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September, 1975

No. 174

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EDITORIAL

It gives us much pleasure to present another edition of "The Fraternal" which is devoted largely to contributions from overseas members of the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship. To those of us who live in the U.K., and who are aware that we constitute the majority of the membership, it could be only too easy to be so engrossed with our own domestic affairs as to be guilty of what Peter Howard once called "ingrowing eyeballs". . . ! By what trick of thought do men allow themselves to be swayed by the "big battalions", as if it were true that only the massive majorities were important? It **could**, then, be easy to fall into this error in connection with our Fellowship—but this edition, like others in the past, shows that we are prepared to avoid that error, and also that we welcome the written contributions of our fellow-labourers whose ways happen to be set in the far places of the earth. Yet what do we mean by "far"? Do you remember the story of the very insular Englishman who was asked by a group of Americans what he thought of New York? "Oh, it's all right," he said, "but the only trouble is that it is so far away, you know . . ." To this statement one of the Americans made the tart reply, "Where from?"

So it is our hope that this edition may be a blessing to us all; and may our overseas brethren be assured once again of our affection for them and our prayers on their behalf. God bless them!

W.H.W.

INFLUENCES THAT HAVE MADE US

It was Goethe who commented that "every man sees what he takes with him". This sort of insight is perhaps a reminder that any article such as this one which attempts to portray something of Baptist life in New Zealand will necessarily be subjective. It is tempting, to summarise New Zealand Baptist life in a concise and simple way, but to do so would not do justice to the complexity which exists, even in a small denomination. What I would like to offer, however, are some personal impressions on some influences that have helped to make us what we have become. We are partly explained by our origins. But any full picture must also paint something of the socio-cultural backdrop which has provided the context for our growth. The life of any denomination inevitably bears not only the marks of its distinctive doctrinal emphases but also the stamp of the culture within which it has been active. Equally, however, it must speak to that culture, and where necessary transform it.

The Colonial Experience

According to Leibnitz, the study of history reveals "the origins of things present which are to be found in things past; for a reality is never better understood than through its causes." Certainly a study of the history of New Zealand Baptists discloses the indelible marks which have been left on

our Baptist life by the colonial experience. Indeed part of the story of the growth of any Commonwealth country and therefore of any Commonwealth church lies in its natural emergence from the shadow of its colonial past.

Early Baptist life in this country was a microcosm of patterns and practices in Britain. An English worshipper in the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle, for example, would have felt completely at home in the first forty or fifty years of its life. The building itself is a small scale replica of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. The first minister in this building, Thomas Spurgeon, along with many of its other earlier ministers were certainly Englishmen before they were New Zealanders. Indeed, a large proportion of these early congregations would have been born outside New Zealand. The way in which the minister understood his role and the congregation viewed theirs, the forms of worship and associated activities would all have reflected familiar patterns.

As first, second and third generation New Zealanders gradually assumed control within our churches, patterns began to change. People reared in the local environment naturally modified the church's mission so that it more meaningfully served local purposes. The period of total British predominance was ending, yet the British influence did not recede entirely. Rather, it tended to become one influence among many.

American Influences

In the nation as a whole, contact with the United States has increased considerably since the war, though this is a trend which has not been without its critics. Baptists have followed the national example mainly because, in three areas at least, the Americans have been developing programmes and ideas which have suited our aims and objectives. The three main areas are Christian Education, Evangelism and Pastoral Care.

The All Age Sunday School system, now widely adopted, was imported from the Southern Baptists. Initially it came complete with lesson materials, single sex classes and many of the idiosyncrasies peculiar to the culture of the American South. However, gradually the idea has been adapted in application, most notably through the writing of materials in Australia and New Zealand. The educational insights of the American Baptists have also been used extensively.

In the past fifteen years, two Billy Graham Crusades and a Trans Pacific Crusade involving the visit of over one hundred Southern Baptist Pastors have established links in this facet of our work. Exchange of persons and ideas has been at the very core of the Board of Evangelism's policies, especially in the past decade.

Perhaps the biggest single attraction in America for our pastors has been the learning experiences offered in various forms of pastoral ministry, ranging from Crisis counselling to hospital chaplaincies. These training experiences are all the more attractive for the fact that pastoral counselling and pastoral care are not in our theological College accorded the

status of having a full-time staff member. This is partly an inevitable difficulty facing a small denomination in a small country, for we do not have the resources for a larger staff. Perhaps the time will come, however, when we can assign one full-time staff member to deal with practical branches of theology such as ethics along with an array of subjects grouped under the heading 'Church and Ministry'—subjects such as pastoral care, pastoral counselling, Christian Education and so on.

It must be conceded that American influences have not been uniformly welcomed by New Zealand Baptists. It would be a harsh critic, however, who contended that there had not been some value in the insights we have gained from this source. Many of their ideas have started us down significant roads in our work, while many of their resources have proved a worthwhile asset to our task. In short, we would be the poorer today had the American ingredient in our own Baptist life been lacking.

Having affirmed this, there are still legitimate complaints to be made. At least two deserve serious attention, in my view. One is that we have tended to overlook the potential contributions of Baptist groups outside the Southern Baptists. That the alliance with this group has been as close as it has is largely due to the keen interest which their denomination has taken in the New Zealand situation. For example, the Trans Pacific Crusade was financed from Southern Baptist coffers. Such a zealous interest in the affairs of other people, even other Baptist people is, of course, part of their missionary philosophy. But it is perhaps our loss that we have not looked more often to the benefits to be derived from a closer association with other Baptist groups in America. A second legitimate objection is that we have not sufficiently grasped the fact that a foreign idea, once borrowed, must also be adapted so that it fits the flow of life in our own situation. We learnt that lesson slowly in the field of Christian education. We still need to learn it in the area of Evangelism. And we would be wise to be alive to the weaknesses which the American Pastoral Counselling movement has when we are tempted to affirm its strengths, which admittedly are many.

The Americans reveal their greatest strengths in the application of Christian truths to the situations of everyday living. This is where we have learned our greatest lessons from them. Perhaps their greatest weakness is in the field of theology, where their approach tends to be heavily cultural. It is here that the scholarship of English Baptists has never really dwindled as a significant stream of influence in our religious life.

So New Zealand Baptist life has been affected by two streams of foreign influence—the British impact which was a natural by-product of the colonial experience and the American impact which has inevitably grown from increased contact with Americans, along with an appreciation of what they have had to offer. But there are other strains which have influenced New Zealand Baptists. One of these is

The Asian Context:

This is reflected in two principal ways: racial heterogeneity and regional co-operation. The race question has been extensively covered in another article. Suffice it to say that communicating the gospel in a multi-racial context is a challenge New Zealand Baptists cannot escape, though some try to. Polynesians are the largest group and include the Maoris, but more recently heavy increases in the influx of Pacific Islanders have altered the balance a little. Auckland now has the largest Polynesian population of any city in the world. Some parts of Auckland city are almost totally comprised of the Islands' culture. One Auckland retailer wryly remarked recently that if you see a white man in Karangahape Road (one of Auckland's central shopping areas) he's probably a missionary! However, there are also significant numbers of other Asian cultures, most notably Hindu Indians and Chinese. There have been and still are Baptist communities of Chinese, but no Christian group has ever made significant progress with the Hindus.

Regional co-operation is the other main facet of our geographical position. A united approach to Christian education is perhaps the most notable area of success. Material is written and read in both Australia and N.Z. on a co-operative basis. It offers a core of material which is universally applicable while adding electives which allow for particular applications in local situations. A growing regional awareness has also attended mission work. Under the shadow of the British Empire in the late nineteenth century we established fields in Tripura State, India and in that part of East Pakistan now known as Bangladesh. But our presence there has grown increasingly tenuous and this combined with an increased awareness of our Near North has led us to diversify missionary activities with special concentration in the now independent state of Papua-New Guinea.

