who did not intend to stay in the first place quite often run into problems. When they go back to Pakistan, they realize much more clearly than they did, the difference in standards of living between the two countries. When they are here they

look back to Pakistan as "home" very often through rose-coloured spectacles, but when they go back it is not quite so rosy, and they begin to feel it would really be better to stay here. There is another problem, particularly if they have brought their families over. They have probably come one by one, first of all the man, then as he saved money, the rest of the family, either as a group or in ones and twos. This is not difficult because they had the backing of the joint family system in Pakistan, and there was no problem in leaving the wife, or some of the children with grandparents, uncles and aunts. However, when it comes to moving back, there is no such joint family, and if all the family have to go together it will cost five or six hundred pounds. Whilst the man is alone here he can provide for his wife and two or three children in Pakistan on four or five pounds a week, out of perhaps £25 a week he earns. When they are all over here it is a completely different situation, as any of your wives will tell you, and £500 for air-fares takes a long time to save up, especially when there are such very tempting things which can make life more comfortable whilst one is here. There comes a time, therefore, when they begin to realise that they are not going back, or at least not for a very long time, and they begin to be reconciled to this country for good. It is probably safe to assume, therefore, that for one reason or another, the majority of the immigrants we have here now, will stay, and their children will grow up here.

Now we can look at the question of ministering to these people. Here again, there is a vast difference between our approach to the Asians and to the West Indians, because the latter are mostly Christians, so we start off with at least one point of contact, whereas the Asians are mostly non-Christian (in Bradford there may be a dozen Christian families out of 30,000 immigrants).

One of the words which is often bandied about is "integration" and it is interpreted to mean that people who live in Rome must do as the Romans do; we cannot rest until all those who have come here are seen to be black or brown Englishmen. Perhaps Paul could help us again here, if we consider his words in I Corinthians 12 about arms and legs and eyes being different, but all necessary. But even if we dismiss the silly ideas, it remains true that the arms and legs must be properly co-ordinated if the body is to be healthy. For the good of our society we must work towards some way of fitting these people in. As Christians we must go further, for we are committed to the proclamation of the Gospel to all men, and if the Bangladeshi in Dacca or Barisal or Chittagong is our responsibility through the B.M.S. he does not cease to be our responsibility when he comes to live in Bradford. There is one big difference. The B.M.S. goes to his country where he is at home in familiar surroundings. In this country he is not at home, and he is not in familiar surroundings, and therefore his reaction is very different. It is probably easier to look at the two main religions,

Hinduism and Islam separately, because the problems are different.

To start with the more difficult first, it is a well-known fact that conversions from Islam are very very few, though when they do come, they often produce quite outstanding Christians. One of the reasons for this is the historical development and the story of the Crusades, which still have a back-log of bitterness. Another reason is more theological, and can be expressed very simply. Islam began six hundred years later than Christianity, as a reaction against a corrupt form of Christianity, Muhammad brought a new revelation to supersede the old, therefore Islam is clearly superior to Christianity, and the obvious line of progress is from Christianity to Islam, and not vice versa. Since that is precisely the attitude of Christians to Judaism, it ought to be quite easy for us to understand. If we consider what would be our attitude to someone turning from Christianity to Judaism, throwing away the whole of the New Testament, we can see what is the attitude of the Muslim to one who throws away the Q'uran. Because of the historical development of missionary work from the West we tend to assume unconsciously that we are taking a new faith to the Muslim, whereas in fact we are taking an old one which he long since discarded. Some of my pupils have expressed amazement when I have talked about Islam, that though I know so much about it, I have not become a Muslim. The basic answer to this, of course, is to let them come to realise that the Christianity they discarded was not the truth of the Gospel, but a caricature of it, and this can only be done in a positive way, and not by arguing about what we consider to be their errors. As a tactical approach it is probably best to begin where we meet together, in some of the stories of the Old Testament. We are both the people of a book, and our books have many of the same stories. There are differences, of course, and when we talk of Abraham's readiness to offer his son, we needn't argue about whether it was Isaac or Ishmael in order to draw the same lesson from it. If this produces interest in the differences, without antagonism, it is possible to go on with the friendly comparison, believing that in the end the Spirit will lead the enquiring soul into all truth.

A second theological factor is the nature of Islam, which is essentially a pragmatic faith, though it has had its Sufis and mystics. For the ordinary man the Five Pillars are concerned with what he must do, and it is quite easy to see what this is, and not particularly difficult to follow it. First he must recite the creed (it is assumed that a person believes what he says, but the important thing is saying it); second, he must recite the prayers five times daily; third, he must fast during the hours of daylight in Ramadan; fourth, he must contribute the fixed part of his income (2½%) in alms; fifth, if at all possible, once in his life he must go on pilgrimage to Mecca. There are other things about Islam, of course, but these are basic and clear. It is far less easy to define Christianity, and when we begin to point out that

there is more to it than outward conformity to clear rules, it becomes confusing for the Muslim.

The third point is the Brotherhood of Islam, which is very strong. Alongside this, for those who have come to this country is the need for security, and for ties with the homes they have left behind, and to which they probably expect to return. The knowledge that they are in an alien environment makes it all the more necessary to hold on to the familiar things, and makes them defensive about their faith. This, of course, is the reason why they prefer to live together, around the mosque, the kosher meat shops and the cinemas which show Urdu films. Since this is exactly what the British did in India, for the same reasons, they must be rather surprised and alarmed when well-meaning people try to split them up, in the interests of mixing with the host-community. Since, again, they belong mostly to the working-class, and since racial prejudice tends to be strongest in the white working-class, which sees them as a threat to their economic position in the semi-skilled and unskilled jobs, they do not see much future in mixing with that part of the host community which they most commonly meet.

How, then, can we minister to the Muslim? Inevitably it must be a long-term, and often indirect ministry. First of all, it must be a ministry of understanding and tact. I fell down on that one day when I took a group of school-leavers to see round a mail-order house, where there was a possibility some of them might get jobs. The firm was very friendly, and laid on a tea at the end for the boys. They did not know what boys were going, but I knew they were mainly Muslim, and I should have warned the firm not to provide ham-sandwiches. They were excellent sandwiches, and I enjoyed them, but I did not help the relationship between the boys and the firm, both of whom were acutely embarrassed, especially the boys, because they were refusing what they realised was generous hospitality.

Secondly, in spite of the problems of immigrant communities living together, we must accept this. After all, we have come to accept Jewish communities living in a particular area so that they can be near the synagogue and the kosher shops. The problem with the Muslim is that they are more obvious because of their colour, but once we come to know them that does not matter at all. Following upon this, we must be alive to see that they are not at a disadvantage because they live together. It is so easy to leave them to their own devices, and very often they themselves will not demand the amenities to which they have a right as citizens, because they do not want to cause trouble, so it is up to us to make sure that they get them. This again means knowing them, and understanding what they do want, or what they have not yet learned to want, but will help them to become at home here. Very often this means dealing with the younger generation. The original immigrants have come to a country which has so much more than they ever had, that they would not realise that they could be even better off in many ways. The younger generation are much quicker

to compare themselves with their contemporaries, and therefore less easily satisfied.

Some times there are specific ways in which we can help. It may be by running play-groups for the children, so that they can learn to mix with others, ready for the time when they will go to school. At home they will almost certainly speak nothing but Urdu, and if they can pick up some English before they go to school it will be so much easier for them. Children of that age find it very much easier to pick up another language than their parents. In Serampore we had children of pre-school age who spoke three or four languages quite fluently, and never mixed them up, simply because they were there in the environment. Again, this may lead to openings for the mothers to get out of the house occasionally. Even an afternoon when they can drink a cup of tea and chat with other mothers may make all the difference to the week. Some of them may also like to learn some English, but even if they do not, they will look with gratitude on the people who have given them the opportunity to get out and about. For the rest, it will depend on keeping alert for openings where we can offer service, *with no strings attached*, in the confidence that in his own good time, God will speak through us, probably in ways we never even expected, and the answer will come.

In many ways the Sikhs are no easier than the Muslims. Sikhism was the product of a Hindu reaction against Islam, which was at the same time strongly influenced by Islam. It began as a militant defensive brotherhood, and still holds on to much of that attitude. Like the Muslim, the Sikh has five signs, but these are very different in character. The most obvious is the uncut hair, which is usually covered by the turban. Remembrance of Samson and the Nazirites means that I have no need to labour the significance of this. Dedication, manliness, power are all involved. The comb which holds the hair in place, and the shorts which give freedom to the limbs, indicate discipline and readiness to fight. The iron bracelet, probably originally just an identification, is considered as a sign of the brotherhood, and of the unity of God. The sword is obviously a sign of militancy. All these are now explained in much less warlike terms, but they nevertheless remain as signs of the need for cohesion and defence of the brotherhood. Last week I was at a committee which was discussing a holiday play project for a mixed group of children, and one of the other members remarked "We don't need to worry about the Sikhs; if we ask them to send fifteen children, they will all be there sitting on the bench when we arrive".

Just as a group of Muslims will not be long before they get a mosque, so a group of Sikhs will get a Temple, and their life will centre round it. Unlike the mosque the Sikh Temple is not merely a place for worship, it is more like a community centre and parish church. It is important because the holy book, the Granth Sahib, is kept there, and the Granth Sahib is so holy that many Sikh families would not possess one of their own, any more than the Israelites would

have thought of having their own Ark. Sikhism is monotheistic, like Islam, and its worship consists largely of singing the songs from the Granth Sahib, which is in many ways like the book of Psalms, and an exposition of the songs, and of the traditions. They have no particular holy day, so in Britain they can easily adopt Sunday, and their observance is very like what we would call an All-age Sunday School, followed by refreshments, and the kinds of recreation which they consider suitable for the day, all centring round the Temple.

Sikhism is puritan and austere, and in many ways perhaps elitist. One does not seem to see poor Sikhs, and there are very many who rise to high places. They have no caste, and therefore no taboos about work like the Hindus, and in India they seem to have been particularly ready to take to engineering and modern technology. They are particularly noted in the transport industry, and in India particularly as taxi-drivers. One sometimes wondered whether they had decided that since the Pax Britannica had banned the use of the sword, the motorcar provided an equally efficient offensive weapon.

