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# Editorial

The development of a fault in the computer, resulting in the severe disruption of a week of one's ministry, is almost certainly the experience of more than a few these days. It serves to highlight the changing conditions of ministry and, by extension, its priorities.

In terms of inter-church relations, these have been improving for so long now that we tend to forget the "dagger's drawn" attitude of earlier days. Hear Parson Kilvert in 1871: "I went to Wern Vawr. The sun burnt fiercely as I climbed the hills but a little breeze crept about the hill tops. Some barbarian - a dissenter no doubt - probably a Baptist, has cut down the beautiful silver birches on the Little Mountain near Cefn y Fedwas". By contrast, what a strength to our ministry are warm, accepting and non-competitive relationships across the denominational frontiers.

Changed too is the focus of our activity which, one senses, is now much more diffuse. In former days the unquestioned priority was the sacrament of the word, with pastoral visiting as time allowed. Nowadays, ministerial life is much more variegated, with significantly more time given to pastoral work, social involvement, strategy, church management and crisis counselling. Then there is the whole atmosphere of heightened expectation. Not that little was expected of our predecessors, far from it, rather that they knew what that was: faithful exposition and a pastoral heart. Today we seek to meet a wide range of expectations, some only half articulated, with a greater risk of experiencing failure and "burn-out" as a result. Further, as the theology of the laos has strengthened, the position of the pastor has become less secure, making for its own particular anxieties: "What essentially am I within the total ministry of the Church and how can I function with integrity?" One might also add the significantly diminished preoccupation with doctrinal issues and the growth of an unabashed pragmatism: not "Is it true?", but "Does it work?" In the light of all this, is the pastor what society and its needs makes of him or her, and is this inevitable?

Coming fresh to this scenario as General Secretary, some 18 months ago, David Coffey shares with us "The Journey Thus Far". It is a great tragedy that entering into the office at a time of great envisioning, David is struggling with severe financial restraints, and even cut-backs, as attempts are made to match Home Mission resources with the unbounded opportunities. After this Philip Clements-Jewery concludes his study of intercessory prayer with some practical ways of stimulating and enlivening the discipline. Thirdly, Ronald Clements introduces some current aspects of concern in Old Testament Studies: socio-economic in character.

A trio of writers combine to address Theological Education, Ministry and Lay Training in the context of world mission. All are serving missionaries with the BMS with a concern to enable and equip those they serve. In a second article, celebrating David Russell's contribution, George Neal concentrates on his distinctive work on Apocalyptic, which some regard as "the mother of Christianity". Then, Ruth Bottoms reflects upon *Patterns and Prayers for Christian Worship*, assessing its strengths and weaknesses. Finally, Paul Beasley-Murray submits a Code of Ethics accepted by the Baptist Union of New Zealand. Surely it articulates all that we long to be for Christ and his people?

# The Journey Thus Far

In his sparkling autobiography, Dennis Healey recounts how as Defence Secretary on a visit to the Middle East he delighted the sheikhs in the mountains surrounding Aden with the story of the frog and the scorpion.

A frog was sunning himself on the banks of the River Nile when a scorpion walked up and asked for a lift across the river.

"No fear", said the frog, "If you get on my back you'll sting me and I'll die".

"Nonsense", replied the scorpion, "if you die I'll drown".

The frog thought it over, and agreed. The scorpion got on his back and the frog plopped into the river. When they were exactly halfway across the frog felt an agonising pain between his shoulder-blades and realised he had been stung.

"Why did you do it?" the frog asked as his limbs began to stiffen. "You know you'll drown".

"Yes, I know," replied the scorpion, "but after all, this is the Middle East".

There have been times in the last twelve months when I have suspected the answer to all my despairing questions is, "But after all, this is the Baptist Union"! Morris West was correct in his usual wise counsel when he warned me in the early weeks of office, "The person who can speak on behalf of all Baptists has never been born and both parents are dead." Realising the parameters of responsibility has been a major part of discovering my role as General Secretary and, whilst there are some aspects of this new ministry which are a continuation of my ordination vows, on occasions I have felt I am re-living my first year as a Probationer minister in Leicestershire.

## First Impressions

The invitation from the Editor was to write about the realities of the task after one year as General Secretary under the title, "the Journey Thus Far". My first impression on reflection is the different pattern of the calendar year compared to that of the local church. I had grown accustomed to the liturgical calendar and the seasonal festivals. Here in Didcot the office is closed at Christmas and Easter and Pentecost - but open on Ascension Day. I well recall standing in my study on the first Christmas morning after leaving the pastorate - all dressed up and nothing to do! It was a dreadful feeling for a pastor who had revelled in the joy of Christmas Day Family Service - the one day in the year when even the most awkward member of the church seems like a Christmas angel.

One year on I begin to understand that I have to adapt to a very different pattern of calendar year. January and February are a preparation for the March Baptist Union Council and this is followed by the April Assembly. May and June are the Association assembly months with July, August and September reserved for the international Council meetings of the Baptist World Alliance and the European Baptist Federation, which can be held anywhere in the world. September and October are preparation months for the November Council, which leaves December for the office party!

A major part of my diary is devoted to week-end preaching engagements and ministers' conferences. I still enjoy the challenge of preparing a series of bible studies and greatly appreciated the stimulus of researching a paper on "Mission themes in Ecclesiastes" for the Probationer Ministers' Conference. It was a privilege to follow in the steps of W Y Fullerton and F B Meyer and speak for the first time at last year's

Keswick Convention. Whilst continuing my links with events like Spring Harvest, I have valued the wider opportunities given to the General Secretary and look forward to participating during 1993 in seminars organised by Christian Aid around the theme of solidarity with the poor and sharing in a smaller group concerned with religious liberty convened by the Bishop of Oxford. I love the challenge of diversity and still cherish the vision for building bridges whilst retaining the Baptist tradition of conviction churchmanship.

Aside from the different routine of the job, I have been amazed at the variety of tasks required of the General Secretary. Bernard Green warned me that no two days would ever be the same, and this has proved accurate. As with the local pastor, there is an element of trouble-shooting attached to the job; helping to handle the well publicised conflict between the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and European Baptists, as well as advising Baptists concerned about their interests in the newly formed English Churches Housing Group have their own challenges. Protest letters arrive with regularity addressing a range of topics, including ecumenical involvement, inter-faith worship, financial restrictions and the withdrawal of grants. Sometimes an angry letter will include sentences like "fat Baptist bureaucrats who live in Didcot". Incidentally, some of us are fat, all of us are Baptist, one or two may pose as bureaucrats and most of us live in Didcot, but together in one sentence is what I call offensive!

In all the administrative responsibilities I have an outstanding colleague in Keith Jones. As a former Association Secretary, he brings a wealth of experience to the office of Deputy General Secretary and having served as Chairman of the Baptist Union Council and the General Purposes and Finance Committee he possesses a formidable knowledge of procedural matters. We operate as a very close team, and frequently thank the Lord for the privilege of working together.

## Travels

I have had the opportunity to travel for the Baptist Union since 1986 when I first visited the Soviet Union with the British Council of Churches delegation. During this past year I was able to add to my international experience by re-visiting the former Soviet Union with the British Baptist delegation in November 1991 and attending the Baptist World Alliance Council meetings in Jamaica in July 1992.

That visit was my third to the former Soviet Union in six years, and each time I have witnessed at first hand massive changes in climate and opinion in Church and State. Churchill's famous definition may still be applied to the emerging life of the new republics, not least to the church scene, "A riddle wrapped in a mystery wrapped in an enigma." More than any time in recent history the links between Britain and Eastern Europe will require an intelligent understanding on the part of those who want to prayerfully discern the unfolding of God's purposes. As we are witnessing in the tragic conflict in the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, there are conflicts and animosities which were previously repressed and distorted and as Tom Nairn observes, "There are depths to these sea-changes that theory will take a long time to get to grips with". I advise leaders in Associations and churches who are developing links with Eastern Europe to take note of these warnings and remain vigilant, particularly in the area of religious liberty.

In the year of the BMS BiCentenary it was a privilege to visit the William Knibb Memorial Church in Falmouth, Jamaica, and to read again the chronicle of Knibb and his contribution to the abolition of slavery. I was deeply moved at the story of Sam Sharpe, a Jamaican national hero and the Baptist slave who was publicly hanged for his opposition to slavery, and discovered afresh the relevance of this part of our Baptist history as we tackle the evil of racism in our own society.

