

# The Fraternal

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## CONTENTS

<b>Editorial</b> .....	3
<b>Liberation Theology and Salvation: An Introduction</b> .....	4
by Rev. Andrew G. Pilcher Minister, Jerusalem Baptist Church, Briton Ferry, Neath.	
<b>1987: That Marvellous Year</b> .....	8
by Rev. G. Henton Davies Principal Emeritus, Regents Park College, Oxford.	
<b>A One Man Library: Best Books by Lesslie Newbiggin 1947-1987</b> .....	12
by Rev. Robert J. Thompson Tutor, Whitley College, Victoria, Australia.	
<b>An Overview of the Baptist Church in Jamaica During the Past Twenty-Five Years</b> .....	14
by Rev. Horace Russell Minister, East Queen's Street Baptist Church, Kingston, Jamaica.	
<b>Ordination Today</b> .....	21
by Rev. Paul Beasley-Murray Principal, Spurgeon's College	
<b>Please Drop Me A Line</b> .....	24
by Rev. D. Iain W. Collins Minister, York Baptist Church, Priory Street, York.	
<b>On the Way</b> .....	25
by Rev. Douglas C. Sparkes, Deputy General Secretary, The Baptist Union	
<b>Book Reviews</b> .....	26
<b>Of Interest to You</b> .....	31

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# Editorial

Commended for our singing by Bishop Moore, encouraged to embrace Wesley more closely by Dr. Rupert Davies and route-marched around our great city, looking for the "edges of his ways", we reflect upon another "London" Assembly.

For all the disadvantages of a metropolitan venue, it does appear that the success of the provincial assemblies (Bootle in the millennium?) may have reflected back upon the former since the numbers, even for the business sessions, seemed to be more than ever. In that great Non-Conformist preaching centre we could easily have been back in the days of Campbell-Morgan and before him, the seraphic Dr. Jowett.

Sitting there, at once gladdened and disturbed by the implications of the call to "Shalom", one could not help but wonder at the significance of such an occasion. Whatever the status of the Assembly, be it consultative, executive or deliberative, it surely serves to enhance the identity of that people called "Baptist". For three precious days all our vicissitudes and theological divergencies were overcome by something greater and richer: a shared belonging to one whose grace is the common denominator of us all.

Further, one wondered what our future is to be. Though we meet on the landing in the great Household of God, and not half enough (how terribly sad when lone Baptists are seized upon like a prize in ecumenical meetings), what is our historical destiny in the purposes of God? Will there ever come a time when our distinctive contributions will have served their purposes in terms of the World Church, and when that time comes will we be prepared to accept the implications? Thoughts during an Assembly.

Andrew Pilcher, in our first contribution, begins a two-part article on the nature of liberation theology, particularly in its "salvation" aspect. If our western concept of salvation is inadequate because not contextual, is that of the Third World equally inadequate because exclusively so?

It is the "God of the Years" who is celebrated next in the life of Henton Davies. So many anniversaries and evocative events made 1987 for him, unforgettable. The article will be of special interest to former Bristol and Regent's students.

Lesslie Newbigin that respected Christian statesman, comes to us this quarter by way of a review of his many influential books. Bob Thompson takes on a tour of Newbigin's literary output. This is followed by an overview of Baptist life in Jamaica, these past twenty-five years. Horace Russell makes us feel how static is the U.K. scene by comparison!

The emerging theology of "ministry" has stimulated Paul Beasley-Murray to devise an Ordination Rite which takes account of it. Perhaps it will prompt some response.

Lastly, this quarter, Iain Collins, on behalf of all our college chaplains, makes a plea for our young people to be commended, that proper care be given while in college and university. And Douglas Sparkes gives us an up-date on the progress of the new Baptist hymn book and service book.

# Liberation Theology and Salvation: An Introduction

There is a theology which has gained ground since the late 1960's which is featured regularly in the press. It attempts to practise theology in a new way, looking at the Church's involvement in politics, and comes out on the side of the poor against those who are the cause and upholders of oppression.

Liberation Theology was born as a movement of protest within the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America. In this country, ever since Gustavo Gutierrez's 'Theology of Liberation' was translated into English in 1974, there has been a steady growth of material written on the subject of Liberation Theology. There are great differences between Liberation Theology and traditional Western Theology, not least in the area of salvation where it seems there is a dispute as to whether salvation should be defined in a physical or a spiritual sense.

## Definition

One of the problems we face as we try to define Liberation Theology is that because it emerges from situations of oppression which differ from place to place, it is necessarily expressed in different ways. Salvation will therefore be expressed in different terms by different theologians.

Gustavo Gutierrez, the Peruvian theologian, defines the theology of liberation. He says it is a theological reflection

"based on the gospel and the experiences of men and women committed to the process of liberation in the oppressed and exploited land of Latin America. It is a theological reflection born of shared efforts to abolish the current unjust situation and to build a different society freer and more human"<sup>1</sup>

Gutierrez rejects any dichotomy between redemption from sin and liberation from social expression of sin, as do many of the liberation theologians.

This is not to say that they are uninterested in sin. They tend to see sin as a corporate or structural evil rather than something which is personal. Some liberation theologians do not talk about liberation from personal sin at all. The most important act for liberation theologians is involvement in the liberation process. The oppressed should be set free. Theology comes afterwards as a second act.

We can see that Liberation Theology wants liberation for people from all kinds of oppression. The message of Jesus, according to Leonardo Boff is

"of a radical and total liberation of the human condition from all its alienating elements"<sup>2</sup>

One could interpret this as including liberation from personal sin, but Boff does not include that idea here at all.

Important words and concepts for liberation theologians are "social justice" and "human rights". For many of the liberation theologians these things are of supreme importance and are talked about continually. As far as most liberation theologians are concerned, socialism is the road for Christians, and they see capitalism as evil. Therefore it is not surprising that liberation theology takes Marxism very seriously and is influenced by Marxist thought. J. Andrew Kirk

says that liberation theology begins not only from a Marxist analysis of society's structures as oppressive, but from a practical identification with a process that will change them. Is this the case? How important is Marxism to liberation theology? Do liberation theologians just use parts of Marxist thought, or is Marxism dominant in Liberation Theology? We will seek to answer this question in Part Two of this article.

Many liberation theologians would advocate the use of violence to bring about the revolution that will end oppression. Some others believe that the liberation the gospel teaches must be non-violent. However, on one thing all liberation theologians agree, namely that liberation is a sharp reminder in any society that change is often brought about from the bottom up rather than through the actions of the influential 'top' people.

So we conclude that the definition of Liberation Theology overall can be summed up by saying it is an attempt to spell out the social and political implications of the Christian gospel in terms of the liberation of men and women from oppression and injustice. We recognise that the question as to whether or not this includes liberation from personal sin is largely left unanswered.

## **Western Theology**

Liberation Theology takes issue with the theology of the West over the West's claim that 'orthodoxy' — correct thinking about Christ — is of the utmost importance. Liberation theologians make a counter claim that 'orthopraxis' —correct acting in the light of Christ — is more important and should be tackled first. Boff claims that

"liberative praxis constitutes the surest road to the God of Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup> So liberation involves action. The oppressed want liberation from their oppression, and they try to work out how this liberation can be procured. People of a like mind group together and form 'base communities' and protest groups. Discussions between oppressed and oppressors may take place, but in most cases a general uprising of the people is anticipated and is often seen as the only way effectively to procure liberation.

We now move on to another important teaching of liberation theology, that of the historical Jesus. Liberation theologians put up the claim that theologians in the West proclaim a Jesus who is the 'Christ of faith', whereas they believe it is of fundamental importance to look behind the Christ of faith and come up with the 'Jesus of history'. As we study how Jesus acted in his day, we can see how as Christians we can act today in light of this.

Sobrinó's starting point in his 'Christology at the Crossroads' is the historical Jesus. There is, however, much debate as to whether or not the historical Jesus can be found. We will again leave the discussion of this issue until Part Two.

Another concept which seems to be important for liberation theologians is the 'Kingdom of God'. The Kingdom of God was important for Jesus who saw it as a present reality. Jesus claimed that the Kingdom of God came through what he said and what he did. This was very hard for the people listening because Jesus acted in ways alien to their practices. The miracles were signs that the Kingdom of God had come and yet Jesus prayed "Thy Kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10/Luke 11:2), which suggests it was still something in the future. So there can be seen tensions in Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God. It could be, however, that although in one sense the Kingdom had come with the coming of Jesus, it would not be fully realized until some future date, traditionally the Second Coming.

