

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

- Feminist Theology*, SCM Press, London, 1983, p.111.
- 18 Elaine Storkey, *What's Right With Feminism*, Third Way Books, SPCK, London, 1985, p.104 cf.p.109.
- 19 E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *op.cit.*, pp.229-30.
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp.346, 350.
- 21 See *The Motherhood of God. A Report by a Study Group appointed by the Women's Guild and the Panel on Doctrine on the invitation of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, ed. Alan E. Lewis, Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1984, pp.31-43. Also see Margaret Hebblethwaite, *Motherhood and God*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1984, pp.128-139.
- 22 Terry Waite in conversation with Rosemary Harthill, broadcast week beginning 28 April 1986.
- 23 Ruether, *op.cit.*, p.111.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p.113.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p.112: 'Androgyny, then, is basically a male and not a female problem. Females do not need to adopt this concept to express their quest for psychic wholeness'.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p.231. See Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1973; Daly has replaced the 'male' image of God with the symbol of an Earth Mother, linking the feminine and nature.

PAUL S. FIDDES

Tutor, Regent's Park College, Oxford

REVIEW

50 Anos de Historia Bautista en Nicouragua by Dr A. Parajon and the Revd A. Ruiz. 243 pp. Obtainable from C.B.N., Apourtado 2593, Managua, Nicaragua, C.A.

Those interested in the present situation in Nicaragua, and able to follow the Spanish, will find this a useful volume. Here you will find the story of the English-speaking congregations of the Atlantic Coast (and Corn Island in particular) that date back to 1852 and which have developed with some help from Jamaica. Here too is the story of the widely esteemed Eleanour Blackmore: 'Ia gran apostol' from a church in Chester who began work on the Pacific Coast in 1903 and who, after the comity agreement in Panama in 1916, was employed by the North American Baptists' Home Mission Board. That the work was seen as part of Home rather than Foreign Mission was itself significant. The story is of the establishment of churches, the birth of the Convention in 1936 and the growth of institutions which today include a Seminary, a Secondary School, a University-Polytechnic, a Hospital, an Old People's Home and a medical agency, called Proবাদenic.

JOHN BRIGGS

determined predilection for the old theology, being saturated in it and ready to die for it. *The Sword and The Trowel*, 1871, p.227.

- 133 *The Sword and The Trowel*, 1881, p.309. Equally he used Philip Doddridge's Evangelical Academy at Northampton as a warning against undogmatic preaching. 'Dr Doddridge was as sound as he was amiable, but perhaps he was not always judicious and not sufficiently bold and decided'. His successor, Dr Ashworth, continued the teaching policy - described by his pupil, Joseph Priestly, the Unitarian, in these words: 'In my time the academy was in a state peculiarly favourable to the serious pursuit of truth, as the students were about equally divided upon every question of much importance. Our tutors also were of different opinions ... the general plan of our studies ... was exceedingly favourable to free enquiry, as we were referred to authors on both sides of every question'. *The Sword and The Trowel*, 1887, p.122-6 and 166-172. In these 'Downgrade' articles the decline of eighteenth century nonconformity is attributed largely to the theological colleges.
- 134 *Annual Report* 1881, p.1. 135 *Autobiography*, Vol.II, p.250-1.
- 136 *The Sword and The Trowel*, 1883, p.262-3.

M. NICHOLLS Tutor, Spurgeon's College, London.

This paper was delivered at the Society's Spurgeon Day Conference in September 1984. The second part will follow in a later issue.

REVIEWS

Faith in the City: A call for action by church and nation, The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, Church House Publishing, 1985. xvi + 398 pp. £7.50.

What a marvellously ambiguous phrase with which to title such an important book! Is faith to be found in the city? Or are we to have faith that the Church of Christ has a ministry to exercise there?