As far as the Sikhs are concerned, my impression would be that it is even more difficult to minister to them than to the Muslims. They are so self-sufficient and efficient that if they need playgroups they will run them themselves, their women will arrange their own tea-parties, and they will make sure that they know what are their civic rights. Nevertheless, though they are very close-knit they are not exclusive, and they will welcome friendship. They will be glad to show visitors the Temple, provided they observe the courtesies, by taking off their shoes and wearing something on the head.

Turning to the Hindus, we find a very different situation.

Islam is a religion of the Middle East and inasmuch as one of the five pillars is the pilgrimage to Mecca it is tied to that particular spot, but one of the strongest Muslim countries is the Philippines, and after all, one can nowadays get to Mecca within 48 hours from anywhere in the world. Apart from that Islam is not necessarily the religion of a particular people, and it is a missionary religion which believes that all men can be brought into its fold. Sikhism, again, began in India, but it cut itself free from many of the social ties of Hinduism, and adopted so many of the universal teachings of Islam that it is no longer tied to a particular place. Muslims can fulfil all except one of their duties where there is a mosque, and that other duty comes only once in a lifetime. Sikhs can fulfil their duties where there is a Temple around which gathers the Brotherhood. Both these can maintain an active life in any place without feeling deprived of any part of their religion.

Hinduism, on the other hand, is not only the religion, but the social and cultural system of one country, India. India is a land of Temples, but Hinduism is not rooted in the temple, but in the home, and in the society in which that home is found. The survival of Hinduism depends far more on the home than on any other factor, and the home needs

the support of the caste and the whole social system. The majority of the Christians in India (apart from the hill people, who were animist) came from those who had no security within the caste system, the outcastes. They were willing to listen to the gospel because it offered them a status and a hope which they could never find in Hinduism. Traditionally a Hindu who left India broke caste, and on his return he had to perform various ceremonies to regain the security of the family and society. Technically, therefore, all Hindus in this country are outcastes, though it would not be very tactful to tell them so. Practically they are isolated from the system, and they have no portable focus, like mosque or gurdwara, to hold them together. They have, of course, their traditional customs, they may retain certain of their caste-rules, but these can never have the strength and the validity which they have in India. Even in India itself, the mobility of modern society has produced a class of more or less non-religious educated Hindus whose personal life may owe more to Christianity, or Marxism, or humanism than to Hinduism in any orthodox sense. Since the only dogma which is common to all Hindus is reverence for the cow, it has always been an all-embracing cloud of ideas which is intolerant only of dogmatism, and it is quite easy for all these people to remain officially Hindus. Perhaps it is easiest to explain it by saying that Hinduism begins to break down when you leave grandma, and in our modern society everyone is always leaving grandma. Many of those who now live in this country have left grandma twice, once when they went to East Africa, and again when they came here. In East Africa they were subjected to a different environment on two sides. On the one side were the Europeans, who took them there originally to build the railways, and therefore did not want to mix with them socially. On the other side were the local people who were still tribal and primitive (and so couldn't build the railways themselves) and the Indians naturally did not want to mix with them. The events of the last couple of years have turned the tables on them, by giving the power to those who were originally at the bottom, and the Indians have had to leave. Neither they nor the locals really wanted to be part of the same society, since in any case the local society was developing so fast that it is difficult to see what would happen, and the Indians at least had some sense of security in sticking together.

Here, if anywhere, should be our opportunity. On the strictly mundane basis, here are people who can be assets to our society. Most of them speak English, many of them have resources, and all of them want to stand on their own feet. From a religious point of view they have traditional customs and ideas, which very often seem to them to be a little out-of-place in our society, and are not very difficult to discard. Even the ideas they have are tolerant and if you get them to articulate them they would probably say that all religions are equal. Particularly those who have been pitchforked out of one environment into another are only too

willing to accept friendship which is offered to them. In some ways it will be a pleasant novelty to find that Europeans want to be friendly with them on terms of equality, and they will respond. In my own church we have made some beginnings with pre-school children coming to play-group, and older ones to the Scouts and Brownies, and even some to Junior Church. Another very useful introduction has been weddings. This is one of the special occasions which is really important for them, because it is a family affair, and a social occasion. It is always accompanied by an elaborate reception which in India or East Africa is easy, because all you need to do is to raise a large awning on bamboo poles, and you can provide as big an area as you like without having to worry about the weather. A terrace-house in Bradford can accommodate quite a number of people at a push, but the church hall is much more convenient. The first time we were approached was just after I had moved to Bradford, and my colleague asked my advice about giving the hall. He was concerned about a non-Christian religious occasion on church premises but I reassured him that all the religious part would be over at home and what they wanted was room for a feast. We were a little anxious about the possible mess that might be made, but decided to risk it. It was a complete success, the place was left spotless, and they insisted that the contribution we asked for the use of the hall was ridiculously small. Since then it has been a regular feature of our service to our neighbours, and there are only two problems, one is that they always clean up so thoroughly that we have to polish the floor again when they have finished, and the other is that we have to open all the windows for a few hours to let out the smell of curry. Here was a need which we were able to meet, and we have not only produced a steady stream of income for ourselves, but it has meant the goodwill which has brought at least a dozen children within the reach of the gospel, and is likely to lead to more. It needed a little knowledge which I happened to be able to provide, a little courage to take a small risk, and a readiness to take an opportunity of service, in the expectation that out of it would come further opportunities if we keep our eyes open. Isn't that what ministry is all about, whether the people are white, yellow, brown or black? It is people that matter.

DONALD HUDSON

UNDERSTANDING AND SERVING OUR BLACK NEIGHBOURS

I have been asked to write about "West Indians" in Britain. This is not an easy assignment, because the subject of race relations is complex as well as explosive. "The Race Relations Industry" as it is called has produced a national Commission and a network of local councils with full-time and part-time officers. The situation varies from one area of immigrant settlement to another. Some, at least, of the abundant literature available suggests that there are as many opinions in this field as there are writers. On such a subject no-one can pose as an expert, least of all a pastor whose experience of multi-racial communities in this country is confined to one London suburb. All he can do is to offer the conclusions to which his limited experience and reading seem to point, in the hope that they will be of value to others.

The West Indian community in Britain cannot be treated as a homogeneous whole. The needs of the younger generation are different from those of their parents, and will become increasingly so. The parents have lived here for periods of anything up to 20 years. They came to improve their prospects and those of their children, and they are prepared to put up with low-grade employment, poor housing, and a degree of rejection on the part of whites, as the price they must pay. As a matter of fact, they may be doing quite well, as is revealed by their well-furnished homes and the cars which they delight to polish. But, in any case, they have the inner security of belonging somewhere. They are still West Indians with roots "back home". Many of them take charter flights to the Caribbean from time to time, and they will tell you that they plan to return for good some day.

Their children are in a very different position. If ever they knew Jamaica, Barbados, or Antigua, they have forgotten them, and they rightly feel that their future does not lie in these islands. They belong here and want to be accepted by white people. Yet everything works against them. In addition to the colour of their skins, they are likely to suffer educational disadvantage. This is not the result of lower I.Q., as many suppose, but of a language barrier, and, in many cases, of lack of interest in their development on the part of their parents. Consequently, many black youngsters leave school with very scanty educational equipment. This, together with a degree of concealed racial discrimination on the part of some employers, condemns them to the lower-paid, blind-alley jobs. Nor is their social experience any better. Up to the age of about 14 white and black young people mix easily, but from then onwards they generally separate. It is very rare to find a youth club in which teenagers of different races mix. The black youngsters form their own groups. In some respects "West Indian" young people have a harder time than the children of Asian immigrants. The latter,

because of their ethnic differences from the British, and their self-sufficient family and community life, are less dependent on the approval of white people. Experience at school and elsewhere is likely to change this attitude, however, and in most other respects the two groups face the same problems.

Thus we have in our cities a growing number of young people who really belong nowhere. They have rejected the Caribbean society from which their parents come, and they are themselves rejected by the society to which they belong. Their reactions to this "crisis of identity" are varied. Many accept the situation and make the best of it. Others, especially those with over-strict parents, rebel, run away from home, and, perhaps, get into trouble with the police. Some of the more intelligent of the younger "West Indians" support "Black Power" and similar organisations. They believe that the people of West Indian origin in this country should seek an identity in association with the other black peoples of the world, and join them in their struggle for justice. This position is understandable and in many ways commendable, but those who hold it are often indifferent to efforts made to promote good community relations in this country, if not contemptuous of them. These younger people are the potential leaders of the "immigrant" population in days to come, and their attitude gives ground for the fear that we are on our way to seeing a black subculture emerge in our country similar to that which is the bane of the U.S.A.

We now turn to the attitude of black Britons to the churches and their message. For Christians this is the most painful and perplexing aspect of the immigrant problem. Almost all of those who came from the Caribbean were linked with churches back home, and many, the women in particular, attended regularly. Now, only a small minority ever go to church. The reasons for this have often been explored and we need only summarize them. Many West Indians work long hours and there is an accumulation of domestic chores at weekends: a reason offered by others besides immigrants. The attitude of neighbours and work-mates is anything but encouraging. There is the factor of our winter temperatures—"The blankets are heavy, Minister!"—though things seem no easier in the summer. Of greater importance is the fact that most West Indians who have come here were rural agrarian workers at home, and feel out of place in our predominantly middle class congregations. The West Indian teacher, civil servant, lawyer, etc., would take his place naturally in our services and deacons' meetings, but he rarely comes to live here.

