

# The Fraternal

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## MANY CREEDS : ONE CROSS

In the 1940s this was the title given to a book that captured in a startling manner the unique nature of Christ and Christianity!<sup>1</sup> Quite apart from the World Missionary Movement that we trace from the labours of William Carey, we must endeavour to come to terms with the challenge presented to us by the presence of so many religions in Britain today.<sup>2</sup> It is always sad to see our Christian churches and chapels closing down for one reason or another. Redundancy has sad side-effects. But, when some of these churches are taken over by Sikhs, Moslems or Hindus for purposes of non-Christian worship, then, we begin to feel tremors of great regret and dissatisfaction.<sup>3</sup> It's not my intention to say whether we are right or wrong in so reacting, but at the end of the day when the scholars in the field of comparative study of world religions have discussed and debated, I simply want to hold fast to the truth that there may be many creeds but there is only one cross of salvation. Jesus Christ is unique.<sup>4</sup> He alone is the way, the truth and the life.

In our schools in contemporary society Religious Education should continue to occupy a place of prominence and prestige. But let us keep Religious Instruction to the churches and Sunday schools where the faithful meet for worship and learning. Let the gospel message be spread by radio, television, newspaper, drama, evangelistic campaigns, open-air preaching, etc. ——— methods available to all Christian denominations. But, if schools are to provide an education for living, then let scholars be taught the religions of the world, freedom being allowed for anyone to opt out of such lessons or to insist on doing examination work within the framework of one's own religious loyalties. More than ever before, Britain today is a multi-religious land.<sup>5</sup>

This brings me to my third point in this essay. Gone are the days when missionary work was defined as carrying the Christian gospel to non-Christians overseas. Stephen Neill has expressed this brilliantly with enough and more sarcasm. "Mission used to be an affair of far horizons. The missionary was the man who disappeared into distant and unknown lands, to return after some years to hypnotize western congregations with tales of adventure amidst uncouth and possibly dangerous aborigines."<sup>6</sup> In contemporary British society we come face to face with these non-Christians. What is more, British Christianity has seen some signs of decline since the last world war. For these two reasons, missionary work begins — like charity — at home.<sup>5</sup> In the words of the late D.T. Niles this means one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.<sup>7</sup> If, however, through spiritual indifference or theological confusion (cowardice?) we refrain from evangelism, then we will inevitably end up by becoming a pastoral community, shrinking as the years go by with no converts coming in. But, in biblical Christianity pastoral care and evangelistic concern are bound together.<sup>8</sup>

Christians have been in the forefront of scholarship as far as other religions are concerned. We have in fact translated the scriptures of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Not content with such serious study we have translated the Bible into various national languages. This dual work still goes on at home and abroad,

One thinks of the Study Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka, run by the National Council of churches in that island, and here in Britain much good work is done at Selly Oak, Birmingham, at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christianity.<sup>9</sup> In Sri Lanka the study of Buddhism has engaged scholars for a long time now. It was Bishop R.S.Copleston of Colombo who published in 1892 "Buddhism Primitive and Present in Maghada and Ceylon." This book still remains a source book on Buddhism written by a linguist who knew his Pali, Sanskrit and Sinhalese. In 1908 there appeared in London two volumes entitled "Ceylon Buddhism" edited by A.S.Bishop. They contained 19 theological works undertaken by a great Wesleyan Missionary, Daniel John Gogerly. In 1946 D.T.Niles wrote "Eternal Life Now". It was a presentation of the Christian Faith to the Buddhists, and marked a modern attempt to define in the theological language the basic concepts of Christianity and Buddhism.

What is important about the 'Niles Method' is that it displayed a sense of respect and friendship unlike the apologetic tracts of the 19th century which displayed much ignorance and bitterness. Niles made masterly use of Buddhist terminology in order to convey Christian teaching to the non-Christian reading public.....

"Let this, therefore, be our constant meditation, our Jnana (Knowledge).

1. that we are Anicca (Perishable). apart from God.
2. that we are Anatta (Soul-less). apart from God.
3. that it is His love which dissolves our Dukha (Suffering/Sorrow).
4. that it is His love which is our Sarana (Refuge).
5. that without Him we can Keep no Sila (Morality).
6. that in the remembrance of His love is our true Samadhi (Meditation).<sup>10</sup>

One would be tempted, in spite of Christian charity, to disown views as expressed by the famous Bishop R.Heber-----"the heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone"----- as not doing full justice to other religions. Such 19th century missionary views were so prejudiced towards Christianity as to miss the essential spirituality of the world's great religions, a spirituality we commend today and which forms a meeting-point for dialogue as well as for missionary activities. Let's take Buddhism as a case in point. There is a desire to understand in a scholarly manner the teachings of Buddhism. This is where the Christian community stands in Sri Lanka today. It is not the same stand taken by Heber, who, in his famous hymn originally wrote "savage" and only later replaced it by the word "heathen". Buddhists no more worship images and idols than Roman Catholics do in their Churches. Veneration of images is apparent but not idol - worship. Symbols and signs are used in abundance but mainly as reminders of higher realities and other dimensions. For example, Dr E.G.Parrinder, in the course of examining African religious systems, made the following comment. "African paganism, the ancient African wisdom, aspires from the root of its soul towards the very soul of Christian spirituality."<sup>12</sup>

Heber would have ranked higher as a theologian if he adopted St.Paul's line of thought when faced with the religious experience of Athenians in Acts 17 : 22-34. These verses are worthy of comment as answers to Heber's defective thinking and theology. In verse 16 we note that ancient Athens was full of idols, and yet Paul

addressed its citizens as people who were "somewhat religious". He noticed their "objects of worship" and their "altar with the inscription -- to an Unknown God". (verse 23). Faced with that type of challenge Paul actually mentioned one of the non-Christian poets of the Athenians in verse 23, and from such points of contact proceeded to preach Christ as the true revelation of the living God. Paul made it clear that the quest of the Athenians for, and aspiration towards, God has not yet been fulfilled. Their religion had not yet brought them full satisfaction but this did not necessarily mean that their religion was totally evil. In other words, God had not left himself without witnesses in the world. Could Paul be described as believing that other religious-systems, including Judaism, were just preparatory for the coming of Christ?<sup>13</sup>

If this be the case, Heber's wording ought to be changed so that the more correct theological insight can be made clear;—

"The heathen in his hunger  
Bows down to wood and stone"<sup>14</sup>

Seven years ago Dr E.G. Parrinder in his Wilde Lectures at Oxford commented on this particular passage in Acts. "In fact men in no religions live in a purely 'natural' and godless world. Paul told the Athenians that God was not far from each one of them, 'that way should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him'. (Acts 17:27). All religions are revelation, in the sense that God speaks to men through them. The revelations are different, and they are transmitted with varying fidelity. Some of them are pale and all of them are imperfect, but there is one true light 'which lighteth every man'. "For a somewhat negative comment one refers to Emerson Tennant's book "Christianity in Ceylon" which was published in 1850.....