Liberation theologians move somewhat along this line in as much as they see the Kingdom of God as a present reality. They see the Kingdom as being most evident among the poor and oppressed. As oppressive regimes are overthrown, probably through revolution, the Kingdom of God is ushered in. Christians can therefore speed up the process of ushering in the Kingdom of God by ridding the world of oppression. Boff argues that Christ did not begin by preaching himself but the Kingdom of God. He claims that Christians in the West have got things wrong and now preach Christ instead of the Kingdom. Sobrino quotes Karl Rahner on this very point, "Jesus preached the Kingdom of God not himself".<sup>4</sup>

R. Ruether says that Liberation Theology restores the Kingdom of God to the centre of the Christian message and like Jesus' message, the message of the Church is to announce the Kingdom.

Liberation theologians' views of the Kingdom of God do not all agree. In some cases their view of the Kingdom of God is very like a Marxist view of Utopia. Indeed Miranda clearly sees the Kingdom of God as Communism.<sup>5</sup> In other cases the Kingdom of God is something which starts on this earth and is ushered in by the abolition of exploitation, but reaches its culmination in the eschatological future.<sup>6</sup> As Moltmann says,

"The church in the power of the Spirit is not yet the Kingdom of God but it is its anticipation in history."<sup>7</sup>

Not only do the liberation theologians look to the liberative actions of the historical Jesus, and his teaching and demonstration of the kingdom of God, they also look to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Boff points out that

"Jesus, in order to bring salvation and liberation, first passed through suffering and death".<sup>8</sup>

He sees the resurrection as the realization of Jesus' announcement of total liberation especially from the reign of death.

## **Biblical foundation**

Liberation theologians have a number of important texts in the Bible, to which they turn in support of their doctrine of liberation. Let us look at such texts:

The 'Exodus' is of extreme importance to Liberation Theology. (Exodus 6:6-7)

Andrew Kirk points out that in the theology of liberation a reinterpretation of the Exodus is taken up, in terms of the greater and deeper deliverance which Christ effects through his death and resurrection, forming a new creation, not now of one nation, but of the whole of mankind.<sup>9</sup> Allan Boesak claims that

"One can safely say that the Exodus-event is as central to the Old Testament as is the resurrection to the New".<sup>10</sup>

Gutierrez says that liberation from Egypt is an event that will be re-read again and again to shed light on other historical interventions of Yahweh.<sup>11</sup> The Exodus is seen as an event which should take place in every situation of oppression.

Liberation theologians also point in the Bible to the Messianic prophecies of the future king as the establisher of justice and the liberator of the poor (Isaiah 9:5-7; Isaiah 11:1-9; Jeremiah 23:2-8; Ezekiel 34:23-27) The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) is also pointed to here.

In the New Testament, there is a passage in Luke chapter 4 which lies at the heart of the theology of liberation. Jesus applies these words to himself where he says,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord". (Luke 4:18-19)

This passage, according to Boesak, ties together the main thrust of several Old Testament passages, Isaiah 61:1; Isaiah 58; Isaiah 52:7; and Psalm 107:20. But he claims that many Western commentators take little or no notice of this passage. Boesak seems to feel that this passage is side-stepped by Western theologians. By spiritualizing it rather than taking it at face value they do not see it as a model for Christians to follow. He also claims that some people in their commentaries pass no comment on this passage at all.<sup>12</sup>

This passage from Luke 4 comes up time and time again in the writings of the liberation theologians. Jesus is seen very much as the Liberator. But Gutierrez does feel there is a problem with this and asks the question,

“Why when Jesus defined his mission in terms of the liberation of the oppressed did he leave an entire people still in slavery?”<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps it is just worth noting that it is not only liberation theologians who see Jesus as the Liberator. John Robinson says that Jesus as Liberator is one of three understandings Jesus had at different times of his ministry.<sup>14</sup>

## **Salvation within Liberation Theology**

Kirk points out that one of the chief tasks of the theology of liberation for Gutierrez is to reflect on the relationship between salvation and the historical process of man's liberation. Salvation is the key concept which explains the work of Christ as Liberator. Segundo argues from Paul's 'Adam/Christ' teaching that salvation is for all. Man is saved when he puts himself within the sphere of the continuation of Christ's saving work of liberating the oppressed.<sup>15</sup>

Ruether feels that for liberation theologians, sin means not only alienation from God and personal brokenness of life but also the structural evils of war, racism, sexism and economic exploitation which allow some people to dehumanize others. Therefore for her, salvation means not only reconciliation with God and personal amendment of life, but a commitment to a struggle for a transformed social order where all evils will be overcome.<sup>16</sup>

Boff sees the essential theme of the Church as salvation meaning social change, creating a more just society.<sup>17</sup> David Wells points out<sup>18</sup> that at a meeting of the World Council of Churches at Bangkok in 1973, where the majority of people were from the Third World, the essential definition of salvation which emerged was that of arriving at personal wholeness. To be saved means to realize one's full potential. In the Third World the socio-economic-political order is often an impediment to this and therefore this order is sin which needs to be overcome. The Council further defined salvation in a number of interconnected dimensions namely that: salvation works in the struggle for economic justice against the exploitation of people by people. Salvation also works in the struggle for human dignity against political oppression of human beings by their fellow men. It is at work in the struggle for solidarity against the alienation of person from person. And finally salvation works in the struggle of hope against despair in personal life.

Wells points out that Bangkok, in its interpretation of salvation, was characterized by strong anti-Western feeling. It is possible that to some extent they have overstated their case. Although in general probably many liberation theologians would be happy with this definition of salvation.

Many liberation theologians, however, neglect the concept of personal forgiveness. It would seem difficult to arrive at personal wholeness ignoring this aspect of personal forgiveness for one's sin. In Part Two it will be asserted that any view of salvation which neglects personal forgiveness is defective and that, for this reason, Liberation Theology needs to be restated.

## Summary

For Liberation Theology, salvation equals liberation. Salvation is demonstrated by working for liberation, by standing firmly against all oppression, and by identifying with and showing solidarity with the poor and the oppressed.

“Evangelization or the proclamation of the good news is the proclamation of Christ’s liberation”<sup>19</sup> (Matthew 25:31-45)

“Jesus Christ wanted nothing else in this world but to free all human beings and bring them to complete fulfilment.”<sup>20</sup>

Jesus said: “I have come that men may have life and may have it in all its fullness”. (John 10:10 N.E.B.)

## Notes

1. Gutierrez, G *Theology of Liberation* (1974) ix
2. Boff, L *Jesus Christ Liberator* (1980) 80
3. Ibid 284
4. Sobrino, J *Christology at the Crossroads* (1976) 9
5. Miranda, J.P. *Marx against the Marxists* (1980) 235
6. Boff, op cit 281
7. Moltmann, J *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1977) 196
8. Boff, op cit 151
9. Kirk, J.A. *Liberation Theology (an evangelical view from the Third World)* (1979) 123
10. Boesak, A *Black Theology, Black Power* (1976) 18
11. Gutierrez, G *The Power of the Poor in History* (1979) 6
12. Boesak, op cit.,<sup>24</sup> He cites H.D.A. Major, T.W. Manson and C.J.Wright 'The Mission and Message of Jesus' (1947); W. Barclay 'Jesus as they saw Him' (1963); J.Arthur Baird 'The Justice of God in the teaching of Jesus' (1963)
13. Gutierrez, G *Theology of Liberation* (1974) 229
14. Robinson, J.A.T. *The Human Face of God* (1973) 81-82
15. Kirk, op cit., 108-109
16. Ruether, R.R. *To Change the World* (1981) 19
17. Boff, L *Church, Charism and Power* (1985) 10
18. Wells, D.F *The Search for Salvation* (1978) 121
19. Gutierrez, G *The Power of the Poor in History* (1979) 18
20. Boff, L *Jesus Christ Liberator* (1980) 295

Andrew G. Pilcher

## 1987: That Marvellous Year!

In spite of its sorrows and distresses 1987 was for my wife and me a most marvellous year. Some mournings have been severe indeed. David Evans, a deacon at Sutton, one of the best loved men in Pembrokeshire; Irene Davies the beautiful and well-loved doctor in Narberth and deacon at Bethesda, Haverfordwest, cut off in and even before their prime; my wife's only and younger sister, Dilys Treharne of Cardiff; the passing of these and so many others, fellow-students and students, brings so many gaps and gashes in our earthly fellowship. Illness too in various bodily organs showing where the last enemy will probably make its final attack. But, nevertheless, a year of great experiences and privileges.