In his booklet, *Black Churches, West Indian and African Sects in Britain*, (CRRU, British Council of Churches, 1971), Clifford Hill asserts that the greatest single reason why black people do not attend English churches is that "white Christians do not want them". He prints the last four words in capitals, and supports his contention by drawing on his experience as a minister in North London, and on his research, though the samples of the latter which he gives

are unimpressive. It would be interesting to hear the views of other ministers on this. We can only speak of Baptist Churches, and so far as these are concerned it is impossible to say categorically that there have been no cases where black people have been cold-shouldered. All the present writer can say is that he finds it hard to believe that there are many of our churches where white worshippers would be reluctant to share their services with black immigrants, and where the situation resulting from a large influx of black church members could not be handled by wise pastoral leadership. What is more likely is that the attitude of West Indians towards white churches is the product of their generalized feeling of alienation from English society. They assume in advance that they will not be welcome. Again, when the West Indian does attend one of our services he may not feel that the reserved greeting he receives is as welcoming as it is intended to be.

There is another question which must be faced. How far have we made it our business to seek out the newcomers from overseas who have moved into our areas? Clifford Hill writes of the failure of the churches in the immigrant settlement areas in this respect as "a basic failure of Christian mission". "Churches which have long traditions of active and generous support for overseas missions have completely failed to seize the opportunity for witness and service when the one-time recipients of European missionary enterprise have come to live and work in their own localities." How many of us who work in multi-racial districts can enter an unqualified plea of "not guilty" in the face of such an indictment? Is it now too late to make up the ground we have lost? In some moods it appears so, but this is to discount the mercy of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. In spite of the factors we have been considering, Christian work among the black population in Britain has its encouraging aspects. One is that most of the parents who came here from the West Indies retain their esteem for the Gospel and their traditional respect for the Minister. The latter stems in part from their plantation background, and we must be careful not to exploit it and so strengthen attitudes of dependence and subservience. But it also needs to be remembered that in spite of centuries of exposure to British and American culture the West Indian is at heart an African and shares the special gift of his race for deep personal relationships. To him as to few others, "people matter". For this reason he values very highly any friendship or help which he receives from his minister and from other Christian people. The visitation of West Indian homes, and pastoral service in other ways, are never wasted, even if they do not yield immediate fruit in the form of church attendance.

Another encouraging factor is the concern shown by so many black parents that their children should attend Sunday School and other Christian activities. We must pray and work so that out of the vast number of youngsters now attending our churches there may be a substantial harvest of disciples who have learned about Christ, and seen Him at work, in

our churches. There are also grounds for thinking that some Christian youth organisations are more successful than their secular counterparts in integrating black and white teenagers. This seems to be true, at least, of the uniformed organisations, though it is doubtful whether it applies equally to our mixed youth clubs.

For reasons which we have examined, the black teenagers growing up around us present a special challenge. They have all been influenced to an extent by the anti-white propaganda which circulates in their communities. They are likely to know something of the compromises and inconsistencies of Christians, past and present, in the matter of racial justice. We can only hope to get anywhere with them if, admitting Christian failures, we try to understand their resentments, and make it plain that we regard them as our equals.

Moreover, here, as everywhere, the proclaiming Church must also be the serving Church. Our concern for the West Indians must take practical forms. In many cases there is a special need of help with children of pre-school age. A high percentage of immigrant mothers go to work, and they are reluctant to send their children to existing white play groups. Instead, their children are often placed in the care of "baby minders" who have no adequate facilities and make no effort to further the children's development. This is one of the reasons why immigrant children are often mentally and socially retarded. The same problem faces many Asian parents. Churches can render Christian service of exceptional value by opening their premises for pre-school play groups and giving every opportunity and encouragement to immigrant parents to make use of them. The parents can afford to pay for this service if they can be brought to see its value, and some of the mothers should be able to help. Local community relations officers are glad to give advice, and the Community Relations Commission may be able to give a degree of help in financial, or other, ways.

We cannot close without considering the question of racial integration within and among churches. There can be no denying that the ideal for a multi-racial community is churches with multi-racial memberships. We may be thankful that there are such churches in Britain, where both blacks and whites are well represented in the membership and at all levels of leadership. Information suggests that this desirable blending is most easily achieved when a white congregation which has fallen away in numbers receives a strong reinforcement of black members, though it could, and should, happen in other circumstances.

The fact is, however, that at present the ideal is only rarely realized, and a large proportion of the black church-goers in this country attend separate black churches. Most of these are Pentecostalist in type, though they are branches of the Church of God, an American holiness church, and have no organisational links with the English Pentecostal churches. The largest group, the New Testament Church of God, grew from a total membership of around 2,000 in 1960 to 20,600 in 1970. There are numerous congregations, many of which

have taken over disused church buildings. There are a number of full-time ministers, a national headquarters in Birmingham, and a theological college. For purposes of their administration the whole country is divided into provinces, each with its own full-time "overseer". (C. Hill, op. cit. *Ministry in Multi-Racial Areas*, Scott and Bronnert, CPAS, 1972).

Many people believe that the all-black churches succeed because the type of informal, emotional worship they provide is similar to that to which their adherents were accustomed in the West Indies. The fact is, however, that many who now attend the separate churches were Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, etc., before coming to England, and were accustomed to orderly and dignified worship. The only Baptist church known to the writer where the *Te Deum* is sung every Sunday morning is in Jamaica! One of the reasons why immigrants support black churches is the belief, which we have already noticed, that they are not wanted elsewhere. Another is the desire to be together and to "run their own show". Before condemning this attitude we might consider the reasons which keep many white congregations apart. One of the chief weaknesses of the all-black churches is their inward-looking pietism, which reduces the amount of practical guidance they can give to people faced with the problems of adjustment to a new society.

What should be our attitude to the all-black churches? Their existence and proliferation are painful to many white Christians who desire racial integration. There are also those who see in them a denial of the power of the Gospel to reconcile people of different races. One cannot but have sympathy with a minister who has a group of Christians of another race holding separate services on his premises. Yet there are situations in which separate racial or national churches are necessary. A case of this kind is that of the Irish labourers who began to come to this country in the 1840s, and who settled on the fringes of some of our largest cities. Because of their residential segregation, and because they were rejected by the English, they formed their own churches, served exclusively by Irish priests. During the past 50 years, and especially since Vatican II, they have been leaving their social and spiritual ghettos and joining in worship with English Catholics. Opinions on various aspects of the Roman Church and its teaching will vary, but we shall surely agree that it was better that the Irish should retain their Catholic faith than that they should lapse into paganism; and it is a fair conclusion that the latter would have happened if they had not had their separate churches.

In the same way, it seems likely that the existence of the all-black churches is not only understandable, but also desirable, for the present at least. They fulfil an evangelistic and pastoral ministry for their own people which the white churches, for reasons not all discreditable, cannot fulfil. They preserve the vitality, warmth, and music of Caribbean worship which could easily be lost at this stage. And, in spite

of their limitations, they are giving a degree of support to young black people in their desperate struggle for identity.

Should we not help these churches in every way possible, and try to build bridges between them and the white congregations? If in such ways we keep our doors and our hearts open, we may hope that the day will come when our black Christian neighbours, having shed much of their insecurity, will take their places with us in the one congregation of the Lord. This is our desire, and, surely, His ultimate will.

DONALD MONKCOM

WE DID IT OUR WAY

Church and Community relations in Southall, 1956 to 1973.

In this article I want to discuss a somewhat heretical approach to Church and community relations in Southall from 1956 to 1973. In 1956 Southall was experiencing a trickling influx of immigrants from Asia and the West Indies which within ten years would turn into an increasing flood. Now, in 1973, black and brown faces, Caribbean-cut suits, Sikh turbans, Punjabi trousers and brilliant saris are at times and in places more evident than white faces and Western dress. We have five Sikh or Hindu Temples, our three cinemas show Indian films, Asians and West Indians buy up our shops and as trustworthy traders serve the whole community. Such an injection of alien cultures and the intermingling of large numbers of people from widely differing ethnic origins has completely transformed our community life. Every social institution has had to face the challenge of such change.

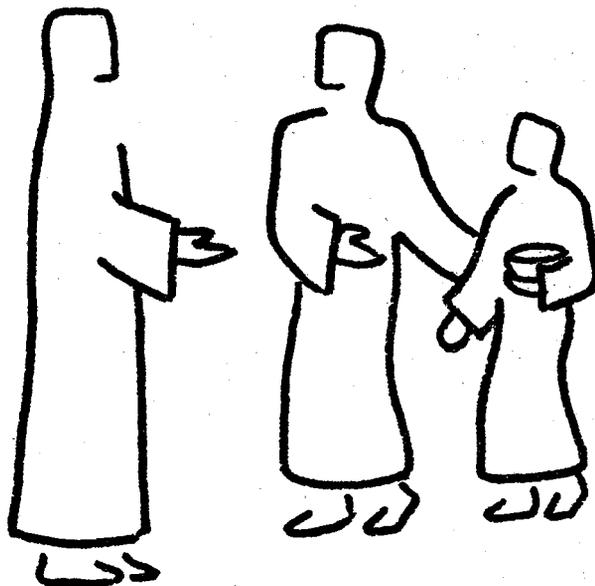
From the beginning the Churches of Southall were aware of the tremendous opportunity afforded for witness and evangelism by the presence of so many people of differing faiths and the need to reach out a hand of fellowship to the large numbers of West Indians who came to us with a Christian background.

At that time the general social concern was for the integration of the "new-comers" with the indigenous population. Schools, for example, attempted to persuade children from Asia to adopt Western dress and absorb Christian ideas. In the churches we similarly encouraged Asians and West Indians alike to come into our buildings for worship and looked hopefully for additions to our congregations.

In order to pursue that matter more effectively we went out to meet our new neighbours on the streets, and in so doing discovered a whole world of problems that needed solutions.

Nowhere in our studies had we been taught even the elements of comparative religions, yet among the Asians we were confronted by adherents from all the main faiths of the world. The communication of the most simple ideas met the barrier of language and even where words were understood, we soon discovered that we were separated by completely

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different ways of thought and culture. At first the West Indians appeared to be by language and background ripe for integration into our church "family" life. We soon discovered that, in the main, their ways were not ours. Their customary morality of faithful concubinage was a startling affront to our clear-cut ideal of Christian marriage. Their love of the "bottle", their turbulent temperament and attraction to the Turf Accountant all seemed to fit strangely with their affection for Sankey hymns and respect for the Church.