"Conceive the difference of meaning", he wrote, "which will attach to the words of the English Liturgy, 'we have done those things which we ought not to have done'. and for which the only equivalent in Sinhalese is the atheistical confession of Buddhism, 'To us all sin happens'<sup>16</sup> If we can get away from the predestination/freewill debate we will come across a definite trend in the Christian Scriptures which attaches to man an element of freedom and choice. Sin is man's conscious disobedience of God's commands, and J.S. Whale stood on good ground when he maintained that "we who have been created for fellowship with God repudiate it continually; and that the whole of mankind does this along with us. Every man is his 'Adam', and all men are solidarily 'Adam'<sup>17</sup>

To the Buddhist, however, with his doctrine of Karmic Bondage, sin in this life 'happens' as the result of past Karmic-deeds in a previous life. The link between one life and the next is Karma. Parrinder mentions how "the deeds of the past life and their entail bring about rebirth"<sup>18</sup>. Reference is then made to "the strength of the theistic religions of India, and the grace-faith religion of Mahayana Buddhism. Even Theravada Buddhism is not self-salvation but dependence upon the supernatural Buddha and Dharmā"<sup>19</sup>. As the Christian scholar faces Buddhism he must remind himself that by its teaching of self-denial and renunciation Buddhism paves the way for a better understanding of Incarnation, the self-abnegation of Christ. It is believed by Buddhists that

“in the revolution of the ages a new Buddha will appear and preach the eternal doctrine”,<sup>18</sup> Can we stop pretending that there are no fundamental differences between the world's religions? Respectfully, the Christian scholar finds Buddhism creates more problems than it offers to solve in the spiritual life. For example “it has no God, no personal Creator, no personal Providence of a Heavenly Father, no image of ‘God in Man’, no due sense of sin, no living Saviour, no Divine sympathy, no hope of release of pain, sorrow, and the ‘evils of existence’, except through an all but endless succession of births, during which all degrees of suffering are possible, and the end thereof, if ever it be reached, Nirvana”<sup>19</sup>

Back to the British scene and to the theme of many creeds but only one cross. Let the scholar stimulate us into action. Britain is a true mission-field with thousands of non-Christian immigrants living in our society. “Now we are all so mixed up together that the situation is entirely different from what it was a century ago. Mission has been washed up on our shores, and we have been washed up on the shore of mission”.<sup>20</sup> Quite recently a vast Moslem Mosque was opened in Regents Park, London, which reminds us that we are now in a face-to-face situation in Britain, Christians and adherents of other religions. Christians are reminded in Ephesians 2 : 12 that in their pre-Christian days they had been “without hope and without God in the world”. In the original Greek this can reasonably mean that they were atheists. Now that they are Christians they had passed from the lower to the higher spiritual life. Can we adopt the same view in our dealings with non-Christians in 1977? In the final analysis we must agree all the way with Stephen Neill-----“The Christian is committed to the view that Jesus Christ is the truth”<sup>20</sup>

One or two concluding thoughts follow. In what way can we Christians stimulate and actively encourage scholars of other religions to produce (a) critical works on Christianity, and (b) critical study of their own scriptures and religious systems? “Will Islam in the long run be able to shut itself off from the intensive Western study of the Koran?” asks Hans Kung in his book “On being a Christian”, page 107. “Will it be possible to admit what no Moslem scholar- not only in Afghanistan - can openly say today, that the Koran contains a great deal of later, adventitious material and also includes a very human history?” It is necessary to point out that Christian scholars have done so much to pioneer in the field of the comparative study of religions, and that the Christian scriptures have been under critical scrutiny for at least 100 years now.<sup>21</sup> Similar treatment of the other religions and by other religions will do us all a world of good as the debate moves onward in our time. Let's make no mistake about the fact which Hans Kung has mentioned in his greatest work. “Today more than ever”, writes Kung, “Christianity too is brought into contact, discussion and confrontation with other religions”<sup>22</sup> At this point some problems arise:-

Let Hans Kung give us a summary:-

1. “If all religions contain truth, why should Christianity in particular be the truth? If there is salvation outside the church and Christianity, what is the point of the church and Christianity at all?”(page99).

2. "Christianity may not belittle other religions in order to be seen to be great itself. Yet neither can an idealizing of the world religions—easier from a distance than close at hand—help to clarify the position". (page 100).
3. "There would be neither arrogant absolutism, not accepting any other claim, nor a weak eclecticism accepting a little of everything, but an inclusive Christian universalism claiming for Christianity not exclusiveness, but certainly uniqueness". (page 112)

Whether we agree, completely or partially, or whether we disagree totally with Hans Kung, he has expressed himself sincerely. Let's hope to God he has succeeded to some extent in provoking us Christians (a) regarding the Faith and (b) our Missionary activities at home and overseas. Surely, we cannot agree with Radhakrishnan who demanded that Christian missionaries must be prepared to make a complete and utter surrender of all claims "for the unique value of Christianity and be content instead to share with Hindus whatever in Hinduism and Christianity is precious"? How many Christian theologians will agree with William Temple when he said that "the conscience of the heathen man is the voice of Christ within him—though muffled by his ignorance. All that is noble in the non-Christian systems of thought or conduct or worship is the work of Christ upon them and within them. By the word of God—that is by Jesus Christ—Isaiah and Plato and Zoroaster and Buddha and Confucius conceived and uttered such truths as they declared. There is only one divine light; and every man in his measure is enlightened by it"? Finally, do we disagree with the Hendrik Kraemers of this world who would insist that we mislead others (as even we are mistaken) when we say by way of explanation that the religious strivings and longings of human history are a preparation for Christ and will find fulfilment in Christ. We are back where we started, Jesus Christ and His cross have unique value. Michael Green in "The Truth of God Incarnate" has a vitally significant passage. "Paul is countering a syncretising heresy in which Jesus is put alongside other mediators as just one of the ways to God, a similar position to that which Professor Hick advocates in his paper, maintaining as he does that other great world faiths are also at their best, ways of salvation. (page 182). Paul denies this strongly" (Colossians 1 : 15f)

Charles W. Karunaratna

1. Many Creeds : One Cross, by Christopher E. Storrs, SCM, London, 1945. This was an edited version of The Moorhouse Lectures, Melbourne, 1943, by an Anglican scholar.
2. World-Religions in Britain, by Mariyan Mahmoud-Harris. Three studies—Islam, Hinduism & Sikhism, 15p each, The British Council of Churches, London, 1974.
3. Evening Standard, 13.7.77. Since 1968 it is estimated that 176 Anglican Churches have been demolished as redundant. "Churches have been turned into theatres, museums, antique shops and private homes". Since 1970 the diocese of London has sold four churches to other religious denominations.
4. John 14 : 6—The claim of Christ is exclusive and unique.  
Acts 4 : 12—No other name that is given among men wherein we must be saved.
5. See reference 2 above. These booklets were "designed to help the ordinary