I recall a high moment from the World Council of Churches' Assembly in Canberra

in February 1991 when white Australian Christians publicly repented of their treatment of the Aborigine people of Australia and visibly demonstrated their own fellowship in Jesus Christ. I believe it would be a cleansing experience and a sign of our stand against all forms of racism that at a Baptist Assembly we conducted a similar act of repentance and reconciliation.

## **Retreats**

In all the daily demands of this new ministry I have realised the importance of spiritual retreats. Donald Nicholl is right when he says, "Unless we can stop the rush and noise of daily traffic in our lives we do not have the slightest chance of hearing the call to holiness". He goes on to say that almost every wrong he has committed in his life has resulted from being in a hurry. I hear the wisdom. For a number of years I have found a haven at the St. Julian's Community House in Sussex, and such retreats, together with the occasional guidance from a Spiritual Director and some stimulating times with four friends, none of whom are in the Baptist family, have kept me on course during this first year.

## **The Statement of Intent**

I am gratified that out of the Listening Days of 1991 has emerged a Statement of Intent, and as we communicate this sense of mission purpose, not least through the much publicised video, "The more we are together - the stronger we will be", we are receiving indications that many of our churches appreciate clear directives of this kind from the Union. The four clauses of the Statement of Intent, Evangelism and Mission, Identity, Associating, and Resourcing, will all require further research and reflection. There is much work to be done, not least in the publication of a mission strategy document which will outline in more detail our commitment as a Union to a breadth of mission projects over the coming years.

The Decade of Evangelism can only be deemed a worthwhile exercise if it stimulates the churches in these islands to recognise that what is required is nothing less than a transformation in mission thinking and practice. The commitment to develop our distinctive Baptist identity has provoked a response that we are becoming ecumenically narrow and exclusive. Far from it. Ecumenically it is desirable that we know the kind of people we are within the wider Church and are ready to give reasoned answers for our Baptist Faith and Order. Pastorally it is wise that leaders who emerge in a local Baptist church who have no previous experience of our particular history and traditions, should be encouraged to discover their Baptist roots. We have been too quiet on this subject for too many years and we have frequently adopted the wrong style of approach in addressing the issue.

Too many ministers and churches are asking the same question, "Is there room for a person like me and a church like mine in a Union like ours?" Let's come out in the open and admit that there are long-standing Baptists who say it is no longer their kind of Union; there are new Baptists who declare they have no time for denominations; there are ecumenical Baptists who pronounce feeling more at home in the breadth of the wider Church; there are Restoration Baptists who prefer the life and leadership of the new churches; there are para-church Baptists who opt for the comparative safety of theologically monochrome fellowship. Most of these stances are taken by ministers who have been prepared to go through the rigours of a Baptist training and accreditation process and by churches who expect to receive a steady supply of college trained Baptist ministers for consideration during an interregnum. Is it any wonder we have an identity crisis?!

There is no simple remedy, but I commit myself to developing an appropriate identity

for this generation of Baptist Christians. We need a new basis for associating with one another which may involve some appropriate form of covenant commitment. I am convinced that a people who are clear on the issues of identity and associating will be committed in their financial obligations. For all the extreme pressures on the local church in a time of economic recession, there are still enough signs of generous giving to indicate that the money which is present in our Baptist churches often fails to flow in the direction of Home Mission because people lack confidence in their own Baptist Mission UK. I marvel at the way sections of the Restoration movement can motivate some of our Baptist churches to part with thousands of pounds each year as a sacrificial sign of commitment to association. Even the many churches who have no sympathy with Restorationism, need to develop within their congregations a generation of church members who have worked out what meaningful associating requires.

### **Renewal by Management?**

I am sometimes asked by correspondents, "Is the Statement of Intent challenging us to reform the life of the local church by strategic management principles?" and "Where is God at work in the life of the Union?"

I profoundly believe that in the worship of the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit we find the renewal of the Church. There is no better way to lead the local church into the renewal of its mission than by the way of worship and I do see God at work in our midst in a diversity of ways.

When you consider the various groupings in the Baptist family which have emerged over recent years, the popular term for which is networking, we are rich in the ministry of renewal. Networking Baptists join together because they share a common commitment to a neglected cause and seek to persuade the whole family to include their interest in any theology of the renewal of the church. I was Secretary of such a Baptist grouping between 1979 and 1984 and understand the dynamics!

Tom Wright's analysis of the various movements of renewal over the past few years has some helpful insights for Baptists. He draws attention to the renewal of interest in ecumenism, in liturgy, in the Holy Spirit, in biblical study, in social and political action, in mission, in worship and many other areas, and comments,

"Taken by themselves, these movements can become the hobby horses of single issue fanatics, while the rest of the church wonders what all the fuss is about. But give the church...a new vision of the challenges that it now faces; show it that in order to meet these challenges it needs to draw on the best that all these renewal movements have to offer and then instead of becoming the hobby horse of a few they become the resource kit of the many".

We need this kind of inclusive fellowship with one another. We are a people on the move with a vision for mission. We are a people whom God has graciously "renewed" with a variety of gifts for ministry. This means that by the Lord's wise provision we should be equal to the task of fulfilling our vision.

**David Coffey**

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| Tom Nairn      | <i>New Statesman and New Society</i> -<br>special edition on Europe, 19 June 1992. |
| Tom Wright     | <i>New Tasks for a Renewed Church</i> (Hodder and Stoughton)                       |

# Intercessory Prayer (3): How To Do It.

The first requirement for those who would lead others in intercession is that they should be people who practice intercession in their own devotional lives.

In this respect, I have been greatly helped by the writings on spirituality and ministry of the Dutch Jesuit, Henri J.M. Nouwen. In his book, *The Living Reminder*, he writes of the importance for the minister of making time available to be with God on behalf of those ministered to. "It becomes clear", he writes, "that a certain unavailability is essential for the spiritual life of the minister...I would like to make a plea for prayer as the creative way of being unavailable". He explains what he means thus: "How would it sound when the question, 'Can I speak to the minister?' is not answered by 'I am sorry, he has someone in his office' but by 'I am sorry, he is praying'...what this says is that the minister is unavailable to me, not because he is more available to others, but because he is with God, and with God alone" (p.49)

In this, Jesus is our model. He "continually left his disciples to enter into prayer with the Father...It is obvious that Jesus does not maintain his relationship with the Father as a means of fulfilling his ministry. On the contrary, his relationship with the Father is the core of his ministry. Therefore, prayer, days alone with God, or moments of silence, should never be seen or understood as healthy devices to keep in shape, to charge our 'spiritual batteries', or to build up energy for ministry. No, they are all ministry. We minister to (our people) even when we are with God and God alone". (pp50-51)

To build such a pattern of unavailability into our ministries involves unmasking the illusions of our indispensability and professional busy-ness. Time - prime time - needs to be programmed into our diaries, perhaps a morning a week (as is my practice) or a day a month, when we can be with God alone to pray and to intercede. And we need to find a place to go where we can be free of distractions, telephone, family interruptions and the like. How else will we be able to lead others in intercession?

Secondly, one who seeks to lead others in intercession needs to be aware of the preferences in the style of prayer and spirituality that people hold in accordance with their personality type.

Again, I have found much insight and help myself in the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator which is based on Jung's theory of psychological types. It is, in itself, a neutral tool that has had wide application. It has been used in industry and management, and in recent years has also been applied to spirituality and ministry.

It is clear that in the Church as a whole, certain types are represented out of all proportion to their numbers in the wider community, while certain fairly strong groups in the community are seriously under-represented in the Church. Such a statistical observation seems to me to have immense implications for both ministry and mission.

It is also clear that certain styles of spirituality attract certain personality types. I would guess (and it is only a guess) that in a given local congregation certain personality types, and their corresponding preferences in the style of prayer and worship, could come to predominate, especially if that congregation was fairly small. If that is the case, then the leader of worship had better be aware of the congregation's preferences, or woe betide! Difficulties are likely to arise if the minister's preferences differ from those of the people. In fact, it may be better to assume that the majority of the congregation are of a different psychological type and therefore have different preferences to that of the minister.

Nevertheless, we all need one another in the fellowship of the Church and the Church

has a place for people from every personality type. There is tremendous enrichment to be gained through experimenting with the prayer methods of those unlike ourselves.

Thirdly, in the light of my earlier remarks about the corporate nature of spirituality, prayer and the Church, we can learn from other traditions of Christian faith and worship. In leading others in prayer, there is nothing wrong or unspiritual in using the words of other people and of former generations, who probably put it better than we can. There is a very great number of collections of prayers published and I can only suggest that you go down to the bookshop and do a bit of browsing.