The Local Scene

Primarily, however, the basic influence on Baptists in this country which cannot be ignored is the call of the local situation. Much of New Zealand is still rural and that brings its own challenge and its own forms of religious expression. Auckland, by contrast is beginning to experience all the typical difficulties of large cosmopolitan cities the world over. There is the challenge of the underprivileged and it is not just confined to central areas but is creeping out into a circle of suburbs in about a 3-mile radius from the centre and we have churches in those areas. The familiar difficulties abound: struggling inner-city churches with low income having neither the finances nor the personnel to meet the needs of their area. The time may be rapidly approaching when **all** the Baptist churches of the Auckland area (about 50 in number) will have to lend their support to work in these areas. For it is the responsibility of the whole city, not just the geographical parts affected. And it may be a task which can only adequately be met by inter-denominational co-operation. This exists already to some extent. For example

in Auckland a Baptist is in charge of the Inter-Church Counselling Centre while in Christchurch, though there is no fully paid director in a similar position, Baptists are beginning to co-operate with other denominational groups in meeting community needs.

Affluence brings its own problems to the door of the church. For all the moaning of the unions and the complaints of the farmers this is still an affluent land—Common Market changes notwithstanding. The affluent have social problems of their own, even if they disguise them more effectively. And the by-products such as religious apathy and the proverbial rat race are perhaps the most difficult situation the Baptists (or any church) have had to speak to yet.

Prosperity has its perils, and no-one is more aware of it than the concerned Baptist, conscious of a dwindling interest in religious affairs in his community, yet burdened with the responsibility of sharing the gospel among his contemporaries.

The local scene is the point of convergence for all the influences which have shaped our Baptist life. For it is the local social setting which provides the context for our activities even while it defines the agenda for our mission. And it is here that the fundamental encounter between the Gospel we preach and the secular society we live in must be given its full expression.

BRUCE TURLEY

NEW ZEALAND BAPTISTS . . . POINTS OF INTEREST

Membership

A visitor coming to New Zealand cannot help but notice the churches. Every city, suburb and township has a church building of some kind. The notice boards outside announce to passers-by that the Anglicans are here or the Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Salvation Army, Apostolic—you name it, we've got it!

Most New Zealanders like to think they belong to some church and every five years mark down their allegiance on the census papers. Don't be taken in, however, by the census returns which suggest that practically every Kiwi is a loyal Christian. According to the census the four largest churches (Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Methodists) have the support of 78% of the 3 million population.

The true picture is very different. A recent survey has shown that only about 17% of the population are active church members. Put in another way: one New Zealander in six attends church with some degree of regularity and supports his local congregation and of those the majority belong to the big four denominations.

The preponderance of these four denominations reflects the British scene from which most of the settlers came. These churches were also the dominant missionary and

pioneering churches of the early days. For those whose New Zealand history is thin I would remind you that the gospel was first preached here by an Anglican missionary in 1814. The Methodists and Roman Catholics followed soon afterwards. These three had the field to themselves until the main flood of immigrants arrived in the 1840s. It was then that the Presbyterians got a firm hold with the establishment of the Scots settlement of Dunedin, the Edinburgh of the South.

The Baptists were late starters. The first Baptist church dates from 1851 and since then Baptists have had a slow uphill climb to respectability. Today Baptists are fifth in the denominational league with 157 churches and a total membership of 17,458.

The 1950s and early 1960s were good years for Baptists here and a steady net increase of 500 a year made us feel we were on the ball a bit more than our British counterparts. Since 1967, however, despite many well organized efforts in church extension, evangelism and Christian education our growth has been minimal. Last year the net increase was 12 and Sunday School rolls were down by 1,000.

This is rather puzzling because church life seems to be quite vigorous at the moment, the giving of the congregations is at a record level and a steady stream of students apply for ministerial training. Why then so little growth?

All kinds of theories have been put forward. Some blame the affluent society, and New Zealand is very affluent at the moment. Others call for more old-style evangelism or look to the charismatic movement for inspiration. Some blame the uncommitted young and others like our General Secretary hammer the middle-aged. "The middle-aged," he said, "feel that the work of God, its progress and development, rests upon academic distinction, promotion, wealth, administration, conferences, church complexes, status, all things that the world holds dear . . . something must be done to inspire the barren decades, those of us in our thirties, forties and fifties."

Whatever the reason for our comparative lack of growth since 1967, New Zealand Baptists are in good heart and form a friendly, united fellowship. One cause for sadness is the arrival of some ultra-conservative Baptist missionaries from America. They have started their own independent churches in two of the main centres. So we can no longer boast that every Baptist Church in the land belongs to the Baptist Union.

Church Union

Union negotiations between Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and the churches of Christ have been going on for years now. Baptists here, as in many other places, have been divided about whether we should participate in the discussions. The plan for Union includes acceptance of infant baptism as well as believers' baptism. Some have felt we ought to have been involved in the union discussions from the start. Others have been equally convinced that since infant baptism is accepted by the majority

of the negotiating churches it would be unwise to participate. As one minister put it: "What is the sense in participating in union negotiations when we know beforehand we cannot accept the conditions". This viewpoint carried the day some years ago and the negotiations have gone on without the Baptists.

There is a new spirit of fellowship and co-operation among the negotiating churches. Local "union" parishes have been formed in many districts, a united theological college is being developed and future planning is being done more and more on a joint basis.

The Baptists, however, although on good terms with the other churches, have stood apart. Whether we are right or wrong the future alone will tell.

The Charismatic Movement

One of the most significant developments in New Zealand in the last decade has been the growth of the Pentecostals. In all the main centres large crowds are now attending meetings run by the Assemblies of God, the Apostolic Church, the Elim Church and other Pentecostal groups.

Interest in the charismatic movement has now emerged in the main-line denominations. The Baptists set up a special committee in 1966 to report on the "effects of neo-Pentecostalism" on our churches. The Presbyterians produced a four-page report in 1967 and a larger one in 1973. At first the movement was greeted with hesitancy, suspicion and sometimes total rejection. A few ministers migrated to the Pentecostal churches. Some churches were split on the issue and there was bitterness and division.

But the period of confrontation seems to be over. The Jesus movement among the young people and the "Jesus Marches" of 1972 which took place in 13 centres in New Zealand involving an estimated 70,000 people, brought Pentecostals into contact with the other churches and a more sympathetic atmosphere began to develop.

Charismatic interest is rapidly growing in the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. At St Patrick's R.C. Cathedral in Auckland hundreds gather every week to share charismatic experiences. So far, there is little official approval and the Bishops are hesitant to take a stand. Among the Baptists, after initial opposition and caution, there is growing interest. Some churches and ministers regard the movement as a fresh work of the Spirit in our time. It has brought a new freedom and warmth to worship. In some of our more traditional churches you may find the congregation on Sunday evenings singing Pentecostal-type choruses, clapping to the rhythm and accepting a style of worship unthinkable a few years ago.

Speaking in Tongues, previously rejected outright, is now accepted by many Baptists provided it is kept for private devotions. The General Secretary of the Baptist Union described the situation like this:

"The renewed emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit has strengthened the Baptist Church. Where our congrega-

tions have reacted positively, accepting the new emphasis as a part (and only a part) of the whole teaching of the Word of God, and developed this teaching under the guidance of God's word and under the authority of the whole congregation, a new depth has been evident in worship and service.

"In some congregations, because of certain incidents, there has been a reaction against the charismatic movement. But in most of these cases there is now developing an acceptance of differing views and a respect for each other. Unfortunately there have been occasions when 'arrogant activists' have exalted themselves above the Christian fellowship of the congregation and this has caused division".