Some years ago, I took a former President of the Baptist Union to a New Town he had not visited before. As we went into the concrete jungle, his face became ashen: 'whoever designed this ought to be put in prison' was all that he could say. We went into one of the 'town houses' that 'graced' the estate, the home of the local Baptist minister. We shared with him his dreams for the community, his hopes for the church and his assurance of the gospel. My companion's riposte as we left the estate was as brief as his comment as we entered it: 'I have changed my mind: whoever designed this place ought to be made to live in it!'

That the church has manifestly failed to make the gospel live in our Inner Cities and other 'Urban Priority Areas' is clear. Is the fault with the church which did not 'stick it out'? Or with the

planners and other authorities who made these communities such loveless places? That is one of the questions posed in the report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas. Planners are always fair game for criticism, and I too find, sometimes, incomprehensible the awards bestowed on those who designed some of our housing areas in recent times. But the causation is more complicated than simply a case of the mistaken interference of the faceless bureaucrats of our Town and City Halls. Decaying city centres that grew like Topsy a hundred or more years ago, present as many problems as well planned post-war estates that have been overtaken by that economic blizzard which has taken away the jobs and businesses that are crucial for the community to remain buoyant and vibrant.

Faith in the City defines an Urban Priority Area as one that suffers from economic decline, physical decay and social disintegration. All three elements inter-twine and are essential to the definition. Economic decline is manifest in the high unemployment in all these areas, even if higher in some pockets than in others. Physical decay follows and social deprivation, widespread despair and that crime and violence which is so sickening a feature of UPAs. The Chief Rabbi may talk glibly about pulling oneself up by the boot laces: the reality of life in the 'other Britain' makes such language an offence. It is no longer the geographical divide that is significant in the life of Britain, though more UPAs will be found in the north than in the south, but the divide between the deprived and the comfortable. The Urban Bishops Coalition (USA) Forward Movement has spoken of an underclass of poor in cities 'which results from the functioning of our economic system, and indeed, may be necessary to it', words which sadly fit our communities too. Are we complacent in tolerating a situation in which the comparative prosperity of some of us is dependent upon the continuing degradation of many who live in the Inner City?

The charge is made that the church has not 'stuck it out' in the Inner City. That clearly is not true in some areas. Baptist churches are still found in plenty in Inner London, and a fair number of them have survived in the estates of post-war Britain. Yet a casual glance at a Year Book will pose the question 'Where have all the churches gone?' In Liverpool, for example, what happened to Byrom Street, Myrtle Street, Pembroke, Carisbrooke, Fabius, Kensington, to name the best known? In many cases, of course, the answer would be that they moved to the suburbs, suburbs which have also become UPAs! A curious statistic (the report calls it astonishing) is revealed in *Faith in the City*, concerning churches in the Toxteth area of Liverpool. To serve a population of 45,000 there are 59 churches/fellowships, apart from Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. At most of these churches the attendance is less than 50, except for two non-Union Baptist churches which have congregations numbering several hundreds, many of whom travel to worship from other areas. One of those has suffered in recent years from a number of splits, some departing because the church made a deliberate decision to concentrate its evangelistic thrust on the community near the church. Many, if not most, of these Free-church-type churches are of a Conservative-Evangelical persuasion. The evidence suggests that

it is the gathered church type that is affected most by urban decay: local resources fail to maintain ministry and therefore mission, and the ailing body dies or amalgamates with another church in the suburbs before going under.

There are questions posed for Baptists by this report. The first concerns the strategic use of our resources, both of money and personnel. What priority do we give to mission in the Inner City - higher or lower than, say, church planting in Silicon Valley? Increasingly, it seems, Church Growth issues dominate the agendas of our Committees - and sometimes the front page of the *Baptist Times*! Can we, as a denomination, come to terms with ministry that, apart from the miracle of God's grace, is unlikely to develop a church life that can be independent of outside funds? Furthermore, it has to be a ministry that does not begin with the local church, for the simple reason that, in many cases, there is no longer a local church in which it can develop. Mission in the Inner City has to develop its own pattern of life and its own structures if it is to be authentic witness. Put bluntly, how long can the large Home Mission grants to London and Salford for their Inner City work survive the cuts that economic realities impose on the Union? Alongside that question comes the even thornier one. What apparatus is necessary that our governing bodies can receive advice adequate for the making of such important decisions?