It is important not to become too dependent on the prayers of others as the source for our intercessory prayers. No such prayer will precisely fit the person or situation for which we want to pray. The danger is of vague "catch - all" type prayers which many find irrelevant and off-putting.

## **Ways and Means**

To conclude these articles, I would like to suggest some ideas for leading intercessions in a different way than the traditional "long prayer". I am sure that much of what I suggest will be familiar to you, and I make no claims to originality.

Instead of one longish, rather rambling prayer of intercession, we could divide the intercessions into a number of shorter prayers on single topics which are announced in advance.

We could get our people to pray together in groups for the period of worship assigned to intercession. They could do this with or without guidance as to topic(s).

Notices in worship can often seem an inconvenient intrusion into the natural flow of the service, or as an opportunity the congregation takes to relax its concentration - like the break for ads on TV, or an intermission at the cinema. However, the notices surely have a rightful place in worship, not only as an agenda for the Church's action, but also as a focus for the Church's prayer. Why not, then, turn the notices into prayer. The one giving the notices could be asked to do this.

Notices can also be the occasion for the sharing of news within the church family. The sharing of concerns and news is in itself a valid act of prayer, done as it is in the presence of God among his people. It may or may not be followed by formal prayers of intercession. In larger congregations this may be better done in groups rather than all together.

Intercession can also be stimulated by the news or by what is in the papers. A question we must always ask about the news is, "What is God doing here?" A congregation could be invited to look out in advance of a particular Sunday suitable items from their daily papers and bring them to church to share, either with the whole congregation, or in smaller groups. It is surprising what variety of items can be brought, and not always the obvious ones that are suggested by the headlines. This idea worked well in the congregation to which I minister.

It is also possible to make available to members of the congregation a book into which requests for prayer can be written. The book needs to be placed in an accessible position where people can find it, they need to be reminded frequently about its availability, and the requests do need to be brought regularly in public intercession, otherwise the book will fall into disuse.

Structured forms of prayer with short(ish) biddings and either spoken or sung responses (litanies) can be another way of leading intercessory prayer. If the responses are sung, there is a wealth of material to use: worship songs, music from Taizé or Iona,



verses from traditional hymns are all suitable.

Again, the use of prayer guides and calendars can be recommended. Districts and Associations often publish these, and there is also the BMS prayer guide, among many others. Using such aids can help us lead prayers that are informed and specific.

We are also living in days when the church's ministry of healing is gaining new prominence. This is neither the time nor the place to give detailed arguments in support of such ministry. But in churches where the ministry of laying on of hands is offered in worship services, it is possible for people to go forward not only seeking healing for themselves, but as an act of prayer for someone else. I have known cases where such prayers have been blessed. This, too, can be a valuable way of offering intercessory prayer.

Another, increasingly popular, way of offering intercessory prayer, this time for the world and its institutions, is demonstrated by the Marches For Jesus that take place frequently today. As well as an act of public witness to Christ, the idea of praying for those in authority outside the very places where they exercise that authority is a very imaginative one. However, I personally would want to add a couple of cautionary notes. Firstly, it would be wrong for any Christian to think that taking part in a March For Jesus discharges totally the need for Christian social responsibility. There is a costly involvement as well to be faced. And secondly, I cannot go along with the emphasis in some quarters, in connection with these Marches For Jesus, on the need to exorcise the demonic. We can sometimes too easily blame the ills of society (and those of individuals too) on demonic forces, but we have to be careful not to eliminate altogether the role of human responsibility for human sinfulness.

To return to the place of intercession in worship services, can I make a plea for a greater use of silence? Its value is much underestimated. Of course, people do need to be trained in the use of silence, perhaps by being invited to meditate upon a verse of scripture or repeating a word or short phrase over and over again in order to focus attention on God. Such silence can be very powerful, because it is in the silence that God can speak. This is where the listening that precedes intercession can be done.

This leads us to a consideration of the use of the imagination, rather than words or thoughts, in prayer. The leader of intercession can invite members of the congregation to picture in the mind's eye a person ( or even situation) for which they wish to pray. In imagination they can then lift that person into the presence of God, or they may like to picture the person of Christ coming alongside the other person in their imagination and perhaps touching them, and then seeing what happens. It doesn't matter *how* they imagine Christ, so long as it is actually the Lord whom they are bringing into their imagination. Such an exercise in the imagination can be offered to God as a prayer of intercession.

The use of imagination in intercessory prayer, especially in relation to situations and the issues of justice and peace, is the theme of Charles Elliott's highly recommendable book, *Praying The Kingdom*. Elliott's helpfulness lies much in his use of scripture as a way into imaginative prayer.

It is perhaps also necessary to say a word about fasting and prayer. In the normal course of life, fasting is very much an individual discipline and as such is to be kept to oneself without making a song and dance about it. But there are perhaps times when fasting ought to be part of a corporate act of prayer, especially in a time of special need or crisis.

The point of fasting is that by depriving oneself of food, one hopes to develop a hunger for God, an inner emptiness waiting to be filled by the grace of God. The human person

is a unity of body, mind and spirit so that physical hunger can help attune a person and increase sensitivity to the presence of God. Fasting is an aid to that essential listening to God that is the prerequisite for intercession.

Fasting is not without its dangers. The spiritual danger is that inner emptiness can also be filled, not by the Holy Spirit, but by evil spirits (see Luke 11:24-26). When we fast, we can be more exposed than at other times to spiritual attack. I am struck how often in my own experience fasting is accompanied by depression. Therefore, when we fast, we need to begin with a prayer of protection.

Fasting is often more meaningful when it is given a specific focus, or when the prayer that goes with fasting is directed to a particular need. This is where the connection between fasting and intercession comes in.

## Living Prayer

In conclusion, it is vitally important to integrate prayer and life. It is not only a question of life becoming material for prayer. It is also a matter of prayer becoming a way of living. That is the meaning behind the Pauline injunction "Pray continually". (1 Thess 5:17)

In his hymn "Behold us, Lord, a little space" (BHB 627), John Ellerton begins as if to suggest that to pray is to withdraw from engagement with the world. But he soon comes to acknowledge that the Lord is not confined to his Church:

"Yet these are not the only walls       Wherein Thou mayest be sought."

He continues to affirm that the earth is the Lord's in the words:

"Thine is the loom, the forge, the mart,       The wealth of land and sea,       The  
worlds of science and of art       Revealed and ruled by Thee."

The very next verse speaks of "claiming the kingdom of the earth" for God and not his foe. Surely, that is precisely what we are doing when we engage in intercession. Intercessory prayer, in whatever form it may take, is an assertion of God's rights over his creation in the spirit of Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it; the world and all who live in it".

Ellerton's hymn triumphantly concludes with the verse:

"Work shall be prayer, if all be wrought       As Thou wouldst have it done;       And  
prayer, by Thee inspired and taught,       Itself with work be one."

Those words seem to me to say it all.

**Philip Clements-Jewery**

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# Old Testament Study Today: Some Current Concerns

## New Concern with Biblical Ethics

A considerable number of recent major studies on the Old Testament have been devoted to the general subject area of biblical ethics. Some have a very relevant link to contemporary social issues and some too have a special interest for Baptists. We can usefully single out three of them and note some of the literature that is available. The three topics are: the Family, the Economic Order and Warfare.

### The Family

It is something of a truism that the Bible is concerned with the protection and welfare of families, but the recent book by Chris Wright of All Nations Christian College entitled {God's People in God's Land. Family Land and Property in the Old Testament} (Paternoster / Wm B. Eerdmans, 1990) will undoubtedly draw new attention to the subject. Wright's thesis is that the family stands at the centre of community life in the Old Testament. Not only is this so from a social and religious point of view, but it is also the case from an economic point of view. In fact, without a stable economic basis, the family in ancient Israel clearly could not function effectively. "{Economically}, it was the smallest, viably self-sufficient unit within Israel's system of land division and tenure; and since that system had a strong religious rationale, the household was an integral part of Israel's 'land theology'" (p. 1). Wright goes on to examine in detail the legal parts of the Old Testament which deal with ownership and use of land, including that of the levitical law of Jubilee (Lev. 25: 24-28). He defends this as based on two fundamental notions; first that God was the essential prior Owner of the land, which was considered as his "gift", and secondly there existed a felt need to preserve the economic viability of the household. In its concern with the family, Wright concedes that the biblical legislation regards slaves and women as part of the 'property' of the family, but argues very strongly that this does not reduce them to the level of mere chattels. They are accorded certain rights appropriate to their role within the family structure.