New Zealand Baptists are still trying to come to terms with the charismatic movement and there are unresolved tensions. To what extent, for example, should charismatic views be taken into account when a man applies for training for the ministry? Some would argue that if a man has Pentecostal views on Spirit Baptism or on Tongues he ought to apply to be a Pentecostal not a Baptist minister. Others feel that within the freedom Baptists enjoy there should be room for many viewpoints. The debate continues. But whatever happens, the charismatic movement is forcing Christians of all denominations to revise their theology, re-examine their worship and test their tolerance.

Evangelism

In New Zealand as in other countries, Baptists have always been to the forefront in evangelism. In 1959 when the first Billy Graham Crusades were held here, there was widespread support from all the denominations and the Crusades and attendant land-line relays were an outstanding success.

Ten years later with the "Honest to God" debate still going on and the Presbyterians involved in a heresy trial, the major denominations were far from enthusiastic about a second visit by Dr Graham. The second Billy Graham visit was far from being a flop but it had considerably less impact. Efforts were made by the National Council of Churches to organize a "Mission to the Nation" but the member churches became bogged down trying to define evangelism and to agree on the best approach. Nothing came of the discussions.

Meanwhile Baptists pressed on with personal evangelism, home-group evangelism and visitation evangelism but with limited success.

Today however there is a new upsurge of interest among all denominations. Carl Henry came over and stimulated interest in a "Key 73" type project. The National Council of Churches has again called for a fresh consultation on Evangelism. Grady Wilson, of the Billy Graham team, came to us for a mission to community leaders. The Baptists as part of their Mission of Reconciliation invited Tom Skinner, the black evangelist from America, to conduct special rallies.

So after the doldrums of the 1960s, the breeze of evangelism is blowing again. Whether it will be a gentle zephyr hardly ruffling the church and society or whether it will be like a hurricane, blasting New Zealand's comfortable complacency, I would not dare to predict.

The Ecumenical Movement

For over 30 years now the National Council of Churches has been the focal point of the ecumenical movement in New Zealand. All the major churches apart from the Roman Catholics belong to the Council. Baptists have played a full part in its work from the beginning. There have been two Baptist presidents of the Council and prison and University ecumenical chaplaincies have been well served by Baptists. Baptists give generously to the Christmas appeal for Christian World Service, send representatives to conferences and committees and pay their dues with promptness.

But the Council has its critics. Some still assume you must be either ecumenical or evangelical. This attitude I am glad to say, is slowly breaking down. Some Baptists are upset because the N.C.C. seems to speak out too much on political and social issues. Justice and Peace they feel seem to be of far greater concern to the Council than worship and evangelism. Other critics feel the N.C.C. follows the party line of the World Council of Churches too much.

The main body of Baptists however are largely indifferent. They take the Council very much for granted. Victor Hayward on a visit here spoke of the "ecumenical alibi" by which he meant that ecumenism is relegated as a programme of the N.C.C. rather than as part of the life of the member churches. Nevertheless, despite the criticisms and the indifference many Baptists realise the Council does a good work and is a valuable bridge between the denominations. It may not have high priority in their thinking but they would not want it to disappear altogether, or that the Baptist Union should withdraw its support.

Relations with the Roman Catholics have been steadily improving over recent years. Ministers' fraternal all over the country include Roman Catholic priests as a matter of course now. Catholics send observers to meetings of the N.C.C. and co-operate in Bible Weeks, Education for Development and in many other ways. For the last two years a joint working group of the N.C.C. and the Roman Catholic membership of the N.C.C. is being seriously considered.

It is hard to know how Baptists will react if this proposal goes forward. Ten years ago there would have been little doubt about the outcome. If Catholics were in, Baptists were out. This is far less likely now. Too many Baptists have had fellowship with the Catholics in a deeper way than they ever thought possible. One minister said that in his local fraternal he felt more at home with the priest than with any of the other ministers.

If the church Union plans go through, if the Roman Catholics join the N.C.C., if the Pentecostal influence grows

further, what will the Baptists do? Your guess is as good as mine.

Social Service Revolution

Until recent years the prime interests of New Zealand Baptists were missionary work abroad and evangelism at home. Social service was largely left to interested individuals and anyone who preached the social gospel was liable to be accused of modernism. With the notable exception of the Manurewa Children's Homes near Auckland which has been a going concern for eighty years now, the denomination did little to develop social service projects.

The last ten years has seen a surprising revolution. The Auckland Baptist City Mission under expert leadership now runs hostels, goodwill stores and a host of other activities. All the main centres now have Baptist Homes for the Aged. Youth hostels, Day Care Centres, Friendship Centres and Counselling Services seem to be springing up like mushrooms. The projects are usually run by individual churches or association committees. The Union through its Social Service Department co-ordinates the projects.

Effective social work calls for professional expertise and to help meet the need for skilled workers the Baptist Theological College inaugurated a Social Service Training Course. This has attracted students from New Zealand and overseas and is producing a steady flow of Christian workers to serve the churches and church institutions.

Are trained social workers employed by a local church, ministers? Should they be ordained or appear on the ministerial accredited list? Such questions are being asked. Some would like to see the whole traditional concept of ministry broadened. The policy of the Baptist Union is largely to drop anchor and wait for the fog to clear before any radical changes are made. Meanwhile the social service revolution rolls on.

Missionary Work

Almost 90 years ago, New Zealand Baptists considering their small numbers and remoteness, took a giant leap of faith by starting a missionary society. They sent out their first missionary to Bengal and ever since India has taken pride of place in the hearts of Baptists here.

The creation of East Pakistan in 1947 split our mission field right down the middle leaving us with two separate areas, Tripura, (India) and East Pakistan. In the former, the work among the hill tribes has grown wonderfully and the Tripura Baptist Union now controls its own affairs. Nearly all the New Zealand missionaries in India have been withdrawn.

The East Pakistan field (now Bangladesh) is centred on the towns of Brahmanbaria and Chandpur. The Brahmanbaria compound was almost totally destroyed in the Bangladesh war of liberation but thanks to help from the World Council of Churches and other aid organisations the hospital and

school are being rebuilt and the work is in better heart than ever before.

The missionary society has recently made two main changes in policy. First, there is a more world embracing outlook. With the almost complete withdrawal from India New Zealand Baptists had to look around for new fields of work. Rather than go it alone in some new area we are seconding workers to serve with other churches and missionary societies. So you will find New Zealand Baptist missionaries in New Guinea, Sarawak, and Zaire. Joint enquiries are also being made with the Australians about possible future work in Indonesia.

The second main policy change has been in methods of financial support. Up till 1971 we financed the missionary society largely through an annual self-denial appeal. We still hold the appeal but we have now added a "Team Support" scheme. Churches, individuals and Associations take up "shares" in an individual missionary guaranteeing to provide a proportion of his total costs during a term of service. The personal touch about the team-support scheme is its biggest attraction and it is proving a popular way of missionary giving.

In April 1963 I wrote an article for the *Fraternal* about New Zealand Baptist life. I ended the article with these words: "New Zealanders are beginning to realise that their future may lie with Asia rather than with Europe and many are feeling like the rich man with the Lazarus of South East Asia at the gate".

A decade has now past and with Britain in the Common Market and France exploding nuclear bombs in the Pacific, some New Zealanders have become disenchanted with Europe. We have our reservations also about America what with the Watergate scandal and the coming to our shores of independent, non-co-operative Baptists from the Southern States. But Asia is much on our minds along with the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. We want to play our part in Asia but we are still learning the right way to do it.

ANGUS MACLEOD

GOODBYE, MR PREACHER MAN?

Goodbye, Mr Preacher Man was the title of a recent study of ministerial loss in the Western churches of the American Baptist Convention. It was a pessimistic, if realistic, product of the 1970s. We processed it into our New Zealand College library along with a book entitled **The Glory of the Ministry**, a reprint of a 60-year work by A. T. Robertson. The latter breathed the optimism and idealism of 1910.

