

The Baptist Ministers' Journal

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"The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily
reflect those of the Editorial Board"

Editorial

It is a hardy perennial to say “the Word became flesh and the Church has turned it back into the word”. Indeed, we find it almost impossible to imagine ourselves back in those pre-canonical days when apart from the Old Testament scriptures, the Church had no book of its very own; no distinctively Christian words. Then, life and Spirit were everything and if the *praxis* was not convincing, nothing was. But when, at the end of the fourth century, the Synod of Carthage sanctioned the canon we know today, we became officially a people of the book, following Judaism and anticipating Islam.

There is an historical inevitability about all this, for the fluidity of thought and its spoken expression needed to have a fixed reference point against which it could be tested: this is Christian truth; that is heresy. As early as St. Paul, extravagant appeals to the Spirit to justify anything pointed to the need for a more objective criterion. And so the Church became literary and cerebral, which in post-modern Britain could well be a stumbling block to the communication of the Gospel: “here is God’s book; study it”.

All this clearly has an impact upon the world of religious and especially denominational, publishing. It could be caught in a pincer movement inasmuch as the secular world won’t touch it and the Christian world increasingly chooses not to. The rate of failure of such publications in recent years serves to concentrate wonderfully the minds of editors. Why does the person who finds his or her daily paper compelling view a Christian publication so differently? Is it presentation, style, content or a problem of conceptualisation, inasmuch as they relate more naturally to the world of the former, be they ever so committed?

Facing this challenge every day is John Capon, Editor of *The Baptist Times*. He shares with us the realities of religious publishing today and something of how he sees the future. Secondly, Clive Doubleday raises our horizons as he describes church planting in Eastern Europe: how we can help and what we can learn.

One of the on-going tensions in church life is between employing efficient management techniques and “leaving it to the Spirit”. Probably most of us try to juggle the two uneasily. Gordon Brand makes out a case for taking management seriously, arguing his case in the light of scripture. Shortly before he died, Ernest Moore wrote an article confessing a re-think on Paul’s view of woman, in the light of some work done by the French scholar, Feuillet. Fifthly, we have been alerted to the importance of taking *context* seriously when it comes to Christian witness. Ron Armstrong addresses this vital issue, cross-referencing both with New Testament World and Third World.

Finally, we are indebted to those forty or so readers who returned questionnaires enclosed with a sample of the January edition. Your constructive comments on the quality of our publication will be taken into consideration in the future.

Watch This Space: Religious Publishing Today

The short answer I give when people ask me why we publish the Baptist Times is this: To tell Baptists about Baptists; to tell Baptists about the world; and to tell the world about Baptists. Like most things about me, it is not original. I have adapted it denominationally from my old friend Denis Duncan, one-time Editor of the British Weekly, now running a publishing house, who used the words “the Church”, rather than “Baptists”.

Telling Baptists about Baptists

The primary justification for having a Baptist periodical must surely be to keep Baptists informed about each other. Because if we don't, nobody will, and in the sort of loose federation of independent churches which constitutes our denomination it is important that there is a medium of communication which keeps us in touch.

But the emphasis we place upon our Baptist identity and purpose is not sectarian. We accept that we are but a small part of the Church of Christ, and we seek to reflect that recognition in the pages of the paper, while still giving prominence to Baptist affairs.

Broadly speaking there are three different categories of Baptist news and information which we carry. Each has its place, and over a period we seek to preserve a balance between them in the paper:

Local. News of events and developments in local Baptist churches is important, but in a limited sense. People like to read about people and churches they know; it enhances their sense of belonging to a wider community. But however important these matter might be in local terms, they can hardly be described as national news. That is why we allocate space each week on the back page to “Local Network”, where adequate space can be given to these reports without giving the impression that we regard them as major news items.

Denominational. Not all Baptist news is of purely local interest. So adequate space is given in the paper to reports of proceedings at the Baptist Assembly, Baptist Union Council, Baptist Missionary Society General Committee, gatherings of Baptist groups, Baptists publications and reports, etc., together with coverage of British Baptist events which have a national significance and news of Baptist life and work overseas.

National/International. Baptists in general do not have a very high profile in the public's awareness, but there are occasions when we are involved in something which catches the attention of the wider world. As I write there have been two recent examples: the granting of sanctuary in Hackney Downs Baptist Church to Sunday Ogunwobi; and the sale by Bristol Baptist College of its Tyndale New Testament to the British Library. Where such events occur we seek to set them in context and deal with them in greater depth.

Looking beyond Baptist boundaries to the wider Church, the first of the categories above does not apply. We only carry non-Baptist local church news when there is an ecumenical dimension with Baptist involvement. But elsewhere in the paper we try to report news of other denominations' affairs when appropriate, especially if the

subject is of wider national or international interest.

The same principles apply for non-news material. Most of our writers are Baptists, as is the subject matter of our feature articles, whether they relate to people, policies or practical issues. But some of our writers are non-Baptists and many of our features relate to matters of general Christian concern. This leads naturally to the second of the three guiding principles given above.

Telling Baptists about the World

Making Baptists aware of what is going on in other churches helps them to relate to the world in which they live but, of course, there is much more to it than that. Baptists who neither know nor understand what is happening in the wider world are hardly likely to be effective witnesses for Jesus Christ. In our media-saturated world it is almost impossible to be unaware of the events and influences which shape our lives, and while it would be impracticable to relate to all - or even many - of them, we try to tackle public issues which have a moral, ethical or religious dimension.

I would be the first to admit our shortcomings in this area. This is partly because of the speed with which national issues arise, are debated in the media, and either disappear without trace or are superseded by something else. Publishing only weekly, and with early deadlines to meet, any coverage we give may seem to be out-of-date almost before it is written. There are not too many people around, either, who have the expertise, the availability and the time to write authoritatively on such matters.

Nevertheless, it is vital that we keep trying. Failure to relate to what is going on around us leaves us stranded in the unreal world of our own parochial dreams and suggests that we have nothing to say to the real world of shattered dreams and dashed hopes. It is hardly surprising that people outside the church tend to be more attentive to us when what we say relates to what they already know about the world in which they live. Which brings us neatly to the third principle.

Telling the World about Baptists

I remember what a pleasant surprise it was to receive a call early one Thursday morning (publication day) from the Producer of BBC1's "Songs of Praise" commenting on something he had read in that week's issue. It was a welcome reminder that the paper circulates far beyond the churches of our own denomination - and indeed beyond the church as such. Copies are read in national newspaper offices (we have good reason to believe that our coverage of the Hackney Downs sanctuary story was one reason why the national press picked it up) and local radio stations always on the look-out for new material.

In a modest way, therefore, the paper provides Baptists with a platform from which to address the wider world. That possibility, however small, serves as a healthy incentive, when we draw up our editorial agenda, to avoid being too introspective and self-analytical, and to deal with issues which scratch where ordinary people are itching.

Breadth Versus Depth

One of the challenges we face in producing a small paper (16 pages most weeks) is how to provide sufficient breadth of content to interest a diverse readership, without finishing up with a product so bland and superficial that it fails

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THE BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN

to satisfy. One of the best defences against such a development is to try to ensure that the communication process of which the paper is a part is complete. For this to happen there needs to be adequate feedback, so that the message is not only formulated, transmitted, received and understood, but also responded to.

I may be wrong, but my impression, based upon more than 30 years continuous awareness of the BT, is that the paper is now generating more feedback than ever. This is one reason why I personally favour a weekly periodical rather than a monthly. A correspondence column in a monthly magazine is about as satisfactory as playing postal chess. The debate moves so slowly that people lose interest. In a weekly a real sense of dialogue can develop over issues which readers themselves have selected, enabling them to be dealt with at greater depth. And anyway, people always love reading the Letters Page!

