

# The Fraternal

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# The Work Crisis in Historical Context

The crisis in employment has gripped the imagination and commitment of the Christian community in quite an astonishing way. There is a formidable amount of practical and pastoral activity. As importantly, it is through the Church that some of the more creative and forward looking thinking about work and the future of industrial society has been done. Such activity is important because it is part of the Church's task to ask how the Gospel demands are to be understood in the movements of history. This paper, only briefly, tries to pick up some of the issues that would seem to be important in support of exercising the more immediate terms of ministry, at whatever level, in the situation.

## I Which "work ethic"?

Much is heard about the end of the Protestant work ethic and the need to accept a more leisure orientated society. Everybody, it is assumed, at least in popularised discussion, has been infused with the assumption that it is right and necessary to work. Not to be gainfully employed is to be labelled as socially parasitic and should induce a feeling of guilt. Somehow, we must break away from our Puritanical past if we are to be freed to enjoy the Utopian future of workless freedom.

Apart from the tenuous relation of such propositions to the original theses put forward by Max Weber and others, it seems very doubtful whether such a "slogan" view of history is either accurate or helpful. History is never as simple as that and understanding is obfuscated by a stark contrast between past and future, black and white. Rather the reality is both more complex and safer ground on which to base future action.

In the first instance it is important to remember that there has been a very large variety of work patterns within industrial society, of which the factory model was only one. Also the shape of industry has constantly been changing with the emergence of new sources of energy, new technologies, changes in political and social attitudes, the rise of new markets and growing social mobility. At the same time there have been a number of "work ethics" involved if by that is understood the motivations and assumptions that give meaning to daily work. Different trades, professions, skills, working conditions each produce their own code of behaviour and standards of practice. Changing economic circumstances also throw up their differing styles. Recently, for example, stress has been put on the prevalence of the "domestic" or "instrumental work ethic" whereby employment is seen merely as the way to provide the means to spend on the meaningful parts of life outside. Nor is this new. There has been a long history of trying to lessen the burden of daily work, of expecting a wage that reduced dependence on work, of encouraging domestic spending and widening leisure possibilities. If there ever was some influence from Puritanism in expecting responsibility from people in relation to work, it has certainly been very much attenuated by the changes of history and above all, secularised in ways that distort it almost out of all recognition.

If it is useful to put one's finger on a single factor that has dominated industrial society and which does seem central to the present debate, it is that modern industrial society is a money economy. Social values are perceived of in economic terms. Social worth is calculated by turning everything into a factor of cost. "Having a job", or at least being married to one, thus becomes socially crucial. It is the way of obtaining money in order to participate in social activity and status is provided by the place of the job on the wage scale. While the welfare state has mollified the harshness of unemployment, in a strange way employment has become even more socially crucial in recent decades. To be able to work has been incorporated into the list of human rights. Full employment, which seemed to be assured until recently, was one of the great social aims of the post-depression reformers. Wage bargaining has become the national economic pastime for almost every employment group. If there is a pervasive "work ethic" it is best described as "the capitalist work ethic" whereby work is part of the nexus of investment, costs, profits and dividends, necessary to be part of the system, dehumanised in terms of personal involvement. Thus, in the harsh reality of recession and demanning, those that lose their job talk about "feeling useless", "being on the scrapheap", or "being emasculated".

Having a skill, a place in the community, an identity, someone dependent on you being there: these are important for being human. For us today, from the janitor to managing director this is largely related to a wage packet given as a reward for work. But, perhaps, what we can begin to learn from the above is that while in any culture work and the social structures are bound to be closely related, they are not necessarily identified. The social system changes and can be changed but work represents the basic human need to be able to participate responsibly in society. That is more fundamental than any formal ordering of that work.

## **II Christian norms.**

Perhaps, too, we are able to look again at what the "Protestant work ethic" really entailed. For the Puritans all life was **sub specie aeternitatis**. Work was understood to be part of our responsibility before God, based on a profound sense of dependency and gratitude for his goodness and mercy. Time and talents, therefore, were to be used at the highest level of skill and application, in mutual service and absolute trustworthiness, as part of our stewardship. It may have been austere, and probably was in an age when death was always threatening, though that is not essential to the notion. Negatively, work was enjoined as part of that order necessary for the containment of sin.

In general terms this Calvinistic viewpoint is well in line with the broad Christian tradition. When this is examined there emerges an interesting perspective. Despite the impression frequently given that work is thought of negatively as labour or discipline, fundamentally the Christian view of work is positive and creative.

Work is the use of man's energy and power to act in relation to thought, matter and others. Man has been created to find his fulfilment in relationships. The ability to work is part of man's potential. He is free to

respond to God's call to participate in God's creative activity. Thus through his action he fulfils himself. He finds purpose in giving and receiving in service, in cooperative enterprise and mutual responsibility, in making and in building an inheritance. This is the true nature of work, and should be expressed in any formalised structure that shapes the tasks which may be needful in community. Its highest expression is in the offering to God in worship of man's fulfilment according to his creative will, symbolised in the sacramental symbolic forms of ordered ritual and prayer.

Of course the negative side is always there. The sin of the world means that man turns his energy to greed, cruelty and oppression. He refuses to live cooperatively but in cut throat competition and avoids responsibility. He finds himself saddled with burdens and struggles to make ends meet.

Yet God does not allow creation to collapse. In the ambiguity of human experience there is always a vestige of order and restraint, and a glimpse of the real possibilities. In this situation work too becomes ambiguous. Man's energy has to be ordered and controlled so that there is some real, if enforced, mutual responsibility, Yet there is always the struggle for hope and justice and peace. It is, to borrow a Lutheran concept, part of the work of God's left hand, bulwark against total collapse. And even within this imperfect world there are those who can rise above necessity, who can transform the mundane and even the oppressive, whose work becomes indeed service and sacrifice. Though in a fallen world the service of God is through the cross.