If modern ministers want to read about the ministry they will find little in contemporary writing about its glory. They will find much in the tone of **Goodbye, Mr Preacher Man**. The United Church of Christ in the U.S.A. produces an

enquiry, **Why men leave the Parish Ministry**. A Methodist minister writes a book, **Privilege and Burden. A long, hard look at the Pastoral Ministry**. In the first chapter, "Seeds of Disenchantment", he imagines a visitor questioning a typical student. "Are you definitely committed to the Ministry as a vocation?" "No, I am here to explore the possibility". "And what do you consider the basic task of the Ministry?" "The basic task of the Ministry is to gossip the gospel at a dimension of depth in such a way as to force a confrontation in genuine encounter with Christ which will in turn lead to an existential decision". Visitor (gasping) "Are you thinking of the Pastoral Ministry?" "Good Lord, no!"

The men who face up to the Ministry today may well be dismayed as they read the current surveys, articles, theses, dissertations and books on the Ministry. I have wondered if I would share with you some of these doubts and difficulties about the Ministry. Yet I hesitated to feed you on such astringent fare, to nag you with negatives, until I came across the crowning negative, "The full-time ministry is not scriptural". That was the launching pad which rocketed me into this subject. There may be some truth in what the pundits say about the Ministry being frustrating, badly paid, escapist, outmoded, impracticable, irrelevant. But if it is unscriptural, we need shed no tears for its demise, and the sooner our College graduates return to their radio-making, school-teaching, house-dealing, truck-driving, pen pushing, and shirt-selling, the better.

Full-time Ministry Unscriptural?

I am grateful for being thrust back to Scripture. My Biblical landing place is Acts 6:2 "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables". Who is talking about tables? To understand this more clearly, let us go back several years when Jesus called twelve Apostles from all sorts of jobs. To the fishermen among them he said, "From henceforth you will catch men". They could have argued, "But Lord, we're already doing a good job. We're providing protein for the population. If everybody goes preaching, everybody will starve". But they didn't argue, they left their nets and became preachers.

Their preaching had a very interesting result. The Gospel struck root, sprouted, and bore a lovely harvest. The exciting story is in the early chapters of Acts. The Gospel produced the church, a people with a new life, the fellowship of witnessing, caring and sharing. "They had all things common". Nobody starved because everybody cared. But this bountiful charity became an embarrassment. The administration of it became too much for the Twelve. Widows complained of neglect. Welfare interfered with the preaching of the gospel. So the Twelve said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. You pick out seven men for this work. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word". How does that sound to you? If practice interferes with preaching, give up practice? If feeding widows interferes

with saving souls, give up feeding widows? Yes, for a man called to the Ministry of the word that's the way it is. In the divine economy that's the way it should be. We don't aid Christian charity by neglecting the Gospel from which it springs. Of course, God calls others to administer welfare. This too, is a ministry. The word "diakonia" which means service or ministry, is used three times in these verses of Acts 6, twice of the service of tables and once of the service of the word. Here is a divine division of labour.

Through the many ministries of the New Testament there are two main kinds. The Prophetic ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers; and the Administrative ministry of elders, deacons, deaconesses, helps, governments, workers of mercy. The Baptist view of the ministry accepts this broad distinction. It is our authority to set apart men for the prophetic ministry. But while accepting a distinction we do not accept division. There is New Testament authority for a special call to some to preach, but no authority to say that nobody else shall. Stephen, a server of tables can preach. Paul the preacher can distribute welfare. So we say to the men called to the prophetic ministry "you concentrate on this". We do not say "nobody else can do what you do" nor do we say "you must never soil your hands with other service". So go forth, Preacher Men!

But what about modern hang-ups about the ministry? I pass over some which are real enough (like financial sacrifice, educational requirements, declining status, and the cussedness of people) to deal with four objections to the ministry as such.

Preaching Manipulative?

What do you say to the complaint that preaching, especially evangelistic preaching, is coercive, domineering, an affront to personality? What about the complaint that we should discuss and not dictate, we should stop talking and listen, we should stop giving the impression that we have the answers?

It will not do simply to point out (what is very true) that if you want to avoid manipulation you should sell your T.V. set, shut your eyes to advertising, your ears to Insurance salesmen and politicians, and discontinue the newspaper. Nor will it do to deny the very real values of non-directive counselling. Let us admit that the danger of too much pressure is real. Few preachers listen enough. They have been called monologists (experts in monologue). The danger is not new. All my life I have been cautious of preaching people into false decisions.

Yet, when Jesus first called his fishermen to preach he used a word of startling roughness, "From henceforth you will **catch** men." They were to do what hunters and fishermen do, "capture", "trap", "hook". If we're squeamish about using this word about men, we should remember that Jeremiah uses a similar expression for the sinner "hooked" in judgement and in 2 Timothy the same word is used for being "hooked" by the Devil. Jesus uses this harsh word to

hammer into the head of the disciples the grim facts of life and death. Men who are not caught for salvation will be caught for destruction. If we are not hooked for heaven we are hooked for hell.

"Manipulation" can certainly have an undesirable sense. It can also have a happy one. Years ago I suffered a smashed-up shoulder, among other injuries. Little could be done for the shattered head of the humerus except to send me to physiotherapy for manipulation, to get that joint working again. Unimaginably painful, but successful. Happy manipulation that saved my shoulder! Happy manipulation that saved my soul! Discard the word if you like, but keep the urgency of it. Follow Paul, who in the same breath (2 Cor. 5) says "The love of Christ constraineth us", and "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men".

Ministry Part of the System?

What do you say to the complaint that the minister is a prisoner of the church system, a cog in the machine, keeping other cogs grinding, at services, committees, duplicators, grounds, buildings? The sooner he is free from the structure the better?

I fully sympathise with this complaint. Structures can be constrictive. People are more important than structures. But structures serve people. In my first pastorate of four-and-a-half years we had a church with practically no structure. No church building, no Sunday School equipment, no Brigade gear, no lawns, no duplicator, no manse, no mortgage. We used a Lodge supper-room for services, and homes for other meetings. My wife and I shifted seven times in four-and-a-half years.

I have no complaints and no regrets. The Lord shared our laughter and our tears. He taught us that the church can live with very little impedimenta, just as you can live without a roof over your head if you don't mind the rain, and just as you can travel without a car if you don't mind blistered feet. Yet I admit that when I moved to a pastorate with a church building, I knelt down in the pulpit and thanked God for it. Brother Preacher, don't be dismayed by structures, provided they are effective and appropriate. All life has structure. Don't destroy it and don't let it destroy you. Reform it to be a servant of the Gospel.

The Ministry Escapist?

What do you say to the complaint that traditional forms of ministry are out of touch with life?

This view of the ministry is typified by the parson who had a tunnel from study to pulpit. He never came out where the people were. Incomprehensible on Sunday and invisible on Monday! The ministry a funk-hole to get away from the real world.

Certainly the ministry can be escapist. But need it be? It was certainly not for Peter, Andrew and the rest. They had lived with fish, working at night on the water with

boats and nets. Jesus called them from fish to men. For them, what a thrusting forth into life! What an embroilment in human need!

In my own experience how far the ministry was from being an escape! I heard the call to the ministry in Dunedin in the Old Chemistry Department of the University. For me it could have been merely the substitution of scientific books by theological, a lab bench by a pulpit. Yet even while I was still training for the ministry I found myself in more intense contact with people than I knew how to handle. Coming back to Dunedin after my first year in College, as student-pastor, almost my first contact was with a distracted widow whose husband had been killed as he rode his bike to work. There was the father whose boy was in prison. There were complicated and baffling family situations.

Sometimes a Theological College is called a cloister, and to some extent this is true. It is a place where we withdraw to read, to think, to pray, to discuss. But we are projected into humanity too. If I could here recount the contacts our College students have had with human life during the last twelve months, in vacation pastorates, City Mission, among Maori people, in hospital, among young and old, this article would be too long! Mr Preacher Man, if the ministry has pushed you into a corner, you should ask yourself why.