Independence and Disclosure

One reason why I am glad that the BT is an independent newspaper (it is owned by the Baptist Union, but I alone am responsible for its contents) is that it enables us to perform one of the essential tasks of any newspaper worthy of the name - disclosure. Christian organisations, like most people, would like everything said about them to be positive and affirming. In the main, this presents no difficulty, but no organisation is perfect, and in the interests of public accountability it is sometimes right that we should draw attention to their shortcomings and failures. It would be difficult to do this if we were the official journal of the Baptist Union.

Independence also enables us, while being genuinely supportive of the Union's work, to publish letters and articles of a critical nature. The paper thereby becomes to the denomination what a church meeting is to a church - a place where contrary views can be expressed within the family and constructive dialogue can ensue. Though the ethos of the paper under my editorship is broadly evangelical (mirroring that of the denomination) and though I realise that that is not to everyone's liking, I hope those from different traditions will not feel marginalised thereby. The editorial in-tray is not closed to their contributions, as regular readers will be aware.

Commercial Pressures

These are not easy times for small circulation specialist periodicals. When recession bites purchasers look around for savings they can make in their personal expenditure, and a weekly paper is an obvious candidate. Advertisers, too, who contribute a substantial proportion of our income, are feeling the draught. Fortunately, costs have not risen greatly in recent years, partly because wise investment in computer equipment has enabled us to undertake more and more of the origination work on the paper, helping to hold down costs and giving us more control over presentation.

When advertising revenue makes such a vital contribution to our economic viability, there is a temptation to trim editorial policy to suit our advertisers. It is a temptation which we steadfastly resist - sometimes to our cost. For example, articles we have published critical of Morris Cerullo and his Mission to London, and our publicly announced decision to accept no further advertisements from his organisation, have cost us several thousands of pounds.

Changes in the Baptist ethos do not make things any easier for a specifically Baptist paper. So many of those in our churches who come within what might

otherwise be regarded as our prime source of potential readers, namely those in the 25-45 age group, are not instinctively Baptist, and do not have the sense of denominational identity which requires, among other things, regular reading of the BT. Our editorial response to that fact is to broaden our contents as widely as possible, commensurate with our prime responsibility to serve the denomination. Getting the balance right requires vigilance and sensitivity.

The media does not stand still. Changes in content and presentation are evident in our national papers - not always in the right direction. So-called "quality" newspapers are unashamedly more popular in their approach, with more human interest, action pictures, large headlines and strong graphics - to say nothing of the liberal use of full colour. Such developments are beyond a paper such as ours, with such limited resources, though some of the changes we have introduced in the BT in recent years have sought to take account of some of these trends. As to the future, we can only echo the familiar catch-line, "Watch This Space".

John Capon

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Church Planting in Eastern Europe

Over the past five years, Eastern Europe has undergone major surgery as the cancer of Communism has been rooted out. Tyrannical and dictatorial leaders like Ceausescu, Zhivkov and Jakes have been overthrown, along with the suppression and persecution of the Christian Church. There is no area of East European life that has not been affected by these shifts in power and political changes. With the fall of the Berlin Wall came the fall of Communist ideology, the cement that held Eastern Europe together. Now the countries cry 'freedom', but what does this freedom really mean, particularly with regard to church growth and church planting in Eastern Europe today?

Having travelled extensively throughout Eastern Europe in the past decade, I share here some of my observations in the hope that we can learn from our brothers and sisters in the East and also recognise ways in which we can help to offer support as they face this newly created challenge. In Romania it is reported that there have been around 1200 new Baptist churches planted since the Romanian Revolution in 1989. (A more conservative figure of around 800 would be more accurate). In Bulgaria the Baptist churches have grown from 16, with a congregation of 800, to 66, with a congregation of 6,000, over the past two years. In Albania, the churches have grown from 0 to 23 in the past two years, with a total of 1,000 Christians throughout the country. Rapid church growth is also recorded in the community of Independent States, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. When you visit one or two of these Eastern countries and meet with the church leaders and their congregations, you cannot help but be impressed with the level of vision, faith and commitment that exudes from these resilient people. Here are a people who have prayed for freedom for 40 years and now their prayers have been answered with freedom to evangelise. They have a tremendous burden and desire to maximise the use of this freedom for the sake of the Gospel.

Strategy

Firstly, towns and villages are identified where there is no particular Christian witness, and a church is usually established in the home of a Christian family, around which other neighbours and friends are invited to a simple service. It is not usually long before a piece of land is purchased and the desire to build a church gets under way. In Eastern Europe, the importance of a church building is considered essential if the believers are to be recognised as an authentic and credible church within the community. This stems from the Orthodox / Catholic culture of many of the East European nations where buildings play an important part in the national life of the country. With very little resources, a church group will set about digging the foundations and acquiring the materials, which is not an easy task. The design of the church building is always for multi-purpose use. In some cases it will be a three-storey building, with accommodation for the pastor and his family and the church secretary and his/her family. There will be additional rooms for visiting guests to sleep, and there will be ample space for the worship sanctuary. In the basement there are large rooms where the youth, Sunday School, offices and aid distribution facilities are provided. It is amazing to observe the whole church family work together to build this church. The children will carry buckets full of rubble or soil, the wives will mix cement and the men will do the brick work and

prepare the building. The church will supply food for the men who come straight from work every evening, and all day on Saturday, to devote their spare time to the building of the church; but very often there is no financial reward for their labours.

Within 18 months to two years the church is established in that community, and often the community has grown simply from one family to around 120 believers. The mother church may have up to six church plants on the go at any one particular time, which puts enormous strain and pressure on the pastor, who is already pastorally responsible for between eight to ten churches. This is due to the great shortage of ministers in Eastern Europe, resulting from the limited or non-existent theological training under the past Communist regime.

In Romania it is estimated that there are 1,500 Baptist churches with around 150 pastors, many of which are around retirement age, so there is a great need now for new ministers to take over these new church plants. In the West we can learn very much from the faith, vision and the commitment of our East European colleagues as they give sacrificially of their time and energy. The Friday evening prayer meeting is the **power house** behind much of the church planting and growth strategy. It usually lasts for about three hours where there is worship, preaching and much prayer with regard to the needs of the church as it seeks to reach out to the community. This would also be repeated on Sunday where much prayer is undertaken. It is, therefore, no surprise that regular baptismal services of up to twenty-five candidates at a time are frequent occurrences.

Difficulties

There are still difficulties, however, facing Christians as they seek to plant in different villages. There is the resistance from the national Orthodox Church in Romania which is not happy to lose members to the Baptist and Pentecostal churches that are being planted everywhere. In extreme cases pastors have had their homes, churches and cars set on fire and attacked by radical Orthodox believers. There is the rise of nationalism in all the Eastern countries; in Romania there is a strong division between Hungarians living in Romania and with the Romanians themselves: nationalistic roots go deep. One village can be totally Hungarian, and another village can be totally Romanian. East Europeans have long memories and remember what was once their land before boundaries were redrawn. In the light of this new freedom, many are eager to regain what is rightfully theirs, which has led to the conflict that we now witness in the fragmentation of Yugoslavia. The exit of Communism has left a huge vacuum in people's minds, and therefore many people are rushing to fill it. This is the flipside to the freedom coin, not only can the Christians hold meetings in football stadiums, halls and villages throughout the country, but so can the cults who are also seizing the freedom opportunities in Eastern Europe: the Mormons have sent 22 full-time evangelists to Romania and there are also Moonies and Jehovah's Witnesses working extensively in mountain villages. Hari Krishna and the Bahai faith are working very much in capital cities. Islam, fuelled by finance from the rich oil states, is gaining ground. Recently, Colonel Gaddafi shipped boatloads of the Koran into Albania to fan into flame the growth of Islam. It can truly be said that in Eastern Europe a battle for the mind is being fought. Another difficulty that Eastern Europeans face is that many of their young people are not prepared to work and struggle on until their country comes up the living standards which they see on television as existing in the West. Many cannot get enough dollars together quick enough to flee for Western Europe

or America, which they see as the world of opportunity and their personal utopia. Materialism is also spreading with the desire to own a car, a video, television, radio or bright Western clothes, which are paramount, particularly with young people.