The first notable event of the year was the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the removal of Regent's Park College from Regent's Park in London to its new



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central site in Oxford. This celebration in March also included the opening of the Wheeler Robinson House, a ceremony which was kindly entrusted to me by the College authorities. These further extensions virtually completed the development of the site as originally intended by the great Wheeler Robinson himself, except that now the College comprises buildings in two quadrangles, and not one as in the days of the great Doctor. The College also gave me the great privilege of preaching the Oxford Diamond Jubilee sermon, when the text was: "Thou shalt remember all the way the LORD God hath led thee.." (Deut 8:2a). I invited the congregation in college to consider the way we had come, not only for forty but for sixty years. I reminded them of the trials of the way as well as its triumphs, its failures as well as its achievements. Then I brought to their remembrance the names of the men and women, the ministers and lay people who were their companions on the way, who had believed in us and supported us, some of whom like Walter Bottoms had walked every yard of the way. Then I bade them consider that Great One who had been the Guide and the Goal of the way, in whose Name and for whose Gospel all had been ventured.

So peering on the way that lay ahead, I made so bold as to venture two suggestions. I proposed that if women students were to continue to form a third or even more of the student body, then the appointment of a woman tutor should have high priority in the College's future plans.

I made a further suggestion. In view of the new world into which science and technology have launched us, and would from now on continue to dominate and revolutionise our very daily living, then the future training of the ministry must take account of this new scientific way of thinking. Thus all colleges, and not merely Regent's, but Regent's essentially, should consider the appointment of a tutor in science. A hundred years or more ago, Bristol College and Regent's actually taught some of the branches of science to their students. Such teaching was no longer necessary, but insight into the scientific mind, baptism with the scientific spirit and an understanding of how the scientific dimensions enveloped would increasingly measure the course of life and was now the highest priority. Without such insight and without some sympathetic cohering with the scientific mind, our very gospel preaching would be increasingly limited, ineffective and dangerously irrelevant.

So Regent's Park College has now been in Oxford for 60 years, and since 1957 has been incorporated into the University of Oxford as one of the five Permanent Private Halls of the University. The College has made, and continues to make, a tremendous contribution to the membership and teaching of the Faculty of Theology through its training of men and women for the Baptist Ministry, at home and abroad. Increasing numbers of lay students, men and women, are entering the College to read subjects other than Theology, and two first class honours degrees in English this year add lustre to the College records.

The establishment of Regent's Park College at Oxford and in the University has been one of the most notable and significant Baptist achievements of this century, and deserves to be more widely known, recognised and acclaimed.

Then, five days later, we returned to the College to partake of the end of term dinner which in 1987 was held in honour of the Revd. J. Eifion Morgan-Wynne, for twenty-five years student, tutor and Dean of the College. After the dinner the privilege came to me of paying the final tribute to this distinguished pastor, scholar and servant of the College and to offer the valedictory prayer. A layman very prominent in the life of the College remarked: "One of the happiest evenings I have ever enjoyed here."

These two events in March 1987 were thus the great springboard for other events which followed.

Nasty illnesses in April notwithstanding, we were sufficiently recovered for great events in Bristol over the weekend of May 16 and 17. Westbury-on-Trym Baptist Church was celebrating the 40th anniversary of its gathering and covenanting as a Church of Jesus Christ. A great crowd gathered for the celebration supper on the Saturday night.

Forty one years ago or so my dear wife had begun a Sunday School in our living room with several helpers and three children. One year later the first anniversary was conducted by Revd. F.C. Bryan of Tyndale and then 57 parents and children partook of tea in our home. The wet day in no way dampened our spirits and Mr. Bryan left that afternoon convinced of the need and necessity of a Church in this growing part of Westbury. Building plots were purchased, temporary buildings — "the huts" —erected, and soon one Sunday a party of teachers and scholars left our home to take up residence in their new Sunday School building. In 1947 the Church was constituted, the site fully developed, and the Church growing and expanding. Let there be no mistake about this, my wife began it all, and to her all the initial credit is due.

After the Saturday night supper, Mr. Warwick, one of the leaders from the beginning, led a party from our old home to the church, thus re-enacting the original walk more than forty years earlier. A former pastor, Revd. Paterson, preached at the morning service, and I preached at the United Tyndale-Westbury service on the Sunday evening. That was the third great event in this wonderful year.

In June we were back at Regent's in Oxford to take part in the End of Session Gathering for the leaving students. The occasion was notable also for a formal leave-taking of Revd. J.E. Morgan-Wynne, and memorable also because the day included the retirement from his office as Chairman of the College, of Sir Godfray Le Quesne, Q.C.,M.A. Sir Godfray, also chairman of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, had served as Chairman of the College for no fewer than 29 years. Presentations were made to him and Lady Susan, and tributes in which I joined to his sterling leadership, wise counsel and able chairmanship, were paid. Thus I saw him in and saw him out, and remember in particular with Mr. Edgar Bonsall, the then College Treasurer, a great triple working partnership and an abiding friendship which continues.

Altogether 1987 had been a tremendous and stirring year at Regent's, and the present Principal and Committee in giving my wife and me so prominent a place in these celebrations, did us great honour. We rejoice in the continuing progress and ever widening influence of the College in the University and among Baptists throughout the world.

In addition something else even more personal may be permitted here.

September 1987 which was to see our 52nd Wedding Anniversary, saw also our elder daughter's Silver Wedding. All our family gathered at the home of Dr. David and Mrs Yona Pusey for a celebration and for a thanksgiving to the Almighty. Golden Weddings, and no doubt Silver Weddings, will surely become less frequent in a society which is fast losing its understanding of marriage, its quality, duration and function in our national life. That our daughter had also been appointed Honorary Secretary of the European Baptist Women's Federation, added to our excitement and joy.

September 28 was the fifth great occasion in this marvellous year, and certainly the most moving event of all. On the evening of that day representatives of Regent's and Bristol Baptist Colleges, members of the Bristol College Brotherhood and of Bristol Baptist Churches formed a congregation of about 500 people to welcome, induct and bless the thirteenth President and Principal

of Bristol Baptist College. The service took place in the famous Broadmead Church and Dr. W.M. S. West, the retiring President, presided in the regretted absence through illness of the Secretary of the Baptist Union, the Revd. Bernard Green. Accounts of this meeting have appeared in the press, but the occasion was notable for me for several reasons. Thus that day was the 50th anniversary of my own election as Tutor-designate to the College, a post which I had taken up one year later in 1938 in partnership with the redoubtable Dr. A. Dakin, the then President. Then again the new President was one of my own students and later one of my tutors at Regent's. The Revd. J.E. Morgan-Wynne was my colleague and co-worker, my friend and my brother in the Lord. I had taken the lead in appointing him at Regent's, and now in 1987 the privilege of 'preaching him in' at Bristol was also given to me. I was enveloped in a glorious atmosphere of memories and felt laden with love of so many. I was so greatly moved and honoured.

Wrapped up in my commendation of the new Principal was my charge to the new Principal. These were the words of that unspoken charge:

Maintain your Performance:

Master and fulfil your Principalship:

Manifest and remain your loving self.

These were the five great events, the dominant experiences of that year of grace. No previous year has ever been quite like it, and no future year can ever match it.

**G. Henton Davies**

## **A One Man Library: Best Books by Lesslie Newbigin 1947-1987**

When in 1951 a small book from the SCM Religious Book Club called *South India Diary* arrived in my letter box, I little knew that it would be followed by a veritable library by the same author, who would be clear winner in my personal "book stakes" for the Book of the Decades across the next, nearly forty years. It began with a description of the opening service of the United Church of South India in 1947, of which the author, Lesslie Newbigin, had been a chief architect. It was not his first book because in 1948, in the immediate wake of the Union, he had written an impassioned plea to Anglicans to accept the new body, of which he, a Presbyterian, was now Bishop — *The Reunion of the Church*. He pointed out that 2,300 villages in his area could not celebrate Communion because they had only lay pastors and not episcopally ordained ministers. In calling for the "re-union of the Church" he said that the spectacle of the churches preaching the "gospel of reconciliation", when they were divided themselves, was as scandalous as members of a Temperance Society being always drunk!