- readers understanding of some non-Christian faiths practised in Britain”.
6. Salvation Tomorrow, London, 1976, page 22. See also The Recall to Religion, London, 1937, which is an adequate summary of the situation 40 years ago.
  7. What is Evangelism? by Douglas Webster, London 1959 page 150.
  8. The Revolt in the Temple, Colombo, 1953, Edited by D.C.Vijayavardhana. See page 485. “The task of the church in Ceylon will not be finished till the remaining ninety per cent of the population, who are not Christians, are converted”. Bishop L.DeMel. (1945).
  9. The Study Centre, Colombo. Made famous throughout S.E.Asia by the research done by the Rev Lyn de Silva, B.D. D.Th. Study Centre for Islam-Christian Relations, Selly Oak, Birmingham, led by Dr.D.A.Kerr and Dr.Penelope Johnstone. The former is a specialist in Christian-Muslim relations in the Lebanon, While the latter wrote a doctoral thesis in the field of Islamic Medicine.
  10. Eternal Life Now, Colombo, 1946, pages 57 and 96.
  11. Great Hymns and Their Stories, by W.J.Limmer Sheppard, London, 1973, pages 61-65.
  12. African Traditional Religion, by E.G.Parrinder, London, 1962, page 147 (footnote).
  13. Galatians 3 : 24-25, refer to the part played by Judaism in pointing to Christ.
  14. Acts 17 : 22, The marginal reading says ‘religious’ instead of ‘superstitious’. J.B.Philips in The New Testament in Modern English says that Paul spoke to the Athenians as “an extremely religious people.” See also Acts 14 : 17 and Isaiah 55 : 1 - 2.
  15. Avatar and Incarnation, London, 1970, page 272.
  16. Christianity in Ceylon, London, 1850, page 333.
  17. Christian Doctrine, Cambridge, 1941, page 52.
  18. What World Religions Teach, London, 1963, pages 61 and 53. See also Avatar and Incarnation, page 272.
  19. Missionary Herald, BMS, February 1895, page 57, from an article - Buddhism in Ceylon by the Rev. Walter D. Hankinson.
  20. Salvation Tomorrow. (The originality of Jesus Christ and the world's religions), by Stephen Neill, page 22, 34.
  21. In Sri Lanka the dialogue appears to have become more and more serious and scholarly in recent times. An excellent study - “A Buddhist Critique of the Christian Concept of God” appeared in 1974 by Gunapala Dharmasiri, a research for the Ph.D. of the University of Lancaster.
  22. On Being a Christian, Collins, 1977, page 89.
  23. Many Creeds One Cross, page 10.
  24. Readings in St. Johns Gospel (1st Series) page 10.
  25. The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, by Dr. Hendrik Kraemer, 1938
  26. The Truth of God Incarnate, Edited by Michael Green, London 1977, page 20. Reference is made to The Myth of God Incarnate, Edited by John Hick London, 1977.

## WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

409 Barking Road, Plaistow, London E13 8AL.

My Dear Brother Minister,

We seem to be in the hands of the builders at our Barking Road site. They have just finished the considerable alterations to the Memorial Church and we are now back in the church for worship on Sundays, and we are very pleased with the alterations.

Then in the Hall of Youth we have taken advantage of a 75% Council grant for improvements and we have new toilets and a new kitchen, and other alterations, and these are just being finished as I write these notes.

The main piece of building however, is taking place on the site of our new flats and flatlets development. Bulldozers have done their job and the Angas Institute is no more. There is a sea of mud and a constant thumping of pile-drivers going on, and very soon we hope to see the bricks begin to rise. Nevertheless it will be the early months of 1979 before it is possible to take in some of the new residents.

The work of our various Homes is proceeding in much the same way as usual. Greenwoods is full, with a full waiting list. Orchard House is building up its new intake of boys, and the Old People's Home is full of contented old ladies, and Marnham House is also full.

We have a good story to tell and if your people would like to be reminded of what we are doing, I suggest you get somebody to book a copy of the new coloured filmstrip, which will be issued as from the 1st October 1977. You can have it with a tape or cassette, or with plain manuscript, and it makes a very good evening for people who are interested in Christian Social Service.

Please ask your people to pray for us, and may God's blessing be on all your own fine work.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL

Superintendent of the Mission.

## CHRISTOLOGICAL THINKING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

I offer the following article on the above theme as a contribution to the dialogue between the N.T. student and on the one hand the dogmatic theologian and on the other hand the preacher of the Word. I do so in as eirenical and constructive a spirit as possible.

### I

A central issue of our theme is the relation of the early Jesus proclamation and the rest of the N.T.'s Christology. Is there is a bridge or a gulf between them? There would be widespread agreement (even where opinion might be widely divided on individual sayings) that Jesus believed that in His own ministry God was acting in His kingly power in a unique and decisive manner. This kingly power was expressing itself in forgiveness and restoration of the sinner. Further, Jesus believed that he stood in a filial relationship to God and addressed Him with the unprecedented *Abba*, and sought to open up that relationship to others. His ministry meant the supreme crisis for Israel, God's people, as a whole as well as individuals who comprised Israel, (and therefore in the long run, for mankind since Israel was the spiritual centre of the world.) The outcome of His ministry would be His own death, persecution for his followers, judgement on Israel (her end—whether the end of the world as well is a hotly debated issue) and beyond all this, ultimately, his own vindication.

Even radical critics acknowledge and emphasise the authority with which Jesus acted: he acted in God's stead towards man. While it is true 'The proclaimer became the proclaimed', nevertheless Jesus did summon men to follow him and asserted that on their response to him depended weal or woe at the judgement: a decision about the Kingdom of God is inseparable from a decision about the bearer of the Kingdom.

All this provides (I think) a sufficient bridge between Jesus and the apostolic preaching of him, while it is basically in line with Jesus' proclamation that the Christian message was good news about what God had done.

### II

The N.T. writings as a whole proclaim and herein lies their basic unity, despite considerable diversity — that Jesus is God's way of salvation, however that salvation may be conceived (forgiveness of sins, deliverance from demonic powers etc). Typical is Acts 4:12: "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under Heaven that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." c.f. Paul — Rom 10:9-13; John — 4:42; 14:6; 1John 2:1-2; 4:14; Hebrews — 10:10-14.

The N.T. scholar would have to react to any lessening of this exclusive claim by asking whether the resultant picture is not such a serious departure from apostolic Christianity as to have impaired something vital. It seems to me essential to start with this assertion of the absolute centrality of Jesus. All else that is to be said must be understood within this framework.

### III

Once the fundamental unity has been discerned and asserted, the N.T. student soon discovers wide differences of expression and concept within the N.T. Indeed he is forced to speak of different Christologies. More than this, he soon discovers that his probes disclose that different responses to, and estimates of, Jesus existed in the apostolic era, concerning which we now have no literary

evidence.

(a) No first hand documents survive from the Palestinian Church, whether its Hebrew or Hellenistic wings, though whether Acts incorporates material from it is a hotly debated issue (some – at the very least – allowance for Lucan theology must be made). There are times when Paul quotes, expressly or not, earlier material, e.g. Rom 1:3–4, concerning Jesus: “Born of the seed of David according to the flesh, appointed Son of God (with power – ? a pauline gloss) according to the Holy Spirit on the basis of the resurrection of the dead”.

Here two periods of Jesus' life seem to be envisaged: the earthly life of which it is said that he was a descendant of David, and the Post-Resurrection life, determined by the spirit, which involved an enhancement of his status – he was appointed Son of God. Such a view might receive support from Acts 2;36, 13:32–33 (where Ps 2:7 is applied to the resurrection of Jesus) plus Stephen's description of Jesus as God's righteous one now exalted at God's right hand (7:52,55). Indeed if we take Cleopas' statement in Luke 24 and the early sermons in Acts, the picture which emerges of Jesus is: a human figure well known to his contemporaries, a prophet and miracle worker, who had been crucified by men but raised and exalted by God to Heaven, who will return as judge.

If this correctly reproduces – let us say – one, early response to Jesus, are we to say that it is a tentative groping after a truth which demands a ‘fuller’ definition, or is it a valid way of looking at Jesus, given the setting of those who so formulated it?