One disturbing trend that I have witnessed throughout Eastern Europe is the promotion of different strands of theology. Some pastors are offered cars and generous allowances, but they must preach and adhere to the theological standpoint of the church that gives these gifts. In some cases, this can be selling out to Liberal Theology, instead of upholding a strong evangelical position. One cannot blame pastors in desperate situations with the responsibility of caring for family and fellowships if they are not tempted to accept the big carrot, often from wealthy Americans who breeze into town with a fistful of dollars.

Theological Training is the Key to Church Growth

Yet in the face of such changes, the Church continues to grow. The preaching of the Word of God is held in awe, with tremendous respect, and unless the preacher has spoken for at least an hour, they feel they have not had a proper service. One of the essential keys for church growth in Eastern Europe to be sustained is for pastors to be trained. The Baptist Seminary in Bucharest, Romania, has gone from nine students, which was its limit under the Communist regime, to 90 in the past 18 months. Some Christian leaders from countries where there is no theological training, have had to come to the West, the UK or American theological colleges to gain degrees, M.A.'s and doctorates before returning home to teach existing pastors. In Bulgaria, for instance, there have been no trained Baptist ministers for over 45 years and there has been no Baptist seminary in that country; now it is planned to build one in Sofia. At Spurgeon's College, two young Bulgarian pastors are undertaking a degree in theology before returning to lecture in their own country, and they are being sponsored by Spurgeon's Overseas Bursary Fund. Spurgeon's are also training students from Romania and Russia.

Another area that requires development is on the lay ministry level. There are currently a few projects to encourage the training and teaching of deacons, elders and Bible/Sunday School teachers who are in full-time employment. This is limited, and as the churches grow with converts, this is a key area of development if a church is to retain the new converts in the years that lie ahead.

How Can the West Help?

We have witnessed much aid flooding into Eastern Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and this is good, but much of this crisis aid has now dried up and the next phase is to share how national Christians can help themselves. This must be done through theological training so that nationals can teach and train national pastors, but also in every other area of social life; industrial, medical, social and political. What Eastern Europe needs now is the sharing of expertise and the teaching of what democracy really means. Another area of help with regard to church growth is through literature, providing Bibles and good clear Bible studies, or machinery for them to produce their own literature. Also, the financial sponsoring of ministers. At present, East European Ministries, sponsors several Baptist ministers in Romania for three year period, so that finances can be released to build the churches and to maintain the ministry. This is on a decreasing level over the years to avoid any unhealthy sense of dependency.

One way of helping is for a church in the West to twin with a church in the East,

have exchanges and visits and help with the building of new churches, providing literature and practical help without any strings attached. We need to ensure that through our giving from the West, we do not impose pressure, propaganda or persecution that they once faced from the Communists.

The churches in Eastern Europe have learned to appreciate that the congregation is a spiritual home and a sustaining community, a place of refuge and an oasis for the Christian believer. We can learn much from our East European colleagues and we can also give much through our prayers and through practical support. As the body of believers in Eastern Europe is now free from its restrictive illness, we can help the new Christian of Eastern Europe to stand tall and proudly proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ that once had to take place in secret.

If you would like to twin with a church in Eastern Europe or support a church planting project in some way practically, then please write to the Revd Clive Doubleday, 117 Kingsway, Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent, BR5 1PP

Clive Doubleday

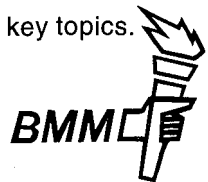
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Church and Management: Incompatible?

“The camel is a horse designed by a committee”.

The purpose of this well-known witty remark is to highlight the apparent incompetence and inefficiency of committee structures. However, if the truth be told, it is in fact a glowing compliment to what can be achieved by careful management and design. The camel may have a rather comical appearance but it is ideally suited to its natural habitat. The frequent failures and frustrations felt by chairpersons and committee members alike are more likely to arise because of the absence of any clear management thinking rather than anything to do with the general nature of committees themselves.

The question must, nevertheless, be asked: what place, if any, does management thinking have in the context of the church? Bearing in mind that the church is a community engaged in spiritual activity, created by divine initiative, based on faith in the ongoing purposes of God, under the headship of the risen Christ, and led by the Holy Spirit it is sometimes assumed that the idea of management is, therefore, not only unnecessary but also a denial of these spiritual elements. Such an assumption needs to be thoughtfully but critically examined in the light of the testimony of scripture and the experience of the Church past and present.

Biblical Evidence

Certainly, the writings of the New Testament emphasize the presence of the Holy Spirit as a means of discovering truth (John 16:13), as a means of recalling the teaching of Jesus (John 14:26), and as a means of equipping the Church through the individual members for the tasks of mission (1 Cor 12: 7-11). There is also the recurring notion of the Spirit conveying specific information and delivering appropriate commands (Acts 9:10ff; Acts 8:26-29). The New Testament Church and its leaders saw the need to discover the mind of Christ for its plans and actions (Acts 15:28; 20:22). There are many examples of the Spirit's presence being seen as responsible for healings, other miracles, and inspirational preaching. Most importantly, perhaps, the Spirit is valued for his ability to reveal to Christians the mind of God and the mystery of his purposes (1 Cor 2:6ff).

At the same time, however, there is much evidence in the New Testament and elsewhere to suggest that human intelligence and activity were still necessary: that the Spirit was given to aid and enhance human capability rather than replace it. In the Old Testament, the Spirit empowered individuals to perform mighty deeds but, more often than not, two requirements were made of the chosen recipient - research and management. Before the People of Israel entered the country of the Amorites (Deut 1:22), and before they attacked Jericho (Josh 2), it was acknowledged that some degree of espionage would be helpful to their cause. Even when promises had been made to the people by God they were still expected to obey in the appropriate organised manner. Indeed, the basis of the covenant relationship was the acceptance of mutual responsibilities and reciprocal activities.

Jesus himself is a pertinent example for this discussion. There were times when he had to plan his activities carefully in order to ensure the maximum possible effect: choosing the right men to work with him (Matt 4:18; 10:1-4), choosing the

right moment to begin his ministry (Matt 4:12), preparing his disciples adequately for their mission (Matt 10) and capturing the best moment for developing his disciples' awareness (Matt 16:13, 21). In his teaching he dismissed on more than one occasion the careless approach - whether it was in building a tower (Luke 14:28), or going to war (Luke 14:31), or in the world of business (Luke 16:1-12). In other parables he speaks of the need for forethought (the Ten Virgins - Matt 25:1-13) and for a wise use of resources (the Talents - Matt 25: 14-30).

When we look at the development of the Church in the New Testament it is plain that from the moment of its conception some structural formation and guidelines were seen to be necessary. Resources had to be co-ordinated (Acts 2:44; 4:32-37) under the guidance of the Apostles; administrative staff were needed to organise the social welfare of the Church (Acts 6:1-6); congregations needed overseers and deacons (1 Tim 3) and elders (1 Tim 5:17) to direct the affairs of the fellowship, and pastors, teachers and others 'to prepare God's people for works of service...' (Eph 4:12). Even in the matter of worship, a supremely spiritually inspired activity, suitable controls needed to be implemented to ensure order and efficiency (1 Cor 14 et al).

Leaving aside specific examples in scripture, there is implicit teaching throughout the Bible concerning the need for us to use our minds and abilities in accordance with the Spirit. If the Biblical doctrine of Man emphasises his particular role in creation as a result of being made in the divine image, then we can safely assume that at no time did God intend to relegate such creative potential to the level of robotic or merely instinctive responses. Rather, the emphasis seems to be on the Spirit as the means to developing a person's full potential. It is the combined mixture of spiritual power and human creativity that expresses the glory of God.