Then summing up these discussions of the "Forties" came "the best book" — *The Household of God*, which for the first time recognised that in addition Catholic and Protestant churches there was a "third force", which he described as "Communities of the Spirit" to cover the Pentecostal-type groups that were continuously springing up — this ten years before the Charismatic Movement! This book has not lost its value and I use it still in teaching the Doctrine of the Church, although now along with a very similar book using similar categories from the 1980's — R.E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*.

The "Fifties" was a time of much discussion of the relation of Christianity to the other religions and Lesslie Newbigin, by now Secretary of the International Missionary Council, and both an "ecumenical and an evangelical", crowned this

decade with his *Faith for this One World*. His answer to the question "Where shall we look for a world faith?" was a strong assertion "of the unique revelation in Christ". This had been spelled out in detail in an earlier doctrinal book for Indian Christians: *Sin and Salvation*, also in the Religious Book Club (1956), and was to become the theme of an even more important book *The Finality of Christ* in the late 1960's. Newbigin claimed that there was no way forward in seeing the best Hindus as "anonymous" Christians, as was being advocated, because it was the best people (Pharisees etc) who crucified Christ, and the best Hindus were most bitter against Him, while the worst people like publicans and Samaritans accepted Jesus where priests and Levites did not.

Earlier than this, however, was my "Sixties" choice as the best book in response to *Honest to God* (Bishop Robinson), *Secular City* (Harvey Cox) and a crop of books on "secular theology", Newbigin's *Honest Religion for Secular Man* which was so much "against the stream" that SCM hesitated to publish it but found when they finally did so it was the best seller of all Newbigin's books, even being recommended by Rome to her followers. Looking back on the period Newbigin writes: "Never surely was a best-seller so quickly buried and forgotten as Harvey Cox's *Secular City* .. the 'spirituality of the seventies' replaced the secularity of the sixties' almost overnight".

By this time Newbigin was back in India as Bishop of Madras (in all he spent thirty-seven years in India), and pre-occupied with missionary concerns which had inspired him earlier to write for the WCC "The Missionary Structure of the Congregation" and "The Relevance of Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission", which in turn was to become the basis of the best book of the "Seventies", *The Open Secret*. In this, the opening chapters were devoted to "Mission of the Triune God", and the succeeding chapters on the role of each person of the Trinity, with final chapters on "Gospel and world History", "The Gospel among the religions", and "Mission as action for God's justice". Particularly valuable is the chapter on Church Growth, Conversion and Culture. He asserted: "It matters supremely to bring more people to know Jesus as saviour", "The fewness of the converts is not a reason for giving up", "We still need missions not just mission", and in affirmation of the latter he refused to allow the missionary journal *International Review of Missions* to be changed to *Review of Mission*, at least while he remained editor.

In 1974 he retired to England at the age of 65, and immediately was appointed lecturer in Mission Theology at Selly Oak College in Birmingham and four years later, in his seventieth year, Moderator of the United Reformed Church of England. The decade of the "Eighties" has seen yet more books from his pen. In 1982 it was a devotional yet scholarly commentary on John's Gospel, *The Light Has Come*, rivalling William Temple's masterpiece *Readings from John's Gospel*. It reflected his discussions with Hindus across many years and told how they were excited by John 1 with its *logos* (word) and "the light that lighteth every man that comes into the world", but were challenged by the "one way Jesus" teaching of John 14:6. Challenging to us are his comments on the texts about "signs and wonders" which Jesus refuses to work at men's instigation to compel belief (John 4:43-54), as "a sign is an attempt to subordinate revelation to reason" (John 2:23-25, 6: 30), but did work them at his own time, in his own way and on his own initiative.

Then in 1985 came the autobiography *Unfinished Agenda* spanning most of the years of our century between his birth in 1909 and the present day. It is an almost unrivalled survey of the issues the Church has encountered during these years. A small book of 1984 *The Other Side of 1984* was supplemented also in 1985 by "the book of the decade" *Foolishness to the Greeks* (The Gospel and

Western culture). Never an “Ivory Tower” Christian, Newbigin while living in Geneva and working for the WCC, into which the IMC had been merged, tried to evangelize pagan westerners in the high-rise flats building of four hundred and fifty families in which he lived. Later in Birmingham, though over seventy years of age, he took on the pastorate of an inner-city church, and found even harder-hearted pagans in modern Britain than either Geneva or India — England was not just secular but pagan. Where the people of India still had hope for the future, those of England had none.

The Enlightenment had thought Science to have resolved all problems, it was now clear that it had solved none. Politics was equally depressing as “The only convinced Marxists today are dissidents in the West, and the only convinced Liberals are dissidents in the East”. In successive chapters he deals with “The Dialogue with Science” (What can we know?), “The Dialogue with Politics” (What is to be done?), and “The Call to the Church” (What must we be?). He spoke of England as a missionary problem and lamented the loss of confidence that the English were showing in their own gospel, and their willingness to “live and let live” with the Eastern religions now widely represented by Pakistanis, Sikhs and Indians in their midst. There was a still “a word for the world” and that was “the Word of the Cross”, which had turned him from liberal theology to evangelical faith as a young SCMer when he first read James Denney’s commentary on Romans. As he had said in the earliest of the books surveyed above “The message of the Cross bursts on the busy world of human life like a mine on the bustling life of an ocean steamer — all its round of social activities, cliques and coteries is forgotten — only one question remains — life or death?” (*Reunion of the Church*).

**Bob Thompson**

## **An Overview of the Church in Jamaica during the Past Twenty-Five Years**

The Church has been one of the oldest, seminal institutions of our island and society. It has been here since the encounter of Columbus with the Arawaks, and although her relationships have changed, she has remained one of the cohesive forces in our nation. She presided over the arrival of slavery but also contributed to its demise. She undergirded colonialism and imperialism but was also the agent of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialist sentiment and activity. She initiated the independence movement and provided the platform for the emergence of island-states in the Caribbean, but at the same time encouraged, by example, the way of federal relationships in the region. Because, fundamentally, the Church is about people and their beliefs, personally and corporately, she is a paradox. And it is this paradox which has been played out before our eyes these twenty-five years.

The story begins with the theological students’ conference of 1959 and the International Missionary Conference (1961) held at Caenwood, then Union Theological Seminary. Both conferences occurred because at an earlier conference of churches in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico (1954), the dawn of the new awareness that the church in the Caribbean was at a cross-roads was recognized, and she had to decide whether she was a pale shadow of the Church of the colonial masters, or whether she was to be owned by the peoples of the region. The details of the conferences are not important except to remember

that they were called because church leaders felt that the winds of independence were now stronger, and the Church as a part of this had to be sure what her place was.

The theological students' conference in these circumstances was an attempt to introduce future church leaders to each other, and in a way the effort succeeded. The I.M.C. conference was a more local effort to get together all mission boards which supported churches here with their local counterparts in a discussion to lay the ground rules for future cooperation and mission.

This conference under the chairmanship of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, a long-time friend of Archdeacon Price of Montego Bay and recently of the Church of South India, was to leave an indelible imprint on church relations over the succeeding decades. **It laid down the principle that mission boards and their counterparts should relate office to office and not through agents or agencies set up by mission boards in the island.** Some churches had already been doing this, but not the majority, and this principle of mutual respect led to other things. It was also generally agreed that the sending of missionaries would be at the request of the local churches or communions and that these missionaries would be under the authority of the local communion. This stance was helped greatly by a presentation given to the conference by Rex Nettleford, a Rhodes Scholar and an exponent of modern dance, fresh from his triumphs in Oxford and an Anglican churchman from St. James. Further, there was discussion on the social framework of the church's mission with discussions on migration (to England), family life, education and food. On the internal life of the church, much was said about Ecumenical Movement, and the need for ecumenical formation through a united teaching programme for pastors at the University of the West Indies, the need to strengthen the administration of the Jamaica Council of Churches which had a secretary, Stanford Webley (but limited financial resources) and also the support of the Student Christian Movement (which has since died) under its secretary, Horace Russell.

When Independence came in 1962, some sections of the churches had already done some thinking as to their relationships with their overseas partners and their own local ecumenical commitments, and to a large extent the past ten or so years of independence have been a working out of these principles.

Some of the resultants have been that on the ecumenical scene, the United Theological College was built and continues to train men and women for the ministry of churches and schools. It remains the largest based ecumenical foundation of its kind in the world, bringing together ten communions in its funding and participation. At the very outset, due to the foresight and commitment of Archbishop McElaney, the Roman Catholics became an integral part of the teaching programme, so that the local priest sits in the same classes as the Methodist pastor, and sometimes the Pentecostal preacher. Although the S.C.M. died, in its place Inter-Schools and Varsity Christian Fellowship and Youth For Christ have grown to become umbrella organisations under which the same ecumenical spirit among the youth can be worked out.