Since those early days both Asians and West Indians have begun to conform to our customs beyond any expectation, though it would be unwise indeed to presume from outward appearances that the deep differences are no longer there. However, in those days the problems were great enough to make us feel quite out of our depths and to look around for some experienced advice, or at best actual assistance. Today there is an almost superfluity of helpful literature available for the understanding of Asian and Caribbean people, their religions and cultural backgrounds. Then there was nothing at all. The Evangelical Alliance especially and some Missionary Societies have since turned their attention most helpfully upon the immigrant scene in Britain, but at that time they had not yet organised action. An appeal for help from the B.M.S. produced the reply that still holds after all these years, that because of legal clauses they were unable to help in work among immigrants in this country.

So it was that out of necessity, we did it our way.

Our first approach to the Asians was with the Scriptures in their own languages, provided most helpfully by the Scripture Gift Mission. By means of such street evangelism many helpful contacts were made and much basic understanding was gained of their differing religions, attitudes and customs. We also discovered those with a nominal Christian or missionary background. A Churches' Committee was convened and through this a number of ventures were organised, such as a Boys' Club, a Women's Sewing Class, and an English Language Course especially designed for Asian women in their homes. A Christian service was arranged on Sunday afternoons, conducted by one of the Southall ministers, translated into Hindi by one of our contacts. As the Asians emerged from their film-show in a near-by cinema we would stand outside and direct them into our meeting. At all these activities we pressed the invitation to attend the services of worship in the churches of the town. Some came. Over the years a handful of Asian Christians have become regular members of our Congregations and some children have passed through our Sunday Schools.

Seven or so years ago, however, it became clear that we needed to make a new move in our work among Asians. It was obvious that evangelism among the by now large numbers in our town could only be done by the Christian Asians themselves. It was also clear that whereas some were happy enough in our services of worship the majority loved best to worship in their own language, sing their own hymns and

meet at times more convenient to them than those of our services.

The obvious answer seemed to be to assist them in organising their own Christian Fellowship. This we did, calling it the Asian Christian Fellowship. It had slender enough beginnings. The first Executive Committee was composed of a man who is now the President of the London Hindu Society, a lady school teacher and a rather rough character who had been rescued from the streets of Bombay and baptised by B.M.S. missionary Desmond Hall. Soon after this a retired headmistress who had served with the C.M.S. in India and one of our boys at a loose end after a year with Operation Mobilisation in Spain, both came in and worked with the A.C.F. Executive as Advisors. The following years saw an increasing number of ex-missionary and full-time workers coming to Southall to work among the Asians and serve with the A.C.F. Today it numbers about 50-60 members, has for a couple of years done without help of "white" advisers, has held its own evangelistic crusade, plans another and is at present endeavouring to purchase its own place of worship, a Salvation Army Citadel whose congregation has withered away. "It isn't that we don't want to worship with you", said the Secretary, a member of my church, a Radiographer trained and qualified through our B.M.S. Missionaries in India, "but we believe it is the only way to reach most of our people."

In a similar fashion we discovered that the West Indians, in the main, were used to a form of service more free than ours. Some, from the main-line denominations were happy to join our congregations and have become Sunday School teachers, seat-stewards, and members of our Choirs. However, most wanted to worship in their own way. At first we arranged meetings for them in their own homes. From these house-groups developed meetings held in Church vestries and halls. As the numbers grew, so did the desire to have their own organised fellowship with their own Pastor-Leader. When the opportunity for a West Indian Church of God Pastor to lead them was presented they were pleased to accept him as from God.

Fellowship with other churches in the town has always been encouraged and together with the A.C.F. the Church of God has sent representatives to sit on our local Council of Churches. The West Indian Church of God has a tendency to divide. At present there are two splinter groups, but with no ill-feeling between them and at times they enjoy remarkably warm and close fellowship. The main body, under its Pastor, has just acquired its own premises, the buildings of a Methodist Church, the former congregation having long ago departed. On their opening day a congregation of 400 gathered and they continued their celebrations with a week of meetings. One of our white boys shared the honour of cutting the ribbon together with the Pastor's son. A portable electric organ, drums, guitar and a choir of 40 voices brought to one drab little corner of our town all the life and colour of a Caribbean holiday.

The idea of the establishment of fellowships which seem to foster the separation of Christians on the basis of race is anathema to many. When we began our work, of which these are the fruit, it was of course never so in our minds. But so it is. We did it our way, the best way we could, and looking back we would do it so again.

DONALD CRANEFIELD

PAUL THE PREACHER AND HIS PREACHING

Modern theologians have placed so much emphasis on what Paul preached (the *kerygma*) that they have tended to forget Paul the preacher (the *kyrux*). Undoubtedly the man is as important as his message for the two are inextricably bound up together. The message is not a matter of abstract theory, but of practical experience. Moreover, Paul the preacher provides guiding principles for preachers of any age, principles which are as relevant to the altogether different environment of contemporary society as to its first century counterpart. It is part of the greatness of the apostle that he was a man who transcends his own time.

The Preacher

Although our main source of information about Paul's preaching is the book of Acts, it is the incidental information from the epistles which is particularly revealing about Paul the preacher. Whereas these epistles supply most information about Paul the teacher and administrator, they are valuable because they draw attention to the qualities which contributed in no small measure to his success as a preacher of the gospel.

(a) His love for men

One of the most striking characteristics of the apostle was his deep Christian love for men. His magnificent hymn of love (1 Cor. 13) could only have been written by a man who had experienced the powerful effects of Christian love. Here was a man who could never be a disinterested herald. He was a man with a highly personal view of the impact of his mission. His was the kind of love which inspired him to express his willingness to be a castaway if only his people the Jews would turn to Christ. It was the kind of love which Jesus described as being the greatest kind of love (Jn. 15:13).

If Paul the teacher could yearn over his converts with the affection of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:8), it is certain that Paul the evangelist would have no lesser love for the people he was seeking to reach. It was this far-reaching love which saved him from any vestiges of professionalism. When writing to the Corinthians who caused him "much affliction and anguish of heart", he could nevertheless say that his heart was "wide open" to them (2 Cor. 6:11). It is unnecessary to illustrate this point further for it is evident in all his

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To the Readers of the "Fraternal"

Dear Friends,

"Let a smile be your umbrella
On a rainy day"

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Nor can I acknowledge the author or librettist—that I regret and I will gladly repair the omission if anyone can help.

This jingle jingles cheerfully as these jingles do and the exhortation at first sight seems admirable.

But to cite and then to develop the theme with a firstly, secondly and thirdly, if I could attempt that, would be, I think, to dent it.

Putting on a brave face against adversity is all very well and merits commendation unless the omission to avoid the adversity or at least to provide a real umbrella against its consequences demands condemnation.

At this point you would expect the commercial on a "get the strength of insurance around you" line.

That prudence speaks for itself but I am really concerned at the moment with the wisdom of the avoidance of trouble.

We have recently had a claim for a silver communion set of four cups and plates stolen from premises visited previously by thieves on several occasions—why was that valuable set not removed for safety out of the church premises into an occupied dwelling?

Another church has a suspect roof and slates are known to be in a condition where they could slip and fall. A sharp edged slate from a height can achieve a nasty injury. Serious incapacity could result and money of itself cannot remove incapacity. Remedial repairs are necessary.

Forethought can put off a rainy day.

Forethought can keep an umbrella (initialled I hope—"B.I.C.") handy just in case.

Hindsight smiles can be a bit lopsided.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN
General Manager

P.S. Rebuilding costs are now about 10½ times 1939 figures. Add in debris removal costs, Architect's fees, something for V.A.T. and forward inflation and you can now multiply 1939 prime costs by thirteen!

epistles that his concern for the welfare of his people was the fruit of his deep Christian affection for them.

(b) His willingness to endure hardship

It is essential to recognize that early Christianity developed in an essentially hostile environment. The preacher was subject to considerable hazards. It was no doubt his dedication to the task that landed Paul in many hazardous situations which a less dedicated man would have avoided. His list of such hazards in 2 Cor. 11 would be shattering to all lesser men. Anyone who could endure five lashings, three beatings and one stoning, not to mention the many natural hazards like shipwrecks and exposure to dangers like violent robbery, must have been a man of outstanding physical endurance. To preach the gospel in such an environment required more than the quality of love. It demanded a resolution to endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ (2 Tim. 2:3). It was because of his determination to preach that he exposed himself to the possibility of the hazards being repeated. He never chose the soft option. There can be few, if any, ministers of the gospel who have endured more than the apostle. His experience offers consolation to those who are called upon to suffer for the sake of the gospel, but is also an inspiration to those who minister in less hostile environments. Those who would emulate Paul the preacher must aim to match his dedication to the task.

(c) His contentment

If one wonders what fortified the man throughout his sufferings, one answer may be found of a psychological kind. His contentment in all situations must have removed a good deal of tension which would otherwise have accompanied his experiences. The clearest expression of this state of mind is found in Phil. 4:11, where his words, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content", speak of more than passive resignation. They reflect a settled state of mind which could not be shaken by circumstances. The gospel requires a contented mind in the preaching of it, for it must be manifest that it works even in adverse situations. If anyone's faith can survive through hazards of the nature of Paul's, there could be no more vivid proof of its essentially practical character. Paul not only wrote profound theology, he also lived it. No modern preacher of the gospel can afford to neglect the importance of serenity of mind for the effective communication of truth.

(d) His prayerfulness

A study of Paul's letters reveals much about his prayer life. In the majority of these he includes a prayer of thanksgiving at the beginning, in which he not only reveals his own dependence on God, but also his prayerful concern for his people. With such a wealth of evidence for his prayer life, it cannot be supposed that he approached his preaching mission with less prayerful concern. Indeed Col. 4:3ff is specific—"pray for us also that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ . . . that I may make

it clear, as I ought to speak". Paul never regarded it as automatic that he would always preach in the right way. He found it desirable to invoke the prayerful support of a group of people at Colossae whom he had never seen. It is no wonder that his missionary impact was effective, backed as it was by many supporting Christian communities, beginning with the commissioning church at Antioch.