The second question is concerned with ministry in the UPAs. How can we grow an effective and validated ministry in areas where, traditionally, leadership is missing? The report points out the difficulties, well known to any Baptist who has worked in such communities. So many people whose lives blossom as they are touched by the gospel, and whose faith and confidence visibly grow within the circle of the church's life, then find themselves free to escape the claustrophobia of Inner City life. Of course, some of them come back into the Inner City on Sundays to worship and teach, but because they are no longer of the City, their leadership loses its cutting edge. In chapter 6 of the report, the Commission discusses the possibility of what it calls Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry, which it then dismisses because it contradicts the catholic universality of the ordained ministry, and because of the danger of its leading to what it calls congregationalism. Such difficulties do not, of course, necessarily face Baptists. Maybe we could pioneer a pattern of such 'recognised' local ministry which could help the Anglicans (and others) to come to terms with their problems in this area. Facilities for training such local leaders now exist in most of our theological colleges, and our committees are already grappling with the question of recognition. Likewise, of course, the Anglicans may well reflect that if they are serious in their insistence that the church in the UPA should be allowed to find its own pattern of life, congregationalism may not be such a sin!

Finally, what is the ecumenical dimension of all this? The report is Anglican and unashamedly so; it is 'The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission'. I am sure that the instinct to produce an Anglican report was a proper one. Had we set up an Ecumenical Commission, it would still have been meeting! The Anglicans, by their

very nature as an Established Church, have the ear of government. There were attempts made by the Commission to include an ecumenical dimension: some Free Church people met the Commission when it visited Urban Priority Areas; some of our churches were asked to provide information and some Baptists are among those who submitted written evidence. What is now clear is that no one denomination can go it alone in this field of mission. The problem is not an Anglican one nor a Baptist one, but a Christian one. What resources the churches can make available for this task must be pooled, employed strategically, and not frittered away. This report must have a high place on Baptist agendas in coming days, as it assuredly will have on the agendas of Anglican synods.

TREVOR HUBBARD

General Superintendent, North Western Area

James Leo Garrett, Jnr, E. Glenn Hinson and James E. Tull, *Are Southern Baptists 'Evangelicals'?* Mercer University Press, 1983, pp.viii, 239. \$13.95.

In this useful book three Southern Baptist scholars tackle a question central to the future of the Southern Baptist convention. Dr James Tull provides a foreword and a concluding summary, whilst Dr Garrett in an historical survey proves that the Southern Baptists belong firmly within the Evangelical family. Dr Hinson argues that if 'Evangelical' means, as many believe, 'Fundamentalist', the identification has many dangers for the Convention. Clearly, the name 'Evangelical' when applied in a modern United States context is almost as difficult to nail down as 'Puritan' when used in Seventeenth Century England. James Leo Garrett takes some trouble to argue that while all Fundamentalists are Evangelicals, not all Evangelicals need to be Fundamentalists. An increasing debate is seen to divide those who believe the Bible is without error 'in all matters of doctrine and ethics' and those who believe it to be inerrant 'in historical, geographical and scientific' matters also (p.68). Moreover, the 'New Evangelicals' have a concern for social ethics unknown to their fathers in the earlier part of the 20th century but more widely shared in the 19th. Southern Baptists, in his view (p.126) 'belong to and exemplify the great heritage of Scriptural authority, Christocentric doctrine, gospel proclamation, experience of grace and evangelistic endeavour which is Evangelicalism'. Hinson's argument is set in the context of the present controversy within the Southern Baptist Convention. His discussion is important lest the lines between Baptist witness (and he seems concerned not merely for *Southern* Baptists) and a rigid, right-wing theology not only of the Bible but of ministerial authority, credal demands and right-wing politics, become dangerously blurred. This is a valuable book - not only for its insights into the Southern Baptist scene but because of a number of parallels with the English situation.

B. R. WHITE