(b) If we may assume (as I think we must) the existence of “Q” and that it was not a catechetical document but one which inter alia reflected the beliefs of the community within which it was produced, then it is interesting to observe that in Q Jesus is the messenger of Wisdom (and not wisdom incarnate). Thus in Luke 7:31–35/Matt 11:16–19 John and Jesus are bracketed together: either both are the works of wisdom (Matt) or Wisdom works through both and her true children recognise this and so she is vindicated (Luke). According to “Q” (Luke 11:49) wisdom has sent “Prophets and Apostles” to Israel, and Jesus stands in that succession (It is Matthew who makes this a saying of Jesus himself, 23:34). and just as the prophet's speak Yahweh's word, so Jesus speaks Wisdom's lament over the unresponsiveness of Jerusalem (Luke 13:34–35; Matt 23:37–39).

Messenger of Wisdom (–God) – a valid way of looking at Jesus or a way which must be superseded?

(c) Paul's opponents in the situation behind 2 Corinthians preached “another Jesus”, and had a different understanding of the spirit and the Gospel according to him (11:4). Paul's details are meagre, but it is interesting that he used the expression “another Jesus”. This would suggest a different interpretation of the early life and career of Jesus compared to his. Paul considered their view as in some way defective, yet it is clear that they were delegates of some church, with letters of recommendation from that church. They may have come from the Church at Jerusalem, though I personally think that this is less likely.

wherever they originated, they were in high standing as apostles and servants of Christ!

The N.T. student has to point to the diversities not only in the N.T. but behind the N.T., in the earliest period of Christianity: some of these diversities would be rather dubious by later patristic orthodox standards. How do we handle this plurality of Christologies?

#### IV

In section 2 we mentioned the centrality of Jesus. How far is the earthly Jesus of central significance, or is attention focussed almost exclusively on the exalted Christ?

Since (a) Hebrews asserts the full manhood of Jesus as essential to his saving work (2:5ff. esp v17) and seems aware of certain traditions about the earthly Jesus ( 5:7, 7:14, 12:2:13:12), and (b) John, however much it may be held that he has projected the glorified Christ 'on top' of the Jesus of History, adopted the gospel form and so tells of the earthly ministry and emphasises the importance both of the incarnate ministry (1:14) and the crucifixion (e.g. 12:23-24, 31-32 etc) this issue really resolves itself down to Paul. Not a great deal can be gleaned from Paul's letters about the earthly Jesus, while he does not quote verbatim from Jesus' words except on two occasions (1 Cor 7:10, 9:14) and on both occasions intrudes exceptions! (Divorce, 7:15; his own renunciation of financial support 9:15) yet, (a) allowances must be made for the fact that Paul was writing to Christian communities who knew something of the story of Jesus (b) the manhood of Jesus is axiomatic to Pauline soteriology as the Adam - Christ passages of Rom 5; 1Cor 15 amply show. (c) Could Paul have made the albeit theological assertions about Jesus - his obedience, his non-pleasing of himself, his gentleness and meekness, his self-renunciation (Rom 5:19, 15:3, 2 Cor 10:1, Phil 2:7-8) - if these were in blatant contradiction with the kind of picture of Jesus which emerges from the tradition behind the Gospels?

Paul was concerned to follow the living Lord, he had undergone a revolution in his estimate of Jesus ( he no longer regarded-according-to-the-flesh Jesus, 2 Cor 5:16), but neither of these must be pressed to the extent that he is alleged to be indifferent to the earthly Jesus and only concerned about the mere fact of his existence.

The N.T. student must ever insist that the significance of the earthly Jesus be given full weight in the formulation of Christology. It is only by doing this that we can be saved from the subjectivism of our own thought on what the risen Christ is saying or doing. The unity of the earthly and risen one must be maintained.

#### V

We turn now to consider the role of the risen Jesus enthroned as Lord over the whole cosmos.

(a) Christ and the Spirit.

If the gospels hint that Jesus was endowed with the Spirit in his earthly life, the rest of the N.T. envisages his resurrection as an act of God by his Spirit. (e.g. Rom 1:4 probably pre-pauline; Rom 8:11, 6:4) and conceives his post-resurrection mode of existence as Spirit: "The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit" (i.e. at his resurrection - 1 Cor 15:45. The text of 2 Cor 3:17 is disputed - is the lord Yahweh or Jesus? If the latter it confirms 1 Cor 15:45; if the former it is irrelevant for our discussion). That is to say, henceforth the

risen Jesus is experienced as Spirit (see passages in Paul where the Apostle can speak of our union with Christ and also the Spirit in us e.g. 1 Cor 6:17,19; Rom 8:2,10-11; Gal 5:24-25: or Christ and the Spirit at work in us :Rom 7:4; 8:2:8:14; Gal 4,6, 1Cor 12:4-5). From the point of view of experience Christ and the Spirit are identical in Paul. It might seem as if John distinguishes the two (e.g. 16:7) , yet even here a case can be argued that the Paraclete-Spirit sayings of the fourth Gospel are one means by which John reinterprets the traditional promise of Christ's return at the end. Thus such a promise could be observed at 14:1-3 at the beginning of the farewell Discourses: in one sense this receives a partial fulfilment in the resurrection appearances , in another sense in the coming of the Paraclete, in another sense it still awaits fulfilment.

Equally it must be emphasised that henceforth the Spirit is experienced as Jesus. Dr Dunn has expressed it this way - that Jesus stamps his personality on the Spirit. I take him to mean that, such was the impact of God's revelation through the earthly Jesus, never again would the Father be thought of except in terms of Jesus. The Father's subsequent activity towards us (the operation of His Spirit ) cannot but be thought of in terms of the personality, conduct and words of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel has perhaps most of all expressed this: the Spirit is the exegete of Jesus (16:13-14) and scholars have spoken of the Spirit in John as Jesus' "alter ego". The Spirit brings no independent revelation but expounds Jesus' earthly words and works ( just as the earthly Jesus had "exegeted" the Father 1:18).

(b) Christ and the Father.

That Jesus's earthly life is characterised as one of obedience can be seen at Rom 5:19; 15:6; Phil 2:8 Heb 5:8; John 8:29 etc. But it is equally true that the risen Jesus continues to be obedient to the Father. The conclusion of the so-called hymn of Phil 2 encapsulates the core of early Christian thought: "Jesus is Lord - to the glory of God the Father." Jesus' lordship does not conflict with nor in any way derogate from the glory of God the Father. This "To the glory of God the Father" corresponds in the respect of the exalted state of Christ, to what "became obedient unto death, even death on a cross", affirms of the earthly life. Indeed Rom 14:11 suggests that in Phil 2:10 the knees are bowed to God at the name of Jesus.

Further evidence may be set forth: (i) 1 Cor 1:30. We come into the state of being in Christ through God's activity. (From Him - presumably through the Spirit) and this Christ Jesus has been made for us wisdom etc "from or by God". There is Christocentricity - the believer is in Christ and Christ is the agent of salvation and its blessings - but there is theocentricity - all is from God. (ii) 1 Cor 3:23; Christ's Lordship over the Corinthians ("You are Christ's" of Rom 14:8) is set under God and belongs to God. (Christ is Gods). (iii) 1 Cor 11:3 There is a hierarchy - woman, man, Christ, God. Head in this verse means Lord or Ruler over (c.f.our expressions "head of a firm" or "head of a college"). Christ's headship over man is linked to his relation to God. There is no suggestion in the text that what is said is only true of Jesus' earthly life. As woman derives her being from man (so Gen 2) and is subject to him, so Christ derives his being from God and is subject to Him even now in his risen life.