(e) His tact

This master preacher of the gospel showed a remarkable adaptability to all situations. The preacher at Athens was different from the preacher at Antioch. The apostle had a keen appreciation of the best approach to his audiences. He claimed to be all things to all men that he might win them. This was not spineless compromise, but tactful understanding. It is significant that he did not adjust his message but himself. The *locus classicus* of Paul's tact is his letter to Philemon. This sensitive man was not likely to blunder in when preaching the gospel. His approach is relevant to preachers in any age.

(f) His dynamic intellect

The writer of letters of the profound character of Paul's was clearly a man of powerful mind which must have been evident in his preaching. He would naturally have had a different approach when speaking to non-Christians compared with his development of doctrines in his epistles, but even Luke's brief examples of his evangelistic addresses in Acts show him to be a man who did not play to the gallery. He nevertheless aimed to establish a rapport with his audience. It would be a fair conclusion that the apostle did not divorce evangelism from doctrine. In his *kerygma* he presented much profound thought which is essentially theological. It may be questioned whether Paul would have had much appreciation of what is popularly known as the "simple gospel", although he was convinced that the truth of God could not be apprehended merely by human wisdom.

(g) His singleness of purpose

In this brief attempt to single out some of the main characteristics of Paul the preacher, we cannot do better than conclude with his clarity of aim. He knew precisely what his target was. He rejected the use of rhetoric, because he considered the message to be more important than the form in which it was expressed. His explanation in 1 Cor. 2:5 is significant—"that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God". His main aim in preaching was to bring glory to God.

It has been necessary to comment on Paul the preacher before considering his basic message to show that the message was no mere academic issue. His *kerygma* was the centre of his life. He spent his time and energies in proclaiming it. We come now to high-light the main features of his proclamation which formed the basis of his theological expositions in his letters. The *kerygma* was the content of evangelical thought which he shared in common with all

early Christians. It is essential to recognize that in spite of his creative thinking, his theology was not based on a foundation of his own making.

The Preaching

Much has been written on Paul's *kerygma* and various attempts have been made to distinguish the primitive proclamation (which he took over from apostolic sources) from the instruction given to Christians (*didache*). The difference between these two aspects is important, but is open to criticism if carried too far. For our present purpose it will be useful to isolate the preaching element from the teaching. In modern times the two have tended to merge. The preaching of the gospel cannot be sharply marked off from the application to everyday life or from a deeper understanding of the theological implications. When C. H. Dodd emphasised the distinction between *kerygma* and *didache* it was with a view to establishing the primitive core in Paul's teaching, but he tended to restrict too narrowly the *kerygma* to formal statements of primitive doctrine found embedded in the Pauline epistles. In spite of the limitation in this approach, it is a useful starting point for determining what were the basic ideas of Paul's preaching. It would nevertheless be a mistake to imagine that these formal statements give a complete picture of the content of his evangelistic messages.

The clearest example of a statement of beliefs which Paul appears to have received from earlier Christians is 1 Cor. 15:3ff, for he says specifically in verse 1, "Now I would remind you in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain" (RSV). He then proceeds to state what he had himself received. His gospel could be succinctly summed up in the following way. It centred on the death of Christ—Christ died for our sins—which is more than a statement of historical fact. The theological interpretation of the event was basic to the earliest pronouncement. We cannot suppose that no further questions were asked about the interpretation, nor that Paul did not elaborate on the meaning in his preaching. When, in fact, he first preached among these people, he determined to restrict himself to the theme of Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2), which must have included a good deal of interpretation and application of the death of Christ.

The second 'fact' concerned the burial and resurrection, the latter evidently being regarded as historical as the former, since "the third day" places it in a historical setting. Paul, moreover, considered it to be necessary to enumerate various witnesses of the resurrection, again emphasising the importance of the resurrection of Christ as a historical event. A final significant factor in Paul's statement is the twice repeated "according to the Scriptures", which shows the importance to him and to the early Christians of scriptural support for the proclamation of the gospel. The *kerygma* was

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not an isolated phenomena, but was linked with past history. The significance of scriptural attestation for the modern preacher of the gospel is broader in proportion as the Christian scriptures are broader and more far-reaching than the Jewish, both in the understanding of the Old Testament and in the addition of the New Testament. There is no doubt that the authority in Paul's preaching was derived from the authority of scripture.

What appears to be an early Christian confession in Rom. 10:8, 9 may throw further light on a key aspect of the early proclamation. The confession "Jesus is Lord" is capable of profound theological development, for it is comprehensive enough to make room for the far reaching Christology in the epistles. It would be quite inadequate to suppose, in view of the former passage considered, that the Lordship of Christ eliminated any view of his redemptive activity. What is most valuable to observe is the emphasis on the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. At the heart of Paul's message was an exalted Christology.

Another passage of interest, although not so clearly representing the *kerygma*, is Rom. 1: 1-4, where the following features are found—fulfilment of prophecy, the Sonship of Christ, the seed of David, the Lordship of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. These were basic elements of Paul's gospel, which supports the view that the early Christians had a clear-cut idea of what the gospel was. This must be borne in mind when considering Paul's statement in Gal. 1:11, 12, that he had received his gospel, not from men, but from God. He is not drawing any distinction between his gospel and that of the other apostles, but between his gospel and the so-called 'gospel' of the false teachers. A man-made gospel could never be proclaimed with divine authority and Paul wants his readers to know that what he preached was a "revelation". Neither he nor any of the apostles relied on their subjective experiences for their gospel.

There are other important aspects of Christian truth which must have found a prominent place in Paul's preaching—teaching about the Spirit, the Parousia and forgiveness of sins. All of these are seen in the apostolic preaching in Acts and are basic in the epistles. The gospel which Paul preached was manysided and rich in content. It was a continuation of and not a contradiction of the primitive announcements.

One important consideration, which is not easy to define, is the problem to what extent Paul was interested in the Jesus of history. There is surprisingly little indication in the epistles of events in the life of Jesus, although allusions are not entirely lacking. Paul knew of the gentleness and meekness of the historical Jesus (2 Cor. 10:1), of his compassion (Ph. 1:8), of his bearing reproaches (Rom. 15:3), of his poverty (2 Cor. 8:9), and there are various references to Jesus Christ as an example. The evidence is sparse but is sufficient to show that Paul was acquainted with information about the historical Jesus. If allusions to events find so little place in Paul's letters, what are we to infer about his

preaching? The probable answer to our enquiry is complicated by the uncertainty about the means of circulation of the materials incorporated in our gospels. It is possible that in the absence of written gospels less emphasis was placed by preachers on the recording of events than on the significance and application of the gospel. No-one, however, could explain the significance except against the background of history.

To conclude this brief survey of Paul the preacher and his preaching, we shall enumerate a few principles which may be of value to contemporary preachers of the gospel.

(a) The first principle is for the preacher to have a clear understanding of the content of his message. If all followed Paul on this matter there would be less irrelevances in the pulpit. He knew what he meant by the gospel.

(b) Paul never supposed that the gospel would appeal to popular tastes. He recognized in it what he called "an odour of death" to the unbelieving (2 Cor. 5:20). With such a gospel there were bound to be discouragements as well as encouragements in the preaching of it.

(c) As a preacher Paul made it his business to understand the background of his hearers. His guiding principle was to be "all things to all men". This was no principle of compromise, but a genuine desire to see other men's points of view in order to communicate the gospel to them.

(d) When he preached, Paul recognized the need to be endowed with the power of the Spirit. This is particularly clear from 1 Cor. 2:4 and 2 Cor. 2:13. Even the words of the proclamation were "taught by the Spirit".

(e) Paul the preacher was a man under compulsion. He was a man who had no choice, a man under orders. He called woe on himself if he did not preach the gospel (1 Cor. 9:6). He had a sense of urgency to match the majesty of the message.

(f) For Paul preaching was not confined to specific times. He considered the preacher to be always on duty—in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4:4).

Although the modern preacher of the gospel is placed in a vastly different environment, none of these basic principles is obsolete. Indeed, as there is no other gospel than what Paul preached, so there are no lesser demands on those who preach it.

DONALD GUTHRIE

THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE MINISTRY

(The second of two articles)

In my first article I mentioned the temptation to self-love, pride and envy. The life of the minister is exposed to a further danger, the temptation to lose faith. This is not the loss of belief in dogma or creed, but the loss of that spirit and of those deep feelings which ought to accompany our

convictions. To fall for this temptation means that though we may still hold, and even preach and teach Christian truths, they no longer energise our wills or warm our hearts. We become in fact cold and indifferent to the love and revelation of God in Christ. The Anglican Liturgy describes this state as "hardness of heart and contempt for God's word and commandment."

It is one thing to believe and declare a great Christian affirmation with the mind, it is quite another thing to do so feelingly and with the whole soul and strength. Familiarity, if it does not breed contempt, may yet breed casualness; we may hold our beliefs, but be no longer inspired or deeply moved by them. When we take for granted what is "so amazing, so divine", when "good tidings of great joy" seem merely commonplace, when our "faith" has no longer "animating" power, then it means we are in peril of losing it. When faith is alive and real it is never content with just a lodging in the mind, nor with being expressed by the tongue; it commands the allegiance of the spirit and the wondering devotion of the soul.

The symptoms of having yielded to this temptation are ministerial laziness, duties ill-done or left undone, formality in the conduct of services and slackness in our daily business. A living faith will never allow us to adopt an easy-going attitude towards a vocation such as ours, an attitude which would be quickly noticed and bluntly condemned in any go-ahead business concern. As long as our faith is healthy and strong it will prove to be a dynamic in our lives revealing its presence in eager and willing service. To be called to declare Good News to people who urgently need to hear it, and yet to feel no happiness in doing so, to occupy the priest's office yet have no genuine priestly concern, this is "coldness of heart and contempt for God's word and commandment." This loss of faith will make us both hypocritical and cowardly. Ours is a calling in which a man ought to be prepared, if it is required of him, to lay down his very life. Our Lord Himself did so. Many have willingly sacrificed their lives for less worthy causes and far less worthy leaders. But only the firm grasp of a living faith can lift a man to those high levels of deliberate self sacrifice. We may preach eloquently about it, we may respect those who make such sacrifices, but we are never likely to attain such spiritual altitudes ourselves unless our faith is and remains the vitalising energy of our lives.