From such a perspective the Christian would always want to affirm, above all other considerations, that the great resource of human energy and creativity, the fundamental tendency of human beings to live in community is a gift from God and must not be wasted or destroyed. No one can be unaware of the problems that are posed by the radical changes in British industrial society, complex and far reaching as they are. It is not easy to see realistic and positive ways forward. Mistakes will be made, the more so where risks are boldly taken. But the aim must be to move towards a society in which everyone has a proper and realistic opportunity to participate in it. If the old models, with all their weaknesses yet bold claims, fail and we are forced to seek new patterns, then this is the vision that has to be held before us.

Of course, the new will be imperfect too. No human society will be Utopia. But there can be hope that some progress can be made, even if there are glaring deficiencies elsewhere. And, however grand the intentions, people will always ensure that it will not work properly. In the flux of constant change there has to be constant vigilance and modifications. There will always have to be ways of enforcing obligations, sanctions, and formal and informal structures and expectations. Yet it does matter by what spirit all these human activities are imbued. What people believe is important.

### **III A turning point in history.**

The next theme leads on from the last. Public figures, in statements and interviews, are just beginning to acknowledge that the present recession may be part of something much greater and more significant than a trade

cycle, whether or not aggravated by previous or present economic policies, that will eventually be overcome. Of course we cannot be certain of the movements of history nor predict the outcome. History has the habit of springing surprises. But there is cumulative evidence that the future is going to be very different from the recent past and that we are in a major period of transition which has been under way for some time now.

A number of elements can be discerned. We are witnessing the decline of the imperial West and a realignment of political and economic power. New centres of industrial development, notably in the Far East, undermine our traditional industries. The commodities market, notably oil but soon others, are less and less controlled by the consumer North. The Pacific is now the focus of the world money markets, not the Atlantic. British industrial decline, now a hundred years on, can no longer go unrecognised or be boosted by empire or North Sea oil. On top of this there is the technological revolution. There may be some sensationalist views about the effect of the micro-chip, but it is equally necessary to stress the real and far reaching changes that are being increasingly and ever more rapidly felt. And there are other areas of technological development, notably in optics, biogenetics and energy, that may be even more decisive in the long run. At the same time there are the strains on natural resources and the need for environmental care that must either be planned for or left as a time bomb of unknown consequences. Competition for resources is, on some scenarios, being forecast as cause for war, a factor already known in the North Atlantic fishing grounds. Population growth puts constant strain on political and economic action, exacerbated in vast areas of the world by famine conditions or political upheavals, and in the huge urban populations threatening to explode.

If this even approximates to the historical reality of our time, then it is obvious that our own problems that weigh so heavily can only be understood and tackled as part of the whole. East-west relations, North-south inequalities, the uses of new technical resources and the ordering of our own society all go hand in hand.

One of the interesting facts about this depression has been the ease with which, so far, the situation has been accepted. It is as though it has been assumed that all that can be done is to weather out the storm. Perhaps there is a subconscious feeling that it is indeed part of something much more extensive than our social leadership has indicated. Certainly, there has been little to indicate the possibility of a brave and generous spirit at any level. Rather, there has been timidity, selfish concern and sectional interests, suggesting that it is better to hang on to what you've got rather than launch out into the risky unknown.

At once we have a recognisable model that relates directly to the Gospel: slavery in Egypt is better than death in the wilderness. But Exodus is not so much a choice as a call to follow God out into his future. The Christian model for this is the Resurrection, the Exodus Jesus accomplished in Jerusalem (Luke 9.31). If today is a real crisis in history, a parting of the ways, then the proclamation of the Gospel must emphasise the themes of Christian hope and the promise of renewal that can enable "the facing of

this hour" (Fosdick).

The coming of the Kingdom in the person of Jesus is represented in the Gospels as the great crisis, turning point in history. It was the presentation of the choice between life and death. But all history is decision before God and times of radical change take on added challenges. Every decision is allied to and part of man's response to Christ. Christ, however, does not merely set a challenge but shows us and accompanies us along the way. The way forward is indeed to step out into the unknown, to take the way of the cross. But that is not abandonment to fickle fate. It is the path of obedience, a dedication to the demands of truth, justice, peace and freedom which stand above all others even at the ultimate cost. Even in the Valley of Shadow God does not abandon his beloved, and that is the only safety.

The resurrection is above all the vindication of that trust. Christ's resurrection is the ground and form of all human experience which, like birth itself, is movement into the unknown. There are, however, three dimensions to resurrection. There is continuity. Jesus is raised, so the past is not lost but is a preparation for the future. Thus hope is not to abandon the present but to demand that we live now, creatively, and actively, for the future. So it matters that we are involved in the struggle to discern and experiment for models of the new possibilities, however small and restricted our opportunities. There is, secondly, the absolutely new which cannot be guessed at. But this is gift not threat. We must hold out as real, though not yet actualised, the possibility of a better world. In history this will only be partially realised, needing further renewal, but mankind can turn to the future in hope. Thirdly, it is indeed the possibility of renewal that is to be accepted. The dead end of the historical situation is not the last word for the last word is with God and he can make all things new, giving life in the midst of death. History is the very material that can be transformed, the stuff of hope, if only we will seize it in Christ.