(iv) Rom 6:10b: "In that he lives, he lives for God". The risen Christ's life is subjected to, devoted to, lived entirely for, God.

(v) Rom 15:7: Christ received us ( i.e. into fellowship with himself) and this is " for the glory of God". If v.8 refers to the earthly Jesus, in v9 Paul is clearly thinking of the risen, exalted Christ. The gentile mission is under way, and Gentiles are glorifying God because of His mercy. In v9b a psalm is quoted in the first person; i.e. Christ praises God in the praise of the Gentiles vv 10-11. Christ glorified God when he became the 'chorus leader of the Gentiles'. Thus both the earthly life ( amongst the "circumcision") and the risen life ( now influencing especially the gentiles ) are devoted to glorifying God. If he was obedient to God to the cross, (cf v3), he continues to serve, obey and glorify God afterwards.

(vi) 1 Cor 15:24-28 esp 28. Christ is exalted by God to be Lord and he reigns from His resurrection to the Parousia. The end of his reign is the Parousia when all his foes subjected, Christ "hands over the Kingdom to his God and Father", and the Son is subject to God that God may be either all in all or completely ( sovereign ) with respect to all creatures. This subjection is nothing new for the exalted state. What Paul envisages is its fulfilment in the sense that now "those who are Christ's", the elect, are themselves brought into the perfect relationship with God through him. We may say further that 1 Cor 15:28 does not mean that (i) Christ will cease to be our mediator - we will not be independent of him after the parousia (ii) Christ ceases to be honoured. The confession "Jesus Christ is Lord" will still hold good.

This is Pauline evidence. It is true of Hebrews where Christ is envisaged as constantly in God's presence, representing us and interceding for us before the Father (c.f. too 1 John 2: 1-2). The same can be said of Revelation, for it is the lamb with the marks of slaughter who takes the scroll and opens it to execute God's redemptive purposes for mankind in history after the cross.

## VI

Briefly in this section I will pursue the theme of the Godward orientation of the Christian life. As the risen Christ serves and glorifies God, so those in Christ are orientated to God - there is a theocentricity in the in Christ concept.

Granted the vital mediatorship of Christ, life in Christ is directed to God.

(i) Our union with Christ - dying with him in order to live with him - is with the ultimate intention that we should bear fruit to God (Rom 7:4)

(ii) Similarly we are to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:11). Our bodies must be offered to God as instruments of righteousness. (Rom 6.13, cf 12:1)

(iii) The important thing is to please God which we do by being obedient to Christ, (Rom 14:18). The whole of life is embraced by our union with Christ, but even eating or not eating "for the Lord" is set under the sign "he gives thanks to God" v6. Serving the brother and so serving Christ, realises the Kingdom of God (v17).

(iv) To live for Christ's sake ( 2 Cor 5:14-15) involves new creation and reconciliation with God (vv 17-19). God's redemption activity is designed to make us "the righteousness of God in him (Christ)". Note how Paul's being constrained by Christ's love grounds ("for") his relation to God (vv11,13). Both creation,

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To the Readers of the "Fraternal"

Dear Friends,

"He did not sleep, save for the white sleep when  
a thin veil is drawn over the mind."

"The Rainbow", D. H. Lawrence.

I find Lawrence perhaps over analytical for my taste. Mind you I have read only "The Rainbow" and "Sons and Lovers" so that probably I draw too hasty a conclusion.

However, on the whole I enjoyed studying "The Rainbow" with the help of study notes some five years ago and when I awake in the night, as I too often do these days, this reference to a "thin veil" comes back to me.

I think too of an excerpt from an anthology entitled "The Ring of Words" which I was lucky to come across over fifty years ago - my battered copy lies before me. A poet "Cushag" wrote "My sleep once broke will not come back to me". Awake in the darkness my mind rolls over the problems of yesterday, of today and of tomorrow. Sometimes I wonder if certain deacons or other officers can sleep when the instructions of diaconates or of committee meetings lie without attention for days and sometimes for weeks before being passed to us.

Tell your deacons or officers please that an immediate phone call can always be followed later by a detailed letter.

The important thing is to get the provisional instruction to us - cover can only apply from the date we confirm and not from the date of unadvised deaconal or committee instructions.

Sleep well.

Yours sincerely,

C.J.L. COLVIN  
General Manager.

reconciliation & righteousness are theocentric concepts.

(v) Paul's living for God ( Gal 2:19) springs out of Christ living in him (v20) – and is proof of the fact that Christ has not become a minister of sin (v17). Christ lives for God and leads his followers to do like wise. They are crucified with him (v19) and live through him (v20). That life of Christ in us means life for God and the opposite of sin.

(vi) If Christ and the Spirit are identical from the standpoint of experience, even here we note the same kind of theocentricity as above. The Spirit dwells in us as a result of our union with Christ and that Spirit is the gift of God given with the aim of glorifying God (1 Cor 6: 19–20). The Spirit liberates us from the nexus of sin and death that we may live for God so that “the requirement of (God's) law may be fulfilled in us”(Rom 8:2,4). That Spirit induces in us the loving cry Abba to God (Gal 4:6). To be united to Christ in order to bring forth fruit to God is parallel to serving in newness of the Spirit (Rom 7:4,6).

(vii) On the whole – there are some exceptions – prayer for blessings & ascriptions of praise, are addressed to God in the N.T.

Sections V and VI have revealed an overall theocentric emphasis ( the evidence surveyed is mainly Pauline for obvious reasons ). The N.T. student may well feel that while some Trinitarian formulation is essential, the Church should not necessarily be bound wholly to the substance formulations of later patristic thought . He may well feel that while they represent a magnificent achievement within the realms of Greek culture and philosophy, they do not necessarily correspond at all points to the more “dynamic” modes of expression found in the N.T.

## VII

From the post-resurrection life of Christ we turn to preexistence, a concept used by the three major theologians of the N.T. : Paul ( 1 Cor 8:6; 10:4; 2 Cor 8:9; Gal 4:4–6; Phil 2:6–7; Col 1:15–17) – Christ was the agent of creation, active in Israel's history and was sent into the world by God. c.f. too the deuterio –Pauline pastorals; Hebrews ( 1;1–4; perhaps 2:9; 10:5) – the Son was the agent of creation; John (1:1–18; 3:13,31; 6:33,38,41,50,62; 8:14,58; 13:3; 16:30; 17:5,24–25) – The Father sends the Son/Son of Man, who comes into the world or descends from heaven. He was the agent of creation.

From this we may say:–

- (1) The assertion of pre-existence is no late development. 1 Cor is probably the first literary evidence ( unless Gal. preceded it) i.e. circa 54–55.
- (2) If Hebrews is early (as I think), and Phil 2:6ff is a non Pauline hymn originally, then we have other, early witnesses to it alongside Paul.
- (3) The idea of pre-existence dominates the fourth Gospel. Here one is entitled to speak of the picture of a God-Man. Traditionally the fourth Gospel has been the main N.T. support for the two natures doctrine and that Jesus himself taught this. Here the N.T. scholar would enter a caveat against the latter, since for the vast majority of scholars the johannine discourses are not the ipsissima verba of Jesus. They are valid evidence for John, not the historical Jesus.

How did these writers take these assertions?

(a) We could say that the truth of Christ's pre-existence they understood literally. This led to the idea of the two natures doctrine of Christ ( perfect God perfect Man ) and the Trinity of three persons, one substance. No doubt many of

the readers of this magazine are happy with this.