What is strongly pressed throughout the book is the claim that the biblical legislation was designed to protect people, as against things. The material and economic orders were to be used to further the wellbeing of persons. Such wellbeing depended upon a communal concern in which the household occupied a central place as the domain of the family unit. Within this, each member of the family was called upon to surrender a purely individual level of ambition in order to uphold this larger domestic realm, both in its lateral and temporal dimensions. Something of this same concern with a communal, family oriented, dimension to ethics is brought out in J.A. Dearman's {Property Rights in the Eighth-Century Prophets} (Scholars Press, Atlanta GA, 1988) as well as Katherine Doob Sakenfeld's {Faithfulness in Action. Loyalty in Biblical Perspective} (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1985).

### The Economic Order

Already the question of what the Old Testament prescribes in its legislation for the economic order figures prominently in Wright's book, which seeks to understand some of the more complex, and seemingly impractical features set out. Foremost among these is the legislation for a Jubilee Year, with what appears to be its stultifying effect upon capital investment and effective property exchange. Raymond Westbrook, in his study

*Property and Family in Biblical Law* (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) tackles many of the same problems addressed by Wright, but arrives at different conclusions. Where Wright argues that, set within the prescribed limits of small agricultural communities, the Jubilee legislation could have functioned practically, Westbrook aligns himself with those scholars who doubt that this could have been so. Rather he argues that such legislation reflects an element of theorising, which would have been ruinous, if practised on a nationwide basis. Not only does it take too little account of the shifting economic development of a community, but it sets all economic life within an artificially determined time-scale. Yet the strength of Westbrook's study, which in spite of disagreements with Wright's views usefully supplements them, lies in its concern to submit economic realities to broader concepts of social justice. In particular he sees the thrust of the biblical legislation to lie in its aim of dealing with the problem of family insolvency in a humane, and just, fashion.

A further major study of the important social and economic aspects of what ancient Israel understood to be implied by the term 'justice' is to be found in Bruce Birch's *Let Justice Roll Down. Old Testament Ethics and Christian Life* (Westminster / John Knox Press, 1991).

### **Warfare and the Old Testament**

Some further thought provoking reflections upon the relationship between concepts of justice and economic realities appear in Millard Lind's study *Monotheism, Power, Justice* (Institute of Mennonite Studies, Elkhart, Indiana, 1990). Lind presents several instructive essays on the theme, 'Law, Justice and Power' and another group on the broad subject of 'War and Economics'. Quite obviously no aspect of life cut more deeply into ancient Israel's economy than did warfare. Lind's excellent earlier study *Yahweh is a Warrior. The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1980) is a real turning-point study on this vexed theme.

Having recently, and in another direction, been researching the beautiful engravings produced by Gustav Doré as Bible illustrations in the late Nineteenth Century (*The Doré Bible Illustrations*, (Dover Publications, New York, 1974)), I am well aware that every illustration is also an interpretation. The serious critic of Doré's outstanding artistic skill becomes all too aware that the pictorial presentation of powerful, and often gruesome, scenes of Old Testament history, can generate a wholly misleading understanding of the message of the Old Testament. What child would not shudder at Doré's engraving of the children eaten by bears (2 Kings 2: 23-24)?

Lind, a firmly committed Mennonite scholar of the highest rank, is convincingly able to show that the Old Testament is deeply committed to a concept of peace, and serves worthily as testimony to One who is "The Prince of Peace". Yet we have to take the many narrative scenes of violence seriously and set them in this larger context of moral and theological ideas. In many ways Doré's illustrations provide the basis for useful discussion of precisely the moral issues raised by accounts of warfare in the Old Testament. What is needed is the larger theological and moral perspective which Lind's studies offer. The same is true of the recently translated study by G. von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (Wm B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids / Gracewing, Leominster, 1991). The original book was written more than forty years ago in the wake of World War II, but this useful translation has a fresh introduction (33 pages) by the Mennonite scholar Ben C. Ollenburger which does an excellent job of bringing the debate up to date in its ethical and exegetical setting.

G. von Rad's study drew attention to the distinctive religious character of the so-called "holy war" ideology of the Old Testament and its formative role in a number of well-known

biblical narratives. Holy war was closely linked to ideas of faith in God's power to give victory, and warfare infused a whole cultural ideology with a set of personal religious attitudes. Yet the debate has progressed extensively since von Rad wrote and Ollenburger especially focuses on the religious aspects, first by showing that the prophets, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel are forthright critics of a simplistic "holy war" mentality. As important, however, is the clear distinction that he shows between ideas of a human victory, won with God's help, and the more far-reaching biblical picture of a divine victory, which over-rides all human endeavour. Ollenburger rightly contends that this is not "holy war" as conventionally understood.

The appearance of these thought provoking studies on moral issues, focused on central Old Testament themes which have a strong contemporary ring about them, indicates a distinct trend of recent scholarly work. The volumes by Chris Wright, Bruce Birch and Gerhard von Rad should all be readily available and are thoroughly commendable additions to any Church or manse, library. Since it is still not uncommon to find Bible readers experiencing a lot of uncertainty and moral confusion about the Old Testament, help need not be very far away, nor all that expensive!

**Ronald E. Clements**

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# English Churches Housing

## APPEAL FOR HELP

This page used to be headed Baptist Housing Association Limited. On 1st July BHA merged with Church Housing Association to form English Churches Housing Group. That of course is a fairly drastic change, but it does not change the fact there are over one hundred properties between Falmouth and Preston which were built on Baptist property with the active help and encouragement of Baptist churches. This also does not change the fact that we still need volunteers to help run those Local Management Committees who are, by their work for those less fortunate than themselves, expressing in the most practical way their love of God and man.

If one of these properties is near where you live, and you are willing to help, please either contact the Local Management Committee, or write to the Deputy Chief Executive of English Churches Housing Group at the address below. If you don't know where the properties are, we can send you a list of them all.

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# World Mission: Theological Education, Ministry, Lay Training

Basil Amey, as Chairman of the BMS BiCentenary Working Group, invited Tim Bulkeley (Zaire 1982 - ) to write on Theological Education, Roy Deller (Brazil 1962-73 and 1985 - ) on Ministry and Peter Brewer (Trinidad 1970-77; 1989-91 and Nicaragua 1992- ) on Lay Training. Each saw this as an opportunity to share reflections on their work. Those reflections stand alone but together they show something of the breadth of ministry in which the BMS is currently sharing.

## **Appropriate Theology - *Reflections on Theological Education in Zaire.***

Inappropriate technology leaves Africa littered with carcasses of unusable machinery. Exporting *theology* risks a similar fate. Consider the introduction of Christmas among Kongo. Coloured streamers, pine trees, even cottonwool balls symbolising snow that no Kongo had seen, decorated the churches. Worse, "The tradition of presents to be given only once a year shocked the Kongo who were accustomed to give presents to the old, the ill, the handicapped, to widows and to visitors at all times. This custom of the missionaries could indicate that it was enough to think of others only one day a year, and so contribute to the destruction of a fundamental element of traditional community: the spirit of solidarity and mutual support."<sup>1</sup>

The story of theological training in Zaire is coloured by three periods of sociopolitical crisis marking the last century in Africa.

## **Colonisation**

The period of colonisation coincides with the installation of the Church in Zaire. As congregations began to multiply, the need to train evangelists and catechists became evident.

The missionary societies' theology emphasised evangelism. Building up the church was understood numerically. Zaire was a "mission field", millions awaited the gospel of Christ. So, by 1918, forty years after the first missionary explorers, training institutes were operating at Yakusu in Upper River region and (jointly with American Baptists) at Kimpese in the Lower River.

The few missionaries, with their greater education, inevitably ran things. This dominance, compounded with western assumptions of superiority, produced blindness to the extent that the "gospel" they proclaimed was coloured, and even submerged by elements of purely European culture.

## **Independence**

Suddenly, the example of China, and fears of an enforced moratorium on missionary personnel, underlined the need to "hand over" to "local Christians". An ideal since before the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, the daily problems of maintaining existing work and opening new, meant that many ideals have been more honoured in word than deed.

The period which began in 1960, despite early tragedy, has seen the growth of opportunities for theological education. Throughout this period the emphasis in pastoral training was preparing men to run institutions.

CBFZ training at all levels has been centred on historic institutions. National

academic policies have led to stress on diplomas. Therefore institutions have “upgraded”, from Bible Institute to Theological School and from Diploma to Degree. Lacking necessary resources, standards fall and effort to attain academic goals is sometimes at the expense of spiritual preparation.