The Gospel declares to the world, to the nation, to communities, to people, in terms of realistic hope, that this death, whether it be of our job or local industry or the national or international economic order, is not the end but also the beginning, the time of opportunity to those that have ears to hear. It is possible to live through the vicissitudes of change without being crippled by fear or destroyed by circumstances and to point to creative alternatives, laying the foundations for a more just and caring society. Such a generalised statement may seem remote from the pastoral problems of the unemployed or the arguments about economic policy at government or boardroom level. Yet it is a primary function of the Church, through all its pastoral and teaching resources, using every opportunity, in appropriate ways to find in the Gospel the fundamental dimensions of human existence that are decisive in informing those attitudes that shape practical action. In the present circumstances it is absolutely crucial that the Gospel of hope be heard, a fundamental challenge to live creatively and boldly in today's world.

#### **IV Freedom over the demonic.**

The call to exercise human freedom has, however, to be put into its proper

human perspective. It has already been noted that part of the current problem is an element of fatalism: there is nothing that we can really do anyway. In another way a similar fatalism is found in the proffered answers to the crisis. If only we lived economically according to the inexorable laws of nature whether it be in terms of market forces or in overcoming alienation, all would begin to fall into place. But this is to enter into what can only be called the area of the demonic. The demonic has a fascination because it offers authority, simplicity and hope. The demand is for a surrender of autonomy and responsibility that will provide an easy solution that is comparatively painless. God, however, has created us differently. We have to take responsibility and exercise vigilance, for the real human values are concerned with relationships and not mechanistic forces.

Of course, it is impossible to deny that there are general principles and that it is possible to discover them. To work flagrantly against the grain of nature or social realities is to court disaster. Yet there is a subtle and crucial difference between having such knowledge and being a slave to it. In the New Testament what we call scientific laws are part of what is understood as "principalities and powers". These are primarily part of God's creation, gathered round the throne or part of Christ's victorious army, executing God's will as angels and messengers. But should they seize absolute power or be accorded divine honours by man, their beneficence is turned into malevolence. In their proper place they are servants of God. As such man cooperates with them and benefits from them. But like the Sabbath, they are for man not over him, serving a higher end, a means whereby the Kingdom of God is established.

If this is so, then the Gospel of hope must insist that we are not the victims of inevitable economic forces or the inexorable outworking of historical processes. To think that the systematic application of a theoretical nostrum is enough is a snare and a delusion. No human knowledge is that complete or assured. Of course, we need all the research, debate, clarity that we can find. Our gifts for scientific enquiry are to be used as much as any other ability. But this is to be harnessed into the service of the Kingdom of God which is fundamentally a challenge to our wills, to surrender ourselves to the responsibility for justice, freedom and peace.

Pastorally this is a most difficult situation to work in for there is always the appearance of self-contradiction. People have to accept the given yet assert that they are not victims but have a freedom that allows them to do more than survive, to exercise decision and choice and to discover new possibilities. Within the limitations of the day to day circumstances the room to manoeuvre is clearly very limited. Indeed we often feel totally at the mercy of the seemingly inexorable forces that manipulate our existence. How can we rise above the dictates of these bonds? Perhaps there is nothing that can be done but to accept that we are where we are, whether appearing to be in the seat of power and decision making or as victim of others' seemingly arbitrary fiat. Yet to surrender is to hand over all power, dignity, worth, to something else, to become absolutely dependent on others. Christian freedom includes the ability to live in the paradox of accepting the limitations of actual circumstances and yet not being

enslaved by them but of having an inner independence because there is a higher loyalty to God. And amazingly that really does give space, the possibility of influencing circumstances and affecting the future.

The thrust of this paper has been that within the rapidly changing world of industry and work the Christian community has a significant pastoral role to perform. This has to be done on two levels simultaneously. There is a need to seek out and affirm the essential Gospel understanding of what is happening. This will include demythologising the accepted images of the past and asserting the human values of people and work in society that must be held on to as we move into new economic structures. It also stresses the Christian perspectives of hope and freedom that can enable a creative and positive orientation to the future. These insights have to be fed into the processes of public debate. At the same time, however, they have to become living realities that inform the daily actions of persons and groups who are caught up in the effects of the recession, often traumatically and bitterly. Yet what can seem easy to state at a theoretical level has to be discovered as a pragmatic word of truth and grace. Indeed it is a test of the truth of the Gospel whether it can be so translated. If not then it has failed. Moreover it is the agonising task of those who exercise pastoral ministry to have to hold together the demands of pastoral expectations and pressures with the theological task of understanding the contemporary world in the light of the Gospel.

**Paul Ballard**

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# Setting Limits in Marriage Counselling for Pastors

## Introduction

This article arises out of a twenty year journey of attempting to relate counselling skills and theory to the context of the local church. It addresses the practical issue of the extent to which a local minister should be involved in the marriage and family counselling of his own church people.

'Counselling' has become a stock in trade term for the local pastor, but the word is almost devoid of content. In practice it may mean anything from a short evangelical monologue given to a parishoner in distress to attempts at long term therapeutic encounter with no explicit theological component other than the belief that a good pastor must be psychologically proficient. One of the tragic results of the churches' journey into counselling has been the apparent separation of theology and therapy. This separation seems to have lead for many, to a practical pastoral care only informed by the social sciences; on the part of many evangelicals to a pastoral care which pointedly avoids the social sciences as of the devil.