Preaching Irrelevant?

What do you say to the charge that preaching is irrelevant?

This of course may mean one of two things, either that preaching as a mode is out-moded, or that the message we preach is out-dated. Our young people at the Youth Forum were no doubt thinking of the first when they called for the abolition of sermons, and so was Gavin Reid when he wrote in "The Gaggling of God" about the failure of the church to communicate in the T.V. age.

There is a good deal in the complaint. People's listening habits are changing. Radio and T.V. give no practice in listening to sermons. We have got to do something about our preaching techniques, for better ways of communicating the Gospel. Some time ago one of our past Presidents spoke at our Fraternal on the lessons which broadcasting can teach the preacher. He quoted the broadcasters' claim that you cannot listen to one voice for a span of more than two minutes fifty-six seconds. He propounded this theses in a lecture to which we listened with unwavering attention for more than half-an-hour! This didn't seem to be quite the answer! We tune in to Parliament to see what help we can get from these masters of speech, but we hear utterances more tedious, more jargon-packed, and more partisan than any sermon. We look for clues among the young on Sunday afternoon at Albert Park, Auckland. We find them haranguing the crowd with a length and intensity reprehensible in any evangelist.

So many other people are in fact still preaching to their brand of congregation that your form of preaching does not seem quite so out-of-date as one might think. Yet we are

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To the Readers of the "Fraternal"

Dear Friends,

"I wish you wouldn't squeeze so," said the Dormouse, who was sitting next to her. "I can hardly breathe."

"I can't help it," said Alice very meekly: "I'm growing."

"You've no right to grow here," said the Dormouse.

"Don't talk nonsense," said Alice more boldly: "You know you're growing too."

"Yes, but I grow at a reasonable pace," said the Dormouse: "not in that ridiculous fashion."

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

I almost wrote "Church-mouse" for "Dormouse" for church finances are feeling the squeeze of inflation which as I write continues at a "ridiculous" and alarming rate.

The Government belatedly has introduced legislation designed to slow up the level of inflationary increase in twelve months time.

But that is next year and it must be realised that the expectation is not to achieve a cut in the present level of inflation but only a slowing up of the inflationary rate. Increased costs already in the pipeline must inevitably emerge to force the "ridiculous" rate to grow before any flattening of the inflationary curve can be achieved.

The sums insured for church buildings, halls, homes for the aged, dwellings, shops and other investment properties must be maintained at the full present inflationary level plus some allowance for debris removal costs, for Architects'/Surveyors' fees, V.A.T. and for the probable effects of inflation up to the next renewal date when the figures should be looked at again. Only thus can the assets of the church or of others be adequately safeguarded against the catastrophe of fire.

Remember therefore that there can be no slackening of attention to this vital question of sums insured until inflation is seen to have been checked; until you can look back to a reduction. For the present, in looking forward, full regard must be paid to a continuing alarming growth rate which is bound to produce a squeak—let the squeak be an instruction regardless to keep sums insured in line with the inflationary pressure.

Sums Insured of a year ago are out of date; sums insured revised two or more years ago are hopelessly out of date.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN

General Manager

continually in need of up-dating our language, form, illustration and preaching style. Nor should we think of preaching as confined to the pulpit. The Gospel can be communicated in smaller groups, through testimony, through discussion. We have hardly begun to adapt our message to radio and T.V. styles.

Message Out-Moded?

What about the irrelevance of the message? In this age when people speak of man as come-of-age, and God as dead, what place has the Gospel? If I stick to preaching what the Apostles preached am I doomed to be unheard? Is the man who invests his life in preaching the Gospel condemned to a dead-end job?

We would not be human if we did not sometimes doubt whether God's word will indeed "prosper in the thing whereunto He has sent it." In our College Old Testament class we have kept company with the most timid and human of the Prophets, Jeremiah. In the 7th century B.C. God called him to preach the word. Trembling, he obeyed. He preached his heart out and wept his eyes out, yet had to watch his nation slide into ruin. Read chapters 15-20, for his terrible controversy with God. He testifies to his own love for the Word. "Thy words were found and I ate them, and thy words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart". But nobody else loved them, or listened to him. He feels God has made an ass of him, "O Lord, thou hast deceived me and I was deceived. For the Word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. I have become a laughing stock, everyone mocks me. I sit alone because of Thy hand. Wilt thou be to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail?" If anyone might have said goodbye to preaching and written a book, "Why I quit the Ministry", it was Jeremiah. He came close to it. He said "I will not mention Him or speak any more in His name. But there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in and I cannot". Acceptable or un-acceptable, popular or unpopular, relevant or irrelevant, it was God's word for his day. In the light of history and God's dealing with Israel, we can see the deadly relevance of Jeremiah's words. Uncomfortable, unacceptable, but not irrelevant. We can see that the irrelevant ones were the false prophets who told the people what they wanted to hear.

How can the modern preacher test the relevance of his message? By the number of people who listen to him? The size of his congregation? The effect on people who do listen? The confirmation of his words by events? Surely he will preach in the faith that he is most relevant when he is closest to Jesus Christ. In the 20th century I cannot conceive anything more relevant than the message of Christ. In an age of despair, the hope of Christ; in a war-like age, the peace of Christ; in a filthy age, the cleanness of Christ; in a hypocritical age, the sincerity of Christ; in a rapacious age, the self-giving of Christ; in a cruel age, the mercy of

Christ; in a regimented age, Christ's love for the individual; in an affluent age, the frugality of Christ; in a technological age, the humanity of Christ. The world may not rush to embrace this message of Christ, but it will not thank us if we let it die in our generation. "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God".

Back to the Twelve

There was a time in the life of the Twelve when they had resolved to quit. It was in those traumatic days of Cross and Resurrection. The Crucifixion of Jesus left them stunned and scared. The incredible events of the Resurrection left them uncomprehending. Peter said "I'm going back fishing", and back he went, with the others. Back to the glorious green of Galilee in spring, to the security of well-known things, to the water, the boats, the nets, the fish. To the job they understood. To work which got results. Away from fickle crowds, frayed nerves, sore feet, problems, weariness, rejection. Away from people, back to fish.

But Jesus met them there, back where it had begun. In addressing Peter He addressed them all, "Do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you". "Then feed my sheep". That's your business, Peter. Mind it!

At the beginning I quoted Middleton and his book, **Privilege and Burden**. In his final pages he says this, "Reading this account may evoke the question, 'Why bother about this vocation?' The burdens are there in abundant and clear detail, but where are the privileges? At this point the answer emerges in the form of a paradox. The burdens are the privilege. The pastoral vocation should be entered only by those who can understand and live with the paradox. The burden is the privilege."

J. A. CLIFFORD

BAPTISTS, MAORIS AND RACE RELATIONS

Any consideration of life in New Zealand must take into account the Maori and Pacific Island population of the country. The problems of initial contact of last century, centering very much on the possession of land and the hostilities of the 1860s, are well documented.

The missionary impact on the life of the Maori people was considerable. It was during that era that the initial Baptist Maori Mission work developed.

In 1880, Thomas Spurgeon, son of the great London preacher, C. H. Spurgeon, came to New Zealand, on a health trip. While here a vacancy occurred at the Auckland Baptist Tabernacle, and Spurgeon accepted the call to the Church. He used to holiday in the Rotorua area, and whilst there met an American invalid, W. P. Snow, who was interested in the Maoris and wanted to start a Mission. Snow offered the Tabernacle Church £100 per annum towards a £200 stipend, if the Church would sponsor the work. The challenge was gladly accepted.