### **Facing the current crisis**

Since Independence, staffing was increasingly indigenised. By 1980, in the Protestant Theological Faculty (a cooperative institution which trains pastors and theological teachers for all denominations), half the teaching staff with doctorates were Zairean. A decade later there was only one expatriate full-time. In this same period post-graduate studies were opened (the first doctoral thesis should soon appear). In the last six years local production of a Journal and textbooks add opportunities for exchange and transmission of ideas. These three developments contribute to finding culturally appropriate ways of expressing and celebrating the Christian faith. This “African Theology” is only beginning, but foundations for real development are laid and another change in training objectives has occurred.

In the colonial period, training produced Evangelists and Catechists, during the post-independence period the aim of training was maintaining the institutions of the Church. Without abandoning either aim, the emphasis at the highest level is now on preparing Theologians. This is appropriate, since in time of crisis men and women need to reflect critically upon their faith and society.

At another level, too, developments offer hope. “Mobile Schools” have been used to bring to the villages training for village leaders. Students live and work at home, the “classroom” comes to them. Community life earths training and encourages appropriate learning.

Facing socio-economic crisis, Zairean Christians must avoid copying western mistakes and be less dependant on European styles or on resources which the rich take for granted. The aim is not to create another elite but to prepare servants for the people of God. Thus, spiritual preparation is vital. Here too the need for ways of being, acting and speaking which are at home in Africa, is evident.

<sup>1</sup> **Mengi Kilandamoko**, “Evangile et acculturation”, *Revue Zairoise de Theologie Protestant*, 1, 1986, pp155-168. Quotation translated from p162.

### **Ministry and Theological Education in Brazil - A brief reflection - preparing ministers in Brazil for the year 2000 and beyond.**

In January 1992, as the BMS moved forward into the BiCentenary celebrations of its founding under the inspiration of William Carey, the Brazilian Baptist Convention met for its annual meetings in Londrina, in the State of Parana.

One of the most stimulating and challenging aspects of the Convention Meetings was the presentation by the Planning and Coordinating Council of the Brazilian Baptist Convention of an audacious and far reaching plan for the expansion in the eight years leading to the year 2000. The plan deals with all aspects of denominational life, including mission and evangelism at home and abroad, religious education and youth ministry, outreach by the mens’ and womens’ committees of the local church, the establishment of local committees for social action and the involvement at local, regional and national level in all forms of the media - radio, TV and publications, both secular and religious.

Central to the thinking of the Planning Committee is the projected growth in church



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**To the Readers of the Baptist Ministers' Journal**

It has been suggested to me that this advertising letter should be devoted once more to the question of Liability Insurance and the use of Church premises by other Churches or outside organisations.

Three years have elapsed since I last wrote on this subject and clearly from correspondence and enquiries it will be helpful to outline the situation again.

A Liability Policy issued by us to one of our Churches will cover the legal liability of the Church "management" or any one acting on its behalf for accidents arising from "negligence". For example, if a defect in the premises or a faulty chair causes an accident resulting in injury, our policy will cover the legal liability of our Church whether or not the injured person is on the premises on the invitation of our Church or another Church or outside organisation who have been allowed to use the premises.

However, if an accident arises entirely from the activities of the other Church or organisation our Church can have no legal liability and our Policy does not cover the legal liability of other parties. We cannot extend the Policy or provide cover for non-Baptist Churches or organisations and deacons would be well advised to obtain confirmation that other parties using the premises have their own insurance in force covering the risk. On request we will be happy to suggest a suitable wording for this purpose.

Yours sincerely

M. E. Purver

membership, and also in the number of churches, based on the growth patterns of the last thirty years. According to the statistics produced in the report presented in Londrina, there are approximately 850,000 members in some 4,500 Baptist churches, served by 3,500 pastors in full pastoral work and ministry.

The projection for the year 2000 is that the membership will continue to increase dramatically, perhaps approaching a total around two million and that the number of churches will grow from 4,500 to some 7,000. Assuming that of the present number of pastors there will be a loss, through retirement, sickness, death or resignation of approximately 1000, the pastoral needs between 1992 and 2000 will require training of upwards of 4,000 new pastors or approximately 500 a year!

Where will these new workers come from and where and how will they be trained? Fortunately the infrastructure for ministerial training in Brazil is already in place, albeit in some areas of a very fragile nature. Theological education in the Baptist Church in Brazil already has a long and distinguished history. Early in this century three national seminaries were established, in Rio de Janeiro, to serve south Brazil, in Belem, to serve equatorial Brazil and in Recife, to serve north Brazil. The Recife seminary celebrated its 90th anniversary in 1st April 1992. In these seminaries several hundred students are pursuing theological courses and the greater part of the student body sees itself preparing for the pastoral ministry.

Ministerial training in Brazil is no longer exclusively the prerogative of the three national seminaries, but is being strengthened by the participation of the newly established seminaries and Bible institutes, located in practically every state in the federation. These regional training colleges, most of which have been established since the early sixties now number almost fifty, and are a reflection of the rapid growth in church membership and in the number of Baptist churches during the past thirty years. This growth pattern is expected to continue well into the next century.

Does the proliferation of Baptist training institutions mean a lowering of standards? Inevitably the answer must be, yes, as the qualified theological teachers are spread ever more thinly around the country. While we must be grateful for the many pastors who give generously of their time to make up the shortage, there are increasing calls for the provision of better qualified staff for the colleges.

The global plan calls upon the major seminaries to become centres of theological excellence and improve and extend their postgraduate facilities. Already there are around a hundred postgraduate students pursuing masters' courses in the three national seminaries and some of the larger regional centres, such as Sao Paulo, Brasilia and Curitiba, have, or are developing masters' courses. There must be significant advances in this area if the teaching needs of seminaries throughout Brazil are to be met by the year 2000.

It is recognised also that qualifications in themselves are insufficient. There must also be courses available in teaching skills and educational practice. It is in this area that ABIBET - The Association of Brazilian Baptist Theological Education Institutions, will have an increasing role to play. At the ninth Annual Conference of ABIBET, held in Curitiba in October 1991, some twenty theological education colleges were represented from places as far apart as Porto Alegre, Brasilia, Recife, Manaus and most of the other major centres.

Papers presented at the Conference included, among other topics,

- a. Theological education and the new millenium.
- b. Evaluation of teaching staff in theological seminaries.
- c. Theological education and the local church - a two way relationship.

- d. Theological students and their books.
- e. The use of audio-visual aids in theological education.

Changing patterns in Brazilian society as well as in the life and witness of the local church also have their bearing on ministerial training. In the urban centres increasing affluence and an ever growing middle class, rubs shoulders with abject poverty and the cardboard box community of the street children. Ministerial training in the latter part of the twentieth century must address itself to these challenges in developing new forms of evangelism and social concern to both ends of the social spectrum.

There are also significant changes taking places within the local church itself which affect church administration, teaching programmes and introduce new forms of worship. Clearly the growth of Pentecostalism has had a knock-on effect in Baptist church practice. These are also areas which must be addressed in the training of ministers for the year 2000.

It is significant that although the main thrust of BMS participation in Brazilian Baptist life has been evangelism and church planting, the need to be involved in theological education has never been ignored. Since the early sixties there has always been a BMS presence in the training college in Curitiba, Parana, which seeks to prepare men and women for pastoral ministry and lay leadership in the local church.

As the BMS has entered other states of Brazil on the invitation of the Brazilian church, so too the need for participation in training work through extension courses, Bible Institutes and seminaries has presented itself. Currently, BMS are co-operating in several Baptist seminaries, Cuiaba, in Mato Grosso; Campo Grande in Mato Grosso do Sul; Curitiba, in Parana; Porto Alegre, in Rio Grande do Sul and in Rio de Janeiro.

The tradition of William Carey lives on and as we participate with our Brazilian brothers and sisters in preparing ministers for the challenges of the year 2000 we shall continue to, *Expect great things and Attempt great things.*

## **Rapid Reflection on Lay Training**

It was the evening before our departure from Britain to begin a period of work with the BMS in Nicaragua. Among the phone calls was one which invited this contribution on Lay Training. It is being penned (literally, in the absence of a typewriter!) from our lodgings in Antigua, Guatemala, where we are learning Spanish. Hence the "Rapid Reflections" of the title!

### **What is lay training?**

Lay training is nothing less than making the whole body of the church mature in Christ. It is the task classically expressed in *Ephesians 4:12-13*, and this task is what ministry is all about. Indeed, pastoral training itself is a specialised form of lay training, since pastors, too, are part of the laos.