The importance of such a conjunction is brought out in John's exhortation that the spirits should be tested (1 John 4:1) and Paul's statement that such discernment is a gift of the Holy Spirit. In other words, there needs to be a careful consideration of any instructions which are alleged to be from the Spirit to discern whether they are in keeping with scripture and the general ethos of the Church. The claim to possess the Holy Spirit does not promote an individual to a position of infallibility and, therefore, there needs to be an organised sharing of ideas, as well as a recognition that one or more members might have got it wrong.

To this can be added the problem of faith. It is a problem only in so far as all that we do is based on subjective belief. However positive we may be in our convictions, we are still dealing in the realm of faith in which there are no absolutes. Even when a church believes that it has by prayer and church meeting discovered the will of God, it cannot dogmatically assert this view. It can only test its response by experimentation: in other words, engaging itself in appropriate actions on the basis of trial and error.

The involvement of mental and physical ability is important for another reason also. Whilst scripture tells us that the Spirit reveals the mind of God to us, nowhere does it mislead us into thinking that the Spirit is every church's crystal ball into which the members can gaze and discover all the relevant information they require (much as we might sometimes wish that were the case!). And yet, information is a vital resource for effective church work in its social involvement and evangelistic activity. Such information is only made available through research.

Information is also required for the day-to-day running of a church. Financial and

secretarial skills need to be applied to the organisation. Skills are also necessary for the functions of leadership, teaching, pastoral counselling and various other forms of church activity. Suitable methods need to be employed in all of these areas and, although it would not be beyond the scope of the Holy Spirit to act as a general source, the information is usually sought either in other churches or even in non-church organisations.

The Contribution of Secular Insights

The decision to look beyond the spiritual confines of the Church for added insights may, for some, need justification. Arthur Holmes, in his book *All Truth is God's Truth*, defends this position most adequately. He does so along the lines that if God is the source of all goodness, then there is much in the secular world to be acknowledged by Christians. If methods of research and management can be found which are consistent with Christian values then they cannot be dismissed simply on the grounds that they were discovered in a non-Christian context. Rather, the Church should become aware of them and make full use of them. If they have proved effective and successful elsewhere then they could be of immense value to the Church. Such research could prove (and has already proved) most beneficial to many areas of church life, whether administrative or pastoral. The problem is that, in some instances, the means has become as sacred as the end and, therefore, virtually impossible to change even in the light of wider experience.

There is yet another assumption at times made which is used to dismiss the benefits of secular influence. That is the belief that talents, gifts or abilities within the Church are Spirit-endowed and, therefore, innate within each individual. This is stated to suggest that one cannot and should not attempt to improve the talent. It is also sometimes used as an excuse by those who would claim exemption from a task because they do not have the necessary gifts. If our natural abilities (musical, administrative, leadership etc) can only become productive if they are developed, it seems logical that our spiritual gifts can be developed in similar ways. Training may give form and substance to many such talents and much of the relevant training material may well be found in circles outside the context of churches or even theological colleges.

Much of church life depends on the stewardship of its members. Whether it is the stewardship of their talents such as we have just mentioned or the general stewardship of financial and material resources, or even the responsible use of time, all of these need careful co-ordination and proper management. If this is lacking then there will be an imbalance of activity as well as a wastage of resources. Also, however commendable they may be of themselves, they are unlikely to be of general benefit to the church or of much relevance to its mission.

The Bible teaches us many ways in which the Spirit works in co-operation with individual Christians and these individuals are often engaged in planning, research and administration which, although not divorced from spiritual activity, can nevertheless be seen as distinct from it. As Christians we find ourselves having to keep two worlds in focus at one time. Our spirituality is not intended to remove us from the secular world, at least for the present, but rather to enhance our human existence; and all that we believe is part of God's gift of life. In the same way, the Church finds the fulfilment of its purposes in the context of this world and, therefore, needs to relate to both the spiritual and the temporal environments. It cannot concentrate on one and exclude the other without losing its 'raison d'être'. As well as possessing much that needs to be distributed beyond its walls, there is much

that it can learn and receive from the outside which can be utilised in the service of the Kingdom.

Obviously, a church must never be solely concerned with its management to the extent that it forgets its dependence on the Spirit. But a church that seeks to avoid or exclude the benefits of secular thought and practice in its management deprives itself of much that is not only useful but also much that is as God-given as the Church itself.

Management thinking can teach us about the kind of organisation a church is meant to be and what forms of leadership and administration can best enable the Church to function effectively and productively. It can bring new life to committees and meetings by creating a new awareness of roles and methods of discussion. Churches are frequently seeking ways of releasing the gifts of members, training them for leadership, evangelism or counselling. The effectiveness of organisations within the church needs constant evaluation. In the building up of the Church and the carrying out of its mission in service and evangelism, the use of management thinking can aid the setting of goals and objectives, increase effectiveness by offering methods of gathering information, clarify the plans for action, develop available resources, as well as providing a means for assessing progress.

A church that combines management with leadership will be one in which members will be encouraged to feel a greater sense of purpose for the church and a clearer understanding of their own individual roles within it. Such awareness can only serve to deepen commitment and enable the Church faithfully to fulfil its purpose in the world.

Gordon Brand

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Paul and Woman: A Journey

At the beginning of the journey, I reluctantly shared the view of many that, in this matter, the Apostle had not freed himself from his Pharisaic prejudices. Here I sketch the main stages in moving a long way from there.

The journey began in a strange fashion, on a hot Sunday afternoon some 25 years ago, at a Sunday School Anniversary in a large Baptist citadel of the North. Parents and friends, in shirt sleeves and summer dresses, were listening to the singing and recitations of their offspring. One young mother had chosen to appear in a dress more suited to the beach.

I reflected afterwards that, in my address, I had probably fought a losing battle, as far as the attention of many was concerned, with that scanty dress. Then my thoughts went to Corinth, and Paul's advice about veils. For a woman to appear in public, without a veil, anywhere in Corinth, would be far more distracting and dangerous than that dress. This led to a more sympathetic understanding of the pastoral situation. These ladies were probably recent Greek converts who revelled in their new found freedom, like other converts who deliberately ate 'eidolothuta' (idol meat) to shock their more scrupulous brothers and sisters. That Paul seems suddenly to drop his argument from Scripture (in Ch 11) suggests that they knew little or nothing of the Law and the Prophets: a point I was later to find of great significance in the injunction to them to "keep silent".

This led to an appreciation of Paul's pastoral problem in the situation underlying Ch 7, and of his great skill in dealing with them. A most unpromising start, for he seems to say: "No sex, but you can use marriage as a safety valve against an explosion of the libido". But our difficulty is largely due to the virtual absence of punctuation in our earliest manuscripts. Paul is actually quoting from the letter he has received. And his problem is exactly the opposite of the 'do-as-you-please-ism' of the previous chapter. His questioners here are ascetics who abstained from sex on the basis that the flesh is evil and the creation of the work of a demi-god who made an awful mess of things. As Chapter 7 proceeds, it is clear that Paul's apparent agreement with them - like his agreement with those who felt free to eat 'eidolothuta' - proceeds from entirely different premises. In both cases, 'eidolothuta' and sex, Paul's concern is about what is best for the Church and the kingdom in the current situation. His pastoral wisdom and understanding is especially evident in his advice to couples who have tried to follow his own path of abstinence, and found it too hard. His repeated insistence that they should not regard themselves as "having sinned" would not please his ascetic questioners. Paul's path in this regard is not for everyone: "Each has his own special gift from God". That means that the marriage of Aquila and Priscilla is no less a cause for thanksgiving than Paul's singleness.

At an early stage came the question: How could an antifeminist ('misogynist' some say) have so many women friends as are not only named but implied ('mother', 'sister') in Romans 16? Was the 'family of Narcissus', or 'the Church in their (Priscilla and Aquila in that order!) house', all male? "Fellow workers" implies far more than cutting cucumber sandwiches in the pavilion while the men get on with the game. At the same time the kind of 'help' given by Phoebe would be much the same as that given to Jesus by the women named in Luke 8:2-3. Indeed, this 'diakonia' by women, given to and accepted by both Jesus and Paul, distinguishes both from the general run of itinerant Palestinian teachers and prophets.