Over these twenty-five years the denominational scene has become more complex and each communion much more sophisticated in its organisation. Percival Gibson, the Anglican Bishop of this period used to speak of the communions in two categories. Those which had their roots in the Catholic classical tradition and those which did not. It was a convenient device for speaking about the churches but these twenty-five years have seen a remarkable shift in pattern and content of theology and these categories do not reflect the current scene. There are many reasons for this. There was the sanction of those emergent patterns of new and indigenous liturgical patterns

subsequent on the coming in being of the Caribbean Conference of Churches in 1973; there were the experiments of the Roman Catholics at St. Michael's Seminary and Aquinas Centre by Barry Chevannes and Richard Holong, and in the University by Noel Dexter, a member of the Church of God, which had far-reaching implications for the churches. Here was the use of folk rhythms in their raw and earthy state being used to communicate the traditional classical liturgy. And in this regard Radio Jamaica Rediffusion with its broadcast of the Sunday Morning Service and a dynamic islandwide religious coverage, the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation's *Tell Me Pastor*, hosted by Cleve Grant (Church of God), Horace Russell (Baptist) and John Hood (Methodist) each morning, and a Youth Programme with an input of religion supervised by Don Taylor (now Anglican Bishop of Virgin Islands) and later Oliver Daley (United Church), playing his guitar, did much to give this new image to the Church and make it populist.

That these new patterns were coeval with the rise of Black Power and Black Theology, stimulated the folk roots of local religion so that between 1973 and now the simmering indigenous faith of the people has been able to boil over in many ways.

A change of government in 1972 provided for the churches in an organized way an opportunity to give expression to this new awareness. For the next eight years the "main-line" churches, through the Jamaica Council of Churches made their voice heard on a number of social and political issues. So much so, that the churches were thought to be aligned with the new Socialist government of Michael Manley, which was itself articulating and addressing the very same populist folk issues. During this period the Church addressed the question of Unemployment and its attendant evils. It addressed the question of Family Life and demanded new social legislation as a whole. But above all it addressed itself to the new national consciousness which was now bursting into life. Communion after communion which had been content to retain old ties and loyalties with the metropolitan countries of Europe and North America, began to question these relationships and in some cases to break these ties. Autonomous church groupings became a feature of this period and the cry of representation at the places where decisions were taken was made by the young and women who were in revolt. Christian boards began for the first time to consciously include youth and women delegates and assemblies and Synods consciously secured youth and women participation.

In this change of attitude Canada played a significant role with its bilateral and multilateral arrangements with Jamaican churches. The Canadian churches in giving aid discussed with their counterparts not only their needs and methods but gave help with no strings attached. And, what was more, sought aid of the Jamaican churches in terms of personnel and ideas.

The Anglicans developed for instance a Caribbean, U.S.A., and Canadian relationship. And the idea of twinning of parishes and of churches came on stream and spread, so that autonomy and independence did not rob the local churches of their inter-dependence.

This new relationship, however, adversely affected local church union negotiations which at this time looked promising, actively culminating in the establishment of the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman. Wider talks were taking place and had included Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Moravians, Disciples and Methodists, but now appeared to be put on the back burner. (Even now some talking is taking place but not at a significant depth). These talks were stymied by this new intra-confessional dialogue which had now begun to take place and naturally took precedence.

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**To the Readers of the Fraternal.**

Dear Friends,

In the financial press and the "money" columns of the newspapers there has been considerable reference to the Financial Services Act 1986. In particular, after the 29th April this year it became illegal for firms or persons to provide "investment advice" unless they are authorised as required by the Act as Independent Intermediaries or have become tied agents.

The Baptist Insurance Company does not itself underwrite life assurance but has in the past responded to requests for assurance companies. The volume of life business placed by us was modest but we performed a useful service to our clients. The Financial Services Act faced us with the alternatives of seeking authorisation, or becoming tied agents or ceasing to give advice on life assurance matters.

The amount of business transacted did not justify the administrative work or cost of authorisation as independent intermediaries. Neither as tied agents did we wish to be seen as only recommending one life assurance company who clearly could not be best at everything! Regretfully therefore we have ceased to provide a life assurance service although I am sure the knowledge and experience of our senior staff is of greater depth than many an authorised intermediary.

Yours sincerely,

**M.E. PURVER**  
General Manager



Nevertheless, while theological discussion on church-union issues were lessened, engagement in the social aspects of the Christian faith increased. **The Jamaican Council of Churches became the medium through which churches began to express together their solidarity with the poor and their opposition to oppression and exploitation.** It was an agent which by its nature was cooperative and as such had a multi-lateral effect upon the nation. It was therefore the sort of institution that governments tend to listen to, and if possible attempt to manipulate to their own ends. These social programmes attracted international attention especially after the Caribbean Conference of Churches was formed and CADEC enlarged its area of operation, so that by the mid 70's, while church union discussions were not actively taking place, nevertheless the churches were acting in concert confronting the people-issues of the day.

It was at this time that the J.C.C. developed a wide range of programmes to combat the divisions in the Corporate Area along party-political lines which had resulted in violence, evidenced in the Orange Street Fire and the Rema episode, by establishing a House of Reconciliation between the community in Rema and that living in the "Concrete Jungle". Alongside there was a legal Aid Clinic established in Spanish Town Road, a massive feeding programme and an open house to the leadership of all political parties. Through the Broadcasting Commission the Council was able to exercise (while it lasted) a prophetic ministry, giving a theological analysis of the current situation.

The net result was that during the Seventies the churches of the J.C.C. gave a lead in creating a wholistic concept of the faith and society. The paradox was that while this universality was being promoted the particularity of the gospel was being rooted in its national and sometimes racial aspects. And this latter was taking place along denominational lines. So that come the 80's there was a conflict of universalities and particularities, within denominations and between denominations.

It was a tribute to the successive administrations of the J.C.C. and in particular to Father Edmund Davis the Secretary, that these competing claims were not allowed to get unduly out of hand. For the times were indeed difficult and traumatic not the least for the leadership of the churches. With the coming of the Eighties, another ecumenical reality emerged on the scene.

The churches which had come into Jamaica subsequent to the Depression of 1929 and had given great comfort to the lower socio-economic groupings of the time as the Non-conformists and Evangelicals had done a century before, had grown in numbers and influence but had gained little national recognition. Their leadership was not consulted openly on educational or social matters, though privately this was done. The Seventh Day Adventists had from small beginnings established themselves in education, health and business. Members of some lesser known churches had gone into Insurance and had been successful, **and what is significant is that most of these churches had some linkage with the United States of America.** Added to this in the latter part of the Seventies the mainline churches had been influenced by the Charismatic Movement which also had origins in the U.S.A., with powerful links with the fundamentalist Moral Majority of the Catholic and Protestant church of that country, even if in some of the manifestations there was a resemblance to the Africanisms of Zion Revival, Pacomania, and local syncretistic Christian religious forms.

These linkages nevertheless were to be a catalyst which was to propel these fundamentalists swiftly into ecclesiastical leadership after the 1980 General Election, in which the conservative J.L.P. (Jamaica Labour Party) perceived the J.C.C. to be "The (Socialist) P.N.P. (People's National Party) at Prayer". This was of course nonsense.

The problem that now faced these churches was how to speak with a united voice. This was solved quite quickly by confessional groupings coming together, and at least three other ecumenical groupings were formed. The whole thing would have been chaotic if the J.C.C. had not used its expertise to become an agency which allowed all to meet together and to speak with a united voice. Two issues allowed this to occur. The first was the issue of Casino Gambling which united the churches around a single issue, and the second was the question of Healing and health-care. While the first was confrontational, the second was the outworking of an underlying universal, a wholistic approach to the faith; that deeper, latent ecumenism which is a characteristic of the Jamaican Church life.

Healing manifested itself in several ways. There were the Healing Meetings of Oral Roberts and Richard which drew some of the largest crowds Jamaica has ever seen. But side by side there are the Clinics which have been sponsored by a wide spectrum of the churches.

These "new" church groupings in every sense were more filled from the latter part of the 70's and early 80's. As has been observed, the leadership, by and large, were not trained in theology but in "sales" disciplines. Some of them had expertise in building and, as architects and builders, know how to use money effectively, how to get over a message persuasively, and how to follow up the client. In this regard, the eldership of the mainline churches were at a disadvantage, and this showed up subsequent to 1980 when in the society as a whole, administrative and managerial skills came to the fore.