(b) Some scholars believe that it was the conviction of the centrality of Christ, in his earthly and risen life, that led to the conviction that this centrality was true of pre-existence. For early Christians, creation and salvation-history are an inseparable whole. Hence if Christ is the mediator in salvation-history, he must also have been mediator in creation. It is however worth pointing out that a belief in a role at the end for Moses, Elijah, Enoch or Melchizedek did not in Jewish circles lead to speculation about their pre-existence.

(c) Many scholars take the pre-existence idea as an interpretative concept by which the unique significance of Jesus could be communicated - perhaps especially for readers outside, or less influenced by, an eschatological way of thinking characteristic of the Hebrew-Jewish outlook. (we may utterly reject the notion that pagan myths exercised a creative influence on the formulation of this doctrine, though they may have facilitated the acceptance of the Christian message by pagans). Let us spend some time explaining this view as it is often not properly understood.

Thus, for example (i) there is evidence for a rabbinic belief that the law pre-existed. Now if Christ had superceded the law as the means and way of salvation, what more natural step than for Christians to apply what had hitherto been said of the law to Christ?

(ii) There is the picture of Wisdom at God's side assisting in creation (Prov 8:22ff), sustainer of creation and inspirer of prophets and wise men (Wisd. Sol 7:22ff), taking up residence in Zion (i.e. equated with the law. Eccles 24). This is quite clearly personification. To say that God has a helper, Wisdom, by His side means that God made the world wisely. Could Christians take this over and apply such an idea to Christ. because the earthly Jesus had in fact disclosed God's purposes fully and finally? He was the key to history, to life, to creation's purpose. This conviction is then expressed in the same way as the Wisdom picture - Christ the creator.

(NB (i) and(ii) are not to be sharply differentiated from each other in view of the equation of Wisdom and Law in Jewish thought).

Is this attributing a degree of 'sophistication' to these N.T. writers which they never possessed? Well - presumably the author of John's Gospel and his first readers knew that the discourses were not the literal words of the earthly Jesus. (I would as a believer, wish to say that they are discourses of the exalted Christ through his evangelist interpreting the significance of his earthly life). If an evangelist could try this medium, we cannot a priori rule out that he and others were prepared to speak of the pre-existent Christ - and, because they were talking about a person, then they would have to speak in terms of personal pre-existence, without necessarily taking this absolutely literally.

This will not convince everyone! Perhaps the above sketch may serve to promote deeper understanding of this approach and disclose its positive and constructive emphasis. To be true to the N.T. we would have to set alongside this explanation the N.T. conviction that all that Jesus did and said is the work of God and the culmination of God's purposes for Israel and the world - in other words, divine election, God's determination to bring this saving history to a

climax in this Jesus ( e.g. 1 Peter 1:20 which, so far as I can see, does not imply pre-existence any more than Rom 8:29f does of believers.) In this way the unity of Gods activity in salvation—history is maintained. ( of 2 Cor 4:6).

#### VIII

May these remarks contribute to useful and profitable discussion in the perennial task of proclaiming the old faith and gospel in a new age without diluting it yet making it speak to our day.

J.E.Morgan Wynne.

I write in response to the article on 'Ministerial Housing' by the Rev. David R.Smith in the April issue of the Fraternal, as there seems to be to me a certain amount of further information which could have been printed and some incorrect information in the article. As far back as July 1968, the Baptist Union issued a document entitled 'House Purchase by Ministers for Retirement', in which the advantages of ministers buying such a property were clearly stated. It was quite clear at that stage that it was possible given the right set of circumstances for a minister to obtain a mortgage although he was not living in the house concerned and also that tax relief in respect of the interest content of monthly payments to a building society for such a property was allowable. In other words, the rules that Mr Smith has described as having found a way round, did not in fact exist. Furthermore, in this document from the Baptist Union, the possibility of the Union guaranteeing the mortgage in order to make the securing of such a mortgage easier was given.

The document also contained the information that the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society was prepared to give sympathetic consideration to suitable applicants from Baptist Ministers, this being no doubt because the Managing Director and Secretary, Mr. Ralph C. Stow is a Deacon of one of the Cheltenham churches. Mr. Stow is currently the President of the Building Societies Association.

Using this information, I was able to take out a mortgage with the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society for a flat for retirement in May 1972 and I know of other friends both within our own ministry and in the ministries of other denominations who did the same thing at that time or earlier. The 1974 Rent Act has in fact made no real difference to the situation.

I hope that this information is of help, I feel particularly that the willingness of the Baptist Union through the Baptist Union Corporation Limited to offer help and advice should not go unrecorded.

Yours sincerely

Peter Coleman,  
84, Montrose Avenue  
Luton.

## URBAN MISSION

### 1. SETTING THE SCENE

Mission is the task, urban is the direction. Urban as opposed to the rural, where the Church has deep historical roots. Urban as distinct from the suburban where the church is relatively strong. Initial concern is for the inner areas at the heart of cities like Liverpool, Birmingham and Glasgow and the central London Boroughs like Southwark and Tower Hamlets. Everybody knows the districts visually because we commute through them en route to our conferences and committees. They are wedges of dense housing, changing population and social problems where the Church is numerically at its weakest. But those engaged in Urban Mission are keenly aware that what the inner city knows today the suburbs and the new towns may well taste tomorrow.

Urban concern is becoming a national pre-occupation! The mass-media presentation of dramatic urban issues like immigration, unemployment and violence is matched by acute and disturbing surveys by national agencies. The recent 'Inner Area Studies' by the Department of Environment which tackled Birmingham, Liverpool, and Lambeth was followed up by the national Council of Social Service with 'Inner Cities—a clear case for urgent action'. For some time financial resources in the form of Urban Aid and social experiment teams in Community Development Programmes have been injected by the Home Office into selected areas. Alongside these a new urban phraseology has grown up with 'deprived areas', 'community relations', 'job creation', and 'educational priority areas' and source books like 'Readings in Urban Society' produced for Open University courses.

The Church cannot stand on one side. David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool, writing in his book 'Built as a City' (and subtitled 'God and the urban world today') maintains that 'Urban living is the typical expression of society today'. So trying to understand what the big city does to people and what is Christ's mission within it is not a marginal subject for Christians. Urban mission is God's top priority today. Fail here, ignore the city and its pressures, and there is no gospel which we can preach with integrity anywhere else'. These pressures the Church faces within the urban centres are much more than the accumulation of long years of attrition, the burden of out-dated buildings or the dearth of leaders with experience and understanding. We have the long-standing physical pressures of housing—seen in high density, clearance areas, and tower-blocks; the paucity of play-areas noted in the rarity of park space and distance from the open country; and industrial run-down brought about by technological change and commercial merger. Increasingly we face newer, more volatile pressures. There is population erosion and change as many of the educated and able 'get up go' to be replaced by the immigrants, whether it be West Indian or Asian. We have political ferment with the weakening of the traditional parties and the emergence of the new left confronting the National Front and this is now linked with the rising question of 'law and order' and the relationship of the police force with the public, especially the West Indian teenagers.

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Many have noted the increasing detachment of the 'professionals' as those engaged in health, Education, Law, Social Services and Commerce commute into the inner city and withdraw at night!

There has been much analysis and to understand the contemporary scene there is a need to uncover the historical roots. When I arrived in West Ham in 1965 I could not understand the reasons for the gulf between the church and the district but in the course of research for a thesis a number of reasons for the weakness of the Church in East London have emerged:

1. The process of secularisation has progressively taken from the Church its influence in the wider life of our society (as in the sphere of education) and has deeply affected the inner thinking of individuals.