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Yours sincerely

T. E. Mattholie

There remained the apparently insuperable Beecher's Brook obstacle: that abrupt injunction in Ch 14 to the women to keep silence in the ecclesia, with its apparent contradiction of the picture in ch 11, - Women praying, prophesying and speaking with tongues (only keep your veils on, ladies, and one at a time please!). For long I was content to say to myself: we should not expect consistency of one who would be the first to admit that he had "not yet attained", and who, in a life of ceaseless activity amid perils of all kinds, had only some 25 years to work out the implications of his 'arrest by Christ Jesus' on the Damascus Road. However, there came what seems to me a sufficient answer, in 1975, with the publication in *INT Studies*, Vol 21, pp 157-191, of an article by the French scholar, A Feuillet: "The dignity and the role of women according to some Pauline texts: comparison with the Old Testament". Here I can but sketch the main lines of Feuillet's argument, interspersing it with some comments and observations, though necessarily omitting much of the evidence with which every sentence is supported.

1. Woman the 'glory' (doxa) of Man. 1 Cor 11:7 (Gen 1:27)

'Doxa-glory' is taken by many to equal 'reflection'. Woman thus becomes a 'reflection of a reflection', a weaker copy of Man who is the direct copy of God. This appears to be supported by 'veil' (v10, 'exousia' =(lit) 'authority') and seems to mean the authority to which woman submits.

The genitive ('of Man') is subjective, as in 2 Cor 8:23. Titus and the friends who take relief to Judaea are 'the glory of Christ'. They are thus 'that which gives honour to, glorifies Christ', and hence, 'those in whom Christ has joy and pride'. So too, in Gen 1, everything in creation brings honour and glory to God, and his his joy and delight - "God saw that it was good". But above all, 'Adam' - the human being in its totality, Man and Woman **together**, are the unique image and glory of God. (Note how Feuillet's 'together' is supported by Gen 1: 26-7: "...**let them** have dominion...male and female created he **them**."

The second, and earlier creation narrative, Gen 2: 18-24, also, underlies 1 Cor. 11:7. Here "Woman is considered in her specific role, in so far as she is distinguished from man, and serves so to speak to complete him. She is the "glory" of man (not his 'reflection', since she is different), because she is his joy and pride in bringing to him an incomparable richness, of which otherwise he would be deprived". (So would she, without him!) "'Doxa' signifies the dignity of woman in her distinction from man, that is, in the role which she has been assigned by the Creator".

2. The Silence of Women in Christian Assemblies. 1 Cor 14: 33b-35

Where does Scripture ('The Law') enjoin silence upon women? "In Genesis 3:16" is the usual answer. Woman's domination by Man, consequent upon her part in the Fall, is virtually a command to silence! Feuillet, however, returns to the distinction of roles in Gen 2. Man is the bearer of 'logos' (speech). He finds himself driven (naming of animals and his partner-to-be) to express what he knows. But the knowledge is mutual. She knows, in silence, intuitively. (Later, Feuillet sees an analogy with the relation of the Logos (Son) and the Spirit in John's Gospel. But more than an analogy!) In other words, the distinction of roles does not mean inferiority or subordination of one to the other. It is a distinction in equality. Here he makes a most acute observation about Gal 3:28. The Greek does not say, as we would expect from the previous words, "neither male **nor** female" but "neither male **and** female". This 'and' takes us also to Gen 1. Male and female **together** are the 'image' of God. Hence equality. On the other hand, "**nor** female" in Gal 3:28 would

have ignored the distinction of roles in Gen 2.

But what has this distinction to do with the injunction to silence? And if we are to apply Gen 2 to the injunction, why are the women in Chapter 11 not told to keep silent as well as to keep their veils on? The situation is different, answers Feuillet. In Chapter 11, the 'ecclesia' is at worship. There is no question there of 'gifts' such as 'prophecy' being given to women (Acts 21:9). Only, keep your veils on, and "two or at most three, and each in turn". In 14: 20-33a, too, the assembly (*ecclesia*) meets "for worship" (v26). And though the whole assembly is addressed as 'brothers', ("how confusing, sisters, is this gender business", he/she said), when it comes to "gifts", the sex of the speaker is left open - "each one", "if any", etc. On the other hand, at v33b (Paul himself did not make our chapter and verse divisions), there is a new situation. Here the meeting (perhaps not the whole assembly as in v26) is for "didache", teaching and instruction, especially of new converts. Here we must go back to our observation about the women addressed being Greek converts, and many, if not most, wives of Greek 'God-fearers', proselytes, like Nicolaus and Cornelius. Their husbands would know the Law and the Prophets as well, if not better, than many Jews. A vital part of this 'teaching' was to show how the Gospel and the Kerygma were rooted and grounded in the Scriptures, especially in the Prophets. But few, if any, of the women in Corinth (even Jewish women) would have attended the synagogue. Moses and Isaiah were strangers to them. Paul seems to go over the top. But the time is short, and it is essential that the converts shall start right. The time of 'teaching' and 'instruction' is not the time for questions and discussion by those who have no knowledge of the Scriptures. If you wish 'to learn' (the verb, v35, implies a 'teaching situation') wait till you get home, and ask your husbands, who know the Scriptures like the back of their hands.

Priscilla was a notable exception. Luke even puts her first, before her husband, in the task of expounding to Apollos "the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). Could it have been that, though well versed in the scriptures, Apollos had soft-pedalled on those which spoke of a suffering Messiah, and "the foolishness of the cross"? Although Paul had left, he had been staying (for 18 months!) with Aquila and Priscilla, in their house, and we can no more imagine him telling her to be silent, even in the 'teaching' sessions, than we can picture him presuming to advise the pair on their sex life.

1 Tim 2:11-14, with Eve 'formed' **after** Adam, yet 'deceived' before him, would seem to be a real obstacle in Feuillet's path. But (1) Bishops only are 'to teach'. The role is forbidden to deacons and presbyters, as well as to women. It is the authorised formulation of doctrine which is in mind, and for which bishops are responsible. Not all kinds of teaching are forbidden to women. (2) 'Authentein' ('to have authority') occurs here only in the NT. It is official and administrative authority which is in mind. Not all kinds of 'exousia' (the usual word) are forbidden to women. (Opponents of the ordination of women often appeal to the fact that the apostles and bishops were men. But this is no more sex distinction, on God's part, than 'to the Jew first' (Rom 1:16), is racial discrimination). (3) The 'woman-first-to-be-seduced' motif is not typical of Paul elsewhere. he does not use (or misuse) Gen 3:16, as is so often done, to imply the inferiority of women. Feuillet's "pretensions of some Christian women of the time" (1 Tim 2) recalls what I have said above about the women in 1 Cor 11 and 14).

3. Ephesians 5:22-23

Note the order. Christ is 'husband' (22-24); Fiancé (25-27); Husband (28-32)!

(a) 22-24. 'be subject' (cf 'subordinate' 1 Cor 14:34. same verb 'hypostasso'). But this comes **after** "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ". It is a mutual respect, born of reverence for Christ. The 'subjection' ('respect' would be a better word) is to a husband whose devotion to his wife is modelled on the love and care of Christ for the Church. Luke 2:51 uses the same verb of the 'subjection' of the boy Jesus to his parents. And this, after a signal example of his autonomy.

(b) 25-27. Mixed metaphors! Christ is Fiancé, yet also 'Friend of the Bridegroom' who represents the Fiancée 'before him' after the pre-nuptial bath (baptism). In Gen. 2:18-24, the Lord (Yahweh) is not only Creator, but 'Friend of the Bridegroom', 'bringing' the Woman to the Man. In 2 Cor. 11:2, Paul himself 'presents' the bride (the Church) to Christ, 'her husband'! (I often feel that biblical images and pictures, though expressed in words, are like great art which defies logic, when you try to articulate it. Excuse the pun. But if you can put it in words, art is not necessary!)