C. H. Spurgeon sent one of his students, the Rev. Alfred Fairbrother, to Rotorua. The work flourished. Regular services and Sunday School were held at Ohinemutu, Waitangi and Te Wairoa. By 1885 attendances were up to 100 at Te Wairoa. But all did not auger well. Mr Fairbrother developed dictatorial attitudes. An Economic Depression was affecting the country, illness was decimating the Maori race and finally the Te Wairoa village was literally buried in the Tarawera Volcanic Eruption. The Tarawera Eruption also buried the first Baptist venture in Maori ministry and a revival of this work was not to take place till the 1950s.

In the earlier days of this century, people thought that the Maori race would have disappeared by 1970. The policy in both Church and Government was to arrange things within the country as though there would eventually be only one ethnic people and one social pattern. Contrary to those past expectations, the Maori has not only revived in numbers but also has been able to survive in an intensely technical world. He has been discovering in the last few years a new pride in being a Maori and is developing Maori social values and cultural pursuits as meaningful for him today as ever they were for his forbears.

A study of New Zealand's Maori population this century reveals several important factors. Firstly the rate of growth of the Maori population has accelerated substantially. The Maori population is younger and faster growing than the non-Maori population. Between 1945 and 1966, the Maori population doubled from 100,000 to 200,000; a growth rate of nearly twice that of the population as a whole. (Notice also that the Maori population gain is a result of natural increase whereas in the total population, natural increase is normally supplemented by sizeable increments from migration.) The result is that the Maori population is more youthful,—50% under 15 years—a median age around 15 for Maori as compared with 25-26 for non-Maori. Up till now people have tolerated and shown concern for the Maoris. The question arises, will this tolerance and concern continue when the proportion of the Maori population increases considerably?

The second factor is that whereas the Maori people were a rural people, since the Second World War, there has been a continuing migration into the cities. Auckland and Wellington have become mecca's for Maori young people seeking employment. Rural towns have also felt the effects of the migration as families, encouraged by Government policy, have resettled in the town. Auckland now has the largest concentration of Maoris in New Zealand. One half of the Maori population lives within 100 miles of Auckland. Urbanisation has brought Maori and European into close proximity and this still growing movement to the city by the Maori people will put New Zealand's race relations to the most severe test they have faced since the 1860s.

A third related factor is the migration of Pacific Islanders to New Zealand. Today more than 40,000 Samoans, Tongans and Cook Islanders are permanent residents in Auckland

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City. Thousands more are working here on tourist permits. Most are employed in industry and a good percentage of money earned is returned to the island economies. New Zealand's motive in allowing these migrant and short-term workers is not entirely benevolent—some industries in Auckland would collapse if the Pacific Island workforce was withdrawn.

The Pacific Islanders add their distinctive facets to the New Zealand community. They cannot be regarded as Maoris—nor as a conglomerate Polynesian group. Each island people maintains very much their own community and social structure.

New Zealand has had a long and relatively peaceful history of race-relationships but today despite a rapidly increasing rate of Maori-Pakeha* intermarriage, real contact and social fellowship between Maori and Pakeha is lacking.

Major Issues Today

What are the issues that affect Maori-Pakeha relations in New Zealand today?

(1) The demands of the Maori people for equality of identity as people.

The Maori people have shown they can adapt, learn new skills, and adopt aspects of Western culture to their advantage. Maori culture has survived the battering of the world's most potent force for culture change—Western civilization. It has not survived unscathed—but the revival in Maori culture and population growth make it imperative that Maoris have an equal status in New Zealand society.

(2) The demand for equality of opportunity, especially in education and employment.

Increasingly, a place is being given to Maori culture in New Zealand school life. More work is being called for in Maori pre-school education and the teaching of English. Maori language is being taught in more and more secondary schools. In the area of employment there is cause for concern that the Maori and Pacific Island people are predominantly employed in labouring jobs rather than spread through the full range of types of employment and profession.

(3) Land Ownership and Use.

This remains a source of real tension. The record of the early settlers, including Missionary and Church organisations, has not always been good. The forced seizure of land from the Maoris led to the Land Wars in New Zealand in the 1860s. Since then some compensation has been made for the illegal actions of the past, but even modern land legislation has been strongly criticised as unfair by the Maori people. Land for the Maori means life and security. Its alienation is still felt deeply.

*Pakeha—New Zealand people of European origin.

(4) Language.

The preservation and development of the Maori language is now accepted as a priority. The provision of Maori studies in schools and universities is developing. But many Maori and Pacific Island people still have a poor knowledge of English. This often inhibits real dialogue between Maori and Pakeha. More has to be done about this.

(5) Difference in outlook of Maori and Pakeha.

The Maori thinks the Pakeha is too materialistically minded. Things matter a great deal to Pakehas. Things are "possessions", valued as status symbols. The Maori is more spiritual and thinks that such matters as hospitality, friendship, helping another in need, are the more important values of life. Time is important to a Pakeha. But it is more important to help another, says the Maori. "Faster the better", says the Pakeha, but the Maori is more meditative and in many cases more sensitive. The Pakeha seems to be indifferent to religion. The Maori feels that religion affects his whole life.

(6) Housing.

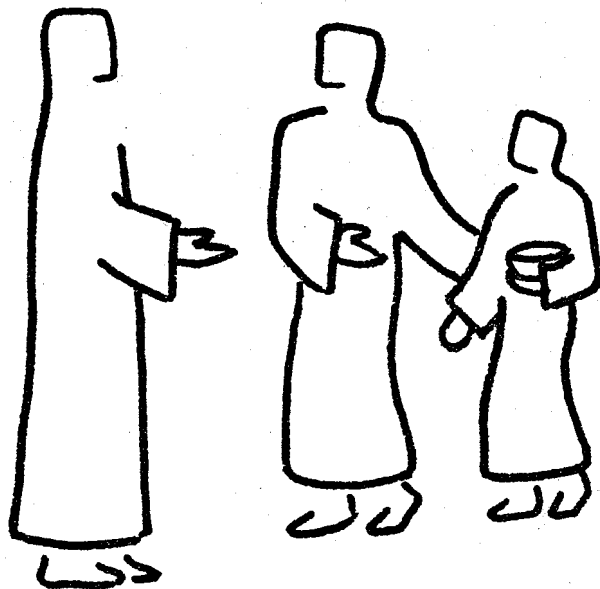
Owing to a general housing shortage many Maori and Pacific people live in comparatively inferior housing. State financed housing is available and increasing efforts are now being made to provide new housing. There have been some instances of colour discrimination in leasing accommodation. To prevent this a race relations conciliator has been appointed to investigate complaints in the area of housing and employment.

(7) The emergence of vocal groups of educated young Maori leaders.

In recent years, groups of young Maori people, many of them with high education qualifications, have been raising their voices calling for action to be taken by Government and community in many areas of Maori concern. There has been no such Maori voice in New Zealand for many years. Much of the Pakeha reaction has been to label the statements of these young people as extreme. Certainly the future of these groups depends very much on the Pakeha reaction to them. Some would see their emergence as foretelling of future stormy clashes between Maori and Pakeha. Others see it as a timely challenge to the whole country. As one of these new Maori leaders has put it: "We have a tiger by the tail. It is not too late to tame it, if grievances can be tackled and sensible policies are pursued."

One significant factor which is influencing many of these areas of concern is the election of a Labour Government in New Zealand in 1972. The Maori vote is strongly Labour and all Maori political representation has for many years now been in the Labour party. After being in opposition for 20 of the last 23 years, the New Zealand Labour Party had a landslide victory in the 1972 General Election. The resultant Labour Cabinet has 2 Maori Ministers in its ranks—one with the Maori Affairs portfolio, the other with

"There is a lad here" . . .



. . . who has a need

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Tourism. Labour policy is setting out to look at many of the areas of concern to Maori voters.