As in Society, so the Church provided the theological undergirding for the new thrust. Fortunately for the Church as a whole, although business-orientated, this did not mean the leadership was theologically ignorant.

This was due in large part to the vision of one man who during the period 'in the wilderness', planned their enlightenment. The concern of Zenas Gerig created from this grouping through the Missionary Church, of which he is a member, the Jamaica Theological Seminary. This theological centre did not aim at the beginning to provide a classical theological training already present at the U.T.C.W.I., but to educate the serving pastors, evangelists and teachers theologically, so that they could with more confidence interpret the faith. This created in them and their congregations an awareness of some of the deeper theological issues, and helped to provide answers. This did not come too soon because due to the opening up of places in the University and the secondary schools to truly mass education, the social groups to which they were catering more were becoming more educated with resultant tensions in the churches.

With the emergence of the J.T.S., the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and the Schools' Christian Fellowship ( which had now eclipsed the S.C.M.) in the Secondary and High Schools and the University, the youth was drawn towards these church groupings, and this was aided by the double linkage of Alfred Sangster who played a part in the genesis of all these organisations. To the J.T.S., there came then groups of bright young people, some originally from the mainline churches but now more prone to these non-mainline churches because these churches were fundamentally **mass Jamaica orientated**. There was in them also more mobility as was now in society at large, since these churches were not fettered by European and continental traditions. And they gave opportunity for national self-expression in all its forms, or at least so it appeared. It was this openness which allowed the increased linkage and influence from the United States theological scene in particular. Since in the first place most of these churches either began in the U.S.A. or were funded from there. But there was another reason.

This openness was to be expected because while the mainline churches were "mission fields", the non-mainliners were "missionary-sending-churches". During these twenty-five years, Brother Bent, *Church of the First Born*, who himself was a pioneer in the understanding of Divine Healing, and with Sir John Carberry insisted on its inclusion at the U.T.C., established churches in England, Canada and the U.S.A. Of course, *The City Mission* had already established work outside Jamaica as early as the 30's, in seaport towns of London and San Fransisco. *The New Testament Church of God* moved into Florida, London and the Caribbean. *The Apostolic Church* had done the same and *The Pilgrim Holiness* had developed its Caribbean-wide understanding of itself. Following in the wake of the Jamaican emigrants, these churches gave not only to their host countries but to Jamaica a means of communication of ecclesiastical ideas, expertise and form, and above all Jamaican grass-root Christian culture.

The late 70's and 80's also saw the increased use of the electronic media by the churches. Churches were not strangers to its use. From the inception of Jamaican radio the churches had always played a part. There were Sunday afternoon services on ZQI and on Radio Jamaica, there was a prayer at 10am daily, and on Wednesday nights, Evensong, Sunday Services as a regular feature began after Independence and the sponsored religious programmes increased. When J.B.C. began it had its quota but 'carried' religion soon took over. The fact is that Religion is a large money spinner for the electronic mass media. And it was this that the non-mainline churches exploited. Drawing upon funds generated abroad, they have been able to complement the work of the local church with that immediacy of outreach given by the airwaves. There was however the ever present large networks like Billy Graham, Back-to-the-Bible and the Lutheran Hour which set the standards. Only comparatively recently have some variations, which have a local input and reflect the national scene, been aired.

The use of the print medium over the period by the churches has been restricted by the high percentage of illiteracy. Few churches have a newspaper, even in embryonic form, and the vacuum had to be filled with Caribbean Contact, an ecumenically produced newspaper by the C.C.C., but it has never caught on. Since the 80's the Gleaner has made a valiant attempt to provide space for this activity but this undergoes much strain. At a more academic level theological journals have been produced for a selective readership and these have been more successful. As yet no substantial theological work has been produced locally, but this might soon be a reality. The fact is that the nation is more aural and oral so that the future might be in the audio and visual cassette.

Looking back over these twenty-five years, certain things appear to have happened. The churches subsequent to 1962 succeeded to a large extent to decolonize themselves. This lasted until the 1970's when the momentum increased. But not all the churches were linked to Europe directly. The other communions whose genesis were by and large in the U.S.A. were not involved in this decolonization and in the 80's have had great difficulty in doing just that. The result is that these churches have been effective channels of U.S. religio-cultural penetration because the channels were already there. So that a strange phenomenon is present where the churches of the erst-while planters, which were dubbed the church of the colonizers, are beginning to look like the church of the liberated and poor which indeed they are. While on the other hand the non-mainline churches are having some difficulty in maintaining some national identity and dignity. Even the terminology applied and accepted by the non-mainline churches "evangelicals" has been used in the way the U.S.A.

fundamentalists and Moral Majority use it without its historical antecedents of Anglican-Methodist, anti-slave holding and anti-establishment. The next twenty-five years are indeed going to be interesting. It is of course my hope that the deeper theological issues of societal relationships, race, colour and class may be in fact discussed and some agreements reached. For it will be upon this that Peace and Justice, these illusive biblical words, and social ideals will rest.

Horace O. Russell

## Ordination Today

One of the challenges facing a new College Principal is to devise his own ordination ritual. True, he could always fall back on Payne and Winward, and yet, as I discovered, the form of service there does not really reflect the understanding of ministry present in many of our churches today. Payne and Winward was written in the days when the monarchical episcopate was the Baptist norm. Today, however, the emphasis is much more on shared ministry. In the following ordination rite I have sought to draw up a form of words which does justice to my own understanding of ministry. I submit it to readers of the Fraternal in the hope that they might be prepared to share their critical comments with me — either privately or through the medium of the Fraternal. In this way, hopefully, an even better form of words might emerge.

Perhaps one further comment is necessary. In practice I have discovered that there is often need to elaborate on the first section of the 'rite'. In other words, rather than read the words just as they stand, I often expand. However, I have thought it helpful not to include the expansion, but rather the bare minimum.

## The Rite of Ordination

We have come together in the name of Jesus to set aside and to ordain....to the office and work of the Christian ministry. Ordination itself is no modern invention. It has its roots in the Scriptures. Thus in Acts 13 we have an example of an occasion when a church set aside two people for special ministry...(Read Acts 13:1-3). We, too, today will be setting...aside for special ministry. What is involved in such ministry?

### 1. Pastoral ministry is God's ministry

In the first place....is called to be a minister of Christ. For it is God who calls a person into His service. We, in setting....aside, are recognising what has already happened in his/her life.

### 2. Pastoral ministry is shared ministry

....is not called to serve God on his/her own. For God has gifted all His people with many varied gifts for service. If the ministry of....is to be effective, it will be so to the degree that he/she is willing to enable God's people to fulfil their particular ministries.

### 3. Pastoral ministry is specialized ministry

Within this general context of shared ministry....is called to fulfil a number of particular roles:

First and foremost....is called to be a man/woman of God. If a pastor is to lead the flock, he/she first needs to be led.

Secondly,.....is called to be a leader. Under God he/she is called to give a lead in worship, as in the general life of the church.

Thirdly,.....is called to be a teacher — the flock must be fed.

Fourthly,.....is called to exercise pastoral care — the flock must be tended.

Fifthly,.....is called to be an evangelist — the lost need to be sought.

Finally,.....is called to be an enabler — the people of God need to be prepared for Christian service.

With these principles in mind we shall proceed through this service of ordination.

## **The Statements**

Ordination rests upon the call of God. I therefore ask....to confess afresh his/her faith in Jesus and to declare his/her belief that he/she is called by God into this ministry.

A call, however, needs to be confirmed. I therefore ask representatives of the sending and calling churches to tell how, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they were led, on the one hand to commend....for training at Spurgeon's College and, on the other hand, to issue a call to be their pastor.

## **The questions**

.....,you have confessed your faith and declared your belief that you are indeed called of God into the work of pastoral ministry. Before we proceed to the act of ordination, it is necessary for you publicly to commit yourself to this office:

1. Remembering the words of Jesus, "Abide in me..for apart from me you can do nothing", will you seek first and foremost to be God's man/woman, giving of yourself daily to prayer and to the reading of the Scriptures?
2. Remembering the words of Jesus, "Let the leader be as one who serves", will you endeavour to model your leadership on the pattern of the Servant-King?
3. Remembering the words of Paul, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved.. rightly handling the word of truth", do you undertake before God faithfully to teach the word of God from the Scriptures?
4. Remembering the words of Peter, "Tend the flock of God that is in your charge", do you promise to see that all who are entrusted to you are indeed cared for?
5. Remembering the words of Jesus, "I have other sheep who are not of this fold", do you affirm your intention to seek the lost by doing the work of an evangelist?