(c) 28-33: Back again to marriage. Why engagement **after** marriage? Christ the Husband of the Church, is the eternal Fiancé. He loves it with a love always new, young and without stain. Husbands are to love their wives like that, with a love which retains the freshness which it had in the dawn of creation when God brought to Adam the Fiancée he had prepared for him.

The 'great mystery' (v31), as we have more than once hinted, suggests that we have here more than a mere analogy, between the relation of God to Mankind and to Israel, on the one hand, and that of Man and Woman on the other. Both spring from one truth which goes back to the purpose of God in creation. The 'mystery' is not "an indecipherable enigma", but "an infinitely rich truth whose depths human intelligence has never finished plumbing".

4. Some Old Testament antecedents of the Pauline conceptions. It is to the prophets, especially to Hosea, that we look for "the symbol of conjugal love to express the mystery of the alliance between Yahweh and Israel". But Feuillet also finds that the Prophets, in their turn, are reliant on the basic creation narratives in Gen 1 and 2, which we have seen to be present to Paul, in 1 Cor 11 and 14. His main point is that, in pleading Yahweh's 'chesedh', his loyalty to his covenant-love, to restore the broken union with Israel, the Prophets "restore the dignity of woman". Gen 2 belongs to the Yahwist edition of the historical books. It sees the history from the prophetic point of view. Gen 2:24 "a man **leaves** his father" is 'astonishing'. Up to this time, the prevailing patriarchal custom in Israel saw marriage as a commercial transaction between the respective fathers. Gen 2:24 is thus "an indirect protest against this conception" in which woman is treated like a piece of property. (Much indebted to Von Rad).

(a) Hos. 2:2, "not my wife, and I am not her husband" reflect *ishahi* and *'ish* for 'wife' and 'husband' in Gen 2:23. It also alludes to the practice of easy divorce. This was all the man had to say, before witnesses, in order to get rid of his wife.

But not so with Yahweh. In v16 and v24, and in Chapter 3, we learn that, despite the adultery of Israel and Gomer (It is quite impossible to prise apart symbol and that which is symbolized. That would destroy the 'mystery') there has been no divorce in either case (cf Is. 50:1). Yahweh will woo his faithless wife in the wilderness until the day when "she will call me 'my 'ish' (Gen 2:23 again!).

(b) The sequence 'husband-fiancé'. What Feuillet has said about Eph 5 applies here too. (This is probably where the sequence comes from!) The new marriage between Yahweh and Israel will have all the strength, tenderness and freshness of a first love. It will be a honeymoon 'for ever'. (cf Jer 2:2)

(c) Hos. 2:16. "No longer will you call me 'My Baal'". Baal, a Canaanite deity, also means 'Lord' or 'Owner'. The relation of Yahweh with his restored wife (people) will not be like that of a lord over his slaves and property. It will be like the reciprocal love between husband and wife. It is the difference between Gen 2: 18-24 where the wife is equal and "the dreamed-of partner of man", and Gen 3:16 where she is enslaved to her husband who dominates her.

The 'Song of Songs', is, for Feuillet, much more than a "simple formula of human love". Its language is indebted to Hosea. It uses the relation of lover and beloved "to speak indirectly of the union between Yahweh and his people". For want of space I omit the 'echoes' (my word, because they would be more evident to constant hearers, than they are to us) from Genesis. Here too, in this love song, is the husband-fiancé sequence, which he also finds in Hosea and Ephesians 5.

Have the profound insights of Feuillet run away with me, so that I claim too much for Paul? Perhaps. One thing is certain. I began the journey, thinking that the apostle had a complete blind spot here, as compared with the racial question. I now see that what he says about, and to, women, is as much the fruit of his understanding of the Gospel and of Christ as any other words of his. In the space of a generation or so, he made tremendous progress. Far, far more than the Church has made after two thousand years.

Ernest Moore

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Communicating the Gospel and Contextualization

We European Christians have lived with the question of biblical interpretation so long that we do not realize how far our mind-set is conditioned by our history, culture, language development, and other subjective factors. Enlightenment rationalism has been in the driving seat for two centuries, often dominating academic biblical interpretation as a purely cerebral activity, divorced from real life.

Anthropology is the science or study of humankind in context. Alan Tippett says "Context determines meaning. All selfishness comes from the exaltation of the individual and the refusal to recognise the social context". (Tippett, *An Introduction to Missiology*, pp 17-18). This means that our culture and social background could play a big part in our interpretation of scripture. A reading of history shows how this has happened over successive centuries in Europe.

One way to discover the extent of this problem is simply to sit down and talk with a visitor from a Third World country. Read a passage from the Authorized Version of the Bible to a student from Kenya who understands contemporary English. With the A.V. Bible, however, he will have problems. He will soon be asking what such obsolete Anglo-Saxon words as "withs" (Judges 16:7) "witheldest" (Neh 8:20), "warp and woof" (Leviticus 13:48), "mufflers" (Isaiah 3:9), "waxed" (Deut 32:15, 6:51) really mean.

One of the major British theologians of the first quarter of the 20th century was P.T. Forsyth. He was a brilliant student at Aberdeen University, and then studied German theology under Ritschl. He began his ministry at Shipley, a suburb of Bradford. There he found that he, the child of a poor working class home, could no longer communicate with working class people. He admitted that he had no gospel for them. Here was the problem of communication caused by social barriers.

More than One Way to See

This difficulty in finding a consensus for biblical interpretation also affects theology. For many years now we have been hearing of African theology, Asian theology, Liberation theology, Feminist theology. The exponents of these theologies, even when they read the same Bible as Western Christians, often fail to agree.

A Consultation on Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism was held at Richmond, USA, in October 1979. Christian scholars with their counterparts from the major world religions met in conference, seeking to achieve greater mutual understanding. The official reporter stated "the diversity among Christians was so deep and central as to make continuing encounter with the other religions unfruitful, if not impossible. There is religious pluralism within the church as well as across the world". (Anderson and Stransky, *Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism*, pp 4-5)

In the light of the above, the challenge facing Christians, from Europe and North America, to come out from behind traditional clichés and engage in real meaningful dialogue, makes many of us feel uncomfortable.

We must also recognise that Christians from the Third World often recognise insights and situations in the Bible to which we are blind. The Third World agrarian struggle to survive is closer to the lifestyle of the Patriarchs than to ours, and the

Zairian woman who has to carry water three miles will identify with Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well and appreciate his words "come to me and receive the living water" more than this writer. A missionary told me that he never understood the Old Testament until he visited Bangladesh where poor farmers still plough with instruments like Abraham's.

So here are difficulties of communicating the Word of God between one century and another, between one social caste and another, between one continent and another, and between one culture and another.

At a conference a few years ago, a leading South American theologian, Orlando Costas, had to introduce his paper with the explanation, "This paper has been written from a Latin American Christological perspective and a radical evangelical theological commitment". It was not meant to be an apology, but simply a case of setting the framework.

Cross-cultural Paul

Paul was the great communicator, he was the Jew who called himself "a Hebrew of the Hebrews...a Pharisee.." (Phil 3:4-6). Yet he was prepared also to be "all things to all men". God had turned Paul around, from persecuting churches to planting churches, and all this within the space of a few years. He pursued his church-planting ministry in a diversity of cultural contexts: to Jews, to cultured Gentiles, and to a wide spread of ethnic hearers in between; and all the time he was walking a tightrope between being faithful to the Gospel he had received, and avoiding giving the authorities reason for arresting him as a threat to the "Pax Romana".