Much Maori discontent centred on the Waitangi Day celebrations on February 6th each year. These commemorate the signing of the original Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 between representatives of Queen Victoria and the New Zealand Maori people. The Treaty ceded sovereignty to the Queen who in turn confirmed and guaranteed to the Maori people their lands, estates, forests, fisheries, etc., and extended to them the rights and privileges of British subjects. In many instances, the Treaty has been flouted in word and spirit from the original day of signing. Some have called for a legal ratification of the Treaty—others for an adherence to the basic spirit of the document. Many have called for the day to become a National Holiday—a day which could remind all New Zealanders of their national heritage with its twin cultural streams and also of the need to strive to become a united people. Since coming to office, the Labour Party have declared Waitangi Day an official holiday.

Baptist Work

In the midst of a complex situation, what is the Baptist Union of New Zealand doing?

For the first half of this century, our eyes were firmly focussed on foreign shores in missionary endeavour. The other major denominations, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian developed Maori work on the foundations laid by the early missionaries. The late re-entry of the New Zealand Baptists to this area of ministry meant that most areas and people were committed, nominally at least, to other groups.

The one advantage of late re-entry in the field has been a certain freedom from the problems of the past and the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of the past. By way of illustration; the Baptist Union never received large grants of Maori land as did the other missionary churches. These grants and the trust they entail are now somewhat of an embarrassment in these days when racial issues are widely discussed and publicised. A further illustration is seen in the separate Maori church organisations and separate Maori ministerial training arrangements of some other denominations. These are now proving to have some deficiencies in today's context.

Our own Baptist experience has not been without its lessons. In the 1950s our Maori involvement was organised much along missionary society lines, with a "field", and "staff", "administrative board", etc. Any relationship with local churches was tenuous. The trend in more recent years is to develop dual ministries in which two men, one Maori, one Pakeha, may minister together in an area as associate ministers of a local church.

Any policy however must recognise that differences still exist between Maori and Pakeha. The simple and easy approach is to say no such differences exist and to act accordingly. As a general method, this has been proved

unworkable. There are still differences, varying on a wide scale from area to area, in cultural background, attitudes, forms of worship and expression, language and kinship structures. There are some matters where unity is possible, without uniformity as a prerequisite. We are made one in Christ, not the same in Christ.

The dual approach means there can be separate meetings to cater for differences between people. We have no difficulty in accepting this concept in ordinary church life as it applies to youth work or women's meetings because we readily recognise the distinctive needs of these groups. But some hesitate in applying this concept to racial and cultural groupings. The dual pastorate system allows a pattern to evolve in which Maori fellowship meetings, house meetings, and worship services can be held recognizing the differences in culture and worship pattern between Maori and Pakeha. Pakeha people are welcome to attend such meetings, on the understanding that they will be Maori in nature and content and that some Maori language may be used. Meetings such as these are proving the most effective for initial outreach into the Maori community in the dual pastorate situation. There are also many opportunities for the total group, both Maori and Pakeha, to meet together for worship, prayer, fellowship and Bible study.

The aim is not integration (a concept facing widening rejection in New Zealand) but to seek to blend elements of separateness and unity in a full expression of the gospel in a multi-racial community. The years ahead will reveal how successful the pioneers of today have been.

TREVOR DONNELL

REPORT ON A "BAPTIST CENTRE"

Miramar is a suburb in the City of Wellington with a population of about 20,000. It used to be a dormitory suburb with most of the workers going into the centre of the city by day. Now however more and more pensioners and retired people are seen about the streets in the daytime. The schools have growing rolls. Houses are being demolished and replaced with high density flats.

The Baptist work was commenced in Miramar about 1928 and the first hall was erected well back from the street in 1930. Over the years many ideas have been suggested but it was not until 1969 that a new building was designed. The plan was typical of the usual type of Church architecture, with a steep roof, small entrance porch, tramcar-design-seating-layout, and fellowship rooms out the back and upstairs.

But in 1970 the church cancelled the plan and the architect was paid off for the work done to date. A sense of uneasiness had begun to creep over some of us concerning the whole concept of the traditional Church building. This was heightened by a visit from Rev. Angus MacLeod, President of the Baptist Union at that time, when he was asked what

he would do if he had the opportunity to build a new Church building.

Subsequently the Church authorised the minister who was going to Australia for two evangelistic missions, to spend extra time and take camera and notebook seeking new ideas.

He discovered in Sydney that the Central Methodist Church had been burnt out some time earlier. Rather than replace everything with the Insurance money they asked some sociology students at the University to make a prediction about the kind of life that could be expected in their city by the year 2,000 A.D. They made three predictions. There would be a lot more leisure time. The working week would be shorter and people would be retiring from work at a younger age. Secondly there would be more affluence. People would have a higher standard of living and a better income. Thirdly there would be much more loneliness. Consequently they had rebuilt in Pitt Street, Sydney with facilities to help cater for these growing areas of need. A seven-storey, revenue-producing building gave the Church two floors for restaurant, fellowship, educational and meeting space.

Much the same story was found in the cities of Adelaide and Melbourne. So ideas were noted, a set of colour slides prepared, and a report written. Experiences of looking at Churches in Australia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong confirmed the impression that in every land congregations have thoughtlessly put up Mini-Cathedrals copying those of Constantine.

One of the things which seemed to have been overlooked was the value of fellowship over a meal table. Call it the "Theology of Eating"! Our Lord Jesus Christ did a lot of work like this. In the Gospels we find Him witnessing and working in meal situations with Zaccheus and others. In fact all the words of John's Gospel, Chapters 13 to 16 were given in an eating situation! And the picture our Lord gives of true fellowship in Revelation 3:20 is of supping with Him.

The architect was re-commissioned. We got to work and planned a building which had the friendly fellowship eating facilities by the footpath and the Worship facilities away from the street. Upstairs there was space for counselling, a library, Sunday school nursery and studies for the two ministers. Rather than walk into a traditional Church building the people enter a modern lounge complete with coffee tables which on Sunday acts as a large fellowship area between the street and the worship auditorium. When you think about it so many other Church buildings are subconsciously giving people the message "If you will come in off the street into our worship service then we will invite you through to the back hall for a cup of tea and a friendly time. But you must pay for this first by attending our Services". We are doing the opposite. In effect we say "Here is a place for you to meet your friends and to enjoy fellowship and coffee. It is open every day from 8.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. We believe that once you get to know us and become familiar with the building you might like to get to

know our Saviour and come through to worship with us in the Chapel."

We have tried to get the message across that the building is a place for others. The sign outside says "BAPTIST CENTRE".

This Centre represents an attempt through architecture to help Christians to reach others in the name of Jesus. Most Church buildings are locked up most of the time. When they are unlocked and used it is mainly by the people who paid for them. The lost world outside passes by not knowing that the Lord of the Church loves them and once died on a cross to save them in their situation of today.

The Chapel away from the street represents the coming aside to worship with the ancient helps of music and preaching, baptisms and prayer, bread and wine. The front area including a receptionist's office, rest rooms, coffee lounge and book store is an area offered to the community representing the towel and basin ministry of our Lord Jesus. So the building speaks of worship and service.

Naming the place was an interesting exercise. We have kept the word "Church" for the people of the membership and their activities. The buildings are called "Centre", the "Chapel", and the old Church is now the "Hall". They are the buildings of the Baptist people (Church). The lounge seats 50 people and the Chapel 250. The library seats another 50. Groups using it apart from the public and the Church activities include Alcoholics Anonymous and a wool spinning club. It has been an interesting venture in friendship evangelism where we have sought to be person-oriented, love-motivated, community-identified and Christ-centred.

The Programme

"CLOSED WHILE WE RE-ORGANIZE THE FRIDAY NIGHT PROGRAMME".