### **The scope of lay training**

Lay training in the commonly accepted understanding of the term may be categorised in three divisions, Discipleship Training, Skills Training and Leadership Training. The first of these is training for the whole church. It will include teaching for new Christians, such as is given in membership and baptism classes. It should include similar Christian knowledge teaching (as we might call it), for many who are not new Christians are sometimes ignorant of Christian belief and practice. It ought to include teaching on how to witness to the world, for many of our members are very inward looking and have little idea of how to share their faith. All this is in addition to the regular preaching ministry,

which is a form of lay training, though not always thought of as such.

Skills Training covers that area of lay training required by those who have undertaken, or will later undertake, specific tasks within the church. Youth workers, children's teachers, lay preachers, worship leaders, administrators, all need some training, even if in some cases it can be obtained outside the church. It is curious that we go to great trouble to train pastors but allow lay preachers, for instance, to function with no regular selection or training at all, although it can be arranged for would-be preachers wise enough to seek help and teaching.

Leadership Training carries the same principle a stage further. Many besides pastors are leaders: deacons, elders, lay pastors (hardly distinguishable from supplementary ministers, except by training). This is the point where lay training and pastoral training overlap. We might do worse than reflect on the creative 'extension seminary' methods of training used for both pastoral and lay training and initially developed here in Guatemala. These methods can equip for church work generally and pastoral leadership specifically, mature natural leaders who have not time or financial support for a full college course. The extensive literature on the subject suggests that these in-service training methods are efficient and economical, have a low drop out rate and produce good local leaders with a high level of commitment to the task. Even when trainees fail to complete the whole course, they learn much from particular modules and so are rarely complete failures.

### **Practical considerations**

It may be asked whether large scale training programmes are worthwhile or necessary in the British situation. Experience in Trinidad and a so far rather hasty study of the Latin America situation, suggests that there is much we could learn from overseas and adapt for our own needs. Our mission record in Britain is not so good that we can afford complacency, especially in the industrial areas. It has been argued that leaders locally recruited, trained and deployed could be more effective in some areas than the highly professionalised pastors, who must cross cultural barriers to be effective.

We certainly have the resources to create a lay training system, using the relatively large number of pastors we have. The basis for it already exists in the BUGB Christian Training Programme, and other literature. It need not add a heavy burden if ministers and churches could combine locally to share the load and rotate the teaching. And the benefits in the development of effective, mature churches could be incalculable.

**Tim Bulkeley**  
**Roy Deller**  
**Peter Brewer**

# David Russell: An Appreciation of His Life and Work (2)

Few ministers read or have read much on either the Apocrypha or the Pseudepigrapha. In their studies, while training for the ministry, they would have come across the subject in their Old Testament lectures but its importance as an essential background to their New Testament understanding may have failed to register properly. But this is the area in which David Russell has become a leading authority. A study of the many reviews of his books on the Apocalyptic Literature reveal how significant is his work and how highly regarded within the academic community.

It may be helpful here to remind readers that the Apocrypha and the Apocalyptic writings are not identical, although they have much in common, belonging as they do to the same genre of religious writing. The former should be familiar to any who own a NEB with the Apocrypha set between the Old and New Testaments. This section has, unlike the pseudepigrapha, some authoritative standing (although not canonical). In the Roman Catholic church the Apocrypha is called deuterocanonical, whereas the Protestant church does not acknowledge them as having any canonical status at all. Catholics call the Pseudepigrapha apocryphal, whereas Protestants have hardly acknowledged their existence, let alone attributing any real spiritual value - at least not until quite recently.<sup>1</sup>

Most Jews, from the start, rejected both the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha as canonical.<sup>2</sup> They were used outside the official areas of Judaism but as Christians began to study and use them more and more because of the help they gave with developing the doctrines related to the specific Christian teachings about the Kingdom of God, Messiah etc, and because of the growing emphasis on the centrality of the Torah within Judaism, the Apocalyptic literature fell more and more into disrepute among the Jews.

## Contribution to Our Understanding

As it is my intention in this second article to offer a general review of Russell's work, let us now look at some of his books. Strange as it may seem, I want to begin with the last book he published which came out this year; it is called *The Divine Disclosure*<sup>3</sup>. It is an up-to-date presentation of the state of research into the literature of Apocalyptic with much critical analysis and discussion with other scholars who in recent years have written on this topic.

This latest book is an excellent up-to-date manual on the present state of the situation in Apocalyptic scholarship. It also includes those changes he has felt necessary to make on his earlier contributions in order to bring his own scholarship up to date. Especially helpful is a brief but stimulating final chapter that discusses the value of Apocalyptic from the Christian viewpoint.

In 1987 he published a book titled *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*<sup>4</sup>. This, too, differs from earlier works in that it concentrates on those aspects of apocalyptic writings which take as their main subject the "further writings" or histories of the Jewish Patriarchs and Prophets. In these works extra non-Biblical information is offered on the life and work of such characters as Adam, Enoch, and Noah. We read further of events in the lives of Old Testament Heroes such as Abraham, Isaac and their descendents culminating with Joseph. In addition this book offers extra information about Daniel, Job, Moses, Ezra and the Major Prophets. Herein are found fascinating imaginative developments of their characters and deeds.

In this book, too, we are introduced to the thoughts of such Jewish scholars as Philo and Josephus and especially how, with all their sophistication, they understood and accepted, the thought and challenge of those early Jewish Patriarchs, leaders and Prophets.

Another smaller book worth perusing is *From Early Judaism to Early Church*<sup>5</sup>. This book attempts in more detail to show aspects of early Judaism as it developed during those intertestamental centuries. We read of the influence of cultural and religious developments in that period and in the course of doing this discover much useful information into such matters as the sources which encouraged the new ways of thinking about religion and scripture. We look also at biblical interpretation and how it was practised, also the nature and value of the Septuagint etc in this period. Included in this study is a look at the Rabbinic sources which includes analyses of such works as the Mishnah, Midrash, and the Targums etc. Here, too, is helpful information on how, in this period, the understanding of the meaning and development of the Torah took place. In addition, we are shown something of the development of the more devotional side of Judaism with its corollary of how mediation between God and Man was understood. Again, this shows how some of the teaching of Jesus and the Gospel writers were influenced by such writings or current beliefs.

As I indicated in the first part of this article, although Russell is covering the same territory much of the time he always offers something fresh and interesting. He is able to pass on new discoveries or fresh, significant research, either from his own work or the work of other scholars. All the time he is endeavouring to show the significance of this area of study for the origins of Christianity, and how the teaching of the apocalyptic writers have influenced not only later Judaism, even when rejected by the more authoritative bodies, but how it has influenced, and can still influence, the Christian faith today.

Underlying the *raison d'être* of his work in this area is the belief that without detailed knowledge of these writings we will fail to appreciate the teaching of both the Gospels and the other books of the New Testament. Christianity is not, in one sense, a new religion, although Jesus had on occasion to insist that His teaching was like new wine that would burst the old wine skins. Indeed, the early Christians, being Jews, felt it imperative to root their beliefs in Scripture and to show that all that Christ did was rooted in the Old Testament and much of what he was and did was foretold there. However, Christians have been hard put to find prophecies that neatly fit and underline all that Christians believe Jesus did and was. One cannot help feeling that the interpretation of many Old Testament prophecies have to be stretched, and even taken out of context, to fit into what the New Testament says. In areas of doctrine especially, there is such a difference in what the Old Testament teaches or believes and what the New Testament accepts.

In such areas as Eschatology, Resurrection, Life after death, Satan and Demons there is a development that is impossible to explain or understand unless you know about the writings which make up the Apocalyptic and Pseudepigrapha.

As I have said already, Russell's work has put studies of the Apocalyptic writings on the Church map. The amount of work done prior to his spate of books was small. Indeed, for much Old Testament scholarship the Apocalyptic writings were virtually ignored, even spurned, as not worthy of study<sup>6</sup>.

However, since Russell began his work the academic world has taken the study of Apocalyptic far more seriously. Russell's insistence that without a detailed knowledge of this period we cannot fully appreciate the New Testament means that the lesson has been learned. Since his first book, in 1960, he has written eight others on the subject or related themes.

Nevertheless, for the Christian minister let alone the Christian layman, the study of the Apocalyptic Writings is still a closed book, except for the oddity - both denominationally (Jehovah's Witnesses) and individually by some non-scholarly fundamentalists who major on those apocalyptic parts that cater for their odd views. The book of Daniel becomes an unhealthy hunting ground as does the book of Revelation and some other passages in the Synoptics, such as Mark 13 and parallels. For this type of person these passages make up the main message of Scripture.