There are ways of protecting ourselves against this temptation: ways which help us to keep our faith "even unto the end". Firstly, it is spiritually dangerous deliberately to overload ourselves. Many of us do so. It may appear a fine, heroic thing to spend our energies recklessly, to go "all out" on the job, but we need divine sanction for doing so. And if we have not that sanction it is likely to involve serious consequences for others as well as for ourselves. A minister's wife sadly admitted that her husband, a good and lovable man, was sometimes almost unbearable to live with because he would so often drive himself to utter exhaustion. Over-

strain will exact its toll. A church member said of his minister, "He is devoted to his work. Every week he spends himself to the last ounce of energy". Members of the minister's family said the same, but not quite with the same admiring satisfaction. They had to bear with the resultant irritability and listlessness. When a Christian minister is too busy to be a Christian husband, father, or neighbour, he is *too busy*. We can no more read everything, pray for everything, serve every worthy cause and respond to every deserving request for help, than we can convert the whole world. It is presumptuous to imagine we can. The best work is done, not in defiance of, but within, our human limitations. Our Maker set them and we cannot, ought not, foolishly to ignore them. It may be misunderstood, but is there anything dishonourable in refusing to attempt to do what we know perfectly well we have not the time or energy to do?

There are occasions in all our lives when Christ Himself calls us to go to the very limits of our health and strength. Tired and spent as we may be, the impulse comes to try once again to solve that member's crushing problem, to ease that pressing burden, to loosen the terribly tangled strands in the life of some difficult family, or to endeavour once more to make the appeal of Christ to a stubborn mind. When such an impulse comes, we must of course obey. It is in the imperative voice. But we cannot live like that, and *it is a mistake to try*. The strongest of us cannot live at high tension all the time, and the longer we over-strain the more serious are the consequences likely to be. We never read of our Lord collapsing through exhaustion. The stresses and dangers he daily faced were immense, and what He did in so limited a time continually fills us with wonder.

"Take from our souls the strain and stress,

And let our ordered lives confess

The Beauty of Thy Peace."

Secondly, it is helpful to trust, more than we do, in the Providence of God. I do not mean trusting in Him for the satisfaction of our physical and material needs, but trusting in His Providence concerning the value of our ministry. We need to be assured that when we have done our best in the spirit of our Lord and in the way of His will, *it is never done in vain*. There are times when we know we have been used. The smile of a human face, the light in eyes that had been sorrowful, a stumbling expression of deepest gratitude or the warm grasp of a grateful hand, these tell us convincingly that we have been used of God and made a means of blessing. We know *we* have not done it. God has done it through us. And what other experience in life can give us joy and peace more real than this? But there are other times when we feel we have been of no use at all. Nothing is said, no sign is given, no result is visible. We prepare and preach the sermon, we give our best in a talk to the young people, or spend many hours in pastoral visitation, and there are times when it all seems to be taken for granted, and to have such little effect. People for whom we have prayed remain just the same, those we had hoped to bring to Christ stay far away, while

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3. I would like to remind you that we are always on the look-out for young folk who have some time to spare before going on to further training, who could give some service in one or other of our Homes whilst they are waiting. We need reliable devoted Christian young men and women, and if you have such a one to recommend, please write to us.

With warmest good wishes for God's blessing on your own ministry.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL

Superintendent of the West Ham Central Mission

there are so many who appear quite indifferent to anything we may say or do. There are periods in most pastorates, especially in long ones, when in spite of costly sowing there is still nothing to reap. But our Lord Himself seems to have known such times also. Men refused His gracious invitations and hardened their hearts against Him, sometimes with scorn and contempt. He warned His disciples that this would be their experience as well. But He did something more. He said that their efforts to serve Him would never be wasted or lost. Within the ever present Providence of the Father, in the very structure of the divine, spiritual economy, no good deed, no good word, no good thought or emotion, is either futile or wasted or lost. God accepts what men reject or ignore and uses it in His eternal purpose for good. The Gospel declares that nothing can happen in this world that God cannot take and use for good: and the Cross bears powerful and poignant witness to the truth of it. If at the end of each week's work we can look back upon it, knowing in our hearts that we have in sincerity and truth done our best to justify our calling, then we must be content to leave the results in stronger, wiser hands than our own.

Thirdly, it is helpful to keep ourselves aware of the difficulties and disappointments we are likely to encounter in our ministry. Many outside the church, and even some within it, have the impression that ours is a soft and sheltered job. But if a man is really concerned about his calling and truly intends to engage in the Christian conflict with evil, he will soon discover that the office is no sinecure. We must not allow ourselves to be too sensitive to the jolts and jars, the frustrations and disappointments inevitable in our vocation. Most of the people to whom we preach experience difficulties all through their days, and we urge them to be patient and courageous. It is not unreasonable on their part to expect us to practise what we preach, and a super sensitive regard for ourselves only makes hard going harder still. In Elijah's time, the threat of a ruthless Queen was no joke, and there is little doubt that Jezebel fully intended what she threatened; but the prophet seems to have taken it a little more seriously than he need have done. He laid himself down and longed to die! He was extremely sorry for himself; many of us would have felt the same. We are inclined to be very tender hearted towards ourselves. But the biblical story reveals the futility of nursing our wounds with excessive tenderness. How much better to get up and go as quickly as we can to Horeb, the Mount of God, where by grace hearts are made brave and hands are made strong again.

Many of the difficulties and disappointments of the ministry are painful. They need no exaggeration on our part, and they are apt to come when we least expect them. Without warning a minister may find himself face to face with a problem or situation which will require of him immense patience, great wisdom, and supreme self-control. Demands may be suddenly made upon the minister's insight and judgment, his discretion and integrity, as any that are made

upon men in far better paid and more highly esteemed positions. The young man in the ministry may be surprised to find that some of the most exacting problems and worries come to him—not when he is concerned with some vital moral or social issue, not with some major enterprise of Christian endeavour—but in the ordinary duties and in the weekly routine of church life and work. The complex human problem may be suddenly presented during what he had taken to be a casual conversation. The intricate situation may suddenly arise as he occupies the chair in an ordinary meeting such as a gathering of youth leaders, Sunday school teachers, choir members or church officers. When it happens demands are made upon all the graciousness, forbearance, and magnanimity we can command. Others may lose their temper, resign themselves to a “bad mood”, give way to irritability and discourtesy, but the minister must not. Differing temperaments and conflicting dispositions cause tensions; to guide and lead a community in such a way as to ensure that brotherly love continues, is far from easy. It demands the utmost and best from a man if he is continually to inspire imperfect Christians to practise the perfect love of *1 Corinthians 13*. And there are times when having done his utmost, the minister must still be prepared to accept misunderstanding and the indignation to which his actions sometimes give rise. To save the foolish from their folly, the ignorant from false conclusions, the blind from the perils of their way, the weak from the dangers of their frailty, has never been cheap and easy service. It cost the Son of God His very life. If One Who was perfect could not serve without carrying the cross, can we expect to work comfortably and easily?

To be a faithful and effective minister makes many demands, in many ways, and all the time on a man’s moral, emotional, and mental resources. He must have some confidence in himself, and patience with those who see no ground for it! He must learn to wait for results, while others declare that nothing at all is happening. He must bear being lied about, ridiculed, even hated, without giving way to ill-will and bitterness. He must dream dreams, yet not be content with them: think hard and long, yet not be content merely to think. He must know the deceptive character of both outward successes and outward failures. Some of the latter are more valuable and do more good than some of the former. He must be prepared to hear truths he has spoken “twisted . . . to make a trap for fools”. He must be strong enough to bear having some of his most costly efforts coolly received, and some of his most cherished plans casually deferred, if not dismissed. He must in certain circumstances be willing to risk everything for the sake of what he believes to be right and true. He must create and establish a relationship with all kinds of people, and yet never, *in an unworthy sense* be “all things to all men.” All human beings must have value in his sight, but none too much. And however difficult he may find and feel it to be, the preacher of redeeming love must himself both love and forgive. A man

who could do all these things, and keep it up through all his working years, would be a not unworthy minister of His Master.

Finally, it is very often a means of Grace, to go back in thought and spirit to our beginnings; to those experiences in and through which we became assured that God was calling us to become Ministers of the Word and Sacraments. In so doing we recapture the cleansing humiliation and joyous exultation which were ours when we said, “Here am I, send me.” We did not in that hour desire an easy life, a comfortable vocation, or the praise of men. The honour of being accepted to serve the Son of God was itself more than we could ask or think. We made vows, but more important were the vows then made for us, and like Wordsworth we knew ourselves “to be, else sinning greatly dedicated” spirits.

The highest conception of our vocation is expressed in the Biblical term, “Man of God.” To be to any degree worthy of that title would be an honour indeed. No earthly, worldly title can be compared with it. The very possibility of a frail human being becoming a “Man of God” to another human soul fills one with a sense of wonder. Within the struggling, trailing race of man upon the earth characters have appeared, and they have lived their lives and done their work, and the dominating thing about them has been the consciousness of God, the inspiration of a call from Him, to be the personalities they became and do the work they did. These men of God have and hold their place in the history of mankind, and in the minds of succeeding generations: being dead they yet speak “with authority”, and “their works do follow them.”