## A Brief Personal History

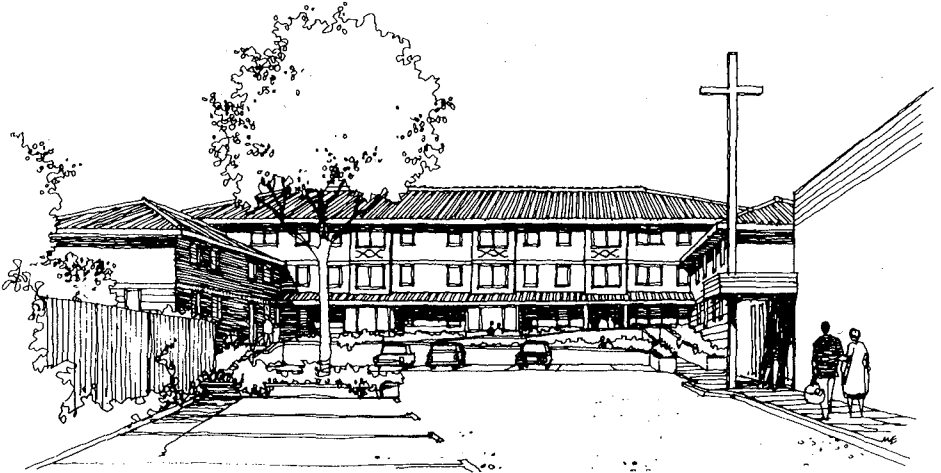
The journey began for me in the mid 1960's when I became pastor of a small church in a western Sydney housing commission area. My commitment to religious conversion was the total answer to all the human predicament. You can imagine the shock horror of my 'young Man's realisation' that for many people, conversion was only the beginning of a positive but painful journey towards a new and fulfilling life style. It was here I realised that something more was needed if I was to be totally faithful to my pastoral task. Counselling in the form offered by Carl Rogers seemed to be the answer at that time. I entered counsellor training and practice with the same degree of evangelical zeal, to find that by the early 1970's my proficiency in counselling was drawing me many clients, and my work as a local church pastor was no longer being done. The move to a full time counselling role in a church mission centre was the obvious answer.

In the early years at the Mt. Druitt Baptist Centre it was found that while many people responded well to the counselling help, which by this time included a lot more than client centred therapy, rarely did they enter into the life of the church. Many made a religious commitment, usually as something that happened alongside of counselling rather than in it, and then chose to join churches of other denominations and districts. It seemed clear that after the healing of an intense counselling experience, people wanted to move to new environments for worship and not be reminded of the pain of the past.

After three years in Mt. Druitt I moved out of the life of the local church while continuing a week day counselling service. Almost immediately clients and ex-clients began moving into the church's life. In fact the church grew fastest at the time when a clear separation was maintained between



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## **ASH GROVE — NORTHFIELD, BIRMINGHAM**

Ash Grove will be opened in November 1986. It adjoins Northfield Baptist Church which was built in 1937, and a Committee from the Church will manage the flats. The property will house 45 people in self-contained flats, two of which are specially designed for residents confined to wheelchairs. All the flats are inter-connected by internal heated corridors and there is a lift.

Ash Grove will be a sheltered scheme. There will be a resident Warden, who will be connected by a call-system to each flat and all the communal areas. The property is particularly fortunate in that it has a large guest room, two lounges, a hobbies room, a hairdressing room and a fully equipped laundry. As in all the Housing Association's properties, the Local Management Committee will place considerable emphasis on christian pastoral care.

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pastoral care and counselling with the counsellor taking no part in the life of the local church. It now seemed obvious, that while counselling builds persons and marriages, it certainly need not build churches. It may in fact help them shrink.

The question: "what is it about Christian care expressed in the form of intensive counselling that mitigated against involvement in the life of the local church?" needed to be answered.

In battling with this question I was also facing an inner battle from my own tradition, a pull between the thought of becoming a secular therapist and the call of a religious vocation. While I could experience the spiritual nature of my therapeutic work I found it quite difficult to translate this into evangelical language.

The emergence in 1977 of the Baptist counselling service added to the pressure to define the counselling role in relation to the local church. A book entitled **Depth Perspectives in Pastoral Work** by Thomas Klink had a decisive impact in helping separation between the concepts of care and counselling that are appropriate for church building pastoral work and the concept of a clinical pastoral counselling role that must be separate from the life of the local congregation.

The continued work of the counselling service has shown the validity of making a clear distinction in levels of counselling done in a church setting. When applied to marital counselling the case is even stronger to separate pastoral care from counselling. Therefore I would strongly suggest that the local minister of religion should not be involved in long term or intensive marriage counselling of couples that already comprise, or it is hoped will join, his congregation. This is not to deny to the minister a vital role in the support and maintenance of marital and family life. It is to suggest though, that the minister who takes up the marital counsellor role may do so at the expense of his more important functions in the total church scene.

### **Why Pastors should not be Marriage Counsellors**

In the December 1980 **Journal of Pastoral Care**, Richard Krebs presented an article, "Why Pastors should not be Counsellors". Krebs, a clinical psychologist, found that his entry into the pastorate spelt an end to his role as counsellor. "I am convinced," he wrote, "that when I try to do counselling as a pastor, I am certain to fail". He offers four basic reasons for the failure of the pastoral role in long term counselling.

These are:

1. The promise of cheap growth that often seems to be the hope of the parishioner who is looking to the clergy for a painless magic cure. These people who are not willing to pay the price of change, resist all attempts at positive change, and may reject the pastor as well.
2. The danger of transference relationships getting out of hand in the total pastoral relationship. In my experience the pastor, by nature of his role is already the focus of a range of projections from his people without adding the intensity of positive or negative transference from an attempted therapy relationship.

3. Role confusion is increased the higher counselling profile a pastor attempts to take.

4. The danger for the pastor that counselling will become an absorbing misplaced priority to the detriment of his other roles.

Krebs' statement applies well to pastoral attempts at a therapeutic relationship with individuals, but there are greater dimensions of potential problems when attempting similar work at a marital or family level.

In the role of minister of religion, a representative of God and His people, the church, the minister has a vital function in the support, pastoral care and education of the family. He has a significant role in leading the family in worship and in the expression of its faith. When crisis and loss come to a family the minister provides structure for the family's grief and assists its members in finding a meaningful way to cope. But in cases where marital disfunction needs intensive counselling the minister plays the role of counsellor at some risk.

Marital counselling, unlike individual counselling, involves intervention into a pattern of relationships that can have implications way beyond the marriage of the clients. Marital counsellors are not only faced with the turmoil and dysfunction of the couple but are also influencing the lives of the children of the marriage, wider family and friendship relationships. A change, even a positive change, in a marital relationship will cause a need for restructuring of family and friendships. Even when considered positive by the couple, this could be viewed as quite negative by others. One of the most difficult tasks of the marriage counsellor is to maintain neutrality and avoid becoming caught up in the family system in a way that neutralises the therapeutic effect.

Because of the many and varied facets of the pastoral role it is impossible for the pastor not to be caught up in the family system. The close involvement with the family that is the essence and value of good pastoral care, gets in the way of the creative change possible in a counselling model. To effectively act as a therapeutic change agent the pastor may need to withdraw his normal form of support and create for himself considerable role conflict between that of the supportive sharer of the Word of God and the more objective, process oriented therapist. This becomes even more difficult if the therapy moves the family towards separation and divorce or a necessary separation between the family generations. While this may be seen as valid in the counselling role it is not at all acceptable in the pastoral value model.

The most extreme is the value conflict caused for pastors if faced with counselling an extra-marital affair or divorce.

A common need in marital counselling is the separation of a couple from the influences of their parental families. During the process of separation the conflict between the generations can be strong. A separate therapist is in a position to ward off the pressure applied by wider family and/or creatively involve them in therapy. A pastor faced with both generations in his congregation is in a most difficult position.

Family and marital intervention often causes a couple to act out their problem in the arena of their social relationships. It is not uncommon for a relational problem in a church congregation to in fact be a projection of a problem of one couple or family. Jules Henry in his book **Pathways to Madness** describes with delightful clarity the way in which a dysfunctional couple avoided fighting between themselves by setting up a local Bible study group to fight on their behalf. If the pastor had been caught between responsibility for the group and a therapeutic relationship with the couple, I doubt if he could have survived.

It is my experience that people undergoing counselling gain much more from counselling if they are also receiving good pastoral care from a separate person at the same time. The pastoral care acts as a buffer in assisting them to relate the change in their relationship to their daily environment. When a pastor is the counselling change agent, it becomes far more difficult for the family to negotiate its change in health with its church relationship. In fact the pastor becomes a constant reminder of the problem of the past. In such a situation the couple will need to leave the church before they can complete the healing task.

I trust I have presented to you a strong case for the clear separation of roles between that of Pastor and marriage counsellor. What then is the scope of pastoral intervention in marital problems?

### **Pastoral Intervention in Marital Problems**

In attempting to delineate pastoral and counselling roles in the church, the Baptist Counselling Service created four categories of work as follows:

#### **1. The Pastoral Carer**

Pastoral care has been defined as the attitude of the pastoral person in all his or her relationships. It is marked by its diffuseness in that the pastoral carer enters into all of a person's relationships as a representative of the care of God and the fellowship of his people. In some ways pastoral care can be used as the context for live space counselling; that is, the using of therapeutic skills within a person's own life setting. The nature of the setting still implies a diffuse as opposed to the intense focus of the counselling room.

Pastoral care includes short-term supportive care relationships that do not contain the goal of therapeutic change.

#### **2. The Pastoral Counselling**

Pastoral Counselling is defined as the short-term, focussed, goal directed, contracted counselling work that is often undertaken by a pastor as a function of his or her role in the congregation. This is limited to short (one to four sessions) series assisting people to deal with personal, conflictual issues or specific transitional or situational crisis. The pastoral counsellor needs to be aware of the limits of these relationships and be prepared to refer if deeper personality or familiar issues arise.

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**To the Readers of the Fraternal.**

Dear Friends,

**“ZZZZ” — While we are asleep!**

Seven years have elapsed since I joined Baptist Insurance and started my series of alphabetical insurance advertising letters to the readers of the Fraternal, commencing with “A” for Average.

“Z” put me in mind of the popular way of indicating in comic strips that a character is asleep. One technological advance we have made in your insurance company during these seven years is the introduction of a computer. Not the least of its benefits is the fact that a whole collection of routine, repetitive tasks which were undertaken laboriously by our staff are now executed for us during the night — literally while we are asleep.

This has enabled us to contain staff expenses and to use time more constructively in our business. I hope Churches have found the additional information contained in renewal notices helpful. The notices now serve as a brief aide-memoire of the risks which have been insured as compared with the main classes of insurance which are available.

We are now actively planning improved policy documents. This is long overdue and no-one will be more pleased than myself to see the present individual contracts replaced by a single Church policy document. However, such an exercise takes time and we ask for your patience. The priority remains day to day service and claims settlement.

**M.E. PURVER  
General Manager**

### 3. **The Clinical Pastoral Counsellor**

The Clinical Pastoral Counsellor is a specially trained counsellor with skills geared to create a therapeutic relationship for persons experiencing individual and marital problems. The clinical pastoral counsellor works only from a clinical setting to provide a professional service on behalf of the church. Such counsellors accept clear limits in working with clients. The relationship is on a professional basis to achieve clinical goals only. They see their role as a specialist adjunct to the work of local pastors. They are available for counselling in centres other than the church of which they are member or pastor. Clinical counsellors guarantee that they will not enter into a counselling relationship with members of their own congregation.

### 4. **Psychiatric or Depth Psychotherapy**

Long-term psychotherapy was not seen as the task of the clinical pastoral counsellor who referred such clients to specialist psychiatrists or therapists in that field.

The move from pastoral carer towards clinical counsellor demands greater levels of training and entails more risk for both client and worker. The local minister is best able to provide a role in the areas of basic pastoral care and short-term counselling. Ideally he should have access for referral to a body of qualified clinical counsellors that are separate from the congregation.

### **What then is the Role of the Pastor in the Care of Marriage?**

Pastoral intervention in family life must be consistent with the total role of the ministry to the local church and have a theological basis in building the church as the people of God.

Therefore the pastoral role in leading worship and in teaching is a vital form of marital care. It is important to recognise that worship is a form of therapy and as such should be a prime focus of pastoral attention.

The Pastor has a privileged role of contact with a family in all aspects of its life. In the general care and support of the family the pastor has opportunity for many subtle healing interventions that can act as powerful preventative therapy. The option for "life space" or informal counselling is one of the most exciting privileges of pastoral work. Much of this will be helping people unravel the unrealities they have collected from their past family life.

In particular the focussed areas of pastoral intervention are in marital crisis intervention, short-term supportive problem solving, and long-term supportive care in a religious context.

The pastor can be helped fulfil these roles if he also has access to good referral sources for long term clinical counselling when this is indicated. The use of a separate counsellor so that the pastor can continue in a pastoral care role has much greater potential for church building.

**Doug Sotheren**

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## Evangelism — A National Priority

(Part of an address given at the 1985 Mainstream Conference)

The Scriptures clearly indicate that for the early church the winning of men and women to Christ and his Church was of the utmost importance. The Acts of the Apostles, for instance, is more than a tale of Peter and of Paul — it is a story of church growth, detailing the various ways in which the Holy Spirit thrust the infant church out into mission. Similarly the letters of Paul pulsate with the heart of an evangelist: "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some ... Necessity is laid upon me! Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Corinthians ix.22,16: cf. also 2 Corinthians v.20; Ephesians iii.8). Paul's great ambition was "to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named" (Romans xv.20). Evangelism was clearly at the top of his personal agenda.

So too must evangelism come at the top of our agenda today. In the first place, because Christ has commanded us to make disciples (e.g. Matthew xxviii.18-20). But in the second place because of the dictates of human need. For in Biblical terms this world is divided between those who are being saved and those who are perishing (1 Corinthians i.18). Without Christ millions are going to a godless eternity. Precisely how many millions, only God knows. From our human perspective we can only talk of the unreached and the unchurched. In worldwide terms there are more than 2,700 million people who have yet to be reached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In British terms there are some 36 million people who are unchurched — and probably many more who do not know Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour. Here surely is reason enough for us to make evangelism a priority. Here is the reason why we can never be satisfied, however flourishing our churches may be.

However, in this paper my concern is not so much with evangelism as a general priority in the life of the church, but rather with evangelism as a national priority, and above all as a national priority for Baptists associated with the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. This at once causes difficulties. For our Baptist understanding of the church puts all the



emphasis on the local church. We don't belong to the Baptist **Church** as such, but rather to the Baptist **Union** whose churches individually seek to order their life together under the headship of Jesus Christ. How then can we talk of a national priority, when for us the action takes place at the grassroots.

Or does it? If we are honest, all too often the local church is the place where action does not take place. Or to be specific, while we can name a whole host of churches filled with evangelistic zeal, we can also name a whole host of churches which, if not downright apathetic and lethargic, are somewhat hesitant and uncertain when it comes to mission. These churches need to be given a lead. They need to be helped to see how to make evangelism a priority in their life. They need leadership.

As the Church Growth movement has clearly shown, leadership is vital to any real church growth. This is true at local church level — I believe it is also true at association and denominational level. This being so, we surely should encourage our Superintendents to give a lead. I recognise that this is not easy for them. On the one hand, they have so many other demands being made on their time: there are always problem churches to troubleshoot, wounded pastors to counsel, Baptists to represent on this committee or that. But in the end, it is a matter of priorities. I believe leadership is a priority. Then, on the other hand, there is the fact that our associations and union form a fellowship of churches, rather than a centralised organisation. Our leaders, technically speaking, have no “power”. Yet, if strong leadership can be given in such groups as disparate as the Scottish Baptists (a minority grouping) and the Southern Baptists (a majority grouping) then it surely can be given here amongst English Baptists. Indeed, there are many churches simply waiting for the right lead. Unfortunately when the lead has been given, it has not always been clear enough, or strong enough, nor indeed has it been sufficiently sustained.

Leadership can and must be exercised at a national level. Indeed, in recent years leadership in evangelism has been exercised at a national level, but by para-church groups, rather than by our denomination as such. Much as I'm grateful to those who, for instance, organised Mission England, I believe that such leadership should not be left to ad hoc groups, but rather that we ourselves should be prepared to take the initiative.

It is a fact that of all the mainline denominations in England, Baptists are the best-placed to make evangelism a national priority. Traditionally we are a missionary-minded group of people. It is not for nothing that William Carey was a Baptist. The German Baptist, J.G. Oncken expressed our tradition well when he declared: “Every Baptist a missionary”. Constitutionally too we are missionary-minded. The third article of the Baptist Union Declaration of Principle states that the basis of this union is “that it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to take part in the evangelization of the world”. Furthermore, theologically we remain mission-minded: some 80% of our churches may be classed as evangelical in outlook — which if this label means anything at all surely connotes that they are evangelistic. Last but not least, ritually we are mission-minded: the very rite of believers baptism



# WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

York House 409 Barking Road,  
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Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother

Dear Fellow Ministers

I am not one for collecting degrees and qualifications for their own sake. I am inordinately proud, however, of a certificate which I received in May, 1986 which reads:

“This is to certify that Trevor W. Davis has attended a **one day course**, thereby qualifying as an APPOINTED PERSON to meet the requirements of the Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations, 1981.”

Together with half a dozen or so other members of the staff of York House, I subjected myself to the rigorous demands of the Instructor who came to us from the St. John Ambulance Association. If, God forbid, there should now be an accident in York House, the patient will probably slip quietly away while the newly qualified Appointed Persons fall over each other in their zeal to apply their recently acquired knowledge. I wonder how many patients are killed, not by their injuries, but by the First Aiders!

Of course, there is a serious side to all this. We know the damage that can be done in our church life by those who feel qualified to involve themselves in other people's crises and to rush in where wiser angels would fear to tread. Those who are involved in Counselling ministries (and I include the West Ham Central Mission in this), are not trying to corner the market. We do believe, however, that there is a place for the experienced, skilled person in meeting the deep needs of our fellows. I like to think of the Mission as an organisation which is one or two steps beyond the "First Aid" stage in personal or family crises. We are grateful that Doctors, Ministers, Area Superintendents and all kinds of other folk see fit to refer to us people for whom they feel they can do no more. We don't know everything. We are all limited. If you feel, however, that we can be of any help to you, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours in his service,

**Trevor W. Davis,**  
Superintendent Minister.

emphasises the necessity of conversion. As a Baptist denomination we are peculiarly well-fitted to take advantage of the fresh winds of the Spirit. My plea is that we ensure we do take advantage.

.....

If evangelism is to truly be a national priority, then all sorts of new initiatives and new approaches will have to be taken — at national level! As far as our Baptist Union is concerned, I believe that it should involve the following:-

- a) **the adoption of church growth insights.** This does not mean, of course, that we have to take over everything, lock stock and barrel, which emanates from Pasadena or wherever! However, it does mean that the principles articulated by Donald McGavran and his followers should be taken seriously and, where appropriate, applied to our own situation. It saddens me that in this country Baptists have pioneered the Church Growth movement, but without the active support of the Baptist Union. It has been left to the Bible Society and to the British Church Growth Association to do the running. Unlike other Baptist Unions, ours has not sought to sponsor any church growth courses. It has simply stood on the sidelines and watched — not without some cynicism. However, hopefully that cynicism is beginning to be a thing of the past. Indeed, it must be, if evangelism is to become a priority. Not only does church growth provide a necessary antidote to the pessimism which has prevailed in our churches for far too long (“God wills his church to grow”), it also offers some very useful tools for mission. Its teaching on “body ailments” or “church growth pathology” is surely a must for any Superintendent or Association minister wanting to understand what is happening to some of our problem churches. Likewise its insights into the importance and the functioning of small groups are of first importance to any pastor concerned for growth. The emphasis on goal-setting is fundamental to all those involved in drawing up strategies for evangelism, whether at local, regional or national level. We disregard the church growth movement at our peril!
  
- b) **the restructuring of denominational structures.** At Union level it would be true to say that evangelism has played second fiddle to other concerns. Fortunately the Union is currently upgrading evangelism and at least putting it on a level with social action. However, at the end of the day there will still only be one person concerned for evangelism per se in our Mission Department, whereas there will be five other members of that department representing all sorts of other interests. At the very least, the Union should consider a further staff member — perhaps one to travel, and one to keep the home fires burning? Or one to be a consultant in evangelism, and the other to be a consultant in church renewal and church growth? However, it is not simply the Union which needs to look again its structures — the associations need to do the same if evangelism is truly to be a priority. Currently there are only two

associations employing evangelism consultants. Surely, if evangelism is to be a priority, then every major association needs to consider appointing a full-time evangelist or evangelism consultant!

- c) **the exploitation of the 10%.** Church growth leaders maintain that in the average church around 10% of the active members will have the gift of evangelism. If this is so, then we urgently need to discover those with that gift and give them full opportunity to win people to Christ. For currently it has been estimated that it is taking a thousand Christians an average of 365 days to win one person to Christ! How are such gifts best discovered? By and large through experimentation in faith-sharing initiatives. To be more precise, I believe we should seek to bring such training courses as Evangelism Explosion and One Step Forward under the Baptist umbrella — lend to them the Baptist 'imprimatur' as it were. Fair enough, they may not suit all churches — but at least they can be part of the resources of the denomination.
- d) **the re-evaluation of Home Mission Fund money.** I once had the temerity to suggest at a district meeting that the Home Mission Fund grant application be evaluated in the light of the Great Commission. This suggestion was immediately ruled out of court. But why not? When money is in short supply, should we not allocate money to churches which are actively in the business of winning men and women to Christ and his church? This is, of course, a sensitive issue, and certainly sensitivity and perspicacity will be required by those administering Home Mission monies. But if evangelism is to be a priority amongst us, then this may well mean that some projects will have to be dropped. The best may have to come before the good!
- e) **the encouragement of Baptist Union evangelists.** In other words, the Union must take seriously its second "object", viz: "To spread the Gospel of Christ by ministers and **evangelists** ...". It is strange that whereas Paul in Ephesians iv.11 writes that the Risen Christ gave evangelists to his **church**, almost without exception evangelists are not to be found in our ranks. If a man felt called of God to be an evangelist, then he had to operate outside the Union in parachurch structures. Surely that is a travesty of how things ought to be. Fortunately it has been fairly recently established that Home Mission Fund grants can be used in support of full-time evangelists. Let's encourage this development. The Anglican church have their own Anglican evangelists — we too should have ours!
- f) **a review of training offered at our theological colleges.** I would wish to ask the question of all our theological colleges: to what extent do your courses reflect the priority of evangelism? The value of learning Hebrew and Greek is indisputable, but this does not mean that our colleges can afford the luxury of simply indulging in academic excellence. First and foremost they are in the business of training pastors, and this therefore,

implies that such future pastors should be trained in all matters relating to evangelism and church growth. In spite of the many real advances made in theological education in recent years, it still is true, alas, that in British theological colleges 'practical theology' tends to be the Cinderella. I suspect that in terms of evangelism our colleges cut a poor figure in comparison with our American and Continental colleges.

- g) **a new approach to church planting.** By and large Baptist churches have come into existence when a group of Baptists in a given area feel the need of a Baptist church in the place where they live. This is understandable, and yet, do not we need a more radical approach? We live in a missionary situation, and missionary situations demand missionary methods. We should be more actively concerned to plant Baptist churches where there are no Baptists at all. Here I have in mind not simply new towns, but in old towns too. Indeed, Michael Griffiths believes that in England we should more correctly speak of church replanting. "We are planting in a garden which has been planted already ... Looking after an existing garden is quite different from starting something from scratch. If some plants die off, as many do when the summer is dry, there will be space for something new. Or if some plant is rather old and sparse, you may deliberately root it out in order to make space for new plants, bursting with fresh vitality" (M. Griffiths, "Evangelism and Church Planting — Future Directions for Church Growth" p126 in **How to Plant Churches**, ed M. Hill, London 1984). The imagery is suggestive, if not mind-blowing. Should we allow some of our inner city churches to die and plant something quite new — rather than, if we may change metaphors, simply flog a dead horse? I find myself challenged to discover that during the last five years or so, the churches of the London Baptist Association have declined a little, but four hundred new churches have been planted in the London area — mostly house churches and black churches. We need to be similarly adventurous. What's more, I suggest that we encourage all ministerial candidates to give a pre-collegiate year in being part of a pioneer church-planting team led by an experienced couple — that could prove to be most creative.
- h) **experimentation in cross-cultural mission.** Here I refer to ideas presented in **Beyond the Churches. Facing a Task Unfinished** ed. P. Brierley, London 1984. Clive Calver, for instance in his article "Beyond our Ghettos" writes: "This is a class-ridden nation and the Christian faith has become a middle-class religion.... The working-class/single parent/unemployed/inner city/northerner is far less likely to hear the message than the middle-class/family man/civil servant/suburban/southerner! Such factors must never become acceptable to us" (pp11,12). Patrick Johnstone in "Britain's Ethnic Minorities" p22 asks: "should we aim for separate ethnic churches or should we emphasise the unity of the Body of Christ which transcends culture? The

experience of many in this type of outreach is that the first generation needs a separate cultural expression of the Church with only a minority of indigenous British involved directly; but subsequent generations may become more easily integrated". Calver and Johnstone raise difficult questions to which there are no easy answers. Hence my expression "experimentation"

- i) **the introduction of mission-auditing:** What I am proposing here is a process whereby the mission of individual churches is regularly assessed or "audited" by outside "consultants". Although this would obviously have to be a voluntary scheme, it would I believe be appreciated by many ministers and churches, if there were some system which would enable experienced "outsiders" to help them stand back and take a fresh look at their mission, then fix objectives and monitor progress made. This concept of audit is not unknown elsewhere. In the Bishop of Stepney's diocese, for example, he and the Archdeacon meet with every priest every other year (i.e. in one year the priest meets the Bishop for a two hour interview in which they cover all the main aspects of his life —the parish and congregation, his specialism, frustrations, difficulties and successes, family, in-service training, plans for future moves and ministry; in the alternate year the Archdeacon visits parish and priest and they look at many more practical matters together — plant, resources, ministry within the parish etc.) In Baptist terms I would see this kind of "auditing" taking place within the association. Of course this would impose extra burdens on the time of Superintendents, Evangelism Consultants or whoever, but it could reap rich dividends if carried out well.

.....

If our denomination is to go forward, then everyone involved in leadership —at local, associational and union level — must make evangelism a priority. It will involve faith, it will involve vision. Would that we could regain the spirit of William Carey's "Deathless Sermon": "Find larger canvas, stouter and taller poles, stronger tent pegs. Catch wider visions. Dare bolder programmes. dwell in an ampler world ... Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God"!

**Rev. Dr. Paul Beasley-Murray**

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## **Forgiveness and Atonement**

*by H.D. McDonald (Baker Book House, 137 pp, £4.55)*

This book is vintage McDonald and anyone who was taught by him knows that that is a good recommendation. In eight chapters Dr. McDonald relates the theme of forgiveness to sin, revelation, Christ, grace, justification, guilt, experience and atonement. It is solid theology and yet pastorally relevant. The twin poles around which the book revolves are the insistence on a correct doctrine of forgiveness and an insistence that forgiveness is to be experienced.

As you expect from Dr. McDonald, it is full of the apt quotation with H.R. Mackintosh, P.T. Forsyth and James Denny heading the cast of the scholars on parade. And as you would also expect it is eminently quotable in itself.

No issue is more important in our churches than that of forgiveness. Our activist and demanding evangelical religion often leaves the church members feeling anything but forgiven while it paddles in the shallow waters of religious experience and insists on the necessity of a host of unimportant things. Its author has done us all a great service by taking us back to a biblical and pastoral centrality and providing us with a thorough foundation for our preaching and pastoral care.

**Derek J. Tidball**