Russell's work should discourage the fanatic and encourage the Church to give Apocalyptic its true place. Without some balanced understanding of these areas of religious writings we cannot hope to understand the Canonical Scriptures aright. Even if we find it difficult to read these books for ourselves (the Bible is already too big to read anyway, is it not?), we do need to know, through the work of such scholars as Russell, what they teach and how significant they are.

### **A Suggested Reading List**

If we could set ourselves the task of reading some of his smaller works we would at least be doing justice to an area of study of which no serious student of the New Testament should be ignorant! In addition, or as an alternative, in order to try and grasp more fully the value of the Pseudepigrapha, dare I suggest a short reading course.

Read the first book he wrote: *Between The Testaments*<sup>7</sup>. This is a short but comprehensive introduction that gives not only the historical setting of the period but sketches the religious situation of the Jews and also offers a study of the contemporary writings. There is also a brief study of the Apocrypha and then a thorough examination both of the method and message of the Apocalyptic writers with detailed studies of theological themes which are relevant to a thorough Biblical understanding of most New Testament concepts such as Messiah, Resurrection and Eschatology etc.

Then read *From Early Judaism to Early Church*<sup>8</sup> to learn about the attitude of the Jews in the intertestamental period on such matters as the Old Testament, the influence of Hellenic ideas and culture on the developing Judaic faith, the development of attitudes to the Torah, as well as the changing views on so many subjects of theological and religious interest. Although this inevitably covers some of the ground found in the early book, the repetition helps one to grasp at greater depth the nature and value of apocalyptic; it concentrates on showing how closely related and influential those ideas are on New Testament thought.

Finally, read his latest book *Divine Disclosure* in order, as I said earlier, to be up to date both on the subject itself and introduced to many of this decade's leading scholars who, although experts in other fields, have felt the need to study the Apocalyptic writings in order to get a full balance to their own theological research. Here for example, we come across references to contemporary New Testament scholars such as J. Dunn, E.P. Sanders and Jacob Neusner.

The importance of the study of Apocalyptic for Christology alone is revealed in the first author, James Dunn, and his book on Jesus: *Christology in the Making*<sup>9</sup>. In the Index of that book we find three pages of references on the Old Testament Scriptures, but amazingly, for Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha and authors of the period such as Josephus, Philo and the Dead Sea Scrolls, there are seven pages. The references for the New Testament cover nine pages. This surely indicates that for New Testament scholars the Apocalyptic writings are a must!

If having read and found the smaller books interesting and your appetite is truly whetted, then find a copy of his magnum opus *The Message and the Method of Jewish*

*Apocalyptic*<sup>0</sup>. You may need three Weetabix before you try this, but for a near exhaustive survey of the whole matter you cannot do better! To conclude this essay and encourage the reading of this large but most valuable work let me analyse its contents in some detail.

The book is divided into three sections. Part one studies the background of apocalyptic, relating it to Judaism and its constituent parties during that period. Its popularity and relationship to Christianity is examined. In addition the literature itself is noted and most of the books are given a brief survey. Incidentally most of these books were preserved only within the Christian Church for reasons given earlier. There were many others written but these have been lost and are known only by name or brief quotation in other writings.

Part two examines the method or way of working of the Apocalyptic writers. They are examined in relation to the canonical prophetic word and comparisons made as to how far it is a legitimate descendent and what they have in common. We are then introduced to a study of the characteristics of the writings - their esoteric nature and their use of literary techniques and symbolism. One chapter discusses the place and legitimacy of pseudonymity which is not unrelated to present day scholarly biblical concerns about authorship and whether or not pseudonymity is a valid practice. Then the author looks at the questions of inspiration, and the psychology underlying the apocalyptic personality.

The final part is a detailed examination of the developments within the intertestamental period of the many areas of theological beliefs. It is impossible to systematize the doctrines in these writings but there are substantial views expressed in these works which show clearly the developing beliefs on all matters relating to religion. We cannot fail to notice how in this period there was an incredible development of the Old Testament in every area of theological concern. Time and eternity, angels and demons, Messianic beliefs and their variety, Eschatology, life after death; these are looked at in detail and again one can see how the New Testament has been influenced by such writings. Even the teaching of Jesus can be seen to bear traces of that influence.

We owe a debt to David Russell, then, for reawakening us all to the nature of Apocalyptic and its importance for our fuller understanding of the New Testament and the faith. David Russell has done a great service by his sustained work in this vital sphere of biblical study; the sphere of academic scholarship honours what he had done.

As a token of our gratitude and respect, nothing would be more fitting than that we read or re-read some of his books.

**George Neal**

### Notes:

1. See Russell *Between The Testaments*, SCM Press Ltd, London, p75f
2. For a balanced assessment of the attitude of the Jews to the Apocryphal Writings and the reasons for acceptance and rejection see *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* SCM Press Ltd, 1980, part 1 section 1.
3. *The Divine Disclosure* SCM Press Ltd, London, 1992
4. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Patriarchs and Prophets in Early Judaism. SCM Press Ltd, London, 1987
5. *From Early Judaism to Early Church*, SCM Press Ltd, London, 1986.
6. *Divine Disclosure* SCM Press Ltd, pp xiii-xv
7. See Note 1 above
8. See Note 5 above
9. *Christology in the Making* James Dunn, SCM Press Ltd, London, Second Edition, 1989
10. See Note 2 above Work (2)



# ***Patterns and Prayers for Christian Worship: A Reflection***

Whatever else *Patterns and Prayers for Christian Worship* is, it is not, and does not set out to be, a definitive set of orders of service for Baptists. Rather, it offers a variety of patterns of worship for differing occasions, with examples of prayers and words that could be used. It invites the user to think through why they lead worship in the way they do, with the words they use. It thus seeks to encourage a broader understanding of, and perhaps practice of, worship.

It differs from *Praise God*, the previous Baptist guide to worship, in a number of respects. Common to both are patterns and prayers suitable for Sunday worship through the Christian year, the Lord's Supper, Baptism and Membership, Infant Presentation, Marriages and Funerals. In addition, *Patterns and Prayers* includes a section on Ministry, and another on the Life of the Church. Ministry covers the commissioning of local ministries, ordination and induction services and commissioning for wider service including overseas. Life of the Church covers the formation of a church, the laying of foundation stones, and both the opening of a new building and the dedication of furnishings, together with patterns for worship at the church meeting, for a prayer meeting and at a service of healing. Furthermore the beginning of the book includes 17 pages on understanding worship and approaches to leading worship, whilst at the end of the book can be found a copy of the new four year lectionary produced by the Joint Liturgical Group. This is not to say that *Patterns and Prayers* is merely an expanded version of *Praise God*. As well as some different material the balance of the books differs markedly. Three-quarters of *Praise God* is given over to material for the Christian year and material for the various liturgical parts of worship. Comparable material in *Patterns and Prayers* constitutes only 30 per cent of the book.

## **Shape and Form**

Having lived with the book for about a year, I have to say that I do not find its lay-out particularly helpful. The words and prayers are not numbered consecutively through the book or even in each section. This makes it difficult to cross reference the prayers to one's own order of service. Equally, the lack of numbers means it isn't easy at times, in the midst of worship, to see at a glance where one prayer starts and other ends.

Still on the subject of lay-out, whilst I applaud the variety of material on offer, I wish the book gave the patterns of worship and then offered the prayers under headings of type and not as examples of the patterns. Take the Lord's Supper: three patterns are given, and then two of these are spelt out with actual words and prayers that might be appropriate, with variations offered. The result is that if one simply wanted to look at possible invitations to Communion, one can be found on page 74, two more on page 76, and a further three on pages 81-82. I would have preferred these to have been grouped together as a section after the three patterns of Communion, not least because in the absence of an index, the only way to find all options is to read through whole sections at a time! This is interesting first time around, time-consuming ever after. In short, I find the book messy to use.

## **Content**

Discussion of the substance of the book is inevitably subjective, not least because it is dependent on the particular occasions I have had reason to have recourse to it.

It is good that the language is largely inclusive, and I am glad to see that many

quotations of scripture, particularly at the "Lord's Supper", have been taken from the Revised English Bible. I regret that few prayers attempt to explore the feminine within the Godhead; the only prayer of this nature I have thus far found is one from St Anselm on Mothering Sunday.