So said the notice on the door for about three months this last winter. There had been about fifty or sixty young people coming every Friday night to the programme which included a pool table, television, drafts, chess, bobs, coffee and a half-hour speaker in an "Inn-Quest" programme. But it became a heavy burden. Many of the people we were trying to reach would not come because they were afraid of what they called the rough element. Our workers were threatened many times. Fellows half-intoxicated behaved badly. Good speakers we brought in were ridiculed so that eventually I felt I should do most of the speaking myself rather than ask a visitor to face such rudeness. And finally the Committee agreed to close down.

The owner of the pool table which had been on hire took it back. He found the coin mechanism ruined with 1½" engineers' washers instead of 20 cent pieces.

Shortly afterwards a policeman visited us. Miramar has a "Community Police Liaison Officer". He was keen to see the place open Friday nights and encouraged us to try again. We explained to him that the Minister and his Assistant had found it an intolerable paradox trying to be both policeman

WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

409 Barking Road, Plaistow, London, E13 8AL

My dear Brother Minister,

As I write these notes I am beginning to come up for air again after a most hectic first three months of my Presidency of the Union. I have received a tremendous amount of kindness from our people, and not least from the Ministers, and it has been good to sense that the heart of the denomination beats very strongly.

I am impressed with the spirit of our churches as opposed to the number of people in them. It would be idle to pretend that all is well with us, but my strong impression gained after this first three months is that there is an increasing amount of spiritual vitality in our churches, and that we are more poised for the real work of the Kingdom now than when I was first ordained in 1936. It would be marvellous if we could see revival in our time, but that must be left in the hands of God, and meanwhile I thank Him most warmly for the grace of perseverance which I have found in Baptist Churches.

Whilst I have been out and about my colleagues in the Mission have been getting on with the work at the grass roots, and it is good to report that the hand of God has been on our work in all kinds of ways. To start with the least important, we have been blessed financially. Last year individual subscribers made a tremendous leap forward in their giving and we had a record year. More importantly, the work of the various Homes show real signs of God's blessing on them, and we have had conversions and baptisms from the work at Greenwoods, and in our other Homes people have been comforted and sustained.

I would like to draw your attention to the NEW MISSION COLOUR FILMSTRIP, which is due to be "published" on October 1st 1975. I have just finished selecting the pictures and there is a splendid variety of good pictures in the new filmstrip. We shall send out the filmstrip with a manuscript or a cassette tape recording, and I hope that you will encourage your people to arrange to see the strip and to hear the continuing story of the Mission. Please write to Miss Margaret Gray, our Assistant Office Manager at West Ham Central Mission, and if you can, please give her alternative dates from which to pick.

May God's blessing be on you and on your people, and on your own fine work.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL

Superintendent of the Mission

as well as a fatherly pastoral caring type of person. He volunteered to come every week in his uniform and be the policeman. So we decided to open again and have done so.

We have divided the programme now between the Hall and the front Centre. Admission to the Hall required registering and paying 20 cents for a membership card which acts as a pass. In this way we get the name and address in case we want to follow up trouble-makers. The front of the building is open as a regular coffee bar with the television and library facilities upstairs. On duty in the coffee lounge is a personable man or woman wearing a badge which says they are the host or hostess. The ministers are identified as such. The policeman pays a friendly visit and has his coffee with us also. The Salvation Army people come in for coffee after their open-air meeting. The numbers are down but the atmosphere is much more conducive to personal conversation and a wider age group (younger and older) are not being excluded by a selfish group of 16-year-olds.

Like most work with living people we will no doubt be reviewing it again from time to time.

In the first year of operation half of the number baptised actually first came to know us through visiting the Centre on some day other than a Sunday.

ARTHUR METCALF

STOCKHOLM '75

The thirteenth Baptist World Congress did something for me that no other Congress has done—and I've been able to attend four. It wasn't just a big Baptist jamboree but gave an unusual opportunity of studying and sharing with people from all over the world in Bible and discussion groups before and after the morning sessions.

My particular assignment was concerned with the pre-Congress conference on Christian teaching and training, attended by about seventy-five people including a number responsible for theological training in various parts of the world. The stress was laid equally on the place of teaching and training in the local church and the need for Christian education in the syllabus of the smaller seminaries or colleges. A model course was available for comment and will be circulated later around the world along with the other papers given.

All the sessions of the Congress were held in the Mässan (Swedish International Fair and Activity Centre), a fine new complex, eight minutes by train from the city centre, where one could find every amenity from a stamp to a reindeer sandwich. Eighty-four nations were represented among the nearly ten thousand people attending and simultaneous translation was available for those who had little English. Cubans were there for the first time in years; twenty-one from U.S.S.R. mixed with the many from the U.S.A.; East Germans rubbed shoulders with West Germans; Jordanians enjoyed fellowship with Israelis—all one in Christ and in

their Baptist witness. Swedish people welcomed us with typical courtesy and efficiency and arranged easy and cheap travel as well as a number of extras that made the Congress memorable.

It is inevitable that any Baptist World Congress should be dominated by Americans: out of our growing strength of nearly 34 millions, over 29 millions are in the ten (and more) different Conventions of the U.S.A. Nonetheless increase is being recorded in other areas—15% in Africa, 9% in South America, 6·7% in Oceania, 3·8% in Asia and even 1% in Europe taken as a whole. These were all well represented in the programme.

There were gaps though in the formal subjects of the sessions. Very little was said about relations with other Christians (although I did meet an American Methodist and a Brazilian Presbyterian Pastor attending) and the Charismatic Renewal was scarcely mentioned.

Each plenary session included an "information interview", with four representatives, on the work of the Commissions: Evangelism and Mission, Teaching and Training, Co-operative Christianity, Baptist Doctrine and Religious Liberty and Human Rights. Reaction to the main address was registered by a panel discussion, ably led on each occasion by Andrew MacRae of Scotland. Unfortunately acoustic problems, the length of the hall (and the meetings!) and the continual comings and goings made these panels far less effective than they might have been.

Highlights included the Rollcall of Nations, with the response of each representative ("If any man be in Christ . . .") in his own language, the delightful music of the Congress choir and Swedish stringband, and the address in faultless English by Mrs Ayako Hino of Japan on "Our primary task". I welcomed an unexpected opportunity to serve on the Nominating Committee which in a genuine spirit of prayer proposed the names of the twelve new Vice-Presidents for the next five years and the new President, Dr David Wong of Hong Kong, first layman and first Asian to be appointed.

Two unusually moving experiences of this Congress were the visits to Swedish homes and the Communion services held in seven of the Stockholm Baptist Churches. Arrangements had been made for 3,000 people to visit Baptist families in Stockholm and Uppsala—a colossal undertaking and all without cost to the visitors. The packed Communion service I attended was conducted with a simple dignity and solemnity. Exquisite choral and organ music included "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me" sung in English and Swedish between the distribution of Bread and Wine. The Word was spoken as about twenty of those present went into the pulpit one by one to say John 3.16 in their own language.

A very fine sermon was preached at the closing service of the Congress by the layman President of the Swedish Baptist Union, Erling Oddestad, who spoke of the embarrassment and fear of the three disciples as they saw Jesus transfigured—a different Christ from the One they thought

they knew. He is greater than any of His disciples realise and unless in our times of renewal we see Him change and "listen to Him" we shall not be equipped for service and mission.

Great changes have been proposed in the structure of the Alliance, including wider representation on the new executive committee, recognition of regional fellowships across the world and a new Division of Evangelism and Education. Those of us privileged to be at Stockholm will certainly be praying for our Baptist work with a fresh earnestness. I strongly commend the Alliance to your prayers too. Why not begin planning now to attend the fourteenth Congress in Toronto in 1980?

R. R. RODNEY COLLINS

SUBSCRIPTIONS

As announced during the pastoral session at Liverpool the annual B.M.F. sub. will be increased to £2·50 p.a. from January 1, 1976. Life membership will cost £25, or £10 for those aged 59 or over. But if you become a life member between now and January 1 the cost will be only £17·50 or £7·50 respectively.

Please remember the new figures when paying next year's subscription.