Donald McGavran argued that Christians must take a high view of scripture and also of culture. Paul certainly achieved this without becoming theologically schizophrenic. In 1 Cor 9:19-20 he is identifying with the Jews, and yet in the following few verses he is able to identify with Gentiles. "To those not having the law I became like one not having the law...so as to win those not having the law". On the one hand, he could communicate the gospel to Jews with the ability to use proof texts from the scriptures. On the other hand, when necessary, as in Lystra, he could also communicate with pagans who knew nothing about the God of the Jews, by appeal to natural revelation, the facts of creation, and the regular provision of harvest.

In Athens he refers to an "unknown god". Diogenes Laertius reports the erection of altars to unnamed gods in thanksgiving for deliverance from plague. That was enough for Paul. Beginning with reference to the "unknown god", he explained that he had come to explain who this god was, and went on to preach the good news of Jesus. Here we see Paul reaching out in credible terms to the sophisticated and academic men of Athens.

We may sum up what we can learn from Paul's strategy of communication in a multi-contextualized world thus:

1. The Bible reveals a God who is the business of communication, from the first page to the last page of the Bible. Hebrews 1:1 tells us that God spoke "in many and various ways of old". The present challenge of communicating the good news of Christ cannot be beyond Him today. If God is source of creation, it would seem logical that He has also the potential to make Himself known in a saving way despite the limitations of His creation in today's world.

2. The good news of Jesus itself never changes, nor are we at liberty to change

it - especially in the light of passages like Romans 1:16-17 and 1 Cor 15:1-11. Perhaps we preachers do need, from time to time, however, to re-evaluate our confidence in the "kerugma" and its relevance for human needs in the late 20th century. We must believe that the unchanging message is proclaimable in an ever-changing milieu.

3. We must begin where people are and where we find them, culturally, ethnically, socially, intellectually and religiously. We must find ways to "sit where they sit", to put ourselves into their skins, and ask "What sense could I make of this preacher's message if I heard it for the first time?"

4. We must recognise that, in the post-Christian society in which we are, we find ourselves in a world remarkably like that of the first Christian witnesses. We can presume nothing. We cannot assume any ideas about the Christian's God or the Bible. This may daunt us - but, with the return of a situation parallel to that of the New Testament world, we must learn from the first witnesses how to go about the task of communicating Christ. It must be possible, or we face the fact of failure, and if we have to admit that the task is impossible today, we must also recognise that we will be the first generation to have so failed; and we are failing both Christ and the Gospel.

5. Although it has been said before, we must learn how to be "all things to all men (and women)" - 1 Cor 9:22. Millions of people who read the *Sun* newspaper, for instance, are unlikely to listen to the wordiness of what we call sermons. We need to train ministers to communicate to a generation which finds news through the pages of the tabloids.

6. Local churches must not leave this to the pastor. Each church must become a missionary society committed to communicate the good news - often in non-verbal ways. This communication may well consist of "showing" rather than "telling", or "showing" first and "telling" later - perhaps much later. The local church must catch this vision or it has no viable future, and this task of communicating the gospel must be carried out by the whole church, for as Kraemer used to tell us, fifty years ago, the Church's mission depends upon the laity.

7. Sometimes, facing this formidable, almost impossible task today, it is easy to get discouraged and bogged down. Alternatives beguile us into going down "by-path" meadow. Thus ministers get diverted into counselling, healing ministries, spiritual conferences, chaplaincies, engaging in social work, etc. etc. (To anticipate the flak let me hasten to add that I recognise all these are legitimate ministries, but they are not identical with focusing Christian mission on the base of the local church).

8. The Holy Spirit is often the missing factor, and I realise that I have made no reference to the "great communicator" hitherto. The story of Pentecost and its sequel in Peter's sermon, conforms us with the challenge of letting the Holy Spirit be our communicator in mission today. If he could communicate the Gospel to Jews from the Dispersion in half a dozen different countries, he must be able to communicate with all groupings of human beings today.

We must believe in the promise, the potential, the activity of the Holy Spirit who was specifically promised, in Acts 1:8, as the one who would witness and equip the Church for its witness. That promise has been fulfilled a million times in the Church's history, and it can be fulfilled again and again in the future.

I have often discovered that what people heard during the sermon was just not

what I was saying. It took me some time to learn that the Holy Spirit was able to take my words and tell people, not what I thought they needed, but what God was saying.

Witness of the Past

For our encouragement we need to return to the Third World missionary situation. Humanly speaking, the pioneer Protestant missionaries of two centuries ago faced an impossible task. They lacked everything that we take for granted as essential - no Bibles, no literacy, no printing, no swift communications, no modern drugs and health equipment etc. But lack of these so called essentials did not deter them, and Brainherd, Carey and his colleagues, Moffatt, Livingstone and thousands of others, with the naivety of the child-like mind which Jesus extolled, went ahead. Somehow, despite the horrors and suffering and discouragement which they experienced, they fulfilled the promise of Jesus about "a corn of wheat dying in order to produce a great harvest". This is the story of Christian missions. Mistakes were made, disasters encountered, but the witness was carried forth, churches were planted, and the people who dwelt in darkness beheld a great light.

What modern missiology reminds us of is not just that Christ is the sender and the companion of missionaries, he is also the sovereign Lord who is present amongst those to be evangelized. We do not take Jesus to them - He is already there ahead of us, and active. When Mary Slessor preached about Christ crucified to unreached peoples in Nigeria a century ago, she noticed one of the chief's wives crying, and when she asked her what was wrong, the woman, with shining eyes, replied simply, "I have always believed there must be a God like that, and now you have told me his name - Jesus".

There's encouragement there for us all, as we bear the good news of Jesus to those for whom He died.

Ron Armstrong

Book Appeal for the Czech and Slovak Republics

In order to establish a library of Baptist scholarship, books by Baptist authors are urgently required.

There is a list available of the specific titles needed. This can be obtained from Regent's Park College which is co-ordinating the project together with the Devon and Cornwall Baptist Association.

Since this is not a general book collection, it is important that reference is made to this list.

**If you would like to donate money to this project, please send it to
Revd Derek J. Keenan,
13 Wrefords Drive, Cowley Park, Exeter, EX4 5AU**

Book Reviews

***Christian Leadership* by David Spriggs (Bible Society, 1993, 200pp, £5.95)**

Christian Leadership is one of a new series of books from the Bible Society, *Resources for Growing Churches*, and is written by a Baptist minister who is currently Secretary for Evangelism at the Evangelical Alliance. The book is aimed at both full-time and lay Christian leaders and is designed to be used in a variety of ways: for personal reading, with prayer partners and for group study. Each chapter concludes with a number of tasks which are marked with symbols to indicate the intended usage. Many of these tasks are rather demanding and time consuming, so would have to be used selectively. At the beginning of every chapter its goal, aims and the main Scripture passages are outlined. As we might expect from a book from the Bible Society, there is a solid biblical foundation to each chapter.

David Spriggs' basic premise is that leadership is a central issue for the Church today and his aim is to assist in the development of leadership in the local church. The scope of the book is wide. As well as looking at leadership in general, and Christian leadership in particular, the author analyses secular leadership models and attempts to apply them to the Christian context. He also deals with personal growth and development in spirituality as a basis for effective leadership, and looks in some detail at the issue of spiritual gifts and how to discern them in oneself and in others. The question of leadership styles is dealt with, as is team work. Later chapters examine the ways in which leadership can be fostered and developed. There is a concern for realism in our expectations of ourselves and a desire to promote care for those in leadership. Towards the end, the author outlines some of the rewards of leadership, stating that we should, on occasion, celebrate our achievements for God. This would seem timely advice to a group who more often berate themselves for their failures than congratulate themselves on their successes. The book ends with a list of literature on related subjects with summaries, also an address list indicating where further help might be obtained. There is, however, no bibliography of works cited - a strange omission.

There is much of value in this book and it could be used profitably by both individuals and groups, as the author intends. Unfortunately, however, it is spoiled by its style which attempts to be familiar and conversational, but, at times, verges on the unctuous. Surely the author could have achieved intimacy with his readers without resorting to a mode of address which is, quite frankly, likely to make them cringe with embarrassment.