It is good, too, that there are reminders within the text to be pastorally sensitive to such groups as those who have learning difficulties (e.g. on profession of faith at Baptism).

I have always found that variations of words for Baptismal vows and Marriage vows are a useful way into discussing the meaning of the whole service. In this book it is the options for the Presentation of Infants that has provided a new valuable resource. Forms of words for the Assurance of Forgiveness after confession have been another component of the book I have found enriching. Nonetheless, I am left with a general feeling that the prayers offered, both for through the year and within special services, haven't added greatly to the range of material I consult in preparing to lead worship.

I do think it is a useful book for discussing varieties of approaches to worship, and for providing at least a starting point in leading the so called 'occasional offices' first time around. In that sense I would like to see the book thoroughly discussed in our theological colleges.

For myself, it is one further resource, and I shall keep it on the shelf next to *Praise God* and *Payne and Winward*, and consult all three as seems appropriate to the occasion.

**Ruth Bottoms**

## My Code of Ethics

1. I will love God with my body, mind and spirit.
2. I will seek to minister rather than be ministered unto, placing service above salary and personal recognition; and the unity and welfare of the church above my own.
3. I will model my caring for others on a professional level with skill and wisdom so that others can experience my integrity, and be drawn towards exercising the same care for others.
4. I will hold as sacred, all confidences shared with me.
5. I will not violate another's body, mind or spirit; and will not participate in the oppression of any person or community. I will not misuse the faith and resources entrusted to me.
6. I will try and live a balanced life: working responsibly and hard; caring for and nurturing family relationships; and not neglecting playfulness, humour and rest.
7. Before any action, I will think how it will appear to God, to my congregation and to my fellow pastors.
8. I will endeavour to lead my congregation without discrediting other churches, soliciting members from them or criticizing other pastors.
9. I will, with my resignation, sever my pastoral relations with my former church members, and will not make pastoral contacts among those relating to another church without the other pastor's knowledge and consent.
10. Having accepted a pastorate, I will not use my influence to alienate the church or any of its members from its denominational loyalty and support. Rather I will do all within my power to strengthen the bonds. If my convictions change, I will withdraw from the church.

Baptist Union of New Zealand

# Book Reviews

**Poles Apart: The Gospel in Creative Tension** by D.S. Russell. (Saint Andrew Press, 1990, 160pp, £6.50)

This book is concerned with the existence of paradoxes within Christianity. The author describes them in less technical language as tensions within the faith. However, these tensions are not created by failure or sin nor should they be feared, for they are creative tensions. They are endemic to faith and must be seen as inescapable. If only one side of the problem is accepted and the other denied, the problem is not only misunderstood it fails to be true or helpful. The paradoxes are mainly familiar but they can be troublesome. Russell offers a way through them all and some of these theological insights and excursions are very exciting.

He deals with ten matters all given a chapter each. Each chapter has sub-divisions so that the problem can be seen from a number of different angles. Each discussion offers guidance as to why the matter is paradoxical and how to relate the differences, so ending up with a synthesis that is convincing and helpful. Once he begins a subject he then excites us by showing how much truth can be dug from the mind, and we are treated to stimulating discussions on nearly all the problems and challenges of the Christian faith in relation both to the theological and the ethical implications inherent in the problems.

Here are excursions into challenging and relevant fields that all ministers should pursue: Russell's book is a great stimulus to deep and practical reflections on the central beliefs and problems of the Christian faith. The book is easy to read, the style is very attractive and the arguments easy to follow. But, as with all his work, do not let the facility of style mislead you as to the depth and breadth of thought that is there.

Reading this book will encourage those who may be insensitive to the problems to realize that their approach to Scripture and Christian truth is not so much simple as naive, and this is dangerous; and for those who see the problems but are not sure how to deal with them, this book will be a helpful guide.

This book will also help all of us to face the apparent contradictions seen in the faith and, finding here a trustworthy guide to take us through them without avoiding any of the challenges, will enable us to have a faith rooted in revelation, but also intellectually honest, and able to be integrated into the truths of God revealed through modern science and all the human disciplines which make up our twentieth century civilization.

He also stimulates us to read the bigger books that have fed his own thinking and guided him on his own pilgrimage through life.

**George Neal**

**Discerning the Spirits** by Douglas McBain (Marshall Pickering, 1992, 224pp, £4.99)

*Discerning the Spirits* by Douglas McBain is essentially a re-issue of his earlier book, *Eyes That See*, but this time including a balanced assessment of John Wimber's ministry, which raises significant problems with his approach.

This revised version is a readable book which applies the gift of discernment to various aspects of Church life. It is also a practical book written in a "preaching" kind of style, which draws together biblical material connected with its subject and illustrates

with many personal stories.

There is certainly far more to be said on the theme than is covered here, particularly when the issue of "checking for truth in signs and wonders" is the book's sub-title. "Checking for truth" in such a context raises fundamental epistemic issues which would take a considerably more substantial work than this to do justice to.

However, it is not a piece of academic theology or philosophy, and perhaps should not be judged as such. It is a work which could be helpful to many people.

One of the beneficial aspects of the book is that it comes out of involvement with the Charismatic Movement, and yet remains critical of it; this is both rare and useful. This is also, however, where my main criticism would lie, because its scope and methods are restricted by this current movement. These issues have been addressed with real profundity by some of the greatest minds in Church history, yet *Discerning the Spirits* makes virtually no reference to this. Jumping over two thousands years of Christian thought is tragic.

When you require a profound treatment of these issues, I would recommend *the Religious Affections* by Jonathan Edwards; but when you need a practical and popular reflection of the current Charismatic scene, then *Discerning the Spirits* is valuable.

**David Middlemiss**

### **A Spoke in the Wheel: The Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer** by Renate Wind.

(SCM, 1991, 144pp, £6.95)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hanged a few days before the end of the war for his association with the plot to assassinate Hitler. He was isolated from the church to which he belonged long before his two year imprisonment. His writings struggle with the nature of Christian responsibility and human maturity.

The greatness of Bonhoeffer is not to be found primarily in his writings, though he continues to offer a rich quarry from which challenging theological building blocks may be hewn. Neither does his greatness lie in his life, although there is much to receive from following his pilgrimage of faith through the ambiguities and horrors of Nazi Germany. His greatness is to be found in the relationship between theology and life. Here is a praxis which offers both integrity and insight, spirituality and challenge. His writings stand on their own, but when read in the context of his life they confront our easy acceptance of theoretical truth and ask us to face the responsibility of struggling with our theological reflection as a matter of life or death. If we find theology soporific is that a reflection on the state of our discipleship?

If we ask whether there is room for another book on Bonhoeffer. I can only reply by saying that this one is worth reading. It offers a readable introduction to those who are coming to this man and his writings for the first time, while at the same time highlighting certain features which are of value to those who are not newcomers.

For example, Wind offers insights into the influence of his social and family origins, as well as a critical account of the development of the Confessing Church. The standard biography is still that written by Bonhoeffer's closest friend Eberhard Bethge, but this new volume is less than a sixth of the length and offers an overview which raises sharp questions for our own day.

The length of the book is both its strength and its weakness. The theological exposition is sketchy yet still offers pointers which should make us think. If it leads some new pilgrims to grapple with the work of this great man, then it will have served its purpose.

**Christopher Ellis**

**Youth Culture and the Gospel** by Pete Ward (Marshall Pickering, 1992, 190 pp, £5.99)

Youth Culture is one of the alleged mysteries of the age, presented as an almost insurmountable boundary against which individuals in society have to wrestle. Pete Ward brings us face to face with his experiences of youth culture and the sacrifices he has been prepared to make in order to understand the 'language' of the young. The book is "A reflection of my own work among young people in Oxford in the light of the Good News of Jesus". He demonstrates his understanding of the many cultures young people share in through anecdotes, songs and questions, causing you to look inside yourself and ask what you actually believe about where Jesus wants to meet young people.

The book covers the many facets of young people taking the uninitiated through a dictionary of terms and definitions to the point where he raises some of the real problems facing young people, such as "I can't read". Ward presents a number of possible ways that can be adopted in order to help young people begin to understand the Bible for themselves.

Ward's experience and reputation will make the book of interest to the professional wanting more background; attractive to the sceptical and curious who feel that youth culture is a myth. But the greatest value I think will be in helping the people who feel alienated by young people to gain an understanding of what young people are saying through their dress, music and styles of worship.

The bibliography in itself is an excellent resource if you are wanting to locate information concerning young people. The book is well presented and you do not have to be an expert in youth work to read it and appreciate the many valuable points raised.

**Iain Hoskins**

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