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6. Remembering that all God's people are gifted for service, will you seek to "equip the saints for the work of ministry"?

### **The laying-on-of-hands**

Following the practice of the early church, we shall set.... aside by the laying-on-of-hands. In this act of ordination representatives of the wider church, as also representatives of the sending and calling churches, will share. For in ordaining....we are ordaining him/her into the wider ministry of churches in our Baptist faith and order.

### **The ordination prayer**

In the presence of God and of this congregation, we solemnly set you.... apart for the work of Christian ministry. "God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power and love and self-control". Our Father God, may this be....'s experience. Guide him/her and direct him/her as he/she seeks to lead your people. Make him/her a wise and able teacher. Fill him/her with your love that he/she may tend the flock eagerly and willingly. Enable him/her to do the work of an evangelist, so that by all means he/she may save some. Keep him/her faithful in times of testing, humble in times of success, and joy at all times in your service.

### **The presentation of a Bible**

Receive this Bible as a sign of the authority which God has given you this day. "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

**Paul Beasley-Murray**

## **Please Drop Me A Line**

I enjoy receiving personal letters: in fact I feel rather lost without them. At times their dearth positively angers me, especially at the time it takes to write one is small. I realise that most of us have correspondence lists a mile long — with guilt feelings to match — but the letter I want you to write is surely one of the most vital of all.

I am talking about referring students to local chaplains. Wherever they are studying — college, poly, university, hospital — students need help. I am the Baptist chaplain in York — for the university, College of Ripon and St John (York) and the hospitals. My job as a chaplain is not to enforce folks to attend chapel (perhaps we should change the word) but to be on the spot to help when needed or wanted.

Generally, I learn from the chaplaincy of about a dozen students coming to York from Baptist churches, though rarely do more than two or three of these churches inform me. Usually only when the student concerned 'has not been coming along recently' or 'was once very keen but now seems to have lost all enthusiasm for the Lord'. Please continue to let me know of such, but tell me about your keen members too!

I write to every student who contacts the chaplaincy and to those who do commend their students. I try to meet these students as soon as possible after their arrival, although this year there are still some I have not met!

I encourage them to find a spiritual home and from that base 'to have a look around'. Quite a number choose to be with us, though many wait until the second or subsequent years to do so, generally having enjoyed being at St. Michael le Belfry's for a while. The church leaders in York are aware of students' whereabouts, though we do not act as 'big brother'.

From time to time I am called by a student who does not worship with us, but feels that I may be able to help with a particular problem. Sometimes a student needs to spend an evening away from college. The manse can prove (amazingly!) to be a place of rest, even with three boisterous youngsters around. Of course there are other 'retreats' available for those who come to the church, as members open their homes to students.

I see my responsibility as being on hand to help — at any hour of the day or night! Are you really quite satisfied to send away your young people, fully expecting them to cope with everything without anyone to turn to, if necessary, for help? A few of you are not, and have written to me. I, too, commend any of our young folk, who are leaving to study elsewhere.

So, you see why I like a good postbag in the early autumn. Please give the full name of the student, the college/poly address or room number (if known!). You are unlikely to have all these details, but please write to me by mid-September with the details you do have. Obviously, if a course begins earlier, I would appreciate a letter before that course begins. Please drop me a line.

You may well have done this in the past years and felt that as a chaplain I have not done my part properly. Sadly, you may well be right. This simply reminds me of my own weakness and shortcomings.

My fellow leaders, please show the concern you have for your people in this practical way by commending them to myself and my fellow chaplains this autumn. We ALL want letters! Then pray for us. We need and want your prayers.

Do I sense my postbag is getting bigger.....?

**Iain Collins**

(If you need details of chaplains, contact the Mission Department, Baptist Church House - Editor.)

## On the Way

Members of the B.M.F. will be glad to have news of two new major publications that are in course of preparation.

The present *Baptist Hymn Book* was published on 13 March 1962. It replaced the *Baptist Church Hymnal (Revised)* which had served the denomination for nearly thirty years. Now a successor to the *BHB* is needed. It is hoped that the new volume, published by the Oxford University Press, will be produced in time for launching at the 1990 Assembly. It will contain not only hymns but also material for worship — as is reflected in the provisional title — *Baptist Hymns and Worship*.

"But when" you may ask "are we to have a successor to Winward and Payne?" The plea has been expressed by many and has not gone unheeded. *Praise God* was given a warm welcome by many but it did not aspire to cover the same ground. Now an editorial group has been formed. It held its first meeting in April



1988 and is preparing a brief to guide the one or two writers who will prepare a manuscript out of the mass of material received from many sources. It is planned that this new manual will be a companion volume to that containing hymns and worship material. Oxford University Press have shown interest in being able to publish it. If the timetable can be kept it is hoped that this, too, will be available in 1990.

Blessings be upon all those engaged in these enterprises. They are placing us greatly in their debt. May inspiration not fail them, nor perspiration dim their eyes.

**Douglas C. Sparkes**

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

**New Frontiers in Mission** Ed. Patrick Sookhdeo (Paternoster, 1987, 192pp, (7f)6.95)

This symposium is a result of the Wheaton 83 international evangelical conference on "The Nature and Mission of the Church", and reflects especially that part of the consultation on the the Nature and Mission of the Church in New Frontier Mission. It is not made clear if these papers were presented at that consultation or if they are reflections on it.

The presentation would have been helped by a short biography of the fourteen authors as some are less well known than others. The papers are not presented in any obviously logical order, unless perhaps this is the order of presentation at the consultation, and the consequent jumping from one aspect to another is disconcerting.

Not all the chapters reflect the overall subject of "New Frontiers". Indeed, many old chestnuts of the Mission debate are treated with varying success. A few recent issues are dealt with, however, and herein lies the main contribution of the book. The emergence of new mission agencies from the so called (why?) Two Thirds World; the internationalization of some Mission agencies; the people group mission strategy; these all receive good coverage. On this last subject Ralph Winter expounds his now well known theory and offers statistics of unreached people groups as a challenge. He says some controversial things and one would like to challenge some of his statements. For example; "The only valid church is one which is understandable to people because it fits them culturally" and again "Only when they...can fit into a group of their own kind will they become fully established in the faith". What about the barrier breaking gospel of Ephesians 2, or the successful cross-cultural churches planted at Antioch and elsewhere, as recorded in Acts?

The book has the limitations inherent in its symposium character and its context of a five years past consultation. For those already engaged in the mission debate it will serve perhaps as a reference (it contains the full Wheaton 83 Consultation Report). For those whose interest in the subject is being awakened it will serve, as the Editor puts it, "to raise issues rather than provide conclusions".

**David W. Doonan**



# WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

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Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother

Dear Fellow Ministers

Those of you who know me will know also that I am a keen amateur photographer. My gifts are limited, but the hobby brings me great pleasure and satisfaction.

Yesterday, there came into my hands a brochure illustrating the very latest in Camera technology. This fantastic instrument has a zoom-lens — Automatic focus — Automatic flash. It can take a single exposure — double exposure and continuous exposures. It automatically adjusts to back-lighting — low-light — indoor and outdoor conditions, etc., etc., etc. I doubt if there is a more sophisticated camera on the market.

**Yet** — even with this superb camera — it will still be possible to make all the basic errors of photography. There will be slanting horizons — lamp-posts growing out of people's heads. There will still be pictures like the one I took many, many years ago of my mother-in-law standing beside a sign "Do not leave your litter here" (honestly, I hadn't noticed).

You see, the picture depends in the end not upon the electronic wizardry embodied in the camera, but in the ability of the photographer to "see" a picture and then to reproduce it on film.

All of which is, of course, a parable. We value the qualifications and skills which members of staff bring to their work in the Mission. Where appropriate, we make use of modern equipment and technology. In the end, though, it is the vision, the "picture" in the hearts and minds of our workers that produce the Christian, loving care that we try to give. — But then, that's true of **all** Christian Ministry, isn't it? May God bless you in yours.

In the Saviour's Name,

**Trevor W. Davis**

**All is Ours** Edmund Flood (Fount, 1987, 224pp, (7f)2.95)

This highly readable study is a distillation of recent Pauline scholarship blended with the writer's own practical and biblical outlook. He is a Catholic — but it's hard to spot!