2. Our massive investment in social caring ( seen in settlements and the institutional churches) has blurred the edge of evangelism, presented a one-sided picture of the gospel and often created an enervating dependence.

3. The relationship between the churches and the Political instruments of the working-classes (whether Labour Party, Trade Unions or the new left ) has often been marked with ambivalence and even a mutual hostility.

4. The Cristian pre-occupation with personal morality ( drink, Sunday observance, gambling, entertainment and sex) has not been matched by an equally powerful concern for the corporate wider issues of poverty, war and race.

5. There has been a cultural and class conflict within the churches themselves which has been seen in the dominance of imported leadership, the use of external finance which has encouraged both paternalism and dependency, and a social manipulation by the more articulate and able.

6. There is a failure to recognise that the urban areas have become mission fields (Church attendance in West Ham has been one-third of the national average since 1871) requiring new evangelical techniques and demanding a different form of commitment and understanding from both ministerial and lay members of the church, local or national.

East London is only a small segment of the urban world and those who really want to look at the subject need to begin with the historical roots of the urban crisis and the church within this. In this country 'Churches and the working classes in Victorian England' by K.S. Inglis is a broad sweep to be supplemented by Hugh McLeod's 'Class and Religion in the late Victorian City' which is more detailed and has some pungent comments on the problems of believing in the city. Bishop Wickham's survey of Sheffield in 'Church and People in an industrial City' is still the classic English book relating to one area while 'The Churches and the Labour Movement' by Stephen Mayor gives a political setting. The social caring of one wing of the Church is covered by Kathleen Heasman in 'Evangelicals in Action' while the whole mission of the church in the urban world is surveyed by David Sheppard in 'Built as a City'. On the wider canvas 'The Secular City' by Harvey Cox should be read alongside Gibson Winter's two books 'The Suburban Captivity of the Churches' and 'The New Creation as Metropolis'

ambitiously sub-titled 'A design for the church's task in an urban world'. The best sociological contribution is still David Martin's 'A sociology of English Religion' but those who want to glean some insights into current social conditions ought to look at the Open University's 'Readings in Urban Education' or read the magazine 'new Society'. The vexed question about belief and social conditioning is faced by John Benington in 'Culture, Class, and Christian Belief' while two immensely readable paperbacks are 'Come out of the Wilderness' which is a stimulating account of a church struggling to live in Harlem and Nicholas Stacey's 'Who Cares?' which is a despairing chronicle of five year's hard work as an Anglican priest in Woolwich. On the pamphlet side Clifford Hill has written 'Renewal in the inner City' setting out a strategy of Urban Mission while the publications 'Christians in Industrial Areas' and 'community' keep giving examples of Urban Mission taking place in this country now.

Books and pamphlets are only one side of the coin and there is now a wealth of experiments and movements which are part of the 'signs of hope' which will be looked at in the next article. The various Industrial Missions and centres like the William Temple College have played their part in preparing the way for a new group of projects situated in, and facing the questions of, the urban world. The Evangelical Urban Training Project was launched in 1974 and now has footholds in Liverpool (its base), Birmingham, London and Manchester where urban workshops are aimed primarily at working class Christians. The older established Urban Mission Project (1969) has an Anglican bias (although Baptists have been on the staff and shared in the courses) and works mainly through clergy courses. In Sheffield the Urban Theology Unit provides 'a community, a listening-station, an experimental base, and a talking-shop where concerned people can get new vision and impetus for mission, action, discipleship and community - creating'.

Three questions run through the books, the projects and the people involved in Urban Mission.

1. What is the shape of future urban life and who controls the forces which determine the life - style of so many? if a sense of 'powerlessness' is a prevailing characteristic of urban man where does the living God come in?

2. How can we establish indigenous, virile, local congregations which will hold together a deep incarnational understanding of the urban scene and embody and express the eternal gospel in worship, work and witness?

3. when will the major denominations (including the Baptists!) recognise that the urban areas of our country have become a vast mission field requiring an investment of spiritual and financial resources, new forms of ministry?

In this article I can only begin to 'set the scene' in a sketchy and preliminary fashion. In a follow up I want to look hard at the 'signs of hope' appearing, often without publicity, in so many places and ways. I invite those engaged in, or concerned about, Urban Mission to send me news of experiments - comments and questions for incorporation in a more detailed look at the Church and the urban world today.

(Lawrence Hall, Cumberland Road, Plaistow London E.13)

Colin Marchant

## THE JOHN BUNYAN BAPTIST CHURCH & KALEIDOSCOPE PROJECT

The John Bunyan Baptist Church, Kingston upon Thames, was founded in 1882. The chapel which was demolished in 1975 had been built by cottagers who used to live in the neighbourhood. Today, a main road runs along the North and East boundaries of the site, and beyond this road most of the houses have been cleared to make way for an industrial estate, a mammoth telephone exchange, and a school.

A decade ago, the members of the Church had to re-think their purpose. The large premises were no longer required for traditional activities, and even if there was a revival of religion the chapel was no longer in a fit state nor in the right position to attract a large congregation.

Attention was focused on the needs of the area to the West of the site. The area in question contains the railway station, two bus stations, cinemas, public houses and cafes. Hundreds of young people come into this down town area from the surrounding towns, especially at the weekends. The local newspapers have publicised the problem of violence, drugs and vice.

It became clear that when the public houses closed, large numbers of young people did not go home, but gathered for ad hoc parties in empty houses or anywhere convenient. These parties attracted youngsters in search of excitement, including a minority who abused drugs and were sexually promiscuous. Some of the people attending these parties were very much at risk, including juveniles missing from home.

The town needed a good meeting place for these young people. The members of the church agreed to convert part of their premises to provide this meeting place and loaned £400 for the purpose. The work was carried out by the minister and several of the members. This was the beginning of the Kaleidoscope club.

### THE KALEIDOSCOPE CLUB.

The Kaleidoscope Club has proved very popular with the young people it set out to cater for. The club is open all night on Fridays and attracts between 120 and 180 young people. The aim is to provide a good meeting place where young people can carry on the same kind of conversations that students enjoy at University, or men or women in the Forces. This social life is a natural part of growing up.

Behaviour in the club is controlled by ten members of staff, and the atmosphere is usually very pleasant. Some abuse our hospitality by trying to sell drugs, and occasionally there is an outburst of violence, but the staff are alert to these dangers and most nights pass without bad incidents. Often the staff are involved in significant discussions.

The Kaleidoscope also runs a disco on Saturdays and a children's club on Tuesdays. The project is involved in the lives of many young people who experience great difficulty in relationships with the rest of the community.

## DRUG ABUSE

The Kaleidoscope club involved us in the problem of the prevention and treatment of drug abuse. We formed the opinion that this is not primarily a medical problem to be tackled by a team consisting of doctor, psychiatrist, nurse and social worker, but a problem requiring community involvement. The United Nations Organisation had recognised this as early as 1972, but we were one of the first projects to pioneer this approach in the United Kingdom.

The approach was misunderstood at first, and led to difficult relationships with the police at one stage, but in 1975 an expert seminar of the United Nations visited the Kaleidoscope and our approach was clearly commended. Partly as a result of this, the Department of Health and Social Security made a grant of £9000 towards the development of our work.