Alison Evans

***Kingdom Concerns* by Ken Gnanakan (IVP, 1993, 224pp, £6.99)**

Written from, and initially for, the Indian context, Ken Gnanakan's thesis is that theology, and especially mission theology, needs to take both Bible and mission context with equal seriousness. 'Actualization' is his own word for describing the vital integration of the two. To some extent, this represents an Evangelical corrective to previous and contemporary overemphases on 'contextualisation', and an attempt to centralise the "word made flesh" theme for any theologising process. For Gnanakan, theology is *for*, and thus *part of* mission; involvement and not reflective objectivity is the prerequisite.

Gnanakan's 224 pages comprise an introduction, both Biblical and contextual, to mission theology. It has three parts: the first looking at the historical setting of modern mission from 1910 onwards (30 pages), the second represents a biblical exploration of mission ('chronologically', from creation to the role of the Spirit) (140 pages), and third, a statement of (in his view) missiological essentials (15 pages). The first part functions as a contextual introduction addressing Evangelical sensitivities in relation to 'proclamation and dialogue' and 'mission or missions' debates. It sets the hermeneutical ground rules for the second, central part of the book.

"If this mission is neither anchored in the Bible, nor channelled through the church, it becomes a purely relative human endeavour".

Gnanakan's hermeneutical key is that "God has an ultimate plan for his world and that the plan relates to his kingdom". As an Evangelical, he accepts both the historicity of past event and the authority of its character as revelation, but recognises the vital need for Spirit-led 'actualization' *in situ* as past and present (and future) horizons merge. Correspondingly, Gnanakan deals with his Biblical material with frequent reference to contemporary missiological debate and finally counsels a radical openness to the Spirit who relativises instrumentation and structure:

"We need to take a fresh look at ecclesiology, refusing to restrict the meaning of the church, in narrow, denominational terms, but embracing its broadest missiological significance within the kingdom of God. Only then will the church be recognised as fulfilling its rightful role as a Spirit-initiated church on the Spirit-motivated mission of the kingdom of God" (p.194)

Gnanakan's closing third section summarises his presentation with reference to the church needing to discover its missiological essence, to underline the uniqueness of its message, and to reaffirm the totality of God's mission.

Gnanakan's book is extremely readable, and, for its size, remarkably comprehensive - as an **introduction**. He draws carefully upon a wide range of systematic and biblical theologians, treating them respectfully and yet discerningly.

Ken Gnanakan is based in Bangalore (where he heads up ACTS Ministries). Having studied at King's College, London, he is now General Secretary of the Asia Theological Association and President of the Association of Theological Educators in India.

John Bayes

***C.H. Spurgeon: The Pastor Evangelist* by Mike Nicholls (Baptist Historical Society, 1992, 192pp, £8.00)**

"Never judge a book by its cover". Sound advice, for this one is badly designed, published in tomb-stone black on drab 'wartime' card. Since most publishers have now given up paying for their authors to have a professional studio portrait taken for their dust cover, why do we have to have less than pin sharp passport-booth-type head and shoulders?

Ignore the cover and Mike Nicholls is to be congratulated on his presentation. The chapter titles are very attractive, even if somewhat reminiscent of J.C. Carlile. There is little new, of course; how can there be unless the untapped material of Spurgeon's monthly magazines are researched. It takes ten years to read the 66

volumes of *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, so how long will it take for some aspiring Ph D student to read the 53 volumes of *The Sword and the Trowel*? In any case Mike is merely trying to give “a simplified and illustrated life of Spurgeon” (Preface), so even his treatment of the “Down-Grade” merely receives a one paragraph conclusion: “Subsequent developments may have vindicated his alarm and his warning”. This hardly does justice to the history of the Baptist Union since Spurgeon’s time.

There are very few mistakes in the book. The most irritating to this reviewer is that every time his own books are mentioned (American editions) they are listed as being published in California instead of Texas! Pilgrim Publications would not be pleased. A hardy annual is that Spurgeon’s Tabernacle seated only 5,000, whereas with the end-of-pew flaps seats down 6,000 were accommodated.

The bibliography reveals that important source material has not been consulted. ‘Hims’ and ‘hers’ ancient and modern, British and foreign, that should have been listed are Eva Hope, G.C. Lorimer, James Douglas, J.J. Ellis, to name but a few; and the important German doctoral thesis, *Rhetorik in den Predigten bei C.H. Spurgeon*, by my friend Adalbert Geduhn.

Since this book was written to commemorate the centenary-that-never-was among British Baptists in 1992, and since Americans tell me “you buried Spurgeon but we keep him alive”, it is to be hoped that many will purchase Mike’s book. Then maybe the author’s ambition will be fulfilled, that it will “inspire and challenge the devotion and commitment of this generation” (Preface). Perhaps deacons’ meetings could be encouraged to buy several copies to circulate among the young people, a generation who know not the Prince of Preachers.

Eric Hayden

***Stepping Aside* by David Brindley (Bible Society, 1993, 128pp, £5.95)**

This is a book which is offered as a help and resource for anyone planning or leading a Christian conference or retreat. I feel that perhaps I am the wrong person to review it. My own experience of, and preference for, retreats is of those of a quieter, reflective, more contemplative nature; and I feel exhausted just reading this.

Nevertheless, I am aware that there is a need for retreats and conferences of various styles (after all, are we not different types of personalities?), and in fairness to David, he has not set out to write a book which concentrates on any particular form of retreat or conference. This is where I feel he does not perhaps do justice to his own, obviously considerable, experience, as the material is, for me, spread a little thinly, although there is a great deal of practical information and commonsense insights. He starts by laying down the principles of planning, and then moves on to the detail of running a wide range of retreats or conferences. There are various books and resources mentioned in each chapter: this is a great help, and starting point, for someone who would like to explore a particular aspect in greater depth. One niggle is that there are some omissions and inaccuracies which should have been spotted at the editing stage of the book.

In one of the “Ending” exercises we are told that “We are quick to criticise others... This exercise encourages members to look for the good in others, and can ensure that the time together finishes on a high note”. I would like to take this to heart and say, that although this book is not exactly my cup of tea, it is a useful

resource and offers a comprehensive practical overview particularly for someone wishing to explore this aspect of ministry for the first time. In David's concluding words, "Give it a try".

Colin White

***A Critique of Pastoral Care* by Stephen Pattison (SCM, 1993, 256pp, £12.50)**

Throughout his critique, Pattison returns frequently to his opening words, "If pastors have no perspective...they risk complacency, stagnation and possible complicity with that which is less than good and desirable" (p1). After discussing what is meant by "pastoral care" - meanings can range from general evangelization to professional 'Christian' counselling - ethics, discipline and politics are studied in relation to the subject. The chapter "The Bible and Pastoral Care" illustrates how presuppositions about holy scripture affect how we both learn from and apply the text, not only in pastoral care, but in other areas of theology.

In an age and a Baptist community where 'success' is the measure of a good minister (and of a Home Mission grant?), failure, real or imagined, appears to have no place. Pattison's chapter, "Failure in Pastoral Care" is thus most welcome. "Failure...is neither to be sought nor to be avoided but ...to be recognised, faced up to and learned from" (p161), and, poignantly, "If it is fully experienced and faced up to, failure can actually humanize pastoral care and give pastors a greater mutuality with those in their care who experience the wounds of failure in other contexts" (p166).

The final chapter, "The Importance of Not Being Earnest", is a corrective to the tendency to take ourselves too seriously.

To be an ordained minister in the church of Christ is to be more than just a "pastor", but Pattison's critique provides a helpful tool in developing a theory and practice for today in what is clearly an important function of both ministers and people. He concludes with a desire for the same sense of perspective with which he began: "It may be that it is only when pastoral care gains the perspective which allows it to see itself as a joke - a bad joke even - that it will be beginning to take God and reality seriously".(p 192)

Keith G. Riglin