This long succession of historic witnesses to a Divine Reality, is both a challenge and an inspiration. It demands an explanation. And no philosophy, no ideology, no explanation to life is adequate if it ignores or evades a fact so impressive and significant as this. Why have there been, why are there still, such characters as these men of God? What reason can be found for the fact that so many through the centuries have heard His voice, obeyed His call, declared His Words, and spent their days in His service? To ask us to believe that these figures of history, the characters they revealed, the truths they declared, the deeds they did, the purifying, healing influences they exercised, were all the consequences of mistaken minds, and deluded hearts, the products of wishful thinking or the fair and rare fruits of mere mental aberrations, is asking us to believe rather a lot. It is fashionable in these times to say that it is very difficult to believe in God. And the Communist, Humanist, and Materialist calmly affirms with conviction that there is no God, but even while he says it he is “surrounded by a vast cloud of witnesses” to the Divine Reality he denies: a vast multitude of men who by what they were, by what they did in their lives, and often by the martyrs death they died, manifest the divine qualities of genuine godliness. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” The ground of the Christian belief in God becomes firmer still when we lift our gaze from the

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succession of the Men of God to One Whom men for nearly two thousand years have called the Son of God. "God so loved that He gave." He came forth from the Father to save and to redeem the world. And it is the same Eternal Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has called us into the work of the Christian ministry, to preach the Word and to do His will. Because so many are indifferent to our witness and work, is not proof that these are no longer needed. Many facts and features of modern life most powerfully suggest that they are more urgently needed than ever before. For lack of faith in any transcendental truth, our age is in danger of losing its soul and our civilisation in peril of losing its life. Man's need of a message which can inspire him to hate cruelty and tyranny, wickedness and evil, and to reverence truth, love righteousness, and be moved with compassion and love,—the need of such a message is written in the tears and blood of suffering multitudes.

There is no lack of clashing religions, rival faiths, and man made, secular interpretations of human life; because of them the family of man is divided into challenging and opposing camps, each of them wondering what is going to happen next and all of them under the shadow of destructive atomic weapons. Christianity itself in the past has been the cause of cruelty and bloodshed, tyranny and war, and in some forms it can still prove a divisive influence breeding mistrust, suspicion and bitterness. To the Christian and the non-Christian, to the orthodox believer and the heretic, to the Humanist and the Communist, the man from north or south or east or west, to the modern scientist and the most primitive savage, Jesus of Nazareth reveals the Love of God for the whole wide world. This is the Gospel; this is the Word which becomes flesh and lived among us. This is the Message and blessed is the man who can set it free from dead traditions and conventions, from out of date forms and theologies, which make it sound weakly and sentimental or hopelessly irrelevant. Modern man, like man of all ages, desperately needs to know, to see, to feel, to believe and live in the Divine Charity, the love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ. The Gospel affirms—in spite of all that appears to deny it—that the love of God is after all the foundation and cement of this travailing creation and that the supreme power in the universe is not atomic power, not the power of knowledge nor the power of the state, but the power of the Divine Charity incarnate in Christ.

In the beginning the Message was not a document, but a Life, a personality: the revelation is not in paper or parchment, but in history, in the facts of the birth, growth, teaching, healing, suffering, and dying of a Man.

Because the Love of God is revealed in Jesus we are constrained to believe that God wills His love to be revealed in us, and in the characters and lives of those to whom we preach and minister. And in the experiences of a life-time in the Christian ministry we know that it can and does really happen. Perhaps we rarely see sinners suddenly converted into perfect saints, but we do see signs, the gleams and

flashes, the surprising revelations of the gracious influence of Jesus Christ at work in ordinary human lives. By these we know and see that a work of saving and redeeming Grace is being done, and it is a moving sight, a sight by which we ministers—unworthy as we are—enter to some degree into the joy of the angels of God over “one sinner that repenteth.” Matthew Arnold has expressed it beautifully in ‘Rugby Chapel’.

Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd!, to come
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

G. W. BYRT

ENTRUSTED WITH THIS COMMISSION

Like most ministers, I learned long ago to avoid depending upon a hand-to-mouth homiletical existence by preparing sermons on a long-term basis. This involves keeping notes, cuttings, etc., taken from constant reading and study. These are filed alphabetically under various subjects and stored away until needed.

The other day, I noticed that one file had swollen to excessive proportions. I checked the title and discovered this was my file headed ‘EVANGELISM’. If a stranger invaded by study, and looked over these files, he would immediately conclude that evangelism must be the dominant note of my ministry, and that, indeed, to judge from the amount of print devoted to this subject over a couple of decades in Christian publishing, this must be the key activity of the whole Christian Church.

The truth is that both ministers (and I include myself) and churches are vastly more proficient at talking evangelism than doing it. If this new-fangled phrase ‘doing theology’ means anything, it means that all our talk about evangelism ought to be being carried over into action much much more than it is. The sad truth is that the Christian Churches in Britain have written about evangelism, studied it, argued about it, evolved complicated plans and systems and methods . . . but still, by and large, it fails to act in evangelism. In fact, I submit we are in grave danger of deluding ourselves, by all our discussion and planning, into thinking we are actually evangelising!

A conference has been aptly defined as ‘A group of people talking about what they should be doing’. This is the point I want to make in this article. Instead of actually engaging in mission, most of us in the churches today are at best, simply talking, theorising, pursuing improved methods, and seeking a competent theology of evangelism. I remember a Church Secretary in one of my churches who presented in the Sunday Notices a most cogent argument why every church member should attend the Prayer Meeting. What invalidated it all, of course, was that when it came down to

brass tacks, this dear brother never attended the Prayer Meeting himself. I think of another active church worker, Convener of the Church’s Evangelism Committee no less, who participated in a planning programme for neighbourhood house-visiting, but just failed to turn up on the nights when it was being put into operation.

Psychologists might suggest why we substitute talk for action when it comes to evangelism and would perhaps murmur about ‘compensation’, ‘rationalisation’, ‘sublimation of guilt’ etc., but the fact remains, it is high time we put action where our mouths are when it comes to this burning and relevant topic.

The fastest growing churches in the world are those which act in evangelism, and which pursue programmes of evangelism, which are sometimes rather uncoordinated, or by our standards inefficient and untidy. With all the defects which, no doubt, could be found in such programmes, the fact is that these churches are getting on with the job instead of merely sitting around talking about it, which frankly seems to be as far as most of us in this country have got. With all our planning and hours of discussion in recent years at every level of our denominational life, we are still a shrinking denomination.

This is the scandal—in theory we are committed to evangelise our generation. In practice we are hardly putting up any kind of showing at all.

The Baptist Union Constitution lays it down that every member should bear witness to Jesus Christ. That’s the theory. But the annual returns of membership in the Secretary’s Report to the Assembly tell another story. These are the harsh realities of the situation. Despite the fact that we belong to the denomination that produced Carey, Spurgeon and Billy Graham, we are still failing to carry out the Great Commission.

William Temple, in the Beckley Lecture of 1943, said ‘The essential task of the evangelist does not vary; it is to proclaim the unchanging gospel.’ He then goes on to criticise the ‘spectator attitude’ in the churches, and proceeds to give a simple exposition of 2 Corinthians chapter 4, from which the above title of this article is taken. Says Dr. Temple “we have this ministry. There is the fact. Why God called us we do not know, but He did, and here we are. Let us not doubt the reality of our vocation, however unfit for it we were and are.”

Dr. Temple was chairman of the Commission which in 1942 produced the report ‘Towards the Conversion of England’. This is still a classic document and should be re-published and made mandatory reading for all Christians today. It originally emerged in the middle of the War which probably meant it did not receive the attention it deserved. In this report, we have the classic definition of evangelism, often quoted since: ‘To evangelise is so to present Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church’.

Nobody would argue with this today, but despite unanimity on definition of purpose and aim, we are still not really reaching and winning this generation for Christ. Why this glaring disparity between theory and practice?

Tom Allen helped establish the 'Tell Scotland' movement back in the Fifties. It had five basic principles, including these: Evangelism is the normal ongoing work of the Church, not a sporadic activity. Evangelism involves the whole church, not just the ministry; the laity must be mobilised. The local church is the central unit in evangelism. Once again, by these principles, we see how far short we are falling. Why? A man was overheard at a Kelvin Hall Billy Graham Rally to say 'I'll be glad when this is over and we can get back to the normal work of the Church'. What is the 'normal work of the Church' if it is not witness and mission?

Recently our denomination was in a turmoil because of the allegation that some of our numbers are not upholding the first clause of the B.U. Declaration concerning belief in the Deity of Christ. Yet in practice, all of us are failing to uphold the third clause of the B.U. Declaration by our failure to bear faithful witness to Jesus Christ in evangelism. How hypocritical can you get?

If we were not committed to New Testament principles, this situation might not be so intolerable, but we are descendants of those 'who turned the world upside down', of Carey and Spurgeon, and each minister swore at his Ordination, and at his Induction to 'do the work of an evangelist'. I personally do not feel that we ministers can satisfy ourselves that this vow is being fulfilled simply by our preaching from the pulpit.

Returning to Tom Allen, in his seminal book *The Face of My Parish* he tells how he got his Church in Glasgow engaged in mission. He admits that, when he settled there, only a minority were interested; the majority were either apathetic or even hostile. He suggests this is typical of most churches today. My own experience broadly confirms this. He says 'in every church, we find "the Church within the Church"'. Where the Church, qua Church, is not missionary minded, even though it will raise money to take the gospel to India or the new towns, then the only alternative is for the missionary-minded minister to begin with those who will engage in mission, and proceed to train them for the task.

I personally have no magic wand to rectify the situation, no panacea to redress the imbalance between theory and practice. That's the frustrating thing. We know the theory already, but how to perform 'the deed, the deed', there's the rub. However, in medicine, diagnosis is supposed to be half the cure, and with this in mind, I submit that our failure breaks down into these six categories.