A report "A Community Response to Drug Abuse", has been published on this aspect of our work and can be obtained from the Kaleidoscope Project at the cost of 65p.

## WALK IN SURGERY

Although we do not over-estimate the importance of medical aid, we are concerned about such problems as unwanted pregnancy, venereal disease, abortion, bronchitis, drug abuse, and psychiatric and other physical disorders. We therefore established a medical surgery which is attached to our club and is open from 10pm on Friday to 2am on Saturday. We employ a doctor and full time nurse and midwife.

This service was grossly misrepresented by a local newspaper and led to the libellous accusation that we handed out contraceptives to teen-agers at late night discos! One newspaper gave the impression that the minister blessed the contraceptives before they were distributed!

The importance of our medical service has now been recognised and our surgery has been incorporated within the National Health Service.

## RESIDENTIAL CARE

Arising out of the work of the club we became aware of the need for residential care for some homeless young people. There are children's homes in every borough but the needs of young people over 16 and up to 22 are scarcely ever catered for, except by detention centres and probation hostels. We used two houses on our site to start a new style hostel which provides a fair degree of independence with specialised help toward rehabilitation. Some of the young people in our care are referred by the local Authority, and for these there are adequate financial provisions from Statutory Services. For many of the most needy young people, no proper provision exists and we care for these at our own expense.

## RE-DEVELOPMENT

The need for a much bigger and better hostel was one of the factors prompting us to re-develop our church site. The hostel has been built by the Kaleidoscope (Kingston) Housing Association Ltd with £250,000 borrowed from the Department of the Environment. At the same time, we have re-developed the rest of our site to provide purpose-built club facilities, a fine new chapel and a community hall. The new complex was opened in January by the Rt Hon George Thomas and the

Rev Ernest Payne. The total cost was nearly half a million pounds, of which about seventeen thousand pounds remains outstanding.

### THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

We are often asked to justify the work of Kaleidoscope as part of the work and witness of our church. The Kaleidoscope was initiated by the church in response to the need in our neighbourhood. The work of caring needs to be sustained by Christian faith and worship, and the Church fellowship needs to be involved in this work as a responsible and responsive section of our local community.

We believe that not only in Christ's day, but also today there need to be "signs of the Kingdom of God". That is, public actions which demonstrate God's acceptance of people and His creative and redeeming activity. A cup of water can express this, feeding 150 young people can express this, giving shelter and practical help can do this. This public demonstration is an anticipation of the gospel we preach and the eucharist we celebrate.

The decision to establish the Kaleidoscope Club has had far reaching consequences. Not only has it been a decisive factor in the decision to re-develop our church site, it has also made new demands on the theology and worship of the congregation.

Some remarkable young people have worked in the Kaleidoscope, Jan Johnston, Richard Fitzsimmonds, Martin Elles, Ian and Liz Hargreaves and Terry Walker in particular not only helped develop the work of the club, they also helped shape the theology and worship of our Church. The Church members felt the impact of these young people in their midst and they caused us creatively to re-examine our church life.

### THEOLOGY AND WORSHIP

From the outset, we needed a theological understanding of the work we were doing in the Kaleidoscope Club. We were convinced that we should not see the work in evangelistic terms only. We were attempting to raise the level of consciousness of the whole group of young people attending the Club. We felt there was an ultimate value in the club, in providing excellent food, coffee, tea and fruit juices. We felt that the sense of fellowship created in the Club was sometimes like that at Holy Communion. Violence and degradation which were sometimes experienced seemed to require of us compassion and the readiness to suffer rather than condemnation.

We thought of the Kingdom of God as being the kind of community we were seeking to discover and to bring about. We realised this required a high degree of personal commitment, and a vital relationship to God the creator and redeemer. We knew that most of the people we were catering for would not make any such commitment nor seek such a relationship, but we were convinced that they nevertheless would benefit from the social life of the club and Hostel. In other words, the Church was to be the agent of the Kingdom of God; the Church would only consist of a small minority, but all would enjoy the benefits of the Kingdom of God being brought nearer.

Our work in the club and our theological thinking about what we were doing

caused us to reflect more deeply upon our worship. In the Club we tried to create a sense of fellowship. This purpose dictated the choice and positioning of furniture and the layout of the Club. It seemed natural to think similarly about the setting for our worship. We grew impatient with sitting in rows looking at the backs each other's heads, we wanted to sit in a circle facing one another.

Preaching and discussing have been important aspects of our worship. We have needed to go back to the roots of our faith and to think again about what we believe in the light of our experience.

Preaching alone does not meet our needs. Our commitment and relationship to God needs constant renewal. Our work in the Club and Hostel is not all that encouraging, and we often feel in danger of being overcome by the evil in our situation. We do not only require a preacher to set us on the right road, we badly need a High Priest to pray for us, and to give us the body and blood of the Lamb. Jesus needs to be known to us in the Word, and in the breaking of bread. Holy Communion has become as central to our worship as it is for Plymouth Brethren, Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox Christians. Indeed, our staff consists of Christians from many denominations of the Church of God and it is therefore all the more understandable that our Sunday morning worship usually takes a eucharistic form. The service is in two parts, the ministry of the Word and the breaking of the bread. Our liturgy is dependent upon parts of the liturgies of the early church which are widely used among Christians today. At the same time, our Baptist heritage of hymn singing, extempore prayer and preaching is very evident.

### NEW BUILDINGS

The old buildings occupied a large site and were one and two storeys high. In order to obtain the necessary accommodation we have re-developed our site with three and four storey buildings. The Kaleidoscope Club, surgery, workshop and car park are at semi-basement level. The new chapel is a little above ground level, and a community hall is at first floor level.

The new hostel is four floors high, consisting of one wing for 24 residents and one wing for 12 staff members. The design of the buildings has been developed from nearly ten years of work. The architect, Mr David C. Cole of Weybridge, has succeeded in designing Club and Hostel buildings which are thoroughly modern but which reflect our "Homecoming" philosophy. A red Aga cooker has pride of place in the kitchen, red brick open fireplaces are on all floors of the Hostel, there are bay windows and the bedrooms are of irregular shapes.

The chapel has practically the same effective floor space as the old chapel without the gallery. The organ has been ingeniously re-built by Ralph Arnold of Orpington, to fit in a corner alcove. The open Baptistry occupies another corner position, and the lectern and President's chair occupy the other two corners. The communion table is in the centre, and the pews are placed on four sides round the table.

### THE NEW CHALLENGE

The new buildings have greatly increased the size and scope of our work. The

volume of work has steadily increased over the last four years and this has been reflected in the growing number of staff employed. Four years ago, the Church appointed the Rev David Langridge as Associate Minister. David and Fran shared fully in the ministry of the Church, and in the work of the Kaleidoscope, and in the re-development programme. David has considerable administrative skills and at times an unfair share of these tasks fell upon him. When David left us this year, we appointed an administrator and secretary to cope with this part of this work.

The Church members have now called Julie Hopkins to be Associate Minister, and it is indicative of the attitude of the members that they are hopeful that Julie will prevent us from "becoming set in our ways". It could be imagined that some might feel that after so much change it was time for a decade of "consolidation". This is not how we feel.

During this summer we have had 10 volunteers living and working with us, and this has been an anticipation of the kind of religious life we hope to develop. We have only just begun to see the possibilities of daily working together, thinking together and worshipping together. Pray that our needs will be met, that we be delivered from temptations and evil, and that we may know more of the coming of the Kingdom of God among us.

Eric Blakebrough.