This is not a devotional paperback but a theological pilgrimage which unpacks Flood's conviction that "The New Testament vision — as opposed to a few disconnected texts — has not been effectively offered" to many of today's Christians.

I found "All is Ours" a mine of detail and useful insights, and I was reminded of the style of C.S. Lewis. Neatly structured, with four sections, the book leads up to a discussion of the possibilities for truly Pauline living with this writer's stress on mature, whole, human life as "partnership with God". His illustrations of empathetic caring, perhaps inevitable, touch the Inner City debate and, in a more general way, national politics.

Flood perceives that the Church "lacks the New Testament conviction that every Christian's life should consist in a mature partnership with Jesus in his work for the world". Inevitably, such a thesis spins off into its ethical and ecclesiological implications. The first section of Part 4 (Rediscovering Paul in Today's World) starts with the sub-head "Mass in Paul's churches". What follows, however, is a very helpful exposition of the central act of Christian community: the Breaking of Bread and Discernment of the Body.

Apart from a few quotations and that sub-head which might raise an evangelical eyebrow, this book by a fine Catholic thinker is a must for all who sometimes find St. Paul a shade unyielding... it is recommended also for all who pursue really worthwhile ecumenical insights. It contains a refreshingly biblical radicalism to speak encouragingly to all who seek the mind of the Spirit and to obey, or as Flood would say, "to cooperate intelligently".

**Mark Rudall**

**The Sacrament of the Word** Donald Coggan ( Fount, 1987, 176pp, (7f)2.95)

Speaking of the Anglican church, Bishop Donald (as I believe we should now call the author) declares that preaching has fallen on bad days. It is at a fairly low ebb with us too, and if we ask why, he would ask us to consider that the quality of preaching must be affected by one's theological evaluation of it. His book is an affirmation of the high significance of preaching and while it contains much of practical interest and value, its first concern is to explore meaning rather than mechanics.

A quarter of the book is occupied by two chapters on the biblical background. In the Old Testament Bishop Donald explores such themes as the God who speaks, the Hebrew awareness of the power of the spoken word, and the relationship between God and those chosen to be his messengers. Here, as in his consideration of the Gospels, the Acts and St. Paul, he makes effective use of biblical word studies. Another such, later in the book, takes him into a thought-provoking chapter on preaching and dialogue, a study of the "lively reciprocity" which is to be nurtured between the preacher and his congregation. Another is to be found in a chapter on the power of silence. He refrains from a definition of preaching but he stakes a claim for certain of the elements he would deem essential in such a statement.

The author is, of course, back on a theme to which he has given a lot of thought over the years, and he has incorporated some items of previously published material. Nevertheless, this is a rewarding book and would help many a minister to feel that he had found surer ground. Its help would go beyond

preaching as such into a worthier concept of the whole act of worship. Its spiritual warmth matches the quality of its vision. Recommended for any minister who feels it is time to take a new look at his pulpit work, and not least for those who are seeking to support lay preachers.

**Geoffrey W. Rusling**

**One Lord, One Spirit, One Body.** Peter Hocken (Paternoster, 1987, 144pp (7f)3.95)

Peter Hocken, in this book, addresses a situation which bears upon most of us to some degree. He sees the charismatic renewal as a unique, spontaneous, uncontrived action of God (a "naked grace") which has touched virtually all the denominations throughout the world, within three decades.

Some response to that phenomenon is almost unescapable. Hocken is concerned in his book with three possible responses: that which turns away from the historic denominations as being effete and unredeemable; that which tries to contain and define charismatic renewal within the boundaries of denomination for that denomination's own strengthening; and that which sees the renewal as a powerful ecumenical impulse. It is with this latter response that he identifies. He sees it as the "third way". His book is directed to its urging and justifying. He is an ecumenical visionary, wanting to see all Christian communions united in a charismatically-renewed and biblically reformed loyalty to Christ. He sees in the Charismatic Movement the most potent and promising ecumenical impulse we have ever known, which will summon and bring divided churches into unity. This, he believes, supervenes, but need not replace, previous ecumenical efforts.

Hocken understands very well how people whose lives have been touched by the Spirit can react against low levels of denominational life, institutional stiffness, and creeping worldliness: but he also has a deep and reasoned appreciation of the continuity of the work of the Spirit in the rich and varied traditions of the churches. He was a youthful convert from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism, but his open-heartedness and sympathy run towards all expressions of Christian faith, whether ancient, modern, Roman, Orthodox, established or non-conformist. The force and expansiveness of his vision is very plainly expressed in the quotation, "All church traditions need this Holy Spirit renewal: this Holy Spirit renewal needs all the church traditions".

The first section of the book describes what the phenomenon of "Baptism in the Spirit" is. He does not define the term. Instead he gives instances of how the experience has been received in various ways by various people: he rapidly traces its history from its perceived beginnings in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, in 1906: he then describes the results and meaning of the experience in ways that are mostly and readily acceptable to most Baptists. This is a section to warm the heart of all who love Christ, regardless of their attitude to charismaticism, as the Christ-centred ministry of the Spirit is set out. He is at pains to point out that this grace is not only "naked" (i.e. unclothed with any limiting traditional or denominational form) but also "unexpected" (not traceable to one church, founder or idea; occurring spontaneously, almost existentially, in a wide variety of ways, places and churches.) He then goes on to argue that it is this very nature of the grace that gives it its powerful ecumenical character.

The second section insists that the whole work of the Holy Spirit be kept in sight, beyond a mere excitement, preoccupation with enjoyable experience (a deadly danger in his view). This fuller vision in renewal enables a "third way" which transcends all denominations, repudiates none and can transform any.

The Spirit's work is to convict and challenge on the one hand and to confirm and endure on the other. So the Spirit challenges all that betrays or obscures Christ in every tradition. He comes to confirm and enliven all that is true to Christ in every tradition. By these aspects of His work, humbly received, the biblical faith of the church and the Christian is purified and rooted in the Christ of Easter as its only true centre. He concludes this section by facing frankly the dangers that can beset the movement of renewal in its ecumenical aspects, and by setting out the principles by which a charismatic, ecumenical response should be shaped.

This is a book which is stimulating both to heart and head. Some questions are begged; e.g. Does the fact that most charismatic Christians "prefer" to use the term "Baptism in the Spirit" absolve one from the need to give it a more thoroughly biblical setting? And does not the claim that this movement has spread with unprecedented speed need to be held in the light of the also unprecedented phenomenon of modern communications? However, this is a book that should be read open-mindedly by all those who hold lightly to the denominational loyalty in which they were nurtured. It is a book that rebukes a narrow denominational stance by both its spirit and its reasoning. It is a book to be taken seriously by anybody with an ecumenical concern.

**Norman Wade**

**The Politics of Paradise** Frank Field (Fount, 1987, 144pp (7f)3.50)

The opening chapters of the book attempt to survey the Jewish faith in the Old Testament, arguing that it changed from being a collective faith to a more individualistic faith during the period of the Exile. Frank Field then argues that after the Exile, faith centres on waiting for divine intervention to establish the Kingdom. New Testament texts are then examined which suggest that the Kingdom is both collective and individualistic, and that salvation properly understood contains both elements. The book then offers four models of the Church, i.e. The Body of Christ, A Congregation of Christian People, A Denomination, and an Ecclesiastical Hierarchy. The author then asks how the Church seen from these different viewpoints can engage in politics. He returns to these models in the final chapters.

In looking at some of the difficulties that the Church has to face up to if it is to do politics effectively, two valuable points are made. Firstly, the two biblical strands of the collective and individualistic understanding of salvation are present in British Churches. The open opposition of those holding different views weakens the Church and its mission. Both views should be seen as legitimate, since Christian faith is about both individual and collective salvation. Secondly, (though dependant upon Lesslie Newbigin for this insight) society is not shaped by the values of the Christian faith, but by the values of the Enlightenment. He argues, as would the political theologians, that the Church failed to confront the Enlightenment and retreated into private pietism.

However, on the whole, I have to say that the book did not impress me. The early chapters contain a lot of biblical material but the exegesis is rather thin. Also, the book does not really address the problem of how to move from a biblical model of the Kingdom of God to an ethical or political viewpoint. Finally, I was left wondering whether anything fresh had been said by a book that had 213 quotations in just 137 pages (if biblical quotations are included).

**Paul R. Allen**