(i) There's a simple failure of belief. Some years ago, Dr. G. R. Beasley-Murray wrote in a magazine the shocking statement that today the Church no longer believes its own gospel! Nobody seemed shocked enough to protest, but I've

never forgotten that. I think he is right. This is the only explanation for the present apathy in evangelism. I discern amongst Christians today a loss of confidence, not only in themselves and their abilities, but in the Message itself, and in the Holy Spirit, the original missionary. Before a new product is launched on to an unsuspecting public, conferences are held to enthuse the salesmen and inspire them. They must have faith in the product and must believe their own sales talk. Do we as Christians have such a confidence in the gospel as the one message of salvation relevant to man's total needs, not just in the Apostolic Age, but in the Atomic Age? We may believe it in theory, but do we believe Romans 1:16 that the gospel is the *power* of God unto salvation? In terms of the Parable of the Sower, do we believe there is *life in the seed* which can still convert men once it is sown and received into congenial soil? We believe the gospel is good news, but do we believe it is power? In 2 Cor. 4:6 Paul links the power of God in Creation with the power of God in Christ to effect man's salvation. He goes on in v. 17 to argue that men 'in Christ' are new creatures, i.e. remade.

I submit that it is inconceivable that if every Christian had such confidence in the Gospel, the present situation would exist another week.

(ii) There is a confusion between simply witnessing for Christ and adopting elaborate methods of evangelism. I think that, confronted with the failure to win much response as a result of previous evangelism, we have argued, 'the failure cannot be in the message, or in God Himself, it must be in us. Therefore we must improve our *methods*'. One aspect of all this is that we have fallen for the fallacy that if only our methods are more efficient, better organised, more high powered literature, etc., then we'll win converts. One danger of this also is that we have tended to reduce evangelism to human activity, rather than recognising that "we are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though GOD were intreating by us . . ." (2 Cor. 5:20). I will return to this in a moment, but I make the point here that we have tended to worship methods and organisation in evangelism, have tended to believe that there is a 'right' method which can give success, and have forgotten that the true evangelist is God the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit overcame the communication gap and demonstrated His supernatural efficacy to win a great multitude to faith in Christ.

(iii) Another aspect of this loss of nerve is that we have almost become embarrassed to talk to people about Christ and seek their conversion in personal encounter. We have, as ministers, become professionalised, and find it difficult, at a moment's notice, to say a word for Jesus Christ. Do some of us even betray a loss of confidence in conversion itself? It seems respectable to talk about political conversions, but spiritual conversion is now theologically *infra dig*. When I spoke of my conversion at a Free Church Ministers' Fraternal some years ago, one elderly Methodist said, appreciatively, he hadn't heard anyone even talking about conversion for years. Something like 90% plus of all

the children who go through our Sunday Schools are not won to Christ and the Church; added to that we seem to be failing to win new members through conversions—so what is the future hope of expansion for the Christian Church?

(iv) Then there's the credibility gap between what the Church proclaims and how Christians live. This, perhaps does not apply to us as ministers. We do honestly and sincerely seek to live consistently for Christ. But honesty compels one to admit that, so often, the outsider just doesn't see this 'new creation' within the local Church and within the lives of its members as he knows them. All of us have had the depressing experience of visiting in the neighbourhood of the Church and being told of squabbles and feuds in the Church's past which are still public knowledge amongst those we are seeking to evangelise. Dick Shepherd was nearly put off the ministry by seeing a bishop lose his temper when he was beaten at tennis. It is this that puts off so many outsiders. They just don't see the difference between Christians and themselves. "Christians act much the same role as everyone else," they say, "Christians get caught up in the rat race, live on sedatives, get conditioned by middle-class bourgeoisie culture, lose their tempers in traffic jams, etc." So the outsider concludes that if this is what being a Christian means, he can afford to do without it. A film producer told the star actress 'Don't just tell 'em, honey, *show em*'. This is part of our witness, to 'show 'em' the new life in Christ. They have the right to see a working model in us. Of course, this doesn't mean we have to be perfect before we can witness. We fail Christ so badly, but God still trusts us with the task. Our job is not to point to ourselves, but to Christ. But still, if we Christians fail to live the new life in Christ, and show that it makes a difference, we are putting a stumbling block in someone's way. Witness isn't just words, it involves both words and deeds, and one interprets the other.

Reading again Acts 2, one finds that the Jerusalem Church did not need an Evangelistic Conference to plan its outreach. Because of the phenomena of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the people came seeking the Church and its secret. Should not this still be true today? In Acts 3 the lame man cured was such a demonstration of God's power at work that people came flocking together to find out about it. If the message were lived out by the Church, surely this would happen today more than it does. Paul Althaus says the credibility of the Church, when it preaches the gospel of God's love for the lost, depends on whether the church itself goes out to the people in their lostness, identifies with them, and, in a priestly way, makes their predicament its own. He says the Incarnation can only be preached and believed in, to the degree in which it is lived and demonstrated by the witnesses.

(v) Failure in evangelism again often stems from a failure to relate the whole gospel to the *whole* spectrum of human needs. Jesus began by asking the woman at the well for a drink, but in a few moments he was dealing with her deepest spiritual needs. In Acts 3 Peter and John met a beggar who

wanted money, but they gave him something much more valuable—his health, so that he did not need to beg but could work for a living. In both of these cases, the real needs lay deep within the person, and the Gospel searched out and met those deeper needs.

In his lecture, referred to above, William Temple links together as inseparable, Social Witness and Evangelism. He saw social witness and involvement as an indispensable instrument of evangelism. He stressed the need for Christian witnesses to get involved in meeting man's needs at every level of society. Then he said "Of course this must not be interpreted as a suggestion that it is a substitute for evangelism. On the contrary, a Christian approach to questions of social justice will lead us back to a renewed belief in the need for individual conversion and dedication."

We must avoid the mistake of reducing evangelism merely to individual pietism. At the same time people's deepest hunger is for Christ Himself, not merely for the amelioration of social injustices.

(a) Take modern man's condition of guilt, for example. Guilt figures largely in much mental illness. More than half the beds in the hospitals are occupied by people suffering from mental, nervous, emotional disorders. Guilt plays a large part in their sickness. British Rail gets 'conscience money' sent through the post daily by people who have defrauded by travelling free. They knew no peace of mind until they purged their guilt by paying up. The gospel we proclaim is the only true answer to that deep seated guilt. God still breaks the power of *cancelled* sin.

(b) Loneliness is another deep need which the Gospel removes. Many people go to pubs and bingo halls simply to escape from unbearable loneliness. When I served with Telephone Samaritans I often received calls during the night from people who just wanted someone to talk to. Again the Gospel remedy here is Love, the Love of God in Christ, incarnate in caring Christians. The remedy is the Fellowship which a true Church should exhibit.

(c) Then there is the purposelessness of many people's lives. Thirty years ago Temple wrote "What is the source of this sense of frustration in its modern form? It is largely the absence of any sense of purpose in life". This is still true. Schopenhauer was asked by a park-keeper who found him sitting in the dark in the public park, "What are you doing here? Who are you?" To which the philosopher replied 'I wish to God I knew'. That is a cry straight from the heart of man in the 20th century. He does not know his own identity; he is lost. Billy Graham quotes June Callwood, a sociologist in Toronto, who reports that 92% of all university students she interviewed confessed they lacked a sense of their own identity, life was meaningless for them, and they had no worthwhile goals. The Gospel speaks to this condition by proclaiming Christ who came to seek and save the lost, and He claimed "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life".

(d) Then there's the anxiety which compels thousands of

sophisticated urbanized men and women to consume tons of barbiturates and sedatives daily. Small wonder that the drug addict answers his critics with the devastating reply "Everyone today is hooked on drugs." People find the burdens and pressures of just living too much, and when special crises arise, the bottom drops out. Psycho-somatic conditions result in a whole range of *physical illnesses*. T. S. Eliot described us as a generation of 'hollow men'. The Gospel offers us wholeness, healing, full salvation in Christ, and the peace of God which passes all understanding; not just a feeling, but true resources to meet life's challenge.

(e) There's the fear of death. Jung said that something like 60% of all his patients over the age of 35 confessed they were afraid to die. Modern man is becoming aware of his mortality and that the sands are running out. Read the obituary and 'In Memoriam' notices and hear the pathetic cries of the bereaved for some answer to death. Again, Christians have a Gospel which has the ringing answer—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again into a *living Hope*, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead . . ."

The conclusion of all this is that we don't need ever to be ashamed of the Gospel, because it is obviously the power of God unto salvation, and still is the only totally relevant message for man's complete needs.

(vi) Finally, I believe that the basic failure of the Church today in evangelism is simply a failure of the will. We suffer from a failure to commit ourselves to Christ and get on with the job. "Why do you stand looking into heaven?" (Acts 1:11).

Some of the above failures stem from confusion, lack of confidence, failure to understand, or other inadequacies, but I believe that basically we fail to evangelise because, when it comes right down to it, we don't want to do it. It costs too much.

Jesus called his disciples with the plain commission "I will make you become fishers of men". Our evangelism must recognise that this is still the imperative. We have failed to train converts to themselves make converts. This is why the Church is not spontaneously expanding as Roland Allen so trenchantly argued half a century ago. Jehovah's Witnesses, Marxists, other groups all put training converts to make other converts at the top of their priorities. The Christian Church fails to do this. The result is that many of our Church Members are suffering from defective conversions. Salvation is something they have been content to receive, rather than something they want to *share*.

In conclusion, I stress that if we assume our basic failure is simply one of methodology and organisation and education, we are deluding ourselves. One appreciates the need of good training, organisation, and literature, but this is not the heart of the matter. I have no desire to turn the clock back to the old days of inefficiency and haphazard fumbling in evangelism of the crudest kinds. However, I think the reaction from that has gone too far. We have identified the

problem with a lack of methods and training, etc., instead of recognising that the heart of the problem is a lack of vision and a lack of will, a failure to get involved. Prayer, training, efficiency, organisation—all are important, but, by themselves don't add up to evangelism. The problem lies in the region of the individual Christian's commitment to His Lord.

The way forward is probably the one Tom Allen found, to concentrate on and work with that 'Church within the Church', that group, however small, who will obey the Lord's command. The choice does not lie between those who say we must sit back and pray for revival, or those who want to engage in a frantic programme of activism. It is in obedience, in going forward with Christ, in hearing his call, trusting his resources, committing ourselves to Him, and engaging in the evangelism that D. T. Niles described; 'Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread'. May we be renewed for that mission, a mission which will not cease till Christ Himself shall come.

RONALD ARMSTRONG

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