

# The Fraternal

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## EDITORIAL.

A reference book recently reviewed in *Fraternal* is being sold at £18 per copy. It is one of a three volume work, so the set will cost the avid New Testament scholar a cool £54. Ministers who prize their literacy and hard-gained scholastic skills cannot but be staggered by the ever-increasing cost of books. Alec Gilmore, among many other excellent things, has done well to set this inflationary fact of life in its proper context. After all, books are still a bargain.

Howard Williams, in our last issue, emphasised the need for scholarship in those who, week by week, handle the word of life. Gwynne Edwards, in a Pauline study, writes for us in that tradition of scholarly and pastoral commitment that has characterised a true Christian ministry ever since the days of his subject.

Emerging from the siege mentality of the sixties, a lot of ministers decided that it wouldn't be such a bad thing if the church of God were to grow in these islands and that there was nothing inherently virtuous in decay and decline. But how are we to grow apart from much leaping about like Baalish prophets trying to induce reluctant fire from heaven? Tom Houston gives us a good place to start. Methodology may not be everything, but at least it will keep us cool and rational, and that's not a bad thing when we are seeking to extend the kingdom of God.

Dennis Monger has written, at our request, an account of the fine work in which he has been involved in East Gwent. Many more in future days, will have to tread similar paths and will be greatly encouraged by his account. It shows what concern, dedication, tolerance and wit can make possible.

R. E. O. White is among our most prolific writers. As Baptists we are not the most encouraging of patrons to those of our number who take up their pens. George Neal was keen to write this review, having a high regard for Principal White's work, and we were glad to give him the opportunity.

## THE PRINTED WORD.

In the early days of TV (and radio too for anything I know) there was a half-baked opinion around that what we were about to witness was the death of the newspaper. When I was in Northampton I remember the editor of the local paper coming to our Men's Fireside Fellowship and telling us all the things a local paper could do which could never be achieved by radio or television. Small ads. and the like. Twenty years later, local radio and Ceefax notwithstanding, there still seems much to be said for his argument, and only today in conversation with a Professor of Assyriology about Magnus Magnusson and *BC: The Archaeology of the Bible Lands*, he gave it as his opinion that if television educates at all, usually the most useful thing it does is to turn people to a book.

In 1967 I was invited by Lutterworth Press to build up an educational list in the field of religious studies, and my job was to visit schools and colleges of education to see what was lacking and what was needed. 'Don't go for books', I was told in some of the more progressive centres of learning. 'Try loops, film strips, cassettes and video-tape. Yes go for video-tape; that's the thing of the future.' I didn't because Lutterworth were in the book business, and ten years later there is still at least as much interest in literature in religious studies departments as there is in other visuals, whilst education cut-backs serve to make it in many ways a more realistic proposition.

Overseas the possession of a book, and even more so the ability to read it, are still status symbols. If people in Britain go in for a television aerial even if they haven't got a set so as to impress their neighbours, people in Malawi are liable to turn up at church with their Bible even if it is apparent as soon as they open it that they cannot read because they hold it upside down. And I shall long remember walking behind two boys at Kitwe in Zambia on a hot humid Sunday afternoon as they made their way to the Dag Hammarskjöld library to change their book, followed by the sight of a dozen youngsters sitting in one corner of the library on the floor reading. Add to this the growing market overseas for theological books, the newly established publishing houses and bookshops, not forgetting the book vans which still make their journeys from the city to the bush, and it is clear that the religious book has a long life in front of it.

This is not to say that there are no doubts or question marks

over it, and it is certainly not to say that the market is what it was twenty years ago, so it might be worth looking at the problems and opportunities.

## 1. PRICE.

Mention books anywhere now, particularly in Fraternal, and the first comment you get is on their price. But then mention anything anywhere just now and the first comment you get is on the price. All right. Books have gone up. But is it really true to say that they are expensive? Whether a thing is expensive depends in part on how much you want it and in part on how its price has increased in relation to other things.

I sat in the train the other day listening to stories of people who had given up smoking. They were allegedly saving about £3.00 a week and though this was judged to be a marvellous saving I didn't get the impression that anybody thought it was an excessive smoking bill. Yet for little more than that amount it is still possible to get a fair book with a hard back and you can certainly get a religious book with paper covers, not to mention the mass paperback religious market where for three pounds you could still get about three books.

Is it in fact any more than you pay for one hour's car maintenance in the garage? Certainly many young people would pay double that for a double L.P.

When I entered the ministry in 1952 I used to put aside 7% of my income for books as a first priority. Any man in the ministry who did that today would still have sufficient to buy one good book and one or two paperbacks a month and perhaps even more.

Moreover, the mass paperbacks still come at under a pound, which is a very reasonable price and there is a lot today which is available in that form which was not the case in the great hey-day of the parson and the religious book. So perhaps the problem is not price. Maybe the minister of today just doesn't read as his grandfather did, and in that case he probably doesn't encourage his membership to read either. If that is so it might explain a lot of other things about the state of the church but that would be the subject of another article!

## 2 MARKET.

Within the religious book trade it is easy to talk about a diminishing market. All the more reason therefore to balance that with a remark picked up from John Bowden of SCM recently who said that he found it not a diminishing market but a growing market. Twenty years ago, he explained, I could only sell my books to Protestants. Today I can sell them to Catholics as well. Publishers of popular paperbacks, particularly among evangelicals and charismatics, would no doubt agree whilst the growth of the church overseas and the establishment of new theological colleges should ensure a steady demand for religious books for years to come.

At the same time there is a diminishing market for certain kinds of books. Throughout the 1950's Lutterworth had a reputation for the scholarly book like those yellow-jacketed books in the Lutterworth Library series which most of us who entered the ministry then still have on our shelves, and much of the thrust was for the minister and the theological student. Theological students in Britain are certainly less numerous than they were. Their interests are considerably diversified and it is no comfort to me to be told to do a different type of book for the newly emerging theological student. There aren't enough of them to justify it. And if thirty per cent of the total number of theological students strike a new line there soon won't be enough of a market with the remaining seventy.

The minister too, I suspect, either reads a good deal less, or reads a good deal more widely, or is more selective. All this affects the economics of publishing, and there are many times when I reject books which I am sure would have had a chance fifteen years ago but which can have no chance today.

Not only have the markets diminished but the review outlets have diminished. It is probably only the author who thinks that you sell his book by advertising it. The publisher certainly doesn't. He knows that you sell his book by getting it reviewed in the right places, waved at the right conference and then talked about and written about. But where?

Not any more in the *Christian World*. Or *Frontier* Or *View - Review*. Or *New Christian*. True, some new religious papers have appeared, but usually I think more at the popular level and less at the theological level.

And this is my point. It is at the theological level that the market has fallen, and that is one reason why again and again I can only encourage an author with his book if I know that I can find a co-publisher in the United States who will share it with me. Fine if the author is well-known and the subject crosses the Atlantic. Difficult with the author who is about to begin, and impossible with a whole range of subjects in which either America is not interested or where for some reason she can only take American writers.

Besides a diminishing market and a diminishing set of papers there is also a diminishing number of shops. SPCK has fewer shops than a decade ago. Many privately owned bookshops have closed down usually because of economics. Large and general bookshops have become more choosy and some have concentrated on those books which sell quickly! There's no money in holding a book on your shelves for twelve months just in case somebody comes to buy. There is still a fair number of religious bookshops, but on the whole they are only interested in the cheaper books (nothing much over a pound), and it doesn't always help that they are run by one who is more dedicated than professional. The very presence of a religious bookshop does in fact have an inhibiting effect on the general bookshop. Try your latest religious title on the general bookshop and unless the author is a William Barclay the salesmen may well be told, 'No, the place to sell that is the Bible bookshop'.

All of which tends to add up to an emphasis on the popular, the cheap and the book with a quick turnover. Not a bad idea you might say, for what is the point of producing a book which doesn't sell? Of course, I agree. And every publisher must have something of that sort in his list or he will never survive. But there are two dangers of which we need to be aware. First, the danger of thinking that what is done in the largest quantities and at the lowest price is the best. Second, there is the danger of the book which is needed but which is not commercial. Who is to do it.

The other place where there is a gap, and it is one which at Lutterworth particularly we have tried to fill, is in the schools. There have been knocks here too, partly as a result of fresh ideas about RE, partly as a result of limited budgets, and partly as a result of library cuts, and some of the commercial firms would never regard even this as truly commercial, but there is still a need for literature and the market is large enough for us to supply it.

The two areas where we have had much success is that of assembly material and that of World religions. Both are interesting, in a way, because both relate to the church's life as well. Books

containing resource material for worship in schools are a boon to the busy parson who is always on the look out for something similar, and though we can no longer sell either sermons or children's addresses it is still quite possible to sell a book like *Explorations in Assembly* or *Saints of the Twentieth Century*. The books on world religions may seem to have less to do with the local church on the surface, but surely not. The church never sent missionaries to the Hindu and the Muslim without teaching the missionaries what they were going to. Now that these people live in our country and on our doorstep so that every Christian is a missionary there is a sound argument for introducing our people to the faiths that are around. Books like *Understanding Your Hindu Neighbour* (for 9-12's) and *Thinking About Islam* (for older pupils and adults) have shown that they meet a real need.

### 3. PUBLISHERS.

In view of the complexity of the issues it is not surprising that publishers are a mixed bag and that each tends to carve out his own niche and stick to it. So we have the big boys of the commercial world, Collins and Hodder, general publishers with a religious list. Hodders, under Edward England, have certainly gone for the popular evangelical paperback and probably have no rival in this field. They have an educational list which is much broader, as well as a number of case-bound titles, and Edward England himself reckons to publish an average of two titles a week. Collins, under Lady Collins herself, boasts a broad list of Fontanas, recently become Fountain paperbacks, and hard back books by best-selling authors like Muggeridge and Barclay. And if they have had a year in 1976 with the Good News Bible no doubt Hodder will have a year in 1978 with the *New International Version* the New Testament of which they already market.

Scripture Union, Paternoster and IVP continue quietly to service the evangelical market at various levels, but the new arrival on the scene is David Alexander of Lion Books whose success seems to have turned on the fact that he has gone for the popular end of the market as far as presentation is concerned and has succeeded in building up enough foreign editions to give his books the appearance of colour which makes them so attractive.

Then, somewhere in between, you have Mowbrays, SPCK, Darton, Longman and Todd and Lutterworth, providing a fair cross-section of liturgical materials, theological titles, children's books and non-religious general books. Indeed whereas you could describe Hodder and Collins as general publishers with a religious list you could describe these others as religious publishers with a general list, and I imagine

it is no secret that the one props up the other. Competition there is, and no doubt competition there must be, but the more a publisher can find his own niche and keep to it to the exclusion of others the safer he feels.

#### 4. OVERSEAS.

We referred earlier to the new literate overseas. From him the demand for books is considerable. Take, for example Malawi.

Blantyre is the only town of any size and 90% of the population of the country live in villages. Thanks to the giving of the western world and the foresight and persistence of a few, there is established in Malawi the Christian Literature Association in Malawi (CLAIM). Not all overseas literature schemes are thriving but this one is. They even succeeded in getting their premises with accommodation to spare and then leasing part of it to the Post Office so as to be sure of a regular income to support their work.

Their job is to cater for the new literates, so they print Primers to help in government - sponsored literacy campaigns, and then sell them in tens of thousands at 2½ or 5 pence each and don't make a penny profit. The government buy them and the religious publishers see it as Christian service. Then too, because Malawi is a rural country, they publish books on agriculture; because health and food are vital topics for survival they publish books on cookery and hygiene; because it's important for people to know where they have come from, they did one on Malawi: Past and Present. And when decimalisation came in it was CLAIM, the religious house, which published the Ready Reckoner. All side by side with a book of prayers and some hymns for the Anglican church. That is a publishing programme which has a real Christian purpose behind it.

Besides publishing, CLAIM goes in for distribution, and in that connection they not only have shops and vans, but they also have kiosks. A kiosk is rather like an ice-cream kiosk in this country. And some of them are mobiles, which means that at harvest-time they can set up the kiosk on the edge of the fields and market their literature. Many of the churches have an agent too; he will hold about £20/30 worth of books and the book van will call on him every two or three months and stock him up.

Not all overseas literature work is as good as CLAIM, but TARGET newspaper in Kenya is much more the voice of the church in Kenya than any church paper I could name in this country, the Christian Literature Society in Madras, of any publishing house in the



world, the Daystar Press in Nigeria is producing books for Nigerian schools, and so on.

All this is so much a part of the mission of the church that one wishes more and more that the church at home would learn increasingly of what is happening world-wide and then seek to apply what it has learned to its own situation. We at USCL are in partnership with our brethren at SPCK in FEED THE MINDS and Jim Sutton, one of our own Baptist ministers and missionaries, is our administrative secretary.

The day has gone when all we had to do was to print a pile of books and export them to the missionaries for distribution, and the day has not yet arrived when publishers in the Third World can trade with us in co-editions in the same way as we trade with America and produce translations from Europe. In between, what we have to do is to build up the overseas publishing house on a firm commercial basis so that aid can give way to trade, and this is precisely what we are about.

## 5. ACTION.

If you are still reading me the chances are you are just beginning to ask, 'What can we do?'

One thing you can do is just to talk about books and literature wherever you go. Ministers talking about books and writing up a book in their church magazines and urging their members to be aware of good literature is the *sine qua non* of all publishing and literature work. People who themselves have no interest in literature or awareness of books are not likely to contribute much to the cause of literature overseas.

Fraternalists might profitably give more attention to books than many do. Enlightenment is always limited when one man spins something out of his own experience and others contribute either from their basic knowledge or perhaps even from their lack of it. The old habit of one man reading a paper on a recent book and others questioning it and taking it to pieces had much to commend it for the enlightenment both of the ministry and subsequently of the membership. Or am I just getting old?

Ministers could run Book Groups in their churches. Indeed one of the most useful ways of teaching theology is to find a group of readers in the church, not always of religious books by any means, and then agree to read a certain book by a given date knowing that shortly

afterwards the group will meet to discuss it. It all strengthens the cause

Book Exhibitions organised in a town, either by a church or a group of churches or a Council of Churches, can have a most beneficial effect. Local bookshops will often co-operate to the extent of putting their stock on sale in a church hall for a given period provided the churches undertake to encourage their members to come and buy. A special author might be invited in to sign copies or a speaker on the cause of Christian literature from Feed the Minds could fill the bill. A local RE adviser might come in at 5 o'clock one day and speak to a group of day-school teachers who could find in the Exhibition some tools of their trade. And when we did it in Worthing a few years ago we rang the bell for silence on the hour throughout the day and one local personality picked out one title and said why he had chosen it in not more than two minutes.

Even Book Fairs which amount to little more than collecting old books and selling them for Feed the Minds does something to stimulate interest and there are many old books in all our libraries which could usefully start a new life in the theological college library overseas.

Well there we are, if you would like information on Book Fairs or Exhibitions, on Feed the Minds seminars or teach-ins, or a Sunday supply with an emphasis on Christian literature, don't hesitate to write and ask. Whatever else happens the mission of the church for a long time to come is going to need the printed word.

Alec Gilmore.

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## THE JUSTICE OF GOD.

### WORLD UPSIDE DOWN.

St. Paul was once accused of turning the world upside down.<sup>1</sup> That was the measure of the upheaval which had first taken place in his own life when he met the Lord on the Damascus road.<sup>2</sup> Here was a man who had lived in careful obedience to the law of God. He could claim an immaculate pedigree.<sup>3</sup> Yet his uprightness and his zeal had been leading him in exactly the wrong direction. He had been hell-bent on God's work.

When an immoral man is converted, it means a revolution in his life. When a moral man has to be forcibly converted by God, the effect is cataclysmic. Everything in Paul's past life underwent an upheaval. Every doctrine and concept with which he had been familiar was shaken out and took on new meaning. Old words and phrases still appear, but they have been through the earthquake, wind, and fire of his experience, and have emerged with new content.

Amongst the doctrines so dramatically inverted is that of the justice, or righteousness, of God. It is the purpose of this article to consider what was the effect on this doctrine of the explosive force of Paul's experience, and to ask how well the Christian Church has understood that the concept of the justice of God is one of the worlds which is turned upside down.

### JUSTICE IN THE O. T.

The language of justice is widely used in the Old Testament, and the picture of God as presiding over a court of law is a favourite one with the prophets.<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy expresses the conviction that the justice of God is strictly applied to man's obedience or disobedience, the former leading to life and the latter to death.<sup>5</sup> There is good ground for the idea that God's justice implies a punishment on sin, which has to be executed.

Even in the Old Testament, however, there are plenty of signs that the language of justice has clear limitations in describing God's dealings with His people. The Psalmist knows that if God does work through strict justice, no-one can stand.<sup>6</sup> Hosea uses his personal experience to describe the relationships of God and His people, and recounts how he took his wanton wife to law, calling the children as witnesses.<sup>7</sup> However, his purpose is not judgement and punishment, but reconciliation. He does not want the death sentence which expressed

justice - he wants his wife back again. So the passage ends with a new wooing and the hope of a new relationship. Hosea has learned that God's purpose is not to pass sentence, but to bring His people back to Himself.

There is a similar emphasis later in the same prophet.<sup>8</sup> God's children have gone astray. Justice requires that they be handed over to their enemies for punishment, but the judge is God, and not man. He will not judge in this human way. There is no doubt that God is a judge, but there is clear teaching that He is not like human judges, and the language of human justice has marked limitations when applied to God.

It begins to appear that the wineskin of judgement may stretch so far as to split, when it is filled with the new wine of mercy.

### **St. PAUL'S INSIGHT.**

St. Paul, schooled as he is in the Old Testament, naturally turns to the language of judgement when he wants to express the fact and meaning of the cross. He assures us that we all stand before the judgement seat of Christ.<sup>9</sup> Yet Paul is also overwhelmed by the sense of mercy and free grace of God,<sup>10</sup> so we should be forewarned that the idea of justice may get more than a little stretched.

In fact, Romans 8 opens with the categorical assertion that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, and the very next verse asserts that we have been set free from the law of sin and death.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that Paul does not say that we are set free from the punishment which is our deserving under the law. He says that we are set free from the law itself, which, though originally good, has become the vehicle of sin and death. So this is not the situation in which a well-meaning friend pays the fine that lets us go free - this is a case in which the law of justice and retribution simply does not apply.

A couple of verses later, Paul explains why this is so.<sup>12</sup> There are two levels of life. On the lower level, the commandment of the law holds sway, and that means death unless we are set free from it by the work of Christ. In Him, we live at a different level, the level of the Spirit, in which the law of God holds sway - but that means a completely new kind of relationship with God. It is a relationship best described by the language of father and son,<sup>13</sup> and that is a very different story from impartial justice.

The crucial insight soon follows.<sup>14</sup> The judge has left the bench, and one is standing in the dock alongside the accused. So far from accusing him, he is clasping him in His arms, as a father might embrace his son. There is no one left to put any case for the prosecution.

The only one still in a position to condemn is Christ, and He is the very one who died, and was raised again, and stands beside His Father to make this joyful scene possible. The whole concept of a court of justice has burst under the ferment of the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. We are free from the law. It does not apply to us any more.

## **THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.**

We have been set free from a relationship controlled by rule of law. So the last thing we should want to do is to re-introduce certain standards which we have to keep in order to stay on the right side of God's justice. Yet Paul was certainly afraid that that was exactly what his converts might do. He was especially worried about the young converts in Galatia. To them, he sends a warning that if they are going to re-open the courts then no-one can possibly be justified.<sup>15</sup> He reminds them that they received the Spirit, not by keeping the law, but by believing the gospel message.<sup>16</sup> He who seeks to build up again the system which Paul has broken down is a transgressor indeed.<sup>17</sup> If a man really wants to reconstitute the court, he will have to be judged by it,<sup>18</sup> and to seek to be justified before the law means that a man's relationship with Christ will be completely severed.<sup>19</sup> The promised blessing of a new relationship with God is not offered on the basis of law, but only on the ground of faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>20</sup>

Paul returns to the same theme in other letters. To the Thessalonians he says that God has not destined us to the terrors of judgement, but to the full attainment of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>21</sup> The Christians at Colossae are assured that Christ has cancelled the bond which pledged us to the decrees of the law.<sup>22</sup>

The language of the law courts has provided a starting point for the statement of our justification through Christ, but has proved inadequate to complete the task. So far as the believer is concerned, the law courts are empty and unused. The death of Christ has made them an anachronism. The Father, His Son, and the other children, are sharing a triumphant family celebration.

## **THE RENEWED DISCOVERY**

Through the course of its history the Church has frequently failed to grasp the glorious freedom which is at the heart of Paul's preaching. Men have insisted that the Judge who leaves His bench should be firmly sent back to His seat. They have re-instated the God who solemnly and severely expects sentence to be carried out on every sin. They have preached a doctrine of salvation which has to be completed within the legal system, and have failed to rise to the understanding

of a salvation which leaves the legal system behind. They have, at best, preached a Christ who has paid our debt rather than a Christ who has cancelled our debt.

It was clearly so in much of the belief and practice of the mediaeval Church. God was the terrible Judge, ready to strike men down for their misdeeds, and to hand them over to waiting legions of demons for torment. The anxious soul could attempt to find some relief from future torture by self-inflicted punishments or by an ascetic life; while further relief could be obtained by pilgrimages to holy places or even by the purchase of indulgences. Men were even denied the relief that might come from the conviction that Christ Himself had borne the punishment for them.

The story of how Martin Luther was oppressed by the terror of this situation, and by the futility of the traditional means of ameliorating punishment, is well known. The picture of a God who, unless otherwise satisfied, will damn sinful men to the torments of the wretched for eternity, was one which shocked and terrified him, just as it has shocked, terrified, and repelled many sincere souls since. He wrote, 'I was myself more than once driven to the very abyss of despair so that I wished I had never been created. Love God? I hated him!'<sup>23</sup>

Luther's breakthrough came with his realisation that he had been misunderstanding the phrase 'the justice (righteousness) of God.' 'I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust'. The turning point came when he realised that this picture from human justice was not the controlling one. 'Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which, through grace and sheer mercy, God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn'. What Luther now sees and rejoices in is not an impartial God, whose thirst for justice has been satisfied by the death of Christ. On the contrary - 'If you have a true faith that Christ is your saviour, then at once you have a gracious God, for faith leads you in and opens up God's heart and will, that you should see pure grace and overflowing love. This it is to behold God in faith that you should look upon his fatherly, friendly heart, in which there is no anger nor ungraciousness'.

## **PARTIAL CONVICTIONS.**

In the succeeding centuries, the Protestant Church itself failed to hold to the full wonder of this discovery. Perhaps the lapse was encouraged by the emphasis on the supremacy of law, in all areas of life which began to be made in the years following the Renaissance.

In civil affairs, the insistence that law had an absolute

authority, even over kings and princes, was to lead in this country to the revolution of the 17th century. The divine right of kings had to give way before the divine appointment of the law. In science, Galileo, who died in 1642, and Isaac Newton, who was born in the same year, were laying the foundations for the view that the universe itself is governed by law. From their findings comes the statement of those laws which the stars obey as they keep their courses, and which nature obeys in the multiplicity of its structures.

It was not unnatural that men, dazzled by the wonders of law, should assume that the very nature of God must be law. Surely, they thought, God Himself must be the supreme source and administrator of law. So back into the thinking of the Church came the language of the justice of the law-courts. Back came God onto the Judge's bench. And the dominant statement of the atonement became that doctrine which we know as penal substitution.

The doctrine is governed by the thinking that God's administration of His own law is absolute. Hence God, in order to be true to Himself, has to pass sentence, but Jesus stands in our place to bear the punishment. At once, the justice of God is satisfied and we are free.

Undoubtedly, this is a deeply moving doctrine with strong evangelical appeal. It has been greatly influential over four centuries, but in its cruder forms it is very much less than the Gospel. It suffers from the inadequacy that it leaves God where the Scripture does not leave Him — on the Judge's bench, in the law-court. It correctly shows us Jesus, standing beside us in the dock, but God is not there with us. He remains over against us in the impartial administration of justice. Thus there emerges a fatal division between the work of the Father and the Son. The traditional doctrine of penal substitution has missed the glorious freedom of Paul's discovery that we are free from the law. It has missed the evangelical ecstasy of Luther's breakthrough into the vision of the fatherly, friendly heart of God.

## **GLORIOUS FREEDOM.**

To look back to Paul, and see him rediscovered in the reformation, is to learn that we are not just acquitted under the law — we are free from the law. Law is not ultimate, even with God, and justice does not have to be satisfied. The law-court is done away by the death of Christ. God, who once appeared as Judge, has adopted us as His sons and is now known as Father. The concept of judgement and the court-



room has indeed proved an old wineskin, unable to contain the new wine of the gospel. The container for the justice of God is now the home and the family, where mercy and grace reign supreme.

For the justice of God cannot be contained in a legal system: it bursts out in the overflowing love of the Father. No more can the death of Christ be restricted to the bearing of our punishment: it lifts us out of the realm of law into a completely new realm of relationship with God. Man's ultimate hope is much more than the hope of acquittal: it is the hope that we may become God's children, and the recipients of His grace.

The full glory of the justice of God is a vision well beyond the power of this writer to describe. It stretches back before the foundation of the world, and so far back must we look to find the moment when God chose us in Christ.<sup>24</sup> Its intention is nothing less than that we should be accepted as God's sons through Jesus Christ.<sup>25</sup> Its scope reaches out across time and space until the whole universe, all in heaven and on earth, is brought into a unity in Christ.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the end of the story is nothing less than that we might attain to fulness of being—the fulness of God Himself.<sup>27</sup>

'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive, by the power which is at work among us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus from generation to generation evermore. Amen'<sup>28</sup>

Gwynne Edwards.

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|------|--------------------------------|------|--|
| 1/.  | Acts 17.6.                     | 17/. | Galatians 2.18.  |
| 2/.  | Acts 9. 1-22.                  | 18/. | Galatians 5.3.   |
| 3/.  | Philippians 3. 4-7.            | 19/. | Galatians 2.21;5.4.  |
| 4/.  | e.g. Isaiah 41. 1; Daniel 7.10 | 20/. | Galatians 3.22.  |
| 5/.  | Deuteronomy 30.15-20.          | 21/. | 1. Thessalonians 5.9.  |
| 6/.  | Psalms 130.3.                  | 22/. | Colossians 2.14.   |
| 7/.  | Hosea 2.1-17.                  | 23/. | This and subsequent quotations, taken from Bainton 'Here I stand', in the chapter on 'The Gospel'. |
| 8/.  | Hosea 11.1-11.                 | 24/. | Ephesians 1.4.   |
| 9/.  | 2 Corinthians 5.10.            | 25/. | Ephesians 1.5.   |
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| 16/. | Galatians 3.2.                 |      |  |

" There were only three hiding places where he ( Dunstan ) had ever heard of cottager's hoards being found: the thatch, the bed and a hole in the floor "

" Silas Marner " – George Eliot.

I needed a leading quotation on theft and since the Fagin gang in Oliver Twist was too obvious a choice I searched around in my mind for another quotation – this quote from Silas Marner came to the surface .

I read Silas Marner perhaps once every five years. In part its interest lies in the " church assembling in Lantern Yard " as the place " where the poorest layman has the chance of distinguishing himself by gifts of speech, and has, at the very least, the weight of a silent voter in the government of his community ". Its major interest rests in the unfolding of Marner's story as the Weaver of Raveloe after he had left the chapel falsely accused of theft and had moved to his cottage where he encountered theft .

When I visited the old Tewkesbury Chapel some years ago, my mind went back to Lantern Yard – it must have been very much what lay within George Eliot's imagination.

But what I want to say now is that there are obvious places in any building and in any event many church thefts are clearly inside jobs in that opportunity must have been taken of open access to " case the joint from the inside " to ascertain the whereabouts of the " hoard " .

Our claims experience defines the word " hoard " in terms of public address systems with amplifiers and loudspeakers; microphones; tape recorders; and projectors; disc players and discs; colour TV's; billiard tables and snooker sets; church money and money in handbags lying around.

You name it and you've lost it or rather many of your churches and people have – by theft from church premises.

It saddens me to write that although thirty years ago a theft from a church was a rarity that theft is now commonplace . This sad deterioration calls for constant vigilance ( I nearly said eternal vigil – ance but that would be too late ).

When church premises are in use nothing of value should be left unsupervised. When premises are not in use nothing of value of a portable nature must be left on the premises.

Silas Marner was lucky for his hoard came back to him years later; stolen church property seldom returns.

If your people take more care then less will be taken.

Yours sincerely

C.J.L. COLVIN. General Manager.

## THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT.

Why do some churches grow while others do not ? Why does the same church grow at one time but not at another ? Donald McGavran, a missionary in India, began to write about this subject in 1936. His interest at first was in India. The questions, however, are of wider interest and when his first books came out in the fifties, enough work had been done to lay tentative foundations for an authentic new discipline in the history of the Christian Church.

In 1965 McGavran established The School of World Mission Institute of Church Growth as part of the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Today it is a very significant force for the spread of Christianity in the world. This article will attempt to summarise some of the significant thinking of this school in the last decade.

**1. Receptive peoples** Jesus indicated to his men that some people would welcome them and their message, and others would not. ( Matt 10: 11 – 15 ) This has been obvious in the history of the church. McGavran and others began to note what could be learned about people who were receptive in different places and at different times to see if there were any common factors that might enable receptive people to be identified quickly. From the beginning he has argued that Christians should put their resources of people and money into places when they are receptive, while not neglecting other areas. Often he shows that churches and missions have put most of their personnel and funds into unreceptive people and starved work of great potential.

Social pressure is often a factor in a widespread openness to the gospel. This can arise from local political considerations, the fact that the leaders of a community come to Christ or a variety of other reasons. These result in " people movements" where thousands become Christians in a short time. By careful study of these, there is a growing understanding of the ways in which the gospel may be effectively spread.

Where there is already some change in a community, people have been found to be more open to the gospel. Recently, it was reported that people in Cambodia who produced only 500 converts after 40 years of missionary work. Then out of 9000 refugees of the same people in Thailand 1000 were baptized and 1500 were under instruction in the space of one year. An understanding of why churches are growing makes it possible for insights gained in one place to benefit other places where people and conditions are similar.

**2. Research as a tool for mission:** A great body of data has been assembled and written up in the last ten years from which many missionary enterprises have derived inspiration and direction. In the process, ways of analysing church growth in the local church, in a denomination, and even in a whole country have been developed and tested. It is the application of these ways of understanding churches that lead to new repentance and give vision of new possibilities for the future.

The basic approach is to take what is already known in a church's records or in denominational yearbooks and plot on a graph the available figures for the last ten, twenty, or more years. These may be the membership figures and the Sunday School figures.

When you have done that, the questions start suggesting themselves. Why did the membership go up in that period and down in that? What was happening in the population of the town over the same period? What was happening in the other churches? Some encouraging answers come from pursuing these questions. Some disturbing facts emerge. You cannot let it go.

It raises questions about who was in leadership in particular periods and what programmes were carried out. It begins to be seen what was effective and what was not.

As you go on, the questions become more refined; all growth is not necessarily of the same value. Biological growth is just bringing in members from the families in the church. In the United States this is reckoned to be 25% growth every ten years. A church in the U.S.A. that has not grown more than 25% in ten years has therefore declined.

Transfer growth is receiving people from other churches — or losing them. This does nothing for real church growth and has to be discounted if we are measuring our impact on the total community.

Only after looking at biological and transfer growth are we able to get down to what it is all about — conversion growth.

So far we have been looking at numbers. Ways of looking at the quality of life in a church are now being developed. A major contribution to this is by Orlando Costas in his book "Church and Mission." He attempts to look at numbers, but also at fellowship and structure factors, at growth in understanding Biblical truth and at the degree to which the church is caring for the community.

3. **Structural Development.** Dr. Ralph ( ex Guatemala ) has made several important contributions to church growth thinking. He and others have brought to bear on the study of mission, insights from cultural anthropology. In healthy developing communities, there are often two related kinds of structure each with its own kind of leaders.

There are the majority who are happier when they are operating in an accepted mode ( modalities ). In Africa this is the tribal structure and its leaders are the elders whose job is to provide stability, order security and meaning for the whole range. Then there are smaller units within the larger group and with their blessing, who get together, throw up their own leaders to do specific tasks or are responsible for new achievements for the benefit of all.

They are mobile, enterprising, dedicated, often composed of people in a single age bracket and, if not, of people who have an adventurous orientation all through their lives. These brotherhoods are called 'sodalities'. In Africa they are the age grades and the resilient young leaders they produce from their numbers.

Now growth, change, development mainly came from the second kind of structure.

In the New Testament these two types of structure are represented by the local churches ( modality ) and the apostolic bands ( sodality ). The apostolic band founds the local church and moves on to do the same elsewhere, but comes back to challenge and renew.

In church history these are the institutional church and the ' orders '. Growth and change have generally come from the ' orders ' or the ' order ' type of persons. In the Reformation the ' orders ' were abolished and everything was centred on the institutional church. Perhaps this is why for centuries there was no great outreach from the Protestant churches. Then with the Moravians in Europe and William Carey in England, the missionary societies began. This was a restoration of the 'orders' or sodalities. There followed the dramatic expansion of Christianity documented by La Tourette

Always in time there is the tendency for the basic insight to be forgotten. The institutional takes over and when it does, growth slows down and stops. Best results are achieved when the two types of structures work creatively together in their different roles. The sodality type of person needs to be identified and mobilised in appropriate groups for the current challenges to grow and develop. This implies on-going structural renewal.

4. **Culture and method:** Dr Ralph Winter is the man who began to make evangelism look like algebra. He introduced the concepts of E: 0 E: 1, E: 2 and E: 3 evangelism.

E: 0 is evangelising within one's church.

E: 1 is near neighbour evangelism to people like yourself.

E: 2 is evangelising some one of a different culture within the same community

E: 3 is cross-cultural evangelism where both geographical and linguistic changes are involved.

He showed at the Lausanne Congress that only by E:3 evangelism being vastly increased can we hope to reach the major unevangelised people of the world.

Those insights however have begun to be applied to church growth in the West. Many churches only engage in E: 0 evangelism. If our communities are to be reached we need people who can be trained and developed in E: 1 and E: 2 evangelism. This implies mobilising like to reach like or finding people who will adapt culturally to reach a group in the community where as yet there are no Christians. This bears keenly on a fact that troubles many in the U. K. that the churches are largely middle - class.

Another name in church growth is Dr Charles Kraft. He is basically a translator. In Nigeria he worked at 'dynamic equivalence' translation like the Good NEWS Bible in the Higi language.

He coined the phrase 'dynamic equivalent' churches where he argued that the forms and structures of any local church should represent New Testament principles in the equivalent forms and structures in the culture where it is set. Certainly the origins of our denominations illustrate this theme, even if their continuance does not.

5. **Culture and message:** Charles Kraft has also begun to work on the Scriptures as they give models for communicating the gospel. This is the most recent development in church growth thinking. It is maintained that every people should hear the gospel within the thought forms and communication patterns of their culture. The great word for this is 'Acontextualisation'. The gospel needs to be presented and heard in context. Another name in this field is Arthur Glasser ( of China ) who is Dean of the School of World Mission. At the beginning the church growth men emphasised quantitative growth so much that they antagonised many people. They were short on theology. This is now being corrected. True to type they have a name for this tie - up between theology and anthropology. It is 'enthnotheology'. It says that our theologians often fail to help us because they are either so immersed in the cultures of Biblical times or of previous theological heydays, or even of the highly intellectual cultures of the present. What is needed is a deep understanding of the message in the context of Bible times linked to an equally deep

understanding of the features of the cultures where the gospel has to be preached. That is 'ethnotheology' or theology related to where people are. This is obvious in the cultures of Africa or Asia. The principles still apply in the West but we have not applied them. We need to do this now.

6. **Renewal:** The reaction to Church Growth thinking is often to feel that it preempts the work of the Holy Spirit. Often in overstating their case this has seemed to be so, yet my experience of the men in the forefront of this development, has shown me that their primary interest is in seeing the renewal that comes from the Holy Spirit breaking out in more lives and more places. A look at the books they have produced for churches to use leaves one in no doubt about this. The methods and the thinking to which the methods leads are just new relevant ways to bring churches and their leaders to repentance and to create new visions of the possibilities that are there, but we did not see before, of working together with God.

There is now little doubt that the message of church growth is one of the things that the Spirit is saying to all Churches all over the world in the seventies.

This review has aimed to be positive. There are problems. In a period of just beginning to collate data, seek for formulae to interpret it, test and reformulate there was bound to be overstatement and bad guesses by over enthusiastic researchers. And there has been much of this. Personally, I began to read McGavran in the sixties in Africa. I was often exasperated. He always seemed to me to be only half right. But, if I was honest I could not ignore that half.

Britain has been very slow to listen to the Church Growth School. That is understandable when there has been decline in our churches for so long. It takes courage and an uncommon readiness for honesty to think in growth terms in our context. Yet I believe we must do it.

The reception to the report of the evangelical working party "Let my People Grow" has shown that thousands are ready tentatively to start such thinking. Who knows where it will lead to? Pray God, to church growth.

Tom Houston.

WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION.  
409 Barking Road, Plaistow, London E 13 8 AL.

My dear Brother Minister,

I have a strong suspicion that some of you are going to feel that you are hearing a lot about the new West Ham Building Project. The fact is that our minds here are somewhat preoccupied with all the implications, as well as the disturbing elements of our building programme, and unless I am very careful I shall be tempted to shrug off some of my exasperation by sharing the problems with you.

We have our problems all right, although in fairness not more than we expected. The builders are in the Church and the work is beginning to make sense before our eyes. Of course, they are not up – to – date but, then of course, they have to cope with some foul weather. They have made a sea of mud on the Angas lawn and have piled up earth works, but we hope we shall have finished this first stage by the end of May at the very latest.

As I write these notes we are waiting for "D" day, which is March 7th, when our friends of the Baptist Men's Movement Housing Association will be opening the tenders of the second stage. If the tenders are within the limits set by the Department of the Environment we can forge ahead. If they are not, then we have some headaches for which to find the necessary aspirins!

We have built up a very formidable list of applicants who want to come and live in our new buildings once they are erected but, of course, our main preoccupation is to get the job done.

If you think that is too much about bricks and mortar then I commend to you the fact that "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us", and we are glad to preach the unsearchable riches in more ways than mere speaking.

Please get your people to pray for us, and if they want to know a bit more about what they are praying for, get them to see our coloured filmstrip with tape or manuscript provided.

May God's blessing be on you as you cope with your headaches.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL  
Superintendent of the Mission.



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## RURAL REFLECTIONS.

I arrived in my present pastorate twenty years ago to find Monmouth a small country town, predominantly Anglican, with two large public schools belonging to the London Haberdashers Company. The town is a tourist centre for the lower Wye Valley. The local Baptist church was formed in 1818 and in 1921 the small village church at Norton, eight miles north of the town, was united with Monmouth "in order to qualify for a grant from the Sustentation Fund for the upkeep of the ministry", and the arrangement made whereby the pastor conducted the evening service at Norton on the second Sunday of each month and rendered any other service in his power".

There are three small Baptist chapels in and near the Wye valley which were formed in the early 19th century to serve well populated and thriving communities. They are Llandogo, once famous for its forestry and woodcraft; Whitebrook, in a tributary valley of its own, where the ruins of the paper mills lie hidden in the trees, and several tombstones in the Baptist chapel yard give the occupation of the deceased as "paper-maker"; and, finally, Penalt (a Welsh name meaning "top of the hill") with its chapel situated on a wind-swept corner where three lanes meet, country roads which wind "with few passing places" through miles of open and wooded land dotted with isolated farms and cottages. There is some written evidence and local oral tradition which combine to suggest that at one time each church had a pastor of its own, but before the second world war a manse was purchased in the name of the three churches which had by then formed one pastorate. When I arrived in the district there had been no resident minister for many years, though Llandogo and Whitebrook had shared student pastors from our Bristol and Cardiff colleges during summer vacations. A good relationship always existed between these churches and the one at Monmouth and former ministers served them in an occasional capacity.

An attempt was now made to regularise the position, and as each church came to request regular pastoral oversight so it agreed to pay a quota to Monmouth church funds "to compensate for the pastor's time spent in the service of its congregation". This group came naturally, without any external pressure, and at the request of each local church meeting. It was a growing together over the years.

Brockweir is a picturesque village on the east bank of the Wye a few miles above Tintern abbey. The church is a Moravian foundation dating back to 1831 when a Moravian minister came by steam-packet across the Bristol channel and, in the words of an old document, "found a village destitute of religious advantages and .. the village street running with iniquity. The community was certainly a hive of activity in those days, with three

companies of ship builders, multiplicity of inns and all the characteristics of an inland port. A church was established and it flourished until the second world war when many left and did not return. The decrease in population continued as more people found work in the towns, and the decline in church attendance brought paper membership to twenty and the active membership to far less. It was no longer possible to maintain a resident minister. The church could not be grouped with another of its own denomination. The nearest Moravian churches were in Bristol, Bath and Swindon and the Severn bridge had not been built. In 1960 the decision was reluctantly taken to close Brockweir the following year. News of the unhappy situation was brought to Monmouth by one of our Baptist lay preachers who asked if we could do anything to help, but by now there were only four months left before the closing date. After visiting Brockweir, I contacted the Area Superintendent at that time, Rev. William Davies. He acted wisely and quickly, and as a result we met the Moravian Church leaders at a round-table conference in Bristol. The discussion was frank and friendly and ranged over matters such as administration, relationships with other Baptist churches in the group, Moravian liturgy and Baptism. It is not possible within the space of this article to give a detailed account of these talks, but the results may be summarized. It was agreed that Brockweir congregation remain in being as a recognised Moravian Congregation with representatives at Moravian and Baptist denominational meetings; that the oversight and services, be arranged through the Monmouth Group of Baptist churches and that Moravian character of the services be preserved as far as possible, new members being received according to Moravian or, where so desired, according to Baptist usage. There was of course, much more, but mention might be made concerning certain keypoints in any inter-denominational scheme. The Moravians clearly stated that my ordination as Baptist minister was regarded as in every way equivalent to their own (episcopal) ordination, and this has been recognised in practice by my conducting every kind of service in the Moravian church except infant baptism. Where this is specifically requested a Moravian minister visits from another church in the Western District, an arrangement made much easier by the Severn Bridge. Over the years a number of parents have chosen and some have particularly asked for a service of thanksgiving and dedication. Provision is made for all who wish to join the church by Believers' Baptism or, having been baptised in infancy, by Moravian confirmation, or again by Believers' Baptism "if the candidate cannot but obey as a matter of conscience".

It took two years for the scheme of union to pass through the required denominational machinery and emerge endorsed and unscathed. (Perhaps a brief historical note is required even here. The Moravian church

regards itself as the oldest Protestant denomination, dating its origin from John Huss in 1457, sixty years before Luther's famous protest. Bill Davies told me after everything had gone through Baptist Union Council that one brother had voted against the scheme because he thought we were linking up with the Mormons! But I know there are deaf-spots in council chamber acoustics as there are blind-spots for the motorist—and almost as hazardous!)

Brockweir church, however, did not close even for one Sunday, and the subsequent 15 years have seen the membership double, the Sunday School revived, and many stories could be recounted of salvation, guidance and comfort received. After all, we were constrained in the beginning to keep the church open because it is the only place of worship in the village. The present congregation includes Moravians, Baptist, Anglicans, Methodist Church of Scotland and others.

The church still shows its gratitude for our Baptist fellowship. In addition to its Group quota and £100 to Moravian Missions, the church gave £120 to the Home Mission Fund, and from a membership of 40, this is more than just a word of thanks.

Five years ago another door of service opened in the village of Mitchel Troy, a few miles west of Monmouth. The local rector retired and the parish was collated with an already large town parish of new estates. The new rector asked if we could consider a united approach to the country parish, where the Anglican church was the only place of worship. He had heard of the success at Brockweir and there were free church people including Baptists in Mitchel Troy. The resultant scheme included a Methodist deaconess, the rector and myself taking services on a rota basis, sharing the visiting and leading worship together at the greater festivals or seasons such as Christmas Harvest or Easter. A parish mission led to the formation of house groups for Bible study and this has proved an effective form of evangelism as friends have brought neighbours without any church connection.

I have written enough – some may say too much – to trace some of the developments in the church scene in this rural area. They fall into two categories, the grouping of churches of our Baptist faith and order and the growing together of churches of different traditions.

The Grouping of Baptist churches into one pastorate does not in itself guarantee the arrival of the Kingdom and prove the answer to all our problems, as some enthusiasts would have us believe. But having been involved in this type of ministry for 25 years in a rural situation, I can see

many advantages. It pools resources and promotes fellowship. Every six months each church secretary receives two copies of a list of dates for the next half year. I have signed my name opposite the Sunday I hope to conduct the service. The secretary fills in the other dates with the help of an excellent team of lay preachers without whom the scheme would fail. These brethren and sisters have their own monthly meeting and study and organise an annual rally in one of the outlying churches.

The copy of the completed list is returned so that dates and names can be printed in the monthly magazine which services all the churches in the group.

Sometimes the suggestion is made by non countryfolk that we should close the village churches and buy a bus to transport the saints to the central church in town. This would be a viable proposition if the churches were not so scattered and already serving the distinct communities where they are placed. The practical point of gathering people from an area of 120 square miles every Sunday, along narrow country roads especially in winter provokes solemn thoughts. It would lead to the impoverishment of the village where there is only one free church or even one place of Christian witness. Brockweir has meetings for older folk, and young people's fellowship and a large pack of Brownies on different nights of the week.

There are limitations to the grouping of churches, just as a fuse can be blown by too large a load. The group must not be so large that the minister's diary resembles a Bradshaw time - table: 9.15 a.m Brockweir 11a.m. Monmouth 3.30 p.m. Penalt, 6.30p.m. Norton. If the group is enlarged to include a team of ministers, as in the case of the East Gwent Fellowship, unless there is careful planning and frequent consultation, it will mean little more than an exchange of pulpits with ministers waving to each other as they pass on the motor-way, and pastoral work will be less effective and too impersonal. The only advantage will be to the minister who likes to make one sermon go as far as possible ! But it can also lead to a waste of travelling grant money or, in other words, irresponsible stewardship.

The growing together of churches of various traditions has become part of the rural as well as the town scene. There is a sharing of resources and a willingness to work together and learn from each other, undreamt of a few decades ago. Many changes have come to rural Britain during the past 40 years. Many villages have disappeared into extensive urban development, others have been altered almost beyond recognition by new building or motor - way construction. But there are still some left and large areas with isolated farms and cottages. Village life and attitudes have changed and there are few people remaining who see no further than the village pump. Radio and television bring the latest developments in church and nation to the most isolated hamlet.

The church in the countryside is being brought to examine its divisions, its diversity and its differences. This is not tautology, because it is possible to have a difference without a division and a diversity within unity. Experience in these smaller communities has shown that people are more ready to stop and listen to a united witness from local Christians than to several competitive voices. The rural church is passing through a transitional period and so far no clear pattern has emerged. One thing is certain, we cannot reproduce the past. It might be helpful, to recall St. Paul's words to the church at Corinth, "now you are the body of Christ", and remember that the Church is a Body with one Head and a number of physical parts, but with one life pulsating through it. This unity is consistent with its variety and, indeed, requires this variety if it is to be true to itself. For one part of the Body to be cut off from the other or not to function with its special contribution is a loss to the whole. On the other hand, we must avoid the monopoly attitude which says we must all be the same.

Some Christians are all for unity. "No problem" they say, "close all the other churches and they can come to us". But for one person or one section of the Church to claim a monopoly of the truth is to lead to a distortion of the Body. "If the Body were all eye...or ear..." Can we imagine such a grotesque figure? Positively, we must encourage mutual recognition and interdependence. The Psalmist said we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and every healthy body is a miracle of co-ordination - eye, ear, hand and foot working together in perfect harmony. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you". Mutual inter-dependence is a rule of life. No wonder St. Paul follows this description of the Christian Church with his great Hymn. Love in its true sense is the breath of the Body of Christ. Only when the Body breathes Love will the world take notice of its existence. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples." We reply, "By what, Lord? By our orders of service, by our incomparable liturgies, by our method of church government, by our ceaseless committees and meetings and activities?" "By this shall all men know you that are My disciples - by your love to one to another." Whatever is in store for the church in the countryside, whatever patterns of ministry will emerge to meet the need of the hour, it will be still be people that we serve for Christ's sake and His Love the essential equipment.

J. D. MONGER.

IT has been a satisfying and exciting task to read this latest book by one of our Baptist scholars who never fails to stimulate this particular minister whether he is writing about Baptism, Prayer, The Life and Teaching of Jesus, Preaching, or any other of the subjects to which he has turned his fertile and original mind. I think this writer is underestimated among his own! Although this present work claims to be a primer of Pastoral Theology there is enough helpful advice here to assist a minister no matter how long he has been in the pastorate.

The writer leaves no potential pastoral concern undiscussed.

This book must be unique in the area it covers, giving detailed informative analyses of every problem one encounters in the ministry. Throughout attempts are made to unravel the many tangled skeins of some human lives, and much light and spiritual insight is cast on the complex world of human relationships, as well as on the confused, frustrated, strained, distressing, inner microcosm which we call the psyche. In these excursions the author teaches us the meaning of sensitivity, and the advice he offers springs from a pastor's heart and a deep concern for the individual which, aware of the complexity of the problems a human has to face, is even more sure of the vast resources that are available in God. There is a realism in the book which clearly reveals that the author has been through much personal heart – searching in the face of many intransigent pastoral problems, that have led him to accept that not all the situations a pastor is called to try and cope with can be solved – not even by much faith and even more prayer. Such comments as "Nor will any pious brush – off with glibly quoted texts or hackneyed Christian phrases do for wise counsel", and also the following: "No instant religion as a cheap nostrum for all the ills of life", are expressive of this practicality.

The tripartite division of the book is most useful, as is the detailed analyses of the contents which enable the reader to assess quickly the ground the author covers. The publisher is to be congratulated on this arrangement.

Part one deals with specific tasks that the minister attempts, and the very detailed information and advice given, even on such basic tasks as the conduct of marriages and funerals, as well as the issues involved in personal counselling and pastoral evangelism, will prove invaluable to the beginner. Apart from the chapters dealing with the usual responsibilities there are two chapters which examine the questions of spiritual leadership and pastoral visitation and each of them has a fresh approach to the subjects concerned.

Part two examines the typical problems that face every minister: marital difficulties, ministry to the sick and dying, and among much else a chapter on the problems of age, which will certainly help a young man to assist in a realm that can pose special difficulties for the youthful minister. Further studies on the relationship of the parent and child, the addicted, and a first rate discussion on the spiritual maladies that afflict us make this section full of practical advice. Depth is added to this section through an excursion into the theology of suffering and death, and the quality of thinking here revealed, and the ensuing theodicy outlined, is most satisfying.

Part three looks at the factors that make up the human personality and examines the way in which the biological, sociological, and psychological drives and desires influence everything we are and all we do. Much of this will be familiar to the man who has studied his psychology, but there will still be much the experienced pastor will glean from this refresher course. Such a chapter as the one entitled "All sorts of people" is an invaluable one, and the young minister reading this will be equipped with an understanding of the diversity of human nature, even when 'sanctified', that will save many a frustration and disillusionment with the failures of the 'saints', and enable him to grasp that even the 'born again' soul retains many of the 'blind spots' and temperamental weaknesses that he had in his unredeemed state. This chapter and the last one in the book on "The pastor's care of himself" alone make the book worth reading.

It is both a practical and a deeply spiritual book – indeed it reveals that the most practical way is the spiritual way.

The essential need for scientific knowledge and technique is made perfectly clear, and the author does his best to introduce the novice to as many of the psychological and theological insights that are needed, but there is the insistence that technique and knowledge alone are inadequate for the pastor's task, for, in addition, there must be a rich personal relationship with God and a deep compassion for people entrusted to one's charge.

So comprehensive is this book that initially one feels it cannot possibly cope effectively with the multitude of problems it tackles, but, at the end, there is the satisfaction of knowing that even if the author has not been exhaustive, he rarely disappoints one in the assistance and insight he offers. Any minister digesting all that it offers will be better equipped in any department of his office to make a greater success of it. I wish I had been presented with a book like this when I began my ministry. Reading it leaves the impression that the writer has great faith in the relevance and necessity of the ministerial vocation. And this is infectious. We are here provided with a rationale for the ministry that is full of deep conviction and sound argument. Not only is the place



of the ministry in God's purpose made clear, but people's spiritual needs are so stressed that the need for a spiritually - oriented people is seen to be a logical necessity; and no matter how effective the "secular pastoralia" may be, the work of the social worker or psychologist will never be able to displace, let alone replace, the work of the person called of God to care for the deeper spiritual needs of his fellows.

The *raison d'être* of the ministry is spelt out very clearly in the two introductory chapters and the final one; but all through the book the philosophy is argued, and all these three chapters do is to add the exclamation mark as it were to the whole theme of the book. A minister's task is unique and eternally relevant.

If I were a tutor in one of our theological colleges I would consider this book a "God send". To put it into the hand of a young man just about to launch out on to the difficult but rewarding and satisfying vocation as the ministry, especially in these days when the place of the ministerial office is so strongly questioned, would be to do him a great service and give to him such a vision of his future work that he would never doubt the viability of the vocation, even if, for whatever reason, he himself one day forsook its ranks.

Within the pages of this book we find deep interpretations of spiritual truths, numerous examples of a logical mind that is the special strength of this writer whenever he enters the realm of anything polemical; plus those insights into the enduring truths of scripture that fill all his books; all this, in addition to a good book, how to be successful in one of the most satisfying tasks to which any man can lay his hand. To be successful here does not mean to benefit from either the world's rewards or the world's acclaim but to know deep inside that the Lord has in some measure blessed one's feeble efforts, and that when the work is well done "no task on earth is so rewarding or earns such ready and lasting gratitude from human hearts".

I finish this extended review with the following warnings. Do not read this book if you are thinking of leaving the ministry because you have the notion that it is no longer a viable vocation in this modern age. Do not read it if you are comfortably ensconced in a church that demands little of you in time, talents, or pastoral care. Do not read it if you do not want to get freshly excited about a calling that can and will demand the very best that any man can ever give in the service of God and his fellow men. This book left me feeling how inadequately I have served my Lord over the past twenty years but also gave me the encouragement to make the next twenty the best yet. May it do the same for you.

G. R. Neal.

## BUYING A HOUSE – AT LAST.

Many men at the commencement of their ministry did not think that a £1,000 house would ever be valued at £12,000. Nor did they ever dream that their savings, insurances, and final retirement gift would not – together – be sufficient to purchase a little cottage.

Our ideas of those days have been long disillusioned. Now we are in the situation of being in the hands of those who will try their best to find us somewhere, when that day of retirement finally comes.

Some of us who began to save hard, round about 1960, as we saw the way that things were going, thought it possible that we might raise £500 in a few years and so purchase a country cottage. That way we should have a holiday house, and a retirement home: the years of sacrifice would be worth it, in the long run. However, by 1970, and after ten years of sacrifice, we were no nearer to purchase than we were at the beginning, since inflation kept insisting on keeping the total sum necessary quite out of reach.

1972 hit all hopes right on the head, with the 100% rise in house prices. So, here we are back at square one, with hardly a deposit, never mind the purchase price.

One of our number has beaten the situation, David R. Smith of Westbury Avenue, London N 22. He bought a retirement cottage last Autumn, with a mortgage, although he still resides near his church. Knowing that you cannot get a mortgage unless you are living in the house, and also aware that there is no tax concession for house purchasers unless they reside in the place, one becomes intrigued that a Baptist minister has found a way round the rules.

Mr Smith insists that he has broken no laws and that he has, in fact, created a precedent for the rest of us. If we are interested (and if we can afford it), we can all follow through! Briefly, the position is that his wife is a headmistress in Islington, and so joint income is substantial. Added to that, the previous prime minister (Sir Harold Wilson) kindly helped by ensuring that his 1974 Rent Act included a paragraph concerning houses 'bought for retirement'. These two ingredients, when mixed with the fact that the Smith's three children are now off their hands, leave one with a recipe for success.

The long uphill pilgrimage so far, which seemed to culminated in the summit, actually commenced a further two year stint of finding a Building Society which would believe the 1974 Rent Act. Nevertheless, the task was completed at last, and the Smiths now have their very own retirement cottage, which stands right by the sea, at Thorpe Bay, and so happens to be a most convenient holiday house, also! Ever since they bought it, they have spent a day each week in their cottage, and they lend it to others for the other six days.

It sounds a bit like everything working together for good doesn't it? And if you would like full details of the method, or if you are in need of a six – day short – stay break, write to them at 7, Byant Avenue, Thorpe Bay Essex, SS